BODIED CURRICULUM: A RHIZOMEAN LANDSCAPE OF POSSIBILITY

By

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Abstract

Undergoing a self-study using the method of currere (Pinar, 1976), I examine my own learning as holistic, embodied, and relational in the context of my mother’s garden. Specifically, I explore my mother’s garden as a site of relational learning that intersects with various classrooms that feature in my educational experiences. The garden and the classroom intersect with/in one curricular landscape, where self and other engage in an embodied process fostering connections and knowledges about each other and place. In bringing forth my narrative through currere, I engage in reflective and reflexive praxis through journal writing, poetry, meditation, and photographic collage. Using these forms of expression, I reflect upon my experiential learning process, analyze issues and concepts related to the body-in-movement, as well as focus on community connections and ecology-based learning as pedagogical praxis.
Acknowledgements

It seems so simple, yet it is not. I feel the word “thanks” is just not enough. I would rather like to think that my thanks is with/in my everyday actions and the living that I do with my family, friends, colleagues, classmates, students, and teachers. However, I am an im/perfect human being and I know that this thanks is not always there. My patient mother, I especially hope you feel the many thank yous with/in this text. To mothers (my one-and-only) and sisters (whom I have two), I praise aloud the strength of these relationships that sustain us and the living that we do. Thank you.

To teachers, my teachers – past/present/future – our relationships, I treasure. The work that you do with/in schools, your classrooms, and your everyday living are often un/heard. It is your generosity and humility that rather gently touches your student’s souls. So, it is to Dr. Stephanie Springgay, Dr. Jack Miller, and Dr. Jim Cummins that I give thanks for their genuine care and continuous support. I especially want to thank my inspiring advisor, Dr. Stephanie Springgay, to whom I dedicate the following quote:

Experience tells us that any “meaningful” relationship implies that my life must become different as a result of knowing you; otherwise, we just go on living as two solitudes. (Smith, 1999, p. 106)

Thank you.

Always returning home (with “new eyes”), I dedicate this text to a wonderful family and to a magnificent mother whose agape does not demand a reciprocal response. With agape, I open this up with you.
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Collage

With/in this text you will find poetry, meditations, photographic images, and reflections from my journal (in italicised format). I also use photographic collage as a form of expression. I must note that I do not present collage as a “piecing-together” of meaning, but rather as a threading/interweaving action bringing past/present/future together to create a new story. There is an ambiguity to the process and work of collage; its ambiguity is its performance.

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Preface

What have I learned? How come I cannot remember “right”? Whatever happened to all that “knowledge” from Grade 10 Math? I had this means-to-an-end mentality growing up. I thought I needed “things” like Grade 10 Math to get me to the next stage in my academic “career”. Grade 10 Math would lead me to graduation and then graduation would lead me to university, and then my university studies would lead me to etc...... I was never without a goal in mind. I thought school was this separate entity that existed outside of life and unto itself. I naively thought that once university was out of the way, “real” life would begin. Sadly, achievement with/in schools and ideas of “success” still echo this means-to-an-end mentality. Standardized testing and rote learning practices are the reality of our education system. However much we may want to abolish such practices, we cannot erase their strong presence but perhaps loosen the grip.

In “loosening the grip”, I ask us to consider our everyday living practices as part of curriculum, our classrooms, and the learning that we do. I include our active bodies with/in our learning landscape that is inclusive of places, such as our homes, backyards, and gardens to name a few. It is with/in the places of “the everyday” and it is our everyday – face-to-face – living with our mothers, sisters, strangers, friends, and neighbours that we can re-consider and re-work our perceptions of self, other, and place. In viewing these everyday places as relational sites of learning, we can reconceptualize curriculum and pedagogy as living praxis (i.e., experience inside and outside of classrooms that is part of one landscape). Being mindful of our landscape we choose to engage in our living collaboratively, authentically, responsibly, and responsively to our differences. As teachers, students, researchers, and curious human beings, we choose to open ourselves to multiple stories, to difficult knowledge, and to an in-between space that asks us to question our practices and our beliefs. In exposing ourselves, we commit –
in generosity – to our own becoming and to who our students could become. Becoming –
together – differently we can alter the landscape and create *something* that is not-yet-known
with/in education.

*What might this in-between space look like?* You may also ask: *How can I choose it if
I’m not sure it is there?* This is the beauty and agony of our living with/in our teacher identities.
We agonizingly pay attention to detail, plan until we are breathless, and maintain organized
agendas to keep us on track. *As pre-service teachers, is this not what we were told “good”
teachers do?* Although I cannot give you a definition of the in-between, you will have to choose
to experience this yourself. I will say that the ambiguity of my answer (that you will shortly read
below) is part of the in-between’s beauty. So, it is in-between the details, an experience of an
a/rhythmic sort of breathing, and in-between the lines of our agendas where we will not find
answers, but alternative possibilities for ourselves, our students, each other, our teaching, our
learning, and our place where our bare feet touch the ground.

With/in this text, I hope you experience this ambiguity through stories that are not my
own, but intertwined with those that I share my living with. I hope in-between my words, my
poetry, meditations, and personal reflections you experience many things. In-between my
photographs (image and textual), I hope you catch a glimpse of *something* you have not *seen*
before. I hope you (re)read and (re)narrate *with* me in hopes of *something* yet-to-come.

I write a messy text and this is not going to be an “easy” read. You will not find best practices
and plans for pedagogic practice; there is no remembering “right”, *here*. My messy metaphors
desire negotiation and imagination, and I hope you choose to open yourself to *something* not-
yet-known. I invite you with/in this text.
Inviting: A Double Invitation

Allow me to introduce myself. I do so here – right now – with these words, with/in this text. We meet unconventionally, though, without a handshake, a smile, a quick gesture, a reciprocal response of any sorts…at least with/in this moment. With/in this moment you cannot see me with your eyes, but I hope you come to “see” me in other ways. It is here and now that I am working with/in the constraints of language to speak/write myself into a Self. How do I do this? I echo Lather and Smithies (1997) quest/ioning of Self. They ask:

What structures our capacity to “name” ourselves, to “speak ourselves, to make a “self” in the midst of the collision of shifting identities and movement across different contexts? What inherited meanings do we draw on? And how do we make sense when inherited meanings break down? How do we come to know ourselves? How do we make ourselves knowable to others? What is revealed and what remains hidden, perhaps even to ourselves. (Lather and Smithies, 1997, p. 124)

Well then, how do I do this? I want to know.

Presence/Absence

I never felt the absence of “I” with/in my academic work.
I never felt its presence, its power and its persuasion.
I recently started writing with the use of “I” and this single letter confronted me. Along with this unexpected feeling, I felt liberation, satisfaction, my Self with/in my writing and with/in “I”.
I think I heard voice – my presence with/in my prose. Writing with “I” is not a Self(ish) means to an end; it’s not about power and ego. Writing with “I” is for me but it’s for you, too. It’s about taking my “I” into consideration and creating your own “I” anew.
I now question the possibility of knowing one’s *Self* because you can never truly *see* your *Self*. I use the word *see* to mean *seeing* one *Self* and others in different ways that reach beyond sight. It is a reach beyond representation. The complication with this kind of *seeing*, however, is that no matter how long and how close you look into that 10X optical quality magnification mirror you can never truly *see* your *Self*. It is the “eyes” of the other that help you *see*. It is the *eyes* of the other that you must rely on. To be clear, the other does not *see* for you. Anne Dufourmantelle (2000) explains that “no one is there to touch for another or for myself, but we are both founded on this relation to the third” (in Derrida, 2000, p.124). She articulates more of a *seeing* together, a doubling, a “second sight” (Dufourmantelle in Derrida, p. 20, 2000). In considering this, it fascinates me that the *eyes* of the other are never the same; there is always difference. You are thus different and always differentiating through the gaze of your mother, father, sister, brother, lover, friend, teacher, neighbour and stranger. You cannot localize a reference point to go to for a definition of who you are; there is not one definition and it is your *seeing* that changes, too.

There is no reflection that can capture a knowable image of you. The big-eyed mirror – with its impressive 10X zoom ability – is thus of no help. Through my reflection and the gaze of others, I am delocalized, decentred, and disoriented. I am dizzy. I do not know where to look. Right *here*, right *now* I want to carry on an intimate dialogue that speaks of my delocalization/disorientation, my knowing/not-knowing but I am stuttering. I am living with/in a language that cannot fully articulate these feelings and meanings. These feelings are felt and these meanings are expressed with/in and through my body. *I wonder how to do this? How do I write my body into these pages?* I want to speak/write intimately and openly right *here*, right *now*.
Philosopher Isabelle Stengers (2010) writes of delocalization as an experience of here that mirrors the here I want to write about. Specifically, Stengers (2010) writes of delocalization as something that brings

...into existence the experience of here and there, the experience of a here that, by its very topology, affirms the existence of a there, and affirms it in a way that excludes any nostalgia for the possibility of erasing differences, of creating an all-purpose experience. (p. 62)

Thus, I write with possibility and carry on an intimate dialogue here, while not erasing what is happening there. Here and there not here or there. One and the other not one or the other. I speak/write about an in-between movement that is everywhere; a Deleuzian (1987) movement that is delocalized yet close, near, and intimate. A movement that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain is between things and

...does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (p. 25)

Let us move through this unconventional introduction and meet in the middle.

Dismantling the autonomous “I”; the “I” that does not notice my body and yours. Let us – me and you – move together to a rhythm not-yet-known. Delocalized we move and “pick up speed in the middle” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 25). Let us move together through the body of this text.

In-Between Encounters: Here, There, Everywhere

I found that pedagogy was everywhere in the spaces of language and in the languages of space and that home was not home and not not-home. And I located a working language
that laboured within a “third” discourse – that trembled on a “third” ground. A working language that draws from the tensions at the edges of psychoanalysis and deconstruction. A working language that spends – that un/does – that ex-scribes as it re-writes – as it moves on. (Palulis, 2003, p. 267)

Similarly to Palulis (2003), I have come to believe that pedagogy is everywhere. However, I would not say that I have “found it” or it is waiting “to be found”. In borrowing a word from curriculum theorist Ted Aoki, I would say that pedagogy lingers. For me, curriculum and pedagogy linger in a patient breeze, a sparkling sea, a rhizomean garden and even a fantastical backyard. For me, pedagogy and curriculum are encountered everywhere. Bodies (human and non-human) encounter each other in different, mysterious and unexpected ways – ways that create newness and sometimes delight, even sadness and surprise.

I once believed that pedagogy and curriculum were confined to the classroom and stored in books produced by bureaucracies and robotically transmitted by educators. Indeed, I once thought this. I do not know why, and I am searching for an explanation. I think I was seduced by comfort and blinded by my desire to locate and sit still in a place of predetermined knowledge. I was blinded because I was seeing with my eyes and not seeing with my whole body. I was not touching, smelling, tasting and listening my way through the everyday places of living. I was living unaesthetically; disembodied from the everyday. Using the Greek word diaporeo (using my “other” language) – a word used by Aristotle and again by Derrida (1993) that means “I’m stuck” (p. 13) – I confess that I was stuck in a sticky state. I was stuck within language – directly translating from one language to the other – trying to make sense. I was stuck and sitting still. Not sitting anymore, but walking through the everyday intrigues me because if you listen deeply for something – whatever that may become – the mundane has the possibility to transform into something unexpectedly new and exciting. With/in my everyday I am now in search. I am
immersed in a “permanent search” (Freire, 1997, p. 106); a kind of peculiar, never-ending search that ironically does not promise permanence. I search for the in-between; whatever that may become.

I Am Searching

I am searching for something that does not feel like anything in particular.
I am searching for something that is slippery.
I am searching for something that cannot be purposefully found.
I am searching for something that is
too spontaneous,
   too sporadic,
      too erratic,
         too volatile,
            too liberating...
               to be found.

The in-between unveils itself (if you open your “eyes” to “see”).

Paulo Freire (1997) remembers and writes about an in-between space that one day marvellously unveiled itself with/in his childhood backyard. He states:

My childhood backyard has been unveiling itself to many other spaces – spaces that are not necessarily other yards. Spaces where this man of today sees the child of yesterday in
himself and learns to see better what he had seen before. To see again what had already been seen before always implies seeing angles that were not perceived before. (Freire, 1997, p. 38)

Returning to his childhood backyard in a new way, with new eyes, he discovered a new space with/in a place that had been there all along. Returning to the “shade of the mango tree”, re-inventing the “smells and tastes of childhood” (Dowbor in Freire, 1997, p. 28), and attuning to the connective roots with/in his backyard, Freire understood “a new reading of [his] world [that] requires a new language – that of possibility, open to hope” (1997, p. 77). Freire came to know his backyard as a space connected to other spaces past, present, and future (Leggo, 2003). The past, present, and future of the in-between unveiled itself because Freire was seeing in new and different ways.

The place of Freire’s backyard is not what particularly intrigues me. It is the in-between space of possibility that lures me into aporia – a word Jacques Derrida (1993) describes as an “old, worn-out Greek term” (p. 12) – a word that refers to an experience of wonder. Nevertheless, it is a fitting term with/in this moment as I envision the in-between to be just that; aporetic, far from sticky and wondrous indeed. There is a mysteriousness and inarticulable surprise once one slips in-between and feels this slippage on the body. I wonder if and how others experience the in-between of their everyday. I wonder how the everyday connects to others and other places past, present, and future. I wonder what the in-between could become. In remembering, reflecting, writing and storying my lived experience, I see many possibilities – possibilities to “see better” and to “see again” (Freire, 1997, p. 38).
In-Between Bodied Encounters

Ted Aoki (1993) imagines curriculum and pedagogy as possible with/in the in-between. Specifically, Aoki (1993) believes that the in-between is possible with/in the curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived (C & C landscape). Drawing a binary distinction between the two is of no use, as Aoki (1993) reminds us that the curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived is not one or the other – it is together – it is fused into one landscape of many. It is this and that; it is here and there. It is a bureaucratic document and a space of lived experience. It is a contained classroom as well as a lived space that reaches beyond and makes its way through the everyday. It is faceless and “face-to-face” (Aoki, 1993, p. 212). Aoki (1993) describes it as

...a space that knows planned curriculum and live(d) curriculum, a space of generative interplay between planned curriculum and live(d) curriculum. It is a site wherein the interplay is the creative production of newness, where newness can come into being. It is an inspirted site of being and becoming. (p. 420)

It is this and that. It is “all the rains, all the breaths that passed it along” (Jardine, 2003, p. 43). The C & C is a landscape of multiplicity that grows in the middle.

I must let the word multiplicity linger. What is this multiplicity? What is it that grows in the middle? I suspect these questions do not have simple answers. Aoki (1993) touches upon Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) to not so much provide us with answers but provoke thought. They state: “In a multiplicity what counts are not the terms or the elements, but what there is ‘between’, the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other. Every multiplicity grows in the middle, like the blade of grass or the rhizome” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. viii). Thus, the in-between is growth, change, many faces, much difference and rhizomatic relations. How might this space look? Aoki (1993) paints a picture for us that reaches, teaches, and transforms. This picture personally reached me, taught me, and continues
to teach and transform me. It is with/in the Nitobe Japanese Garden at the University of British Columbia that we walk with Aoki (1979) and linger with/in the in-between. With his poetic prose, Aoki (1979) paints an inviting picture of a rhizomean garden that welcomes possibility in its difference. Let us now walk with him.

Soon I reach the garden and I slip in, wherein I find no two things alike, yet together possessing a unity of their own. To me this garden talks the language of a dialectic world, a paradigm of reciprocity of differences, a dialectic world of positives and negatives, of things and no-things – a world that invites the viewer to become one with it. (Aoki, 1979, p. 345)

Allowing Aoki’s (1979) metonymic moments with/in the Nitobe Japanese Garden to linger, I have come to think of gardens as pedagogical places of puzzlement. In my everyday, I now return to the place of a garden – specifically my mother’s garden – in new, puzzling/disorientating ways. I think this newly developed complication is what intrigues me, lures me with wonderings of “what if”? That is, what if there is the possibility for something more with/in my mother’s garden; more than aesthetic beauty and plentiful produce? I should be clear though, the garden is not really like a puzzle that is meant to be put back together in its predetermined form. This is not how I see it. For me, the garden is shapeless and fluid in its endless growth. Indeed, it has roots but is never stable, static, and contained. The roots are those of a rhizomean plant. Its appendages – its roots and shoots – entangle and reach with and towards multiplicity. With water, sunlight, soil, insects and human touch – with each other – these plants grow in new and different ways. Ted Aoki (1996) explains that such a space is a rhizomean landscape, a curricular landscape of multiplicity. I now want to slip in.

Touching upon Deleuze and Guattari (1987) once again, Aoki (1996) reminds us that this “multiplicity is not a noun” (p. 419). Rather, what bodies do, what gardens do, and what happens in-between – in-between “the textured web of connecting” (Aoki, 1996, p. 419) roots
and shoots is what intrigues us. In-between the C & C we bring forth our lived experience (i.e., cultural and linguistic) and actively engage in a pedagogic process with others. Being-with – a relational process where bodies intertwine with lived experience – rather than knowing or getting to know the other is of interest here. Considering this mode of being we acknowledge the whole student and open ourselves to possibilities of becoming in difference. That is, becoming as a sensory and meaningful process (i.e., a process of differentiation) that creates new forms of being and expression; an ontological encounter to learn and move on from. Reconfiguring the boundaries of traditional places of learning to include places beyond the classroom, I ask: How does curriculum and pedagogy flow through such rhizomean landscapes that come into being by acknowledging lived experience and legitimating lived curricula? In what ways do gardens and the mundane places of the everyday have the possibility to reach and teach? Taking these questions along in my writing journey and moving our way through the places of my everyday (inside/outside of the classroom context), I foreground the body with/in experience.

**Bodied Curriculum: A Flesh-y Encounter**

Thinking about the body as meaning-making is crucial to lived experience. With/in Aoki’s (1993) lived curriculum students and teachers have bodies and faces; they are “face-to-face” (p. 212). In facing each other he describes a mysterious “click” that is possible; a click he is so attuned to hearing and that I want to hear, too. What is it that I must listen for with/in my everyday? I want to know. Aoki (1993) describes this click as an in-between space of possibility. More specifically, it is an in-between space of infinite movement that requires an intense tuning into self, other, and place (Aoki, 1993). It is a transformative space where pedagogic teaching
and reaching un/folds. Aoki (1993) believes it is a space for “pedagogic leading” – a leading that is not a ‘Simon Says’ exercise, but a praxis that involves a “responsible responding to students. Such a leading entails at times a letting go that allows a letting be in students’ own becoming” (Aoki, 1993, p. 213). It is a click of possibility, of becoming.

What is this Becoming that Aoki speaks/writes about? Can I see It with my eyes? Can I hear It with my ears? Can I ask for It? Does It just happen? All this questioning is exhausting…Becoming seems like a lot of work! I’m not even sure that all this questioning will get me there; to this space of Becoming. With/in this moment, I continue to internally question anyway as I suspect that this questioning is one of many paths to getting there. I know that there is no guarantee, knowable location/destination, but I also suspect that this journey into the unknown is part of It.

Re-reading my above thoughts, I internally sigh. I quickly think to myself that I should stop this internal gesturing and get it all out! I should continue to question and sigh out loud…use my voice, my breath. I now audibly sigh…SIGH! Why do I sigh you may ask? Well, because I realize that my humanness yearns to feel the comfort found within knowing (or at least thinking you know). I also know (or perhaps think I know) that knowing and the finiteness of such an announcement is not Becoming. I’m once again left to struggle with my thoughts. Is this struggle part of It?

I bring forth the living body not as being, but becoming with/in the everyday, curriculum, and pedagogy. I imagine a bodied curriculum that reaches and teaches with/in and through the body, and with others (Springgay and Freedman, 2007). Borrowing Maurice
Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) theory of the body as *Flesh*, I articulate the in-between as a *Flesh-y* encounter where bodies relationally intertwine with lived experience. *Flesh* “is often conceptualized as in-between, where beings (bodies) constitute themselves not as objects, but as meaning, and as embodied existence” (Springgay and Freedman, 2007, p. xxi). Thus, the body is neither a material substance nor a container where mind/knowledge is stored and separate from the world (Springgay and Freedman, 2007). This *Flesh-y*, in-between space is a space of inter-embodiment (i.e., *being-with* other bodies relationally). Merleau-Ponty (1968) explains that these encounters open the body to being touched. Specifically, “inter-embodiment proposes that who we are and how we come to know is produced in the moment of an intertwining, inversion, and “touching” between bodies” (Springgay and Freedman, 2007, p. xxii). Bodies can touch in the material sense, as in extending a hand to shake another’s or to pat one on the back. However, I am referring to a virtual touch – one that is possible *here* and *there*, between me and you – that cannot be predetermined and is felt *with* the body. This touch is an inter-embodied/intercorporeal way of knowing. A bodied curriculum invites touch and intimacy, and forms a rhizome that ruptures and complicates – it exposes. It “enables us to reflect on how differences are produced in the moment of bodied encounters as opposed to differences being contained within a particular body” (Springgay and Freedman, 2007, p. 201). Thus, it is a re-thinking of curriculum intimately, with vulnerability and action (Springgay and Freedman, 2007).

*Cool Breeze*

*I open and close my eyes for the first couple of minutes. I hear faint voices in*
the park and then
a cool breeze
surprises me
with its
wonderfulness. I
openly welcome it
and it gently swirls
in and around my
body. The breeze
becomes my breath
and I lose track
of everything else.
I feel like I have
never quite enjoyed
a cool breeze as
much as I am
enjoying it right
now.
I question this and
ask myself: What’s
so special about
this breeze today?

Complicating Curriculum

A bodied curriculum is complicated for many reasons, one of them being its
unpredictability. It is an unforeseen curriculum that dismantles and disrobes bodies into a naked
space of vulnerability. *Being-with* others, as described above, is never a risk-free interaction as
touch is a reciprocal act. Indeed, there is the risk of harming others and there is also risk of
being harmed. For “the meaning of the speaker’s utterance and hence its veracity depends on the
total intersubjective transaction – the speakers utterance, the response of the other and the
dialectical relationship between utterance and response” (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 70).
With/in interactions, relationships, classrooms, and communities there is an interconnectivity of
affect, risk, and responsibility; a responsibility for yourself and for others. Rather than being-
with others, I suggest a being-for (Todd, 2004) others that similarly concerns ethics with/in interactions.

Sharon Todd (2004) explains that community is formed around responsible togetherness, which involves being-for the other not each other. I have come to understand being-for “as a practice that does not merely demand students to be for others, but that sees itself as a mode of togetherness that displays the openness requisite to living responsibly across difference” (Todd, 2004, p. 348). I explore an ethics of relationality that is “composed of nomadic becomings and belongings” (Springgay, 2008, p. 35). Thus, understanding “difference as a continuing process of differentiation, of becoming, where each subject is a sensory and meaning network, radiating out to other networks” (Davies and Gannon, 2009, p. 147). Undertaking a feminist poststructuralist approach to ethics, I am not interested in what I need to know about the other, but rather interested in being-for others in an ethical encounter. Thus, ethics is not about getting to know the other, but engaging with others as genuine others “rather than as inferior, or otherwise subordinated versions of the same” (Gatens, 1996, p. 105). Such an ethics of embodiment opens our bodies to each other and to a transformative space that requires us to consider “tangles of implication” (Miller, 2005, p. 223). I ask: What are the implications of an intimate, bodied curriculum? What is it that we can learn from these Flesh-y encounters? “By investigating our “tangles of implication” in what we might come to see as contradictory and conflicting discursive constructions, we also might glimpse spaces through which to maneuver, spaces through which to resist, spaces for change” (Miller, 2005, p. 223).

I thus reach out and bring forth a bodied curriculum that is relationally created, intercorporeal, and unpredictable. It is a bodied curriculum that invites lived experience, subjectivity, and possibility in difference. It is an in-between space of difference, many not more than or less than. It is a call to understand difference differently; in a way that cannot determine
difference beforehand. Echoing Miller (2005), I believe it is a shift in thinking; shifting how “we as teachers, students, and teacher-educators perceive our “selves” and others’ “selves” so that we do not simply incorporate or appropriate “others” and their stories into the ones we already and always have been telling about ourselves or “them” (p. 229). In displacing the self/other binary, I invite possibility in difference and imagine the in-between as a space of many faces, “face-to-face”, living and “embodied in the very stories and languages people speak and live” (Aoki, 1993, p. 207). It is with/in the everyday acts of being together – in difference – that we are altered by each other and where this click can possibly be heard.

My hopes to disorient traditional curricular discourses and open ourselves to a bodied curriculum, to the everyday relational living/pedagogy that unfolds with/in one rhizomean landscape – this, I believe, opens us to the possibility of something new and not-yet-known with/in education and with/in our lives as we live them. I re-think the traditional educational notions of the static student body – waiting to be filled with knowledge – and shift to the sensing, moving body that creates new knowings through relational face-to-face interactions. Foregrounding the body with/in experience, curriculum, and pedagogy is important because we begin to acknowledge our body, other bodies, our embodied interactions with others, and the potential such bodies have to reach, teach, and learn. This is indeed a relational endeavour. Bodies and faces, students and teachers, we work towards the co-creation of new meanings, feelings, and knowings. Such possibility is hopeful – hopeful for personal and social transformation as well as transformation with/in curriculum and pedagogy.
Our Journey

Sharing my lived experience with you, I invite you on an intimate journey through the gardens and classrooms of my everyday experience. I invite you to explore these places as rhizomean landscapes, pedagogical possibilities, and spaces of newness that “transform the language of school life such that multiple meanings of the word curriculum can prevail” (Aoki, 1996, p. 420). Not only transforming/re-thinking meanings of curriculum and pedagogy, but creating a possibility – through storytelling – to engage, complicate and rethink our lives, our subjectivity, our identities, our languages, our embodied interactions with others, and our responsibility for ourselves and others. David Geoffrey Smith (1999) reminds us that one’s journey does not have to be one’s own. He explains that “undertaking a journey can be a collective enterprise as much as an individual one” (Smith, 1999, p. 2). I choose not to travel alone, as it is our togetherness that creates possibility. I thus invite you to read and re-read in multiple ways, to imagine, disagree and to complicate with me. I invite with hope and with agape (love); a love that does not demand a reciprocal response. I am indeed hopeful of our journey.

With/in our journey, we first travel through gardens of pedagogical possibility. Specifically, we explore my mother’s garden as an embodied space of possibility where we move towards and together in difference. I see/feel her garden as a place/space where a slipping-in is possible; a relational moving about together. Such an interaction, Sharon Todd (2003) explains is “a togetherness born out of the immediacy of interaction, a communicative gesture that does not have as its end anything except its own communicativeness, its own response” (p. 33). Its response is its potential to reach, teach, and grow (in rhizomatic ways), to extend itself to other gardens, backyards, and peculiar places we live.
Aoki’s (1996) poetics continue to linger, and I now remember the Japanese word *tsuchi* (it means earth). It is a textured word that Aoki (1996) more fully describes below:

It is “eco” of “ecology,” a discourse concerning life on earth. It is “geo” of “geography,” earth writing or earthy writing. To the Greeks, it is dwelling place of Gaia, the goddess of earth. It is the *humus* of the earth, which nurtures us as *humans*, a place where *humans* are beckoned to dwell in *humility*, yet with a sense of *humour* where joyous pleasure and laughter can commingle with serious living. (p. 413-414)

We thus explore my mother’s garden metaphorically and locationally, as well as with seriousness, joy, and care. We live seriously with thoughtfulness and responsibility, but we must laugh, live humbly, and humour each other. This is my mother’s garden, our garden.

We then continue our journey with/in the garden and linger for awhile. In lingering, the place of my mother’s garden transforms into a space that dis/locates us. Metaphorically, I thus explore language (i.e., bilingualism) and a hyphenated identity (i.e., Greek-Canadian) as an experience of dis/location. Specifically, I write of an experience where the co-mingling of language and identity struggle, refuse, and cross borders. It is a language that doubles and an identity that multiplies into shifting identities that are fluid and in-the-making with others.

Lastly, I move from gardens to classrooms and explore what is possible in-between our curricular landscape where both contexts are present. I address the reality of the classroom context, as it is the place where we – students and teachers – live and breathe. I also address imagination in our living and the possibilities of narrative reading-writing when it is included with/in the classroom not as a subject, but as an embodied process that is pedagogical. I must note that I do not bring forth the classroom as a separate entity; a landscape unto itself. Rather, the place of the garden and the place of the classroom intersect and are part of one rhizomean landscape; a curricular landscape of possibility. From this perspective, we can (re)imagine the garden and other “earthy”, everyday places of living as pedagogical. Furthermore, I discuss the
implications of our bodied encounters with/in this curricular landscape and suggest that an ethical encounter requires being-for others, which entails a responsibility for oneself and each other.

In connecting the garden and the classroom, I imagine a rhizomean landscape of possibility where the body moves with/in and through the everyday, reaching with responsibility and genuine care. The body reaching – with eyes, ears, nose, mouth, arms, hands, soul – is how I imagine.

**Running With/in Curriculum**

In exploring the garden and classroom as intersecting pedagogical places/spaces of living, I draw upon William Pinar’s (1976) method of currere. Currere – “the root of curriculum” (p. 36) – is the term Pinar (1976) uses to refer to educational experience. He states:

> It describes the race not only in terms of the course, the readiness of the runner, but seeks to know the experience of the running of one particular runner, on one particular track, on one particular day, in one particular wind. (Pinar, 1976, p. 36)

In order to think about currere from the perspective of a body-in-movement, I want to think about my body running. In thinking through this running body-narrative, I engage in reflective practice. Such practice is suited for autobiography, but currere demands something more; an engagement with life and with others. Currere demands an engagement in self-reflexivity, a process I have come to understand as thinking about my own thoughts and experiences; an imagining of future possibilities. In exploring a narrative writing of past, present, and future, I do not merely recall my experiences but work towards something new with others with/in life, curriculum, and pedagogy.
Employing the method of *currere* as a body-in-movement – a running body – I envision theory as residing “in the spaces between these stories, just as countless stories reside in the spaces of educational research theory” (Nolan 2001, p. 27). Through my lived experience, I am not suggesting that gardens and classrooms of my everyday experience are indisputably pedagogical or curricular. I am more than suggesting, rather hopeful that through the exploration of these experiences transformative possibilities are possible. Through sharing my experience, I welcome a personal transformation as well as hope to affect others. My writing is an invitation to do just that. It is an invitation for others to (re)read, (re)interpret, (re)complicate, and disregard. It is these verbs that do not reduce curriculum to a noun, but reconceptualize it into a bodied intensity of action and re-action. I not only share my stories, I complicate my stories as I hope you do in order to work towards *something* new and not-yet-known. I view this work as a relational endeavour bringing forth past, present, and future in hopes of keeping curriculum and pedagogy moving in difference.

**Running: *Currere***

I am experience.
With each breath.
Experience.
Regardless of the context, I am, running a course.
*Currere* is to run.
(Pinar and Grumet, 1976, p. vii)

I run. I would say that I run a lot. Though, I would not say that I am a runner. I am often asked if I am training for something – a marathon, triathlon, something competitive of sorts – but I always say nope! I just run. I would say that I run with no concrete purpose and it is one of
those things that I just do; something that just happened to me. Sounds absurd, but it really just happened with no premeditative thoughts. One day, I simply went down into my basement, saw a pair of my old dusty sneakers, put them on, went outside and started running. I do not want to overstate my physicality and must admit that I ran very slowly in the beginning. Believe me, I have woken up many mornings unbearably soar and unable to move. From this experience, I now know that stretching before and after a run is immensely important. The stretching, the patience to do this (i.e., stretch) is indeed important.

This patience requires attentiveness to experience, to the body, to the body breathing, and to its course of running. Patience and impatience, “we need a balanced dosage. The world cannot be transformed without either one, for both are needed” (Freire, 1997, p. 64). It is a complicated kind of running, one that is not timed, measured with a stop watch, and quantified. I do take my pulse qualitatively, though. I do not aim to measure my aliveness, but my goal is to listen (i.e., attune) to my body; to listen for the pulsation, the vibrations, its rhythm, my breathing. I listen for the dance of my breath. It is a breathing that is at times laboured and asphyxiating; other times it is intoxicatingly elegant, woozily swirling around the dance floor (Derrida, 1998).

Running With/Against The Wind

I now dance and I run. I am dancing and running attentively with others, with/in curriculum; taking detours, swerving, and running against the wind.

The impatient wind is harsh and my flesh feels this. Hydrating masks and cold creams cannot calm the tightness; erase the traces of harshness from my flesh. I feel it. The wind is
frigid, at times crippling in this Canadian climate, but I continue to run. I run with/in and against (Low and Palulis, 2004) curriculum, pedagogy, life, living. I do so with hope, with possibility to encounter the breeze that becomes one with my breath. I am running with/in, against, and in-between past, present, and future selves.

The Method

The method is the self-conscious conceptualization of the temporal, and from another, it is the viewing of what is conceptualized through time. So it is that we hope to explore the complex relation between the temporal and conceptual. In doing so we might disclose their relation to the Self and its evolution and education. (Pinar, 1976, p. 51)

Currere is an educational method that involves engagement in: regression, progression, analysis, and synthesis. I use the method to explore my lived experience and write of a here as well as a there that is everywhere. Subjectively so, I am my own data source (Pinar, 1976). I remember, I ask questions, and I question myself through my body-in-movement (i.e., my running body). Pinar (1976) explains that an important question to ask is: “What has been and what is now the nature of my educational experience?” (p. 20). I ask puzzling questions that I do not have neat and tidy answers for. I remember my public schooling, my grade two teacher, and my adolescent years trying to make sense of my hyphenated identity. Along with Aoki (1987) and Derrida (1998), I question what this hyphen wants. What are its requirements? I also
remember more recent moments with my mother in the place of her garden. Furthermore, I think about what it is I am trying to do here – right now – with you. I ask: What am I doing? What is possible here? What is it that currere does? Pinar (1975) explains what he sees in the process of currere. He states:

I write about my biographic situation as I see it (not as I want to see, although this can be included) then it is as if I have escaped from it. It is there, on the paper in a way, and I am still here, at the [computer], looking at the print and the conceptualization of the perspective that was mine, and so the place is new. (Pinar, 1976, p. 20)

It is newness that I imagine, an interval to create and experience. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1999) explains that “[t]he interval, creatively maintained, allows words to set in motion dormant energies and to offer, with the impasse, a passage from one space...to another” (p. xi). So, it is with “my writing – in my speaking – in my breathing – into the space of the interval” (Low and Palulis, 2004, p. 16) that I create anew. I must emphasize that I am writing, but I do not create alone and write selfishly, for this is not what I want this writing to become. Yes, it is true that currere is an engagement with my experience and my writing and, yes, I truly do want to let (my)self write. I’m thinking that letting (my)self write – I mean really letting (my)self write – is a good way to examine who I am, my voice, as well as the choices I negotiate with/in my prose. It is more so an opportunity to step outside (my)self and in-between. It is an opportunity to linger with/in this space, take a deep breath, and (re)negotiate what is in front of me. Sometimes thinking about these things is not enough. Actually seeing my own thoughts in print is that much more powerful and brings about something new; an interval to explore aesthetically with others. It is with/in this journey full of dancing, running, remembering, and writing that
...I present myself not so much to tell stories, but rather to participate in a questioning of the questions we typically ask when we, in and through our very living, tell our stories – stories that inevitably tell who we are and, as well, our understanding of how our world is. (Aoki, 1987, p. 349)

Let us dance, run, remember and write.

**Regressive**

*Here,* I re-enter my life and my life in schools. “It exists still; one re-enters it; one goes back; one regresses; it is there, here, present. Recording it via words; conceptualizing it” (Pinar, 1976, p. 24). I did this, lived this. I am doing this, living this. I am living the past presently and taking notes. I intently observe myself, my mother, father, siblings, friends, and teachers. The attention is always on the self and with others. Just seeing with our eyes is okay for now. I see this stage as disembodied, but for now – with/in this stage – we observe merely using our eyes. Pinar (1976) advises us not to interpret what we see at this moment as “interpretation will interrupt our presence within the past” (p. 57). Regression involves locating the past and bringing it forward with/in the present. So, I do not do anything, but observe and question my location, which has become blurry. *Am I with/in the past or present?* Pinar (1976) explains:

To ascertain where one is, when one is, one must locate the past. Location means, identification means bracketing the past. Bracketing means looking at what is not ordinarily seen, at what is taken-for-granted, hence loosening oneself from it. As the past becomes present, the present is revealed. (p. 56)

We thus must enter the past to free ourselves from it, which in turn will free us to live freely with/in the present (Pinar, 1976). I now enter my past presently. I remember and I write.
I am six-years-old and I am running. I am running what seems to be a race. I am in purple shorts and a loose t-shirt one size too big. The wind is with/in my shirt, poking at the fabric. My movements are small but quick. My arms are rapidly pumping and my feet are pounding the earth beneath. I cross a border; what looks like a thick blue ribbon and I now see the others behind. It is the finish line. I look up at a large banner with the words “Annual Turkey Trot” boldly written across. I am presented with a red ribbon; 1st place is embroidered on it. I won. I finish first.

Above is my photograph. Pinar (1976) suggests that by “holding the photograph in front of oneself, one studies the detail, the literal holding of the picture and one’s response to it suggestive of the relation of past and present” (p. 58). I hold onto my response, as Pinar (1976) explains that this response is part of a second photograph to be completed later. We now progress.

Progressive

With/in the progressive stage we presently move into the future. It echoes the regressive as “the future is present in the same sense that the past is present” (Pinar, 1976, p. 58). Pinar (1976) encourages us to look into tomorrow, next week, next year, three years from now. With educational experience of interest here, he suggests thinking about intellectual interests and where they are going, perhaps a future career and the relation between these interests, your private life, and historical conditions (Pinar, 1976). Relationships – emotional and intellectual – can be explored as well (Pinar, 1976).

I surprisingly feel hesitant to speak/write of a future that may not become so. I am scared of being too romantic, too naive, too confusing, and too complicated. I am perhaps fearful of a
mis/understanding. I feel dizzy and my eyes are blurry, but Pinar (1976) encourages us to move through this stage. He states (1976): “It is important to free associate, and to avoid use of the rational, critical aspect. Don’t for example conclude that an imagined futuristic state is unreasonable. At this stage allow usually buried visions of what is not yet present to manifest” (1976, p. 59). Pinar (1976) does not want us to force this futuristic photograph. He encourages us to relax, perhaps sit alone and meditate – just breath. I now sit in stillness.

**Hummingbird**

*My heartbeat echoes throughout my body  
and it is this pulsating that fills my ears  
and thoughts. My breath is tight  
and struggles to make its way past my throat. I take a deeper breath  
and a smoother rhythm unfolds. My breath slows  
and stretches with/in  
and around my body. My breathing is rhythmical  
and humming along.*

I now travel to the future to see; to imagine possibilities.

*I am thirty-something, maybe forty and I am running. I am running what seems to be a race. It’s blurry, though, and it does not look like the race I ran when I was six-years-old. It is a different kind of race and a different kind of fast. I think it looks like life. The body, breathing, people, and conversations of curriculum fill my head. The face of my mother and my family fills my heart. I smile. Classrooms, cars, homes, and the voices of children with/in enliven the space. Decisions, duties, and responsibilities strain, but reward. With/in classrooms and with/in my home and those of family and friends, I live. Beside cars, I run.*
Above is my second photograph and I re-read it and respond. Considering these two photographs and their responses, Pinar (1976) suggests we “describe the biographic present, exclusive of the past and future, but inclusive of responses to them” (p. 59). Into the analytical present we now move.

Analytical

Make a list Pinar (1976) declares. Describe your:

- present state
- intellectual interests
- emotional condition
- ideas
- areas of study
- likes/dislikes
- without interpreting, just describing (Pinar, 1976).

Write with/in the present; an embodied experience that creates a third photograph. Yet again, respond to this process (Pinar, 1976). “Juxtapose the three photographs: past, present, future. What are their complex, multi-dimensional interrelations? How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?” (Pinar, 1976, p. 60). I carry my responses with me and now write of a present as I see it.

I am twenty-something and I am running. I am still running. I run outdoors and running beside cars makes me feel fast. Depending on traffic, I sometimes feel like I can outrun a car. I do another kind of running, too. I run with/in education, curriculum, classes and the academy. I like this running; it is new, different, and surprising. I miss the running of my six-year-old self, though. I miss the school day mornings – sitting on the kitchen stool
(half asleep) – as my mom braids my hair. I miss the friendships. I miss the teachers. I miss afterschool baseball practice and running up and down the soccer field. I miss my six-year-old self that ran in the “Annual Turkey Trot” and won a whole, frozen turkey as a first place prize; a turkey almost bigger than my six-year-old self. I miss my six-year-old self that lugged that turkey all the way home, up that great big hill, dragged it up the front porch steps, and presented it to a hysterically laughing mother that could not believe her eyes. I miss my six-year-old self.

Laying out my photographs – through writing – and thinking about my responses to each picture, I realize that I am running past, present, and future. The running does not stop and the speed changes. This running that is slow and fast, and un-choreographed is deterritorialized in its movement (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). My photographs reflect just some of my experience, but I am curious as to what it all means; all these memories, feelings, and imaginings – all this running. In moving through this stage and into the last stage of currere, Pinar (1976) encourages us to interpret our experiences and to conceptualize our past, present, and future. Pinar (1976) reminds us that “conceptualization is detachment from experience” (p. 59-60) and so we now move to the synthetical stage where we look into that big-eyed mirror and ask: “Who is that?” (p. 60). Let us take a look and see what is there and here.

Synthetical

Although this stage is detached from experience it is still bodied. Pinar (1976) encourages us “to look at oneself concretely, as if in a mirror” (Pinar, 1976, p. 60). Looking in the mirror he suggests that we ask difficult questions, such as: What does my present situation mean? What contributions (scholarly and professionally) have I made? What do these


contributions mean? Questions in regards to ontological movement, liberation, and conceptual sophistication can be examined (Pinar, 1976).

Upon looking and asking, I – my Self – am experiencing difficulty. I see my Self – my concrete body – but I am skeptical about being able to “see” beyond this reflection in the mirror. To momentarily remind you, I had previously mentioned that it is experience and being-with others that allows us to “see” beyond representation. However, for now, we are encouraged to put Syn (togetherness) + tithenai (place) aside (Pinar, 1976). Opening myself to Pinar’s (1976) request, I stare a little longer and a little harder, and I self-consciously re-visit my past, present, and future photographs.

I re-look at my photographs and re-read my responses. Re-looking and re-reading, I now see a longing, a nostalgic writing of my past six-year-old Self. This longing with/in my words reminds me of Freire’s (1997) reminiscence of his childhood backyard; a place of shade and shelter under his mango tree. In reading Freire’s (1997) writings of the past, for the first time, I deduced a longing within his words; a desire for the past that was. However, upon re-reading his recollection, I am re-interpreting his writing not as a longing for the past, but movement towards the future. Freire (1997) explains that “the past, understood as immobilization of what was, generates longing, even worse, nostalgia, which nullifies tomorrow” (p. 45). When you are stuck in the past and long for what was and what is not now, you become in “need of everything”, he says (Freire, 1997, p. 44). Never happy and being never satisfied is indeed an immobilizing and anaesthetizing state. Admittedly, I was re-living the past in a nostalgic way. I was missing my six-year-old Self. Missing what was and the realization that “you are no longer a child” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 81) is an incorporeal transformation. These feelings are not wrong, even bad, but what currere aims to do is encourage corporeal ways of knowing that move thought and action forward into the present and future. In connecting past, present, and
future, and re-visiting what was, what is, what could become, we begin to see a whole picture. Pinar states (1976): “It, all of it – intellections, emotions, behaviour – occurs in and through the physical body. As the body is a concrete whole, so what occurs within and through the body can become a discernable whole, integrated in its meaningfulness” (p. 61). In its wholeness we see beyond the reflection in the mirror, we see the intellect and feel the emotion. Pinar (1976) explains that the “self is not a concept the intellect has of itself. The intellect is thus an appendage of the Self, a medium, like the body, through which the Self, the world are accessible to themselves” (p. 61). In living and re-living the past, present, and future in new and different ways we embody an “understanding of the interrelations between knowledge, life experiences, and social reconstruction” (Springgay and Freedman, 2007, p. xxi). Thus, currere (as methodology) and a bodied curriculum (as praxis) do attend to the Self, but are reflective “where reflection is not simply an awareness of interiority (self-awareness) but a process that interconnects the interiority and exteriority of the body (intercorporeal)” (Springgay and Freedman, 2007, p. xxiv).

Our Meeting

And so, we have now met. Well then, Pinar asks: “What is the meaning of this meeting for us, for the collective?” (1976, p. 22). What does it mean for curriculum, for pedagogy, and for our living? Echoing Pinar (1976), I am unable to give you a precise definition of the above word, and I am unable to give you a clear explanation of the meaning of our meeting. But, it means something. I have come to see this writing, these words, and this text as part of me that is something meaningful. I have come to see this text as a bodied encounter; an experience of slipping in-between and of possibility. So, it is this kind of meeting – deterritorialized (i.e.,
always running) and at different speeds. However, “interpretation does not begin with me. It only begins when something happens to me in my reading of a text, where something strikes me, tears me open, “wounds” me and leaves me vulnerable and open to the world, like the sensitivities of flesh” (Jardine, 2003, p. 59). Perhaps a better question to ask is: What is it that I want to do?

I hope to form a rhizome with these words so we can grow together in many and different ways. With/in curriculum and running with/in a postreconceptualist framework all we can do is attune to the everyday, each other, colleagues, schools, education, curriculum, and other fields of study (Pinar, 1976). We do this – together – to create possibility for something new. In accepting my invitation, let us form a rhizome and rupture the root.

**Growing: A Rhizomean Landscape of Possibility**

Image 1: Magnolia
There was once a beautiful magnolia tree within my backyard. It was so alive, so vibrant, yet soft in its aroma and calm in its creamy hues. It was a tree with roots, of course, yet unstable; I think “dramatic” is the word. It blossomed in the early Spring and without warning. Magnolias dramatically burst into being and dramatically discard their blossoms without pause. They abandon their flowers after a few days, once undergoing a sequence of petal, stigma, and stamen movements (Thien, 1974). The petals, stigma, and stamen move purposefully in order to attract pollinating beetles (Thien, 1974). In fact, many blossoms spirally arrange their stamens in order to ensure pollination (Thien, 1974). This relationship was obvious to me, perhaps not as technically as described, but I would find a beetle here and there – perceiving the magnolia’s movement – waiting for its chance. There was this life-sustaining connection the magnolia and the beetle had; a connection I shared, too.

I would sit underneath my magnolia tree and read from Spring (its moment of “showing off”) through Summer. It was a nice place to read; cool and warm and cozy. Seasons changed, years passed, and my magnolia began to lose its liveliness. Its efflorescent radiance was not so anymore. My magnolia had changed. The tree and its flowers, the tree that knew its beauty – almost too confidently – was not putting on a “show” anymore. I continued to sit underneath my magnolia trying to now sit with it rather than underneath it. My magnolia did not respond (at least in the way I wanted it to). I continued to sit and to read, and tiny droplets – the size of tears – punctured the pages of my text. Not raindrops, nor drops from a hose, nor sprinkles from the sprinkler; it was my magnolia. It was weeping. It wept for two years until I could not bare it no more. I refused to pump poison through its veins and had no choice but the choice to let it go. We cut into its flesh and that was the death of my beloved magnolia tree.
Living/Dying: The Sakura and the Rose

Death with/in a backyard (i.e., a garden) where things are supposed to pleasurably grow complicates this place. This complication has taken me on a detour. I have swerved into a space with/in the place of a backyard where death infects and destroys production and pleasure. It is blurry and I am swerving, yet I think: What would it mean to think of death as growth with/in the garden? What would it mean – with/in our classrooms – to think of death as movement away from knowing towards a becoming movement of newness and growth? How might we approach this thought?

One way I would like to approach this question is metaphorically and with double vision (i.e., a dialectical mode of thinking). For example, I am thinking “as a conjunction of two cultural paradigms, separate folkways that find unity in their reciprocal influences...a face-to-face situation” (Aoki, 1979, p. 345). Let us take the sakura (cherry blossom) and the rose as examples, and examine their life cycles in a dialectically poetic way. Let us metaphorically return to the Nitobe Japanese Garden, slip in and quest(ion) our dying/living, our knowing/not-knowing, our being/becoming. It is these in-between movements that live in tension, cross borders, and that we can learn from in our living with/in gardens and classrooms.

Drawing upon Inazo Nitobe’s (1905) writing within Bushido: The Soul of Japan, Aoki (1979) describes the sakura and the rose as symbols of “two lifestyles – two ways of seeing, two ways of knowing, that is, as two metaphors” (p. 345). Sakura is the anthos (flower) of simplicity, gracefulness, and ever-readiness to “depart life at the call of nature, whose colours are never gorgeous, and whose light fragrance never palls” (Nitobe, 2001, p. 70). The vivid rose – “showy” in its colours and heavy with its odours – “clings to life as though loth or afraid to die rather than drop untimely, preferring to linger on her stem” (Nitobe, 2001, p. 69). Aoki (1979) describes the sakura way-of-life as rooted in a dialectical mode (i.e., life and death). It embraces
the notion that without life there is no meaning in death and visa versa. The rose way-of-life, however, its clingingness to life and refusal to accept death, (i.e., to prolong the inevitable) is a reflection of the human desire to push death into our peripheral vision (Aoki, 1979). In seeing this way, with tunnel vision, “one tries to understand and to define life by looking at life itself. Within this scheme of things life is defined by life; death is defined by death” (Aoki, 1979, p. 346). Seeing in this way is, therefore, based upon fear. We fear moments of not-knowing and take comfort standing in one place. We refuse to move towards the border, which is the movement of the rose. Aoki (1979) urges to think about the sakura and the rose as root metaphors that enable us to understand a different way of seeing that is reflective, and to imagine a different way of living that is in-between (the sakura and the rose way-of-life). Aoki (1979) writes:

In Nitobe’s view the sakura and the rose are root metaphors within which we could dwell and which in our daily lives guide and help us to interpret our world and to act. We live by metaphors. But most of the time we take our root metaphors for granted without realizing the assumptions we unconsciously hold. (p.346)

Reflecting upon my experience with/in the garden, taking nothing for granted, and acknowledging this potential in-between, I see my magnolia rhizomatically re-shooting with/in one rhizomean landscape that connects gardens and classrooms. In returning to the garden once again and taking nothing for granted (i.e., attuning to my magnolia), I imagine a new way of being with/in gardens and classrooms; a mode of being-with. It is a relational process that opens us up to a space of movement; an in-between space that our bodies create.
Being-\textit{With My Magnolia}

Listening is a metaphor for openness to others, sensitivity to listen and be listened to, with all your senses…Behind each act of listening there is desire, emotion, openness to differences, to different values and points of view…Competent listening creates a deep opening and predisposition toward change. (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 114).

Listening as an embodied process involves \textit{something} more than ears. It involves active listening that confuses habit and breaches boundaries. This listening desires a special kind of attention that, according to Ceppi and Zini (1998), requires “an openness and attention to others as a value, [and] respect for differences, however they may be expressed” (p. 2). It is necessary to return to this notion of “value” (which I will re-visit later on with/in the text); however, I will first address listening as an embodied process that is necessary with/in our rhizomean landscape. Maxine Greene (1978) describes a “\textit{wide-awakeness}” that is similar to the listening that I am thinking and writing about \textit{here}.

Emerging from synthetical moments of self-understanding, this \textit{wide-awakeness} does just that; wakes us up (Greene, 1978). It wakes us up not to the morning, but to the warmth of the morning’s sun, our senses, the world, our earth, our being, and becoming. Greene (1978) explains that without \textit{wide-awakeness} “individuals are likely to drift, to act on impulses of expediency” (p. 43). \textit{Wide-awakeness}, therefore, involves attuning to our landscape (i.e., a sensory mode of living) which opens our bodies to experience \textit{something} new. Perhaps this \textit{something} is with/in a cool breeze, the warm sun, the face of a stranger, and the eyes of a kind soul. Perhaps there is \textit{something} in-between the tender petals of a magnolia blossom. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain that “the wisdom of plants: even when they have roots, there is always an outside where they form a rhizome with something else – with the wind, an animal, human beings” (p. 11). There is \textit{something} to the “\textit{withness}” of things. There is \textit{something} to
being-with others with/in gardens and classrooms. I ask us to consider not only being-with other human beings, but being-with as a relational process that is not confined to the human body and human relations. My magnolia, for example, I ask us to consider it as a part of our world and a part of the earth we live and breathe with. It lives and breathes as do we – with us with/in gardens and classrooms. It involves “learning to live “with” others [human and non-human], touching not to consume or inhale, but opening up to particularities and possibilities of what each may become” (Springgay, 2008, p. 34). Being-with and being wide-awake opens our bodies to creating “aesthetic moments capable of elevating the mundane” (Slattery, p. 655). Living in openness (to difference) is what we can do with/in gardens and classrooms. In doing so, I imagine the possibility of affecting each other in meaningful ways that alter our living together. It is an affect that Deleuze and Parnet (1988) describe as transformational. They state:

Affects are becomings: somewhere they awaken us to the extent they diminish our strength of action and decompose our relations (sadness), sometimes they make us stronger through augmenting our force, and make us enter into a faster and higher individual (joy). (Deleuze and Parnet, 1988, p. 74)

It is a relational process that promises nothing but this doubling (i.e., sadness and joy).

However, it is in-between these feelings that there is the possibility of the third; the possibility of something different. Re-visiting my magnolia metaphorically and re-accessing my backyard with double vision – as a site of sadness (death) and joy (life) – it has become something new. In-between my magnolia’s life and death, I learn that living with others (human and non-human) means attuning to our landscape and imagining the possibility of what each of us could become. In this “doubling” way, my magnolia has reconnected its “fascicular root” (i.e., a radicale-system) (Deleuze, 1987) into this textual and textural rhizome that is a part of our curricular landscape. Experiencing sadness and joy, we find new meaning in-between that connects and transforms our living with each other with/in gardens and classrooms. Taking nothing for
granted and paying closer attention to the “everydayness” of our living, we learn to be-with others (human and non-human) differently.

In re-accessing the past, “we do not have access to a thing or a state, but only to a coming. We have access to an access” (Jean-Luc Nancy, 2000, p. 14). Moving towards this access means being in touch with ourselves and with other beings (human and non-human). Being in touch with “ourselves is what makes us “us,” and there is no other secret to discover buried behind this very touching, behind the “with” of co-existence” (Nancy, 2000, p. 13). To put it in another way, being-with others accesses what makes you “you” (i.e., your origin) and me “me” (i.e., my origin) only in present moments of making and as many times as we are together and co-exist (Nancy, 2000). Nancy (2000) further elaborates:

Whether an other is another person, animal, plant, or star, it is above all the glaring presence of a place and moment of absolute origin, irrefutable, offered as such and vanishing in its passing. This occurs in the face of a newborn child, a face encountered by chance on the street, an insect, a shark, a pebble...but if one really wants to understand it, it is not a matter of making all these curious presences equal. (p. 20)

There is an intense curiosity about all of this (i.e., the stars, strangers, plants, animals, and our landscape). We are curious about each other and sometimes we stare and sometimes we compare. The city’s underground transit system is an example of a place where this staring incessantly breeds and travels through the moving transit’s tunnels. There is a strangeness of the stranger that causes us to pause and stare. It is this encounter with the stranger that also prompts us to divert our eyes once our strangeness meets. So, we are curious about each other and where we come from, our families, our histories, and our friends, but what I am curious about is not one’s origin, but what it is we can create together with/in our strangeness. I am curious about creating an origin together; creating a map. Echoing Spinoza, I am curiously asking: What is the body (human and non-human) capable of with/in a rhizomean landscape?
Forming a Rhizome: Becoming-Multiple of the Body

The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five, etc. It is not a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added (n + 1). It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21)

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) remind us that it is not a question of whether the tree is a rhizome or a root, and it is neither a question of who or what, nor how many. We rather direct our attention to the relational process that creates the rhizome. I previously introduced us to Greene’s (1978) notion of wide-awakeness; an aesthetic practice as well as a kind of consciousness of oneself and of others. However, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) are not interested in the body as a place of consciousness. They would posit that the body is not a place at all. What is of interest is the movement of bodies, what bodies can do, and what could become possible. For example, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain that tree and root structures exist with/in rhizomes, and it is possible for trees – say, my magnolia tree – to become rhizomorphous. That is, “to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange new uses” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 15). It is therefore possible for a rhizome to form “in the heart of a tree, the hollow of a root, the crook of a branch” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 15). It is a relational process that multiplies and creates in excess of itself (i.e., exceeding normalization) (Miller, 2005). Miller (2005) describes it as dis/ruptive process that makes “a full, complete, or adequate understanding of the world impossible” (p. 128). In a multiplicity what counts is the middle (i.e., the in-between); a relational space where bodies are not separable from each other and not confined to a location (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Visualize the rhizome as a map, if you will, with tracings and multiple entryways. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe this map for us,
stating that the “map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back “to the same.” Mapping has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged “competence”” (p. 12-13). Tracings are therefore “ready-made” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and known, reproducing sameness and territorializing our movement. So, there is a hierarchy; a stabilizing “rootedness” to the rhizome. For example,

...one will often be forced to take dead ends, to work with signifying powers and subjective affections, to find a foothold in formations...In other cases, on the contrary, one will bolster oneself directly on a line of flight enabling one to blow apart strata, cut roots, and make new connections. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 14-15)

Every rhizome creates diverse map-tracing, rhizome-root assemblages that potentially territorialize and reterritorialize movement, as well as deterritorialize and link with a line of flight. Music, for example, sends out sensational lines of flight that de-code/arborify its structure, and “that is why musical form, right down to its ruptures and proliferations, is comparable to a weed, a rhizome” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 11-12). Bodies affected by their senses emerge as becoming-bodies, “multitudes, infinitely sensing in excess of their organisms, reaching toward songs of experience” (Manning, 2007, p. 83). Ellsworth (2005), too, touches upon sensation and more specifically, “sensation constructions”. Paraphrasing Kennedy (2003) she describes moments of learning (i.e., deterritorialized movements) as “‘sensation constructions,’ in which the ‘body’ of the pedagogic environment, event, or media relates and assembles with the bodies of its users/viewers/observers “in a web of inter-relational flows in material ways’” (p. 27). Such thinking addresses us as (not having bodies) but as moving and sensing bodies that – through movement and sensation – come to learn something new about self, other, and place (Ellsworth, 2005). Below, I share a personal, musical moment that I interpret as a sensation construction that activates a becoming-body; a body in excess of itself.
The Sax Man

It is dark and I am walking.
It is such a lovely evening.
Dark and fresh and lovely.
The crispness and the freshness of the Fall season,
I adore.

The streetlights shimmer and cars glisten;
their rays of light caramelizing the roads dark surface.
It is dark and light all at the same time;
my eyes enjoying this peaceful complementarity.
I hear this beautiful melody and wonder where from.
It strangely compliments the humming cars on the road.
I search in the darkness and cannot see.
I need to see this music.
I search more.

The notes are those of a man standing.
He stands amidst a buzzing intersection.
Everything, everywhere is intersecting.
He is not alone.
He is with his saxophone.
It is raised into the clouds like it has something to say,
something to enunciate and announce.
I still cannot really see him.
I see a soft silhouette howling into the night.
I do not need to see him fully.
I now feel him.

His music penetrates the place.
Notes bouncing off business buildings,
rhythms melting into the concrete.
The sidewalk carries the rhythm.
It cannot contain it.
It cracks.

The notes,
the music,
the rhythm entangle beneath my feet,
inflate my body, and
tug at my heart.
I want to dance.
I want to find a partner to dance with.
Alone, but not feeling
alone,
I purposefully linger.
Similar to the sax man and his notes, the magnolia and the beetle make a map; this is what becoming bodies do. It is a map created by reciprocal capture. Not a violent capture (although violence is possible), but one based upon connection, interdependent openness, and unconditional hospitality (Derrida, 2000). It reflects an ecological perspective that gives life to new relationships and modes of being and becoming. Stengers (2010) describes it as a “symbiotic agreement”

...that is not substantively different from other processes, such as parasitism or predation, that one could qualify as unilateral given that the identity of one of the terms of the relation does not appear to refer specifically to the existence of the other. (p. 35-36)

A symbiotic relationship – one that has the potential to reciprocally capture – can be based upon mutuality. However, and as Stengers (2010) explains above, it can also be parasitic as well as commensal; all of these relationships are welcomed and valued. I must note that my use of classificatory/scientific terminology to describe such relationships is problematic within Deleuzian philosophy. The map-making process does not measure in terms of “worth” and define relationships. However, we also do not eliminate such terminology, as maps are assemblages of possible fields of virtual and constituted elements (Guattari, 1995). Working with inevitable redundancies (i.e., technical terms and representational forms), I explore the relationship between the magnolia and the beetle as a symbiotic relationship based upon reciprocal capture. Using it as an example, I consider what a symbiotic relationship can do for student and teacher relationships with/in the context of a classroom. Specifically, I ask us to imagine Stenger’s (2010) “symbiotic agreement” as an “educational act” where students and teacher actively and relationally create (through mapping) possibilities that alter their relations and transform from being to becoming bodies.
As previously noted, magnolia flowers spirally arrange their stamens in order to ensure pollination by beetles (Thien, 1974). The blossoms also open and close their petals inviting the beetles in. They physically capture their pollinators, but in a non-violent way. The opening and closing of the petals allows beetles to enter and leave at any time (Thien, 1974). Specifically,

...when the flowers open, the food supply has diminished, the stigmas are pressed against the gynoecium or turn brown and nonreceptive, and the stamens have dehisced and detached from the androphore. This results in the beetle's leaving and going to another flower, thus effecting cross-pollination. (Thien, 1974, p. 9)

This process is based upon a “mess and spoil” (Faegri and van der Pijl, 1971) principle of pollination in which the beetle crawls into the blossom and becomes covered with pollen all over its body. This process is similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) example of the orchid and the wasp in which the heterogeneous plant/insect relation intertwines into a new assemblage (i.e., a symbiotic agreement). Try to visualize the beetle with/in the creamy flesh that is the magnolia’s layered petals. It is cocooned with/in its blossom and we cannot see the beetle’s concrete body yet the beetle, I must be clear, is not enveloped. The beetle does not turn into the magnolia and the beetle does not appropriate the flower, nor does the magnolia consume the beetle. There is no inside or outside; the magnolia and the beetle are un/folding into each other. Pedagogically, “un/folding invites the corporeal body into the threshold, a dehiscence of difference that is inside the outside, rupturing the visible, the map, and discovering new sensory becomings” (Springgay, 2008, p. 85). The mapping is a fluid process that does not codify/aborify, but it is an embodied and relational act that creates an “anamorphous space” (Springgay, 2008, p. 84). For instance, there is no beetle-body and magnolia-body with/in their relation; bodies are intertwined and becoming something else.

With/in the map-making process we must consider “what it does, how it functions, what it affects, what it produces” (Grosz, 1994, p. 170). It is a Flesh-y space that “brings bodies
together as beings(s)-in-relations that lead to new assemblages, meanings, and outcomes” (Springgay, 2008, p. 2008, p. 92). Such thinking – that is, thinking with possibility – proposes new “value universes…that are detected as soon as they are produced and which are found to be already there, always, as soon as they are engendered” (Guattari in Stengers, 2010, p. 37).

Engendered bodies are moving bodies that metamorphose when in relation to their surrounding and to one another (Manning, 2007). Engendering bodies do not have form and it is rather the aesthetic experience which creates potential for new becomings. Manning (2007) further elaborates:

The engendering body is a becoming-multiple of the body. This is not a subjective body that identifies itself as something concrete one could call a self or an individual, but a series of intensities, through which endlessly diverse populations are engendered. (p. 95)

Therefore, mutual, commensal, and parasitic relationships are welcomed and valued with/in this rhizomorphous map-making process. An ecological perspective based upon reciprocal capture thus means “we do not view “value” as that “in whose name” something can be imposed or must be accepted” (Stengers, 2010, p. 37). Rather, we can open ourselves to a creationist perspective that includes all beings, their modes of existence, and pursue a quest(ion)ing that Stengers (2010) insists asks: *What could count? Ask: What else can we do? What can we become?* It is these questions that do not conceive of value as worth, but consider what is possible in co-existing and co-constructing meaning with/in our daily lives and with/in the various contexts with/in our rhizomean landscape. In shifting our thinking, we can conceive as curriculum and our classrooms, for example, as *Flesh-y* spaces that reconstruct “teaching and learning as variable, heterogeneous, and discontinuous” (Springgay, 2008, p. 92). In seeing our student and teacher encounters in this way, we can respond to the uniqueness of our students, to the unpredictability, and to the spontaneity of our classroom interactions. It is these *Flesh-y*
encounters that “open up a space for other ways of understanding a living curriculum based on sensation and flows of interconnecting spaces endowing curriculum with contradictions and complicated knowledge” (Springgay, 2008, p. 95). It is this complexity and our in/complete knowledge that increases our capacity to engage in the difficulties of life’s unknowingness (Springgay, 2008). Living in openness to what each of us may become, students and teachers learn from these encounters and respond differently to difference. Attuning to our landscape, we do not take each other for granted. We begin to notice what is often un/seen. In doing so, we create bodied encounters that “flicker and slip, affecting a release, and bringing us into the world itself. All at once new maps occur, a touching that glides across, colliding with other maps, pulling apart the space between” (Springgay, 2008, p. 95). Dis/rupting our assumptions and the routine of the everyday, we travel to new spaces that complicate our relations and transform them into something/someone else we could not see before. My mother’s garden, for example, un/folds us into new spaces – spaces that un/fold in-between the gardening. Specifically, I write of our (symbiotic) relation as a friendship (i.e., a politics of friendship) that grows in-between the gardening. I explore our relation as something that is not always “friendly” (i.e., a friendship of ease), but one of confusion, complication, and in/completeness. I thus uproot the idealistic mother/daughter relationship into a metaphoric/metonymic space where identities are co-constructed, move back and forth, and cross borders.

**With/in our Garden: A Politics of Friendship**

*It is a beautiful summer morning and the temperature is impatiently reaching a humid high in this summer month of August. The tomatoes are ripe red and the crispy cucumbers still plentiful. I see the lush beauty of the garden from my window. I see my*
mother tending to the minor imperfections of her garden. It is not surprising that she is out there. I expect to see her in her garden, as she is there every summer morning. Like clockwork, I head out there in my oversized pyjamas with a bowl of crunchy cereal in hand. We proceed with our usual good morning ritual and I stand in close proximity to my mother who is happily working away at her garden. In between bites of my cereal, I ask my usual questions: How are the tomatoes doing? How pesky are the insects this year? Do you think we are going to have a full tree of peaches this summer? My questions lead to a lengthy dialogue in which I learn that we are frequented by a rogue rabbit that enjoys damaging my mother’s eggplants. I express some annoyance on her behalf, but we begin to chuckle about it and from then on take turns staking-out the garden for the rogue rabbit.
We visit my mother’s garden locationally through the textual and photographic images I have created. It is a reflection of one of the many times with/in her garden that is more so our garden. It is her garden in the sense that she is the patient gardener tending to the needs of her beloved plants. It is ours in the sense that I share this place with her as a friend. Friendship, Manning (2007) writes, involves “sensing the body beyond the law...allowing the body to sense across the space that links my body to another” (p. 36). It is not a fusion of bodies per se; it is a friendship that is a coming-together in difference. It is a “con-fusion” where bodies “speak to one another as only bodies can, in and across space, promising nothing but this movement, this listening to a moment in space-time” (Manning, 2007, p. 38-39). It is con-fusing because we do not know what we are seeking nor can we ever know such details, for it is this “perhaps” (Manning, 2007), this “maybe” that is so blurry in our movement. With/in my mother’s garden we are not seeking a friendship that is biologically determined; a kind of unearned friendship determined at birth. This agape (love) is not what the garden requires. Perhaps we are seeking a “friendship of hearing” (Manning, 2007). Is this the kind of friendship the garden desires? Perhaps an “aneconomic” (Derrida, 1997) friendship; one that does not abide by the rules of the economy. How about a friendship that is not based on any rules at all? Can we imagine a friendship of emergence that affects/touches someone/something? Perhaps a listening touch is what we seek; a kind of touch that responds by moving the friendship in a new way. Perhaps a “politics of friendship” (Manning, 2007) that un/folds philia (friendship) in this way:

I touch you to listen,
I listen to you touch
I am in con-tact with you.
I cannot touch you without listening to your response, without responding in turn.
(Manning, 2007, p. 42).
A politics of friendship is the kind of friendship I experience with my mother with/in our garden. It is an ontological experience that attunes to our earthy landscape and creates a special kind of touch (i.e., an affect). Manning (2007) describes it as a friendship that comes “alive through the touch of an-other, embodying the insatiability of my need to reach out toward you, to touch your singularity, my difference, to make con-tact with you” (p.46). In my quest(ion)ing of this “perhaps”, this “maybe” – a possibility – I am not seeking to define friendship nor locate it with/in the garden. Manning (2007) reminds us that a politics of friendship is not a state of being, but a becoming movement. In being-with my mother with/in our garden, I experience this friendship in-between the gardening. It is not the act of gardening that brings this friendship to the foreground and it is neither based upon a biological relation. Rather, Manning (2007) insists that our friendship is not “found” within a pre-constituted space that is determined. A politics of friendship is emergent, inventive, responsive, and always metamorphosing. It is this becoming movement that I would like us to consider as possible with/in classrooms, curriculum, and pedagogy. I would like us to re-think our everyday living and learning as sensational, “where potential is present in the perceiving body. It is the moment of reception of that which has been and continues to be in relation. This in-betweeness is the unknowable of that toward which I reach” (Manning, 2007, p. 36). Imagining this as a movement towards possibility with/in our schools, we must tread carefully as state politics and curriculum documents struggle with this kind of unknowingness. Our friendship, too, struggles with this tension, as our experiences with each other are not always “friendly” and, of course, we do experience sadness and joy. This doubling experience wrestles in hopes of the third space of possibility (i.e., our movement in-between). In-between we can imagine emergent and embodied relations that alter student-student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and our human relationships and the earthy living we do with/in one rhizomean landscape. Altering our relationships and creating modes of
togetherness while, of course, not eliminating moments of dis/location, we learn to live differently with/in our schools and with each other. Our curricular landscape is, of course, this and that. Acknowledging the “this” and “that” of our relations, I will explore my mother’s garden as a dis/located space of difference (i.e., the “that” of our relation).

An Earthy Interlude

“A Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky”: Both title and music bring out a sense both of the exquisite solitariness of nature, and of the vibrant and crawling interrelatedness and resonances of the Earth. It brings out both of these – both the interrelatedness and the solitariness, both the intertwining kinship of things and the uniqueness, individuality, and utter irreplaceability of every thing. For this bell is in an empty sky, solitary and unsurrounded; and it is ringing out, echoing and resonating with all things. It strikes an image of interdependence and relatedness that issues from exquisiteness and is not at odds with it. (Jardine, 1993, p. 88)

This piece of music (above) unfolds within a beautiful space – a space that is also ugly in its beauty, irresponsible in its responsibility, mean in its affection, and separate in its togetherness. Music is part of our earth as is the ugliness, irresponsibility, meanness, and separateness that is with/in our backyards, gardens, and classrooms; it is part of our landscape and the everyday listening and moving that we do. Jardine (1993) eloquently brings our attention to the everyday, specifically the everyday things we use, such as the paper I am writing with and the technology that we use to ease our living. I do not wish to paraphrase his thoughts, as I cannot find the words to re-articulate such depth. Please just listen.

1 “A Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky” is a piece of Japanese flute music performed by Goro Yamaguichi. The music evokes “openness and spaciousness; images of echoing and resonances; images of the time and the quiet needed for a conversation to go on; images of the space for the natural affections of speech, its kindness, its interweaving and living kinships or “family resemblances” to come forth” (Jardine, 1993, p. 85).
This paper from which you are reading does not simply announce itself, announce what it “is.” It is not exquisitely this piece of paper because it requires nothing but itself in order to exist...[r]ather, it is what it is because it is not – it announces sun and sky and earth and water and trees and loggers and the meals they eat and chainsaws and gasoline and pulp and the dioxin produced by the bleaching of this paper and the effluent and the poisoned fish near pulp mills, and the cancer and the pain and the death and the sorrow and the tears, and the Earth and the trees growing up out of it. It announces all things without exception, just as a bell echoes everywhere, even where it is unheard. This piece of paper, in all its uniqueness and irreplaceability, requires everything else in order to exist. (Jardine, 1993, p. 88)

This listening has affected me with/in this text, with/in my quest(ion)ing. The words of Jardine, and of those who have similarly and differently joined us thus far with/in this quest, spill at the margins and trickle into my mother’s garden where I am situating myself. With/in this moment and with surprise, Jardine’s words interrupt this textual space. I now take a detour in my quest(ion)ing. I state:

*I am quest(ion)ing the paper I use, the ink I will print with, and the laptop I am typing on – a piece of technology that is entangled in-between my flesh and melting into my human body. Interweaving Haraway’s (2006) thoughts, I am thinking about these things (i.e., the paper, ink, technology) and our interrelatedness/difference...our togetherness/dislocation...our love/hate relationship. I wonder. I quest(ion).*

**Cyborg**

*Piece of paper, computer, glasses on my face – prosthetics perhaps? Objects that are not unto themselves, more so exceed themselves?*
Paper, computer, glasses – nor object, nor subject – embodied?

Melting into the skin, becoming part of our fleshy earth?

“A cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction.”
(Haraway, 2006, p. 117)

Paper, computer, glasses; the body as cyborg?

“The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts.”
(Haraway, 2006, p. 117)

Imagination, lived experience; what else could count?

**Dwelling in Difference**

Derrida (1997) helps us complicate the place of my mother’s garden, which I am currently situating myself with/in. He states: “The body of the friend, his body proper, could always become the body of an other...outside all place or placeless, without family or familiarity, outside of self...strange, but also ‘a stranger to’” (Derrida, 1997, p. 177-178). My (m)other as a stranger...a foreigner...I am surprised by this feeling our *withness* creates. When
we are with/in our garden I feel the heaviness of her accent; her alterity. What does this say about me – me and her – us, our friendship? Seeking a quick response to ease my discomfort, I am afraid I will not find an answer from Derrida, but rather a response that questions. He asks: “Isn’t the question of the foreigner [l’etranger] a foreigner’s question? Coming from the foreigner, from abroad [l’etranger]?” (Derrida, 2000, p. 3). Am I the strange one then...the xenoi (foreigner)? Am I the one with the heavy accent? I have never asked this question aloud. Maybe I do not want to ask my (m)other if I am strange. Perhaps it is best to ignore this foreignness our garden can possibly open us up to. However, it is too late for this, as my (m)other’s garden has already opened us up to this in-between space of dis/location and difference. This difference is not something I need to necessarily articulate. It is not a question I have to verbally ask and audibly hear. I feel this foreignness in-between our gardening, where our friendship brings us together as well as creates as space of dis/location where we wrestle with difference. This is an encounter, a moment of connection, a moment of “losing oneself” Ellsworth believes “not with danger but with the opportunity and occasion for inventing new forms of non-violent (even if conflicted) association with each other” (2005, p. 90). Being-with my mother with/in our garden thus becomes an intersecting space of accents, languages, homelessness, hyphens, and slashes; a doubling of two lives becoming different in-between (i.e., the third space). It these differences that take the relation to a different place/space we have not seen before.

Wounded Bodies

I think about what it is like to live in my cultural body, my sexed body.
How do others respond to it?
How do others live with/in their bodies?
Sometimes it seems that these bodies get in the way of what could become wonderful relationships, connections, and moments with friends and strangers.

There is something that will not allow their soul-bodies to speak. Sometimes it is these wounded bodies that silently do all the talking, mis/communicate, and remain un/heard.

**Travelling Ho/me: A Third Space of Dis/location**

I was birthed into a hyphenated identity. My (m)other, on the other hand, was not. I am from here and s/he is from there – the there that birthed he/r into (an)other identity. He/r travels have, however, hyphenated her, too. In our garden we are here and there, travelling back and forth, and at times struggling for an in-between that is nowhere at all. At least we are together in this third space of nowhere where “different layers of culture and self shift, intersect, and change” (Wang, 2006, p. 113). Our togetherness eases the travel on this long lost flight, as I am an inexperienced traveller aboard this peculiar plane and the turbulence reverberates right through my body. My (m)other, however, is well-travelled as s/he has been moving back and forth now for thirty-five years. I sometimes feel like s/he is a tour guide showing me the “place” through her eyes. It is similar, let’s say, to your friend showing you he/r apartment for the first time. For example, s/he knows the place well, determines what s/he will show you, and perhaps tells you what to feel about something or (an)other. Perhaps this rings true for many (m)other/daughter relationships; the overprotective relationships that promise shelter from difficult knowledge and a comfortable (ho)me. However, I refuse to join these “touristy” tours. “I sneeze at organized tours, for the things I see in the Wild or in the remote parts of the world,
Traveller/Tourist

It was the summer of 2008 when I hopped on a midnight ship across the Ionian sea. We bought our tickets across the street from the port of call. We had no plans, no hotel reservations; just two tickets to Corfu – one of Greece’s beautiful islands. I promised myself that I would someday go on this adventure. I wanted to see the island’s tree-covered cliffs that delicately dip into the soothingly warm sea. I wanted to feel the warmth and taste the saltiness of its sea. I had to let myself go. I convinced my sister – more liked begged her – to come with me. My persistence paid off and so we waited in the darkness for our boarding call.

I spent the night in and out of sleep, trying to rest my frozen body on a stone-hard chair. I was cold. The heavy beach towel that I had cocooned myself within was of no help, and we were both pretty miserable on this frigid ship. At last, it was morning and we just reached Corfu’s port. Originally planning to take public transit, we realized that that was not going to happen, as Glyfada (our beach of choice after consulting fellow travellers on board) was way too far and nestled within cliffs only reachable by car. We opted for a taxi.

This was one of the most terrifying cab rides of my life. The speed, the cliffs, the winding roads...we were convinced that we were going to die! Regardless, we continued on our adventure keeping track of the time. We were thirty minutes into our road trip and there was no ocean in sight; just trees, frail yellow grass and the dirt road’s dust making everything, everywhere hard to see. Our cab driver sensing our terror started a conversation with us to ease the tension. Usually welcoming such conversation I tried to keep it at minimum, as I did not want to be “found out”. But, it was too late, he had noticed. He asked: “Where are you from?” I casually responded, “Oh, we’re just from

are those You can’t see when You abide by pre-paid, ready-made routes” (Trinh, 2011, p. 40). I want to be a traveller not a tourist that sees through the eyes of my (m)other.
“He then responded, “You have an accent. Are you from Crete?” I was surprisingly pleased that he thought I was his fellow patriotisa (patriot). I then realized I had really underestimated my linguistic abilities. I responded with a brusque “no” to his question in hopes of not carrying on this conversation anymore. Our driver picked up on this and we raced along the dirt road in silence.

Writing with/in the past tense, I remember my transcontinental adventure with regret. I regret not welcoming the conversation and I regret not being myself. I regret trying to imitate the Other by creating a clandestine self (i.e., a “falsified other”) (Trinh, 2011, p. 41). In trying to negate the clichéd tourist who is easily imitable, I became the imitator of the Other, trying to disguise myself in a counter-exoticism (Trinh, 2011). I experienced a traveller’s “identity crisis”; one that “often leads to a mere change of appearance – a temporary disguise whose narrative remains, at best, a Confession” (Trinh, 2011, p. 41). Indeed, I must confess to a bad translation, as Trinh (2011) explains that “striving for likeness to the original without being powerfully affected by the foreigner (the Other) is the hallmark of bad translation” (p. 41). I thought I needed this disguise to avoid an inflated cab rate; however, there is more to this experience now that I am remembering and re-thinking my thoughts. Rather than regretting my actions, I am quest(ion)ing my actions. I am re-thinking that I did not accept the cab driver’s linguistic invitation for fear of exposing my alterity. I was fearful of a mis/translation and just wanted to belong to his “place”. In my wanting to belong, I slipped into a localizable relation. I slipped into a “touristy” mis/adventure that imitates and seeks an immediate foundation. Mimicry, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) remind us, relies on binary logic; a language that reproduces sameness and confines us in codes. A traveller must belong and not belong, experience presence and absence, loss and “the birth of the third from the loss” (Wang, 2010, p. 382). Self/Other, Self/Foreigner, Daughter/(M)other...I only see a doubling. Where is the third?
I need a map with/in this garden that transcontinentally connects the Greek landscape to the English one I thought belonged to a separate (ho)me. *Where am I going? Where am I coming from? What am I heading for?* Such questions, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) warn us are useless, for “making a clean slate, starting or beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation – all imply a false conception of voyage and movement” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 25). Thus, we do not need a map to tell us where to go. We create maps with/in our movement (i.e., our mis/translation).
For Derrida (1991) the im/possibility of translation is its poetic beauty and our hope. Wang (2010) agrees that a poetics of translation creates possibilities for a transnational future, connecting many places, such as the darkness of the ports night call to the lightness of our garden’s morning calm. There is something to this poetic complementarity (i.e. the evening’s darkness and the morning’s light). There is possibility in writing in this doubling way. Trinh (2011) believes that

…it is by listening to the evening, to the fading sounds for this moment of multiplicity, transformations and metamorphoses that one’s ears open up to the sight of two worlds wavering across the sky. Such a sight has its own becoming-sound story. (p. 75)

The place of my (m)other’s garden is a site/sight “of two worlds wavering across the sky” (Trinh, 2011, p. 75). It is such a sight only when we are travelling as travellers and not as tourists. The tourist and my (m)other as tour guide will just not do. Travelling as travellers, we are nomadic and open to embodied encounters that intertwine both Greek and English landscapes creating (with struggle) something new. We need to travel together in exposed openness, experiencing difference and creating differently. For example, with/in my (m)other’s garden, I experience a “strange” difference (i.e., a conflicted bond); one in “need for identification and a fear of it” (Bouvet in Kristeva, 1991, p. 188). Negotiating between languages and identities, I cannot locate one that is “true”. Wanting, at times, to be able to flawlessly translate and to understand the (m)other, I struggle with this im/possibility. My fear of mis/translating (as was the case in my overseas travels), Palulis and Low (2004) warn us results in consuming the Other. If we are to move rhizomatically and create the space that will allow our garden to grow, we must mis/translate (i.e., self and (m)other) from the middle; a performance in-between. In the movement of mis/translating (i.e., negotiating between languages and identities) we travel in openness towards an “uncanny strangeness” (Kristeva,
one that is in excess of itself and unable to erase differences. From this perspective, “erasure shifts from the removal of something to the act of creation” (Springgay, 2008, p. 88). A *Flesh-y* space of intercorporeality is thus created. It is this respons/ibility that we can imagine with/in our curricular landscape and our teaching and learning. Opening our classrooms to embodied encounters (i.e., transcontinental movements) that create cross-cultural spaces of difficult knowledge and “ambiguities and paradoxes” (Wang, 2006); the space where the “departure and arrival of languages” (Palulis and Low, 2004) are never at ho/me. “The space of the hyphen” (Palulis, 2004); “a third possibility” (Wang, 2010) that creates “passages, connecting the land and the sea, the sun and the moon, the light and the dark” (Wang, 2010, p. 379). It is all connected and interdependent, and our travels – as travellers not tourists – allow us to cross borders and experience someone/thing different and become someone/thing new.

Returning to the poetic word, once again, Wang (2010) interprets Julia Kristeva’s (2002) following phrase: “Future humanity will be made up of foreigners trying to understand each other” (p. 257). In her interpretation Wang (2010) states:

> Here the foreigner is not only literal but also metaphorical, defined as the translator of the sensory universe in its singularity. This multiple sense of translation – linguistic, national, cultural, gendered, psychic – unfolds before us as a promise to re-envision curriculum, pedagogy, and curriculum studies as a field. (p. 382)

In re-envisioning curriculum and pedagogy in this poetic way we can imagine the possibility of living creatively, aesthetically, and attentively with/in one rhizomean landscape that is inclusive of languages and identities, and the earth we travel. Furthermore, we can continue to foster the poetic word with/in curriculum and pedagogy through words of imagination (i.e., non-fiction texts) and the sharing of our lived narratives. Such embodied processes can take us – student and teachers – to other places we have not yet seen. Aoki (1993) believes that the lived curriculum is the more poetic “in which life is embodied in the very stories and languages
people speak and live” (1993, p. 207). Daughters and (m)other’s, self and other, students and teachers, WE create our stories – together – in our living that we do with/in the places of our everyday. Storying our lives and listening to the other’s text, we can begin to read in-between the lines and catch a glimpse, perhaps hear Aoki’s click that takes us to new places and opens our eyes to new ways of seeing with/in one rhizomean landscape that is lived, planned, and creative in-between the C & C.

A Second Interlude

if I can believe in an invisible net of worldwide interconnections in cyberspace, surely I can believe in the ecology of words and lines of care borne lightly in the heart, even the unbearable

-Carl Leggo (2004)

Living In-Between: A Curricular Landscape of Possibility

I have been running with/in these pages metaphorically and I have also presented you with photographs of my past Self literally running. I was six-years-old then and as I think about her once more, I laugh. All that running she use to do in-between classes and afterschool makes me smile. Gertrude Stein (1985) reminds us that “identity is funny...Being yourself is funny” (p. 53). I do not think Stein (1985) is referring to a “laugh-out-loud” funny, but to a funny that is
complicated. She believes that writing with ‘I’ is complex because you do not believe the Self you have written into words (Stein, 1985). She explains that “you could not be yourself because you cannot remember right and if you do remember right it does not sound right and of course it does not sound right because it is not right. You are of course never yourself” (Stein, 1985, p. 53). Sifting through Stein’s (1985) explanation while I write my Self with/in this text, I have been feeling worried about remembering “right” and trying to find the real me that seems so unreal at times. However, I remember what I can of my Self and as I am writing, I am understanding (i.e., taking in the “total intention” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xx)), that she will remain blurry, never quite sitting still or running slow enough to catch her (i.e., know her).

Taking in the total intention involves taking in “not only what these things are for representation...but the unique mode of existing expressed in the properties of the pebble, the glass or the piece of wax, in all the events of a revolution, in all the thoughts of the philosopher” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xx). So, I am realizing that these “Who” questions (i.e., Who was I? Who am I? Who will I be?) are not the questions I should be asking. Curriculum theorizing is not about knowing the Self. I should ask: What can I do? What can we do with/in gardens and classrooms? What are our bodies capable of doing with/in our landscape? We must explore these possibilities from the point of view of our many selves (past, present, and future), as well as from our landscape of living that is inclusive of experiences with/in gardens and classrooms.

Wanda Hurren (2003) makes the choice “to drop down closer to ground level in [her] curricula storytelling or map-making to impose and compose stories of place and self within the lines of [her] everyday maps of teaching, learning, living, and researching” (p. 112). Similar to Hurren (2003), I have made the choice to not separate curriculum from my experience. Living is one experience with/in one landscape where “we can pay attention to embodied knowings of place, self, [other,] and curriculum” (Hurren, 2003, p. 112). Through narrative and as narrators of our
living we empower ourselves by becoming “mindful of our rootedness in earthy experiences” (Aoki, 1987, p. 67). Acknowledging the power of narrative – both fictional and non-fictional text – with/in our rhizomean landscape, enables us to read in-between the lines and begin the re-writing/map-making process with/in one curricular landscape. Imagining narrative as a sensory access to experiences of self, other, and place is its possibility. To be clear, it is not an access to truth; an access to knowing oneself, the other, and about your place. Narrative with/in our landscape is an opening that invites us to re-think and re-imagine what could become possible in our living, curriculum, and pedagogy. Through narrative, we can create “new lines of curriculum, lines that communicate, collaborate and connect” (Meyer, 2003, p. 21).

**Teacher Narratives as Performance**

With/in my writing journey it is im/possible to return to my original landscape; however, it is this im/possibility that creates potential. To imagine possibility through narrative is not about remembering “right”. I am exploring narrative as an embodied process that is transformative and empowers narrators (i.e., students and teachers) as creators of their own knowledge with/in classrooms and the everyday living that they do. Maxine Greene (1995) draws upon Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) theory of perception, which suggests that educators, through narrative, can recapture the “nascent logos” that “teaches us, outside all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself...it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action” (p. 25). Greene (1995) explains that this *logos* involves “noticing the active insertion of one’s perception into the lived world” (Greene, 1995, p. 74). It is a reflexive praxis that prompts us to think about our own thoughts in order to alert our body to its own response. Greene (1995)
further elaborates upon this praxis, which she suggests makes room for imagination with/in the classroom and with/in teacher practice. She states:

If I can make present the shapes and structures of a perceived world, even though they have been layered over with many rational meanings over time, I believe my own past will appear in altered ways and that my presently lived life – and, I would like to say, teaching – will become more grounded, more pungent, and less susceptible to logical rationalization. (Greene, 1995, p. 77-78)

Remembering our original landscapes (i.e., our mother tongue) not as it was, but re-working it into something new and meaningful is one of many ways we can become more present to our classroom practice, and attune to the needs of our students with/in the classroom. In the writing of my body-narrative, I have come across the narratives of other teachers that have resonated with me and that I would like to include as part of this text. For example, Karen Meyer (2003) writes of her “teacher identity” as one that is in tension. I am wrestling with a similar “identity crisis”. My “teacher identity” is a new one for me, so I do not have much experience living with it. Sometimes I feel that I do not have any worthwhile experience to share and feel like an “imposter”. I write the word “imposter” cringingly, as it is such a harsh word. But, I am writing honestly and sometimes, admittedly, I feel like a “teacher imposter” and even “graduate student imposter” (another fairly new role). I thought I was alone in this nightmare. However, coming across Meyer’s (2003) story, I realize I am not. She writes of feeling like an “imposter” herself with/in the academy. She describes a haunting dream that “acts out in a weird tension between belonging (and what that means) and estrangement” (Meyer, 2003, p. 15). Meyer (2003) explains that, for her, this identity crisis “relates to being tenured, promoted, and an administrator while feeling like an impostor in the academy” (Meyer, 2003, p. 15). As I am writing my story into words, I am not sure I have made “sense” of my “imposter scenario”, but then again, perhaps I do not need to make (common)sense of this at all. Perhaps it is the
realization that I am not alone and share these feelings with others that is enough. I would also like to especially note that in sharing her narrative during a seminar, one of Meyer’s students revealed that she too experienced this “imposter scenario”. This is the beauty of narrative; it transforms a dull seminar room into a space where student and teacher narratives reverberate through bodies and penetrate the room. Narratives create possibilities to connect when we bring our living with/in the classroom. Furthermore, in reflecting upon her student’s response, Meyer (2003) re-envisions other possibilities. She states:

My fantasy is to act out this dream as a short skit with a group of colleagues. I believe the improvisation may prove to be healing to those of us who feel estranged, interrupted, ignored, or excluded. I think there could be fruitful discussion after such a performance. (Meyer, 2003, p. 15-16)

Attuning to her landscape, herself, and to her students she re-workers these narratives and (re)imagines: What else can this narrative do? How else can we use our bodies with/in the classroom? Meyer’s living pedagogy has prompted me to now ask: How else can we imagine narrative with/in our own practice? What is possible in re-thinking narrative not as subject, but as a Flesh-y process that is co-creative, shared, and re-worked with each other? Let us address these questions below.

Recovering and Reworking Literary Experiences

How else can we imagine narrative with/in our teaching practice? Greene (1995) suggests we recover our own literary experiences. She explains that through the recovery of childhood literature we can re-discover and re-work our own narrative (Greene, 1995). It is a reflective and reflexive praxis that foregrounds the active imagination. Greene (1995) further explains:
One of the ways of beginning the reflection that may enable us to create a narrative and to start understanding imagination in our lives is through the recovery of literary experiences that have been significant at various times in our lives. (p. 76)

Imagination, Greene (1995) believes, can be released through the (re)reading of literary texts (fiction and non-fiction) from our childhood. (Re)reading childhood literature nurtures one’s lived experience by exposing the body to new feelings that had not been accessed before. John Dewey (1934) uses the term “art as experience” to describe such praxis. Drawing upon Dewey’s (1934) theory, Greene (1995) explains that “active engagements with diverse works, active attempts to realize them as objects of experience, might...counteract the anaesthetic, the humdrum, the banal, the routine” (p. 76). I would like us to consider literary texts (fiction and non-fiction) as bodies that affect (i.e., touch) the body of the reader (i.e., student and teacher). I would like us to think about children’s literature as one of many ways we can begin “the reflection that may enable us to create a narrative and to start understanding imagination in our lives” (Greene, 1995, p. 76). In asking you to think this through with me, I draw upon my own childhood experience with literature and recover the stories that shocked me into wonder about my world and the many worlds I explored through reading. In sharing my literary experiences as an elementary school student, I describe my encounters with literature as *Flesh-y* encounters that move the body of the reader and the body of the text into an intertwining action that creates in excess of itself. Specifically, I recover my reading of Madeleine L’Engle’s (1962) book *A Wrinkle in Time*. Furthermore, in considering Greene’s (1995) thoughts on teacher praxis and the recovery of literature, I engage in a (re)reading of Engle’s novel and create new meaning for my teacher praxis. Returning to the text in a new way – as an adult and as a teacher – has enabled me to reflect upon my *Flesh-y* encounters with literature as a child, as well as re-connect these encounters to my teaching praxis. I encourage us to (re)consider the (re)reading of
literature as an embodied process of learning that bring living pedagogy into the classroom and creates authentic learning experiences for students and teachers.

Reading In-Between the Lines

With/in narrative reading and writing we need language and words to communicate. I struggle with these words at times, as they are inadequate in expressing what we experience with our bodies. However, language does not envelop us as Merleau-Ponty (1962) says. Through language we can communicate multiple perspectives and bring forth multiple narratives. There is endless potential in exposing young readers to multiple stories. It is not the words of the text that create meaning; it is the experience of reading that creates transformative possibilities. Merleau-Ponty (1962) explains that language becomes meaningful to a child when it “establishes a situation” (p. 467) (i.e., when the text does something). Merleau-Ponty (1962) provides us with another example by sharing a story he read in a children’s book. He recalls a story of a boy who put on his grandmother’s glasses and picked up her book in hopes of finding the stories she used to read to him. The boy becomes disappointed as soon as he realizes that the stories his grandmother used to read are not there. All he sees is black and white. Merleau-Ponty (1962) interprets this encounter below.

For the child the ‘story’ and the thing expressed are not ‘ideas’ or ‘meaning’; nor are speaking or reading ‘intellectual operations’. The story is a world which there must be some way of magically calling up by putting on spectacles and leaning over a book. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 467)

Reading as an embodied process (i.e., a Flesh-y encounter) involves a breathing with and into the text that creates in excess of our bodies. It creates “slippages between text and world,
knowledge and the real” (Miller, 2005, p. 129), which move the relation beyond what is written in the book. The boy from Merleau-Ponty’s story, for example, can move beyond seeing black and white to seeing gray in-between. This in-between movement is possible only when the boy draws upon his own lived experience, thus authentically connecting/intertwining his experience with the text. Merleau-Ponty (1962) insists that

...in every successful work, the significance carried into the reader’s mind exceeds language and thought as already constituted and is magically thrown into relief during the linguistic incantation, just as the story used to emerge from grandmother’s book. (p. 467)

Merleau-Ponty (1962) further reminds us that experience is not consciousness (i.e., what we think); it is what we live through. Reading, therefore, as an embodied process foregrounds the body and in doing so, it is the body that is in communication with the text. The body communicates; it does not possess (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Not only does this understanding challenge subject-object dualities, but it encourages us to engage in a reading that is in-between the lines. It is these in-between movements that keep curriculum and pedagogy moving.

**A Double Reading**

To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. ix-xx)

*The smell of plastic never quite smelled so sweet! It fills the school’s hallways and tickles my nose. I follow the scent into the school’s library where this glare suddenly disorients me. I stand still for a moment in hopes of refocusing, but my body begins to*
twirl around and around, about the neatly stacked books that endlessly encircle me. The lights from above reflect upon the books smooth surface, making it so shiny, so hard to see. Their jackets glisten, inviting me to pick them up, to touch their paper flesh. I want to touch them all! These books smell so sweet! My body dances to this beat and after many spiralling movements, I choose my book – just one for today my mother’s voice reminds me. I linger a little longer with Madeleine L’Engle’s (1962) book, *A Wrinkle in Time*, carefully clenched underneath my arm. I impulsively pick up a pencil and an eraser in the shape of a star. I convince myself that this is enough, at least for today, and make plans to re-visit the book fair tomorrow.

To return to the “pre-reflective days” (Greene, 1995) – to the days when plastic smelled so sweet – both Greene and Merleau-Ponty (1962) assure us is an im/possibility. To return in that way we cannot, but we can return in a new way and with the possibility of becoming more present to our “enmeshed and open-ended selves” (Greene, 1995, p. 73). As I am reflecting throughout my writing journey, I am also feeling an in/completeness; an in/completeness that Greene (1995) explains as something that openly questions and summons us to action. This urge to do something – to reach out, re-work, and “enlarge” (Greene, 1995) this reflection – I honestly feel the need to do so. I also feel a rush of memories flooding my body. These memories are poking around and are so unsettled in their movement. One of these memories moves a little closer, begging to be intimately examined. It is the memory of my Grade 2 teacher – Ms. Mac (for short) – the one who loved reading and that inspired me to love it, too. A rush of warmth colours my cheeks as I remember her endless bookshelves and old, raggedy piano she used to play for us with/in the classroom. I let this memory linger and im/possibly imagine its pre-reflective innocence.

Ms. Mac introduced me to the bizarre, but lovable narrative of Amelia Bedelia and the whimsical worlds of *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and *James and the Giant Peach*. 

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These books ignited *something* with/in me. I was drawn to these stories that had adventure, a mysterious journey that invited me to travel, to run *with* other narrators and characters, to visit new places and imagine new things. Similar to Greene (1995), I was drawn to “languages of imaginative literature [that] disclosed alternative ways of being in and thinking about the world” (Greene, 1995, p. 90). This curiosity grew and I began to pick up non-fiction texts and “wanted to see through as many eyes and from as many angles as possible...to begin to feel those “multiple realities” or “provinces of meaning” that marked lived experience in the world” (Schutz in Greene, 1995, p. 94). Reading multiple narratives and listening to the lived narratives of those with/in my classroom, it was the most peculiar thing. I was trying to make “sense” of these stories by re-working them into my own narrative, my own experience. I had and I have so many unanswerable questions and, I struggle with the im/possibility to “fully” understand my own and the narratives of the other. However, I have a feeling that we can never “fully” understand. In/complete{ness} is what makes the narrative, a “narrative”. It is living and with/in our living we do not stop. We live in in/complete{ness} and must invite this in/complete knowledge of ourselves and others. Echoing Greene (1995) we live quest(ion)ing with our questions remaining “forever open” (p. 92). Quest(ing) *with* texts, *with* our classmates, *with* colleagues, *with* students, and *with* fellow human beings is our possibility *with* in curriculum, pedagogy, and our living. This co-creative movement, that is hopeful and imaginative, is how we keep moving with/in and in-between our landscape. It is *with* imagination and imagining what could become, that we can attune to the in/complete{ness} of our rhizomean landscape and re-work our narratives. If it were not for the in/complete{ness} of our landscape, nothing would need to change. I thus choose to attune to our landscape and (re)attend to the book, *A Wrinkle in Time*, for the possibility of (re)working new meaning into my narrative. Let us travel back in
time to not “fix” this incompleteness, but to engage in a double reading that re-writes and keeps our narratives moving.

A Wrinkle in Time

The educational theory and practice divide continues to haunt us in our graduate classrooms. We struggle to imagine how theoretical frameworks work their way into the elementary schools where we teach. Our thinking is still theory into practice; a linear relationship that applies reason to practice (Aoki, 1984). This idea of application rings of a means-to-an-end mentality that our rhizomean landscape struggles to recognize. Aoki (1984) suggests that we imagine theory and practice not as a divide, but as a dialectical relationship; a relationship that ventures forth – together – with students. This relationship is action-orientated, involving reflexive praxis where the teacher is an “acting person in dialectical relationship with the classroom world” (Aoki, 1984, p. 134). The teacher is actively “interpreting the classroom world, acting with and on that world, and reflecting and acting on both self and world” (Aoki, 1984, p.133). The teacher is thus engaging in an embodied process, co-creating and re-writing her own narrative. Such teacher practice is what Aoki (1984) describes as “situational praxis” (p.116). He further describes such praxis below.

I wish to propose an alternative view of implementation, one that is grounded in human experiences within the classroom situation. This is the experiential world of the teacher with his students, who co-dwell within the insistent presence of a curriculum X to-be-implemented. (Aoki, 1983, p. 116)

Palulis (2003), too, echoes Aoki’s thoughts as she is often confronted with the question of how her conceptualized writing in the academy connects to her classroom practice. She responds by
saying that “stories emerge in the intertext” (Palulis, 2003, p. 267). She further clarifies by explaining that through reading and writing, as well as through the re-reading and re-writing of narrative there is an “inky spillage” (Palulis, 2003, p. 267). Her Grade 1 students, she says, are already dwelling in hybrid spaces, engaging in hybrid writings and re-locating other narratives with/in their own writing (Palulis, 2003). These narratives travel, Palulis (2003) says. These “stories leak through border crossings...[bringing] the im/perfect tense into our conversations” (Palulis, 2003, p. 268). It is through narrative that “we begin to read into elsewhere spaces [and] we begin to write otherwise” (Palulis, 2003, p. 268). Writing otherwise involves complicating pedagogies and in doing so, we often find ourselves travelling in agonizing spaces where our questions cannot be “fully” answered (Palulis, 2003). Although there is agony, perhaps “uncanniness” (Kristeva, 1991) is a better word that (re)conceives of this unease as an opening beyond anguish. It is this unease that I believe is part of our desire to keep on complicating curriculum and pedagogy in order to continue our quest(ion)ing, and in hopes of new curricular and pedagogical spaces to learn and move on from.

Many years ago when I first read Engle’s (1962) book, A Wrinkle in Time, it was a frustrating experience for me. I could not fully understand the places the heroin Meg Murray travelled to. She visited many strange planets, such as Camazotz and Ixchel. I think my frustration with the book has prompted me to re-visit and re-write this in/complete experience. In re-writing my experience, I also re-complicate and re-locate it, connecting it to my present moment with/in our rhizomean landscape. I do this in hopes of new meaning for our curricular landscape and for teaching praxis.

With/in classrooms and our everyday, sight is often equated with understanding. What we see is thus how we understand. A bodied curriculum does not see in this way, as it is part of a rhizomean landscape that foregrounds the creative, aesthetic, imaginative, and experiential
movement of bodies. This movement resembles the attentive movements of Aunt Beast, one of the characters, in Engle’s (1962) book. Aunt Beast is an interesting character because her title personifies her (i.e., Aunt), yet her name (i.e., Beast) de-humanizes her. She is described as a hybrid (human/non-human), which I believe urges us to use our imagination and read beyond the representation of words. For example, s/he is described abstractly as having gray flesh and a fluidity to he/r body. She has tentacles, which she uses as her eyes, ears, and hands. S/he, however, can still see in the way a bodied curriculum urges us to see. Aunt Beast sees by listening through touch on the sensory planet of Ixchel. I was, originally, troubled by this planet as a young reader/narrator. I was unable to connect my narrative to Aunt Beast’s landscape, but I was able to connect to Meg Murray’s, which enabled me to continue reading/creating with the characters in the book. Similar to my adolescent self, Meg could not understand Aunt Beast’s way of seeing and relied on the rational way of seeing to understand. With/in the book Aunt Beast explains to Meg that seeing is not understanding and that to see, you must “look not at things which are what you would call seen, but at the things which are not seen” (L’Engle, 1962, p. 205). Although Aunt Beast explains this to Meg, s/he knows that Meg will have to experience this kind of seeing for herself. Aunt Beast and Meg travel to other planets, such as Camazotz; a planet that is ruled by a disembodied brain that thrives on sameness and routine. It is a planet unlike Aunt Beast’s warm planet of Ixchel that unconditionally welcomes travellers and lived experience. However, Aunt Beast explains that the planets are not separate, but exist with/in one landscape of living and share the “same sun” (L’Engle, 1962, p. 205). Together – Aunt Beast and Meg – cross borders, meet different people, and create different ways of knowing through their travels. Aunt Beast reminds us that seeing is about “knowing” and “not knowing”, so all that we can do in our travels and in our running is move with other bodies in openness, and in hopes of creating something new. For me, Aunt Beast embodies the “grayness” of the in-
between. She is the pedagogue that I now see with/in this book. She embodies the teacher that engages in a praxis that involves a “responsible responding to students”, which Aoki (1993) describes as “a letting go that allows a letting be in students’ own becoming” (p. 213). Returning from their travels, Aunt Beast returns Meg to the place of her mother’s garden (with “new” eyes). She then fades into the “grayness” letting Meg be in her own becoming.

As readers, writers, students, and teachers narrating our own lives we must “look toward untapped possibility – to light the fuse, to explore what it might mean to transform that possibility” (Greene, 1995, p. 42). It is to Aunt Beast and pedagogues, such as Ms. Mac that I acknowledge and thank for igniting something with/in me. I thank Ms. Mac for her attentive and imaginative pedagogy; for letting me be in my own becoming. Thank you, Ms. Mac for allowing me to explore the possibilities with/in literature and narrative writing. Thanks for creating the educational space for me to imagine and co-create with the bodies of literature somewhere in-between. Thank you.

Towards Togetherness

If Self implies Other, then the “I” that I claim for myself lives in a condition of perpetual non-resolution and incompletion, requiring as a condition of its existence ongoing acts of engagement, conversation, and negotiating with Others whose very identity, too, depends upon “me” for survival. “You” and “I” are the terrains out of which “we” work and shape our shared existence. Such an understanding is, I believe, the necessary foundation for any viable ethics in the new millennium. (Smith, 2003, p. xvii)

The praxis of pedagogues like Aunt Beast and Ms. Mac is what our bodied landscape desires. Breathing life into the text and into the classroom is part of such praxis that works to create connection; a togetherness that supports our landscapes multiplicity. There are different
forms of togetherness and when there are human bodies involved, there is a risky unpredictability to our actions. Legitimating lived curricula with/in the classroom means opening up a space that invites multiple narratives and in doing so, there is the possibility to open our bodies to a vulnerability that destabilizes and disorients us. Our rhizomean landscape invites this multiplicity and that is its potential (i.e., to create differently). Greene (1995) further explains what such a curricular landscape can do for students and teachers. She states:

Attending concretely to these children in their difference and their connectedness, feeling called on truly to attend – to read the child’s words, to look at the child’s sketch – teachers may find themselves responding imaginatively and, at length, ethically to those children. (Greene, 1995, p. 42)

Attuning to our landscape’s multiplicity enables – teachers and students – to dwell in openness and with possibility of becoming in difference. Acknowledging multiple narratives with/in the classroom is one of many ways “we can bring warmth into places where young persons come together...where dialogues and laughter...threaten monologues and rigidity” (Greene, 1995, p. 45). A bodied curriculum hears the many “sounds of pedagogy” (Aoki, 1991); it creates a melodious, polyphonic tune. Lingering with/in this sensory landscape, bodies (i.e., self and other) create possibility to experience togetherness in many different ways. Imagining not who “I” am, but what “we” can do is the body’s response. The active body, Greene (1995) believes, “enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called “other” over the years” (p. 3). We do not fill these spaces, but feel the need “to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions” (Greene, 1995, p. 3).

Togetherness as a mode of being-with is a modality that responds and attunes to the diverse needs of our landscape in “openness and resignifiability” (Mayo, 2007, p. 54). Specifically, I suggest we respond responsibly (i.e., ethically) – a mode of being-for – which similarly concerns ethics in interaction. Merleau-Ponty (1962) explains that being-“for” “the ‘other’ to
be more than an empty word, it is necessary that my existence should never be reduced to my bare awareness of existing, but that it should take in all the awareness that one may have of it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xiv). This modality is a way of interrupting our everyday and revealing ourselves within a situation (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xiv). This responsible togetherness – that is revealing and relational – entangles our bodies taking “us somewhere we couldn’t otherwise get to” (Miller, 2005, p. 52). It is a space that creates meaning about self, other, and place.

**Responsibly Responding: Being-for Each Other**

It is as if young people ask for, above all else, not only a genuine responsiveness from their elders but also a certain direct authenticity, a sense of that deep human resonance so easily suppressed under the smooth human-relations jargon teachers typically learn in college. Young people want to know if, under the cool and calm of efficient teaching and excellent time-on-task ratios, life itself has a chance, or whether the surface is all there is. And the best way to find out may be to provoke the teacher into showing himself or herself. (Jardine, 1999, p. xvii)
In running, reading, and narrating our lives – all this travelling that we are doing – we can be-with each other and for each other in many different ways. From a feminist post-structuralist perspective, ethical interactions are understood through alterity, otherness, and rights (Springgay, 2008, p. 34). This approach transitions from “understanding ethics as epistemological (what do I need to know about the other) and rather problematizes ethics through a relational understanding of being” (Springgay, 2008, p. 35). Sharon Todd (2004) draws on Zygmunt Bauman’s (1995) modalities of being-with and specifically focuses on being-for as a transformative modality that is spontaneous, and also based upon commitment and responsibility with/in face-to-face encounters. Referring to its spontaneity, Todd (2004) explains that being-for the Other

...is a togetherness born out of the immediacy of interaction, a communicative gesture that does not have as its end anything except its own communicativeness, its own response. And it is in this moment of transcendence that convention has no meaning, has no currency within the bounds of the relationship. (p. 345)

Togetherness, as described by Todd (2004) above, is based on a relation that cannot be determined beforehand. The relation (i.e., the encounter) is an active, creative, and aesthetic coming-together that is itself (in its relation to otherness) potentially ethical (Todd, 2003). With/in such a relation, inventiveness is its potentiality and it is with openness (i.e., attending to alterity) that we commit and respond. Todd (2003) insists that

...our commitment to our students involves our capacity to be altered, to become someone different than we were before; and, likewise, our students’ commitment to social causes through their interactions with actual people equally consists in their capacity to be receptive to the Other to the point of transformation. (p. 89)

Openness to “not knowing” and to be “affected” is our commitment to our students and our responsibility for our students. This student-teacher relationship is “a communicative approach
rooted in one’s capacity to feel” (Todd, 2004, p.346). It is a responsibility for each other that is a commitment to “genuinely” care (Gatens, 1996). To care for the Other in their difference and to attune, and respond to this difference is what, I am suggesting, our curricular landscape needs. It is not the “knowing” of difference, but the action of responding to one’s alterity in possibility of what we may become in difference.

With/in our commitment to be affected and to affect each other we do not do this without risk and complication. For example, we do sympathize and empathize with our students and these emotions are, of course, not bad. However, Todd (2004) cautions us towards emotions, such as the cliché “putting yourself into someone else’s shoes”, because empathy is not what responsibility entails. Todd (2004) problematizes empathy because it encourages “…a shutting down of the very opportunities for communicative openness and learning from the other that social justice education works so hard to achieve, and that responsible community would appear to require” (Todd, 2004, p. 348). To “put yourself in someone else’s shoes” risks appropriation (i.e., violence towards the body). The body is not to be possessed, nor to be taken hostage as if it were an object we could violently control or consume. Rather, we are to conceive of being-for “as a practice that does not merely demand students to be for others, but that sees itself as a mode of togetherness that displays the openness requisite to living responsibly across difference” (Todd, 2004, p. 348).

Emmanuel Levinas (1998) further articulates being-for as a responsible encounter that lies outside language and knowledge. It is similar to a quest(ion)ing of not what one is, but what our relation could become. Levinas (1998) states:

If the relationship with the other involves more than relationships with mystery, it is because one has accosted the other in everyday life where the solitude and fundamental alterity of the other are already veiled by decency. One is for the other what the other is for oneself; there is no exceptional place for the subject. The other is known through sympathy, as another (my)self, as the alter ego. (p. 83)
In my quest(ion)ing of Self, specifically with/in my mother’s garden, I experienced difference not as relationship of mystery, but difference as a desire to conceal/erase. Through empathy and sympathy both Todd (2004) and Levinas (1998) remind us that relations based upon “knowing” or “thinking you know” are ego-driven desires that are for the Self and not the Other. For example, with/in my (m)other’s garden, I experienced a conflicted bond that at times was in “need for identification and a fear of it” (Bouvet in Kristeva, 1991, p. 188). In wanting to “belong”, as in desiring to be understood in sameness, I feared a mis/translation resulting in the consumption of the Other. Palulis and Low (2004) explain that in openness to mis/translation

...“transforming the original as well as the translation” (Derrida, 1985, p. 122) the obligation of the translator is to both sustain textual life and survive beyond – a kind of hospitality that becomes a symbolic alliance between languages – a language that grows from the middle, extending each language beyond itself. (p. 22)

It is the movement of mis/translating that allows us to travel in openness, thus creating a hospitable space where multiple identities and “not knowing” are welcomed. It is this responsibility that we can imagine with/in our landscape of learning. Furthermore, my encounter with my mother’s strangeness, her foreign body, and my fear of my own foreignness is what makes hospitality risky and necessary. “In welcoming what seems strange in the other, we encounter our own sense of foreignness” (Gilbert, 2006, p. 27). It is a hospitality that welcomes “but one that resists idealization and risks ambivalence” (Gilbert, 2006, p. 26). Being-for and being-with as hospitable modalities welcome anything and/or anyone that shows up and in doing so, does not fear strangeness and detect difference beforehand, but rather unconditionally welcomes in hopes of rupturing the hospitable space.

According to Derrida (2000), there is a doubling of hospitality with/in our landscape. There are the laws of hospitality, which govern our formal and informal human relations, and there is the Law of hospitality that I would like to focus on below. The latter Law
unconditionally welcomes students and teachers with/in our curricular landscape. Derrida
(2000) further explains this Law for us.

Let us say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, before an anticipation, before any identification, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female. (Derrida, 2000, p. 77)

The Law of hospitality invites us to accept the stranger and the “strangeness” we can never “know”. Derrida (2000) also urges to recognize that the Law is in a dialectical relationship with the laws of hospitality. He insists that both laws are “more or less hospitable, hospitable and inhospitable, hospitable inasmuch as inhospitable” (p. 81). This is its risk and our risk with/in our bodied landscape. We are living with/in an im/perfect landscape and with/in an im/perfect tense (Greene, 1995), trying to evade the automatous laws that are in dialectical relationship with the Law of hospitality. Derrida (2000) describes the presence of “perfectability” with/in our landscape; a sameness that excludes the Other. With/in our unconditional welcome there is the risk of perfectability, indeed. However, we cannot exclude the sameness that the laws evoke; they are part of our landscape, too. We can, however, learn from our risky interactions and investigate our “tangles of implication” that contradict and conflict discursive constructions and open our bodies to new ways of moving (Miller, 2005). (Re)conceiving risk as rupture, we can respond to the in/completeness of our knowledge about self, other, and place. “A bodied curriculum approaches the notion of “experience” as socially and discursively produced and recognizes that interpretation and representation are always incomplete” (Springgay, 2088, p. 32). We can imagine an in-between movement that is in-between the Law and laws of hospitality. We can imagine a sensory experience in-between the C & C that links up with a line of flight becoming something not-yet-known in curriculum, pedagogy, and our lives as we live
them together. As responsible teachers, “in the pedagogical moment when we enact an imperfect welcome, we must also be striving for an unconditional welcome” (Gilbert, 2006, p. 28). It is these in-between movements that we must hope for. It is with/in our experience as teachers and with “genuine” (Gatens, 1996) care for students that we can attune to our landscape and respond by choosing different forms of being that open our bodies to in-between movements of becoming with our students and with each other. We must attune to our curricular landscape and reflect upon our embodied interactions with our students, colleagues, family, friends, and strangers. In doing so, we learn from our experiences, are open to other possibilities, and keep moving on. We move towards hospitality.

*Being-For: Attuning to Our Earthy Experiences*

Image 4: Our Earthy Landscape
If we speed up the work in the garden, you’ll just have to spend that much more time sitting in the zendo, and your legs will hurt more. It’s all one meditation. I would like to take this all the way back down to what it means to get inside your belly and cross your legs and sit – to sit down on the ground of your mind, of your original nature, your place, your people’s history. Right action, then, means sweeping the garden. (Snyder, 1989, p. 252)

Re-visiting my mother’s garden metaphorically once again, I am thinking that perhaps the garden is not hers, mine, nor ours (i.e., mine and hers). In an ecologically interdependent sense, it is all of ours (human and non-human). So, it is “our” garden with/in one rhizomean landscape. The garden and the earth that sustains it has always been a part of my life. My genealogy traces a long line of gardeners and farmers, and many of my childhood summers have been filled with outdoor, “earthy” experiences ranging from goat herding to picking peppers. These “earthy” experiences grace the Toronto landscape and connect – in flight – to European landscapes abroad. These are landscapes I have learned to attune to – attuning to the “call to be mindful of our rootedness in earthy experiences” (Aoki, 1987, p. 67). It is a call that Aoki suggests can be heard “if you get attuned to that possibility from early in life” (1987, p. 67). Jardine (1993) similarly believes that “the possibility of touching the Earth, this attunement, is rooted (perhaps also uprooted) early in life” (1993, p. 87). Of course, both Aoki and Jardine do not claim this as factual and, of course, I cannot claim this for myself nor for anyone else; we cannot “know” this. I can merely rely on my lived experience – not as a site of “knowing” – but as a possibility to learn something new. Upon living – past/present/future – we do not rely on rationality to make (common)sense; rather we open ourselves to being-with others and being-for others in the hopes of becoming in difference. There is an organic freshness to this process that risks relying on letting things un/fold as they may be. However, I am not convinced that things “just” happen and leaving it to the stars risks believing in “not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing” (Gadamer, 1989, p. xviii).
Furthermore, the act of un/folding is just that – “active”; bodies do the un/folding. It is what we do that is of interest to bodies living and learning with/in a bodied curriculum that is with/in one rhizomean landscape. What we do in backyards, gardens, classrooms, and with each other affects what happens to us; it does not control, but indeed touches our bodies. So, we cannot take a care-free, irresponsible approach to living. We must live responsibly with others and attune to the earth which sustains our interrelatedness, our togetherness. Rosie Braidotti (2006) calls for an “ethics of sustainability”, which is a call for action (i.e., a responsible response). She states:

A sustainable ethics for a non-unitary subject proposes an enlarged sense of interconnection between self and others, including the non-human or “earth” others, but removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism. This is not the same as absolute loss of values, it rather implies a new way of combining self-interests with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one’s territorial or environmental interconnections. (Braidotti, 2006, p. 35)

To respond responsibly (as teachers) to this call of action, I am suggesting that environmental issues and our relationship to the earth can be fostered through outdoor, “earthy” experiences. There is a growing movement within schools and classrooms to develop curricular connections that engage students in thought, dialogue, and action about ecological issues. However, such issues tend to be addressed linearly, with problem-solving approaches that assume ecological problems can be solved through technical solutions, such as recycling. Yet, environmental sustainability is not simply about achieving a curricular goal. Rather what schools and classrooms require is a pedagogic praxis that nurtures our relationship to the earth and to each other. It requires shifting our practice from what we “know” about the earth, to a praxis that asks: What else can we do? From this perspective, learning becomes an embodied process that is meaningful and redefines what it means to collaboratively learn and actively create with our earth and with each other. In exploring the garden, for example, as a site of
relational learning we can shift our thinking into imagining school gardens as places of learning; places where students engage in embodied, interdisciplinary processes that foster connection and knowledge about self, other, community, and place. We can shift our thinking to asking questions, such as: In what ways does eco-based learning foster interrelationships and student perceptions of self, other, and place? What are the possibilities in re-thinking places of learning (i.e., garden as classroom)? In what ways does relational/embodied learning impact student engagement with curriculum, community, and the environment? Foregrounding the body, we re-think the traditional educational notions of the static student body – waiting to be filled with knowledge – and shift to the sensing, moving body that creates new knowledge through relational and embodied interactions. In doing so, students draw upon their background knowledge (i.e., cultural and linguistic), create and communicate their knowledge through active engagement, and develop self/other/ecological awareness and responsibility. We therefore empower ourselves as creators of our own knowledge with/in our landscape of learning. This praxis entails a re-thinking of curriculum and ecology as an inter/connective process of learning that is authentic, creative, and shocks our bodies to the foreground. It reconceptualizes curriculum and pedagogy into a bodied intensity of action that complicates and is forever in/complete.

Mirrors

Who am I?
I look into that big-eyed mirror and cannot see.
There is no true, complete me.
Fragmented pieces;  
a multiplicity on the floor.  
A sea of  
selves  
swirling  
towards the shore.

Being-in/complete: Becoming Narratives of Intimacy

*Currere* is a method of educational inquiry; its purpose, however, is not “to know, define, and sum up” one’s *Self* (Benstock, 1991, p. 5). It is not an autobiographical tool to tell our “teacher stories” to “simply reinforce stationary, predetermined, and resolved versions of our selves” (Miller, 2005, p. 54). *Currere* is a narrative in-the-making; a map-making process not of the *Self*, but a re-writing of *selves* as ever-changing “site(s) of permanent openness and resignifiability” (Butler in Miller, 2005, p. 54). My worries then of remembering “right” are not to be worried about and of no particular use. Rather than “worry”, I suggest we “imagine” what could become.

Both Greene (1995) and Miller (2005) ask us to consider imagination with/in our lives and with/in the stories we share and create together. Miller (2005) questions “what might happen to the forms and purposes of autobiography in education if they assumed the potential of imaginative literature to disrupt rather than reinforce static and essentialized versions of our “selves” and our work as educators” (p. 54). Greene (1995) insists that such encounters lead to a “startling defamiliarization of the ordinary” (Greene, 1995, p. 4). Ordinarily, narrative writing is approached in schools as a subject and from the point of view of one person. It is usually one person “telling” their story. This can also be true for pre-service teachers who are encouraged to reflect upon their practice. I describe such narrative writing as a memorization and regurgitation
of what we have been telling ourselves all along. I have experienced this form of narrative writing as a pre-service teacher. At the time, I understood narrative as a recall process that had little to do with creating meaning. I rather concerned myself with remembering “right”. It was a disembodied process, unlike the narrative writing that I am doing now. It is surprising what the body can do when it is engaged with/in a process that is authentic and means something. This narrative (re)writing – the writing journey you have generously become a part of – feels like an intimate performance with no beginning and no end. With/in my performance there are dull moments and then there are not-so-dull moments. There are ambiguous interludes and moments of unease. There are also in-between moments (i.e., encounters) Aoki (1996) calls “centerless spaces”. He describes these spaces as the “intimacy of narration” (1996) where multiple body-narratives reverberate through these pages. One of many things we can learn from these in-between encounters is that embodiments create in excess of words, making it im/possible to remember “right” and find your “true” Self through your prose. The possibilities with/in the process of currere and narrative writing are their acknowledgment of the everyday as a pedagogical place where we can “dis-identify with ourselves and others” (Miller, 2005, p. xiii). If we can (re)imagine our narrative/living in this way we will find ourselves “not mirrored – but in difference” (Miller, 2005, p. xiii). Narrative then becomes an opening to an intimate, in-between space that moves us to imagine living otherwise and in no need of that big-eyed mirror with 10X zoom ability.

**Being-funny: An In-Between Moment of Laughter**

I think we need to break away from that narrow version of humanness by reconstituting the meaning of human in terms of, perhaps, our relation to the earth. If we were to link
the word human with related words like humility, we begin to see a new relationship between self and others. It may help us to remember that human has kinship with humus and humor. We need to move to an earthly place where we can have fun and laugh, too. (Aoki, 1994, p. 75)

It is funny. Returning to my mother’s garden and returning to my six-year-old self, and to the self that bought that wonderful book at the school fair...It is funny. With/in my writing journey, I find myself laughing aloud with these pages. It is really funny how all our travelling, running, and narrating connects. Making these connections shocks my body into laughing – one of many emotions I have experienced– with this text. It is funny how narrative affects.

Kristeva’s (1991) curiosity begs her to ask: “To worry or to smile, such is the choice when we are assailed by the strange” (p. 192). I choose the possibility in-between (i.e., to laugh).

Laughing, I imagine its possibility when we do it together. If narrative texts all but do is make us laugh, well then, is that not something? Roland Barthes (1975) once said that the reader who reads in-between the lines can re-write the text. In re-writing the text we rhizomatically re-write our lives, live in openness to laughter, and always move towards rupturing the root.
Image 6: Until We Meet Again


