SILENT MOMENTS IN EDUCATION

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Silent Moments in Education

An Autoethnography of Learning, Teaching, and Learning to Teach

For Emma and Paul,
always

For Alberto,
remembered always

And for B M L,
some other way

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Contents

Acknowledgments

A long car trip punctuated by rest-stops and rainstorms, side-tracks and torn maps, flat tires and static on the radio: it is an obvious metaphor for the making of a book, but it captures something of the feeling of interminability that makes a writer wonder at times how much further the destination can be. And then suddenly, we arrive.

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Prologue

First Circumnarrative: The Sun

> It matters to stumble after.
> . . . It matters in this time of not-yet sight
> that some skin cells seem sensitized to light.
> — Joy Kogawa, *Itsuka*

It is not a straight line.

January 2006
If an ending is also a beginning, can a beginning be also an ending? And can there be a place where we are neither beginning nor ending, but waiting to do both? I have been wandering around in academic limbo for some time now. For well over two years I have done virtually no work. This time has divided itself roughly into two not-quite-equal parts: caring for a terminally ill loved one, and mourning the death and the permanent absence of that beloved.

Still, it seems as if it might be time to begin, stumbling.

November 2005
Five months after the death of my partner, Alberto Mendelzon, I drive from Toronto to Ottawa to take his place in a ceremony inducting him into the Royal Society of Canada. With me are his sons and my own two children. Our little trip is bittersweet: the five of us joke about the recitations of inductees' (to us strange and even incomprehensible) scientific accomplishments, and roll our

eyes at the dinner speeches, but we feel sadness and regret and loneliness too, because the one to whom all of it would have meant the most is not with us.

The day after the ceremony we drive home, five hours through cold, rainy, late-autumn weather. Our spirits are low. But about halfway home, as we come over the crest of a high hill and see a valley spread out below us, its forest stark and leafless, I catch my breath as the sun breaks through the clouds, just for a moment, and turns the trees' dark wetness to silver. And in that moment, I feel a lifting, a sense of light not just around me but in me. It is not quite a new beginning, not yet, but there is the possibility of beginning.

March 2006
This is taking longer than I expected. I have begun to move forward, but slowly: I am not finished grieving. I know this because, in the way of such things, there are days of feeling quite well, of believing not only that a life less marked by absence might be possible but that I may actually be capable of beginning to live that life. On these days I can read, and think, and even write, at least a little. But there are other days, of a crippling, bewildered hollowness that cannot find its own expression in words and that refuses to let words express anything else either: days passed numbly with memories necessary but painful – the same letters read and reread, the same music played over and over, and conversation, silent and impossible yet imperative, with the one who is gone.

Introduction

I hope the usefulness of what I am embarking upon
lies partly in inviting round the table . . . guests who should
talk to one another but have not yet managed to do so.
                                        – Harold Rosen, *Speaking from Memory*

There was nothing he could do to contravene the certainty
that awaited him: a whole solid clock-ticking afternoon
buried alive in the dark, lonely den
with that goddamned book.
                                                    – Carol Shields, *Happenstance*

Silent Moments

A four-year-old kindergarten pupil is silently, utterly obedient, even
when faced with disagreeable demands from the teacher. A secondary
school student feels drawn to a specific subject area, but vehemently
refuses to enrol in a course with a particular teacher, despite warnings
that this decision could preclude continuing in a beloved discipline.
A university student, despite being familiar with the texts the course
addresses and interested in its concepts, sits at the computer for days
on end, producing nothing, as the due date for the final paper rapidly
approaches. A preservice teacher is eager and obliged to gain practical
experience, but owing to a conflicted relationship with a supervising
teacher finds herself unable to use her new knowledge and skills in a
practicum classroom. An experienced educator, usually confident and
at ease in the classroom, suddenly feels lost, unanchored, cast adrift by

the demands of a new technology she is required to use. Adults in a dance class find their own movements strangely inhibited as a young child moves with abandon among them.

At first these events seem quite unconnected, but for the relationship each of them bears, in one way or another, with education. There are other similarities they share, however. First, despite their disparity, each of them implies something about individual identity on one hand and a relationship on the other, a relationship perhaps between facets of identity, or between individuals, or among individuals, institutions, and ideas, all within the context of education. Second, each encapsulates the notion of some form of difficulty with or breakdown in learning or meaning, and concomitantly in relationship: a moment when an individual learner or teacher – or something inside of that individual – gets stuck, freezes, becomes paralysed, is in one sense or another rendered silent. Third, although each is quite particular in its circumstances and enactment, all are arguably emblematic of broader and deeper difficulties, breakdowns, or silences within the likewise broad and deep world and work of education. Finally, and most significantly in this context, all of these events are autobiographical artefacts of my own educational history.

I grew up in southern Ontario, Canada, attending public elementary and secondary schools in the 1960s and early 1970s, the elder of two daughters who, like almost all of our counterparts, spoke the dominant language (English) and identified as 'white,' although our ethnic heritage (Franco-Manitoban/Aboriginal on the paternal side, and Hungarian/ German on the maternal) made us slightly exotic in what were then almost exclusively Anglo-Irish semi-rural and suburban communities. I was a strong student in academic terms, and but for one brief period when I was 12 and my parents' marriage was coming to an end, and another when, as a grade 11 student, I insisted on dropping English (the first 'silent moment' I speak of in this book), I caused little trouble. At parents' night meetings my teachers occasionally suggested that my talking tended to distract others, but by and large I was considered an exemplary student: in the report-card vernacular of the time, an 'asset to the class.'

Occasional bouts of classroom chatter notwithstanding, life at school, and even more at home, was marked mostly by containment and silence. Worries were held in; high grades were the goal; 'being good' – in the form of unquestioning obedience – was key. I remember being worried when I had to ask questions in class about things I ought already

to have known, and anxious about what would be said at home when a test had come back with a grade lower than A-plus. I recall sneaking out of bed early on dark winter mornings to finish homework I did not want my parents to see for fear of their criticism, and attending class with colds and flu that might have kept other students home, because in my family illness meant weakness and less-than-perfect school attendance was unthinkable.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, under all this surface acquiescence, trouble was brewing. Following secondary school, persuaded by a scholarship (and a grateful, financially strapped mother), I finished a year of university. But by the end of it I was sure that my relationship with education at all levels, and indeed with educators (by that time both my parents had become teachers), was over: I would never return to school. Aside from a few language courses, and a nursing program at a polytechnic that I began but did not finish, I kept that vow for 20 years. By then my own marriage was ending and my children were in school. Influenced, however ironically, by my parents' career choices and by dominant discourses of teaching as appropriate 'women's work' (along with the nursing program I had already tried and rejected), I decided that acquiring an undergraduate degree, and subsequently a primary teaching qualification, would lead to a career that would let me support my family.

Extreme difficulties in the practicum portion of that Bachelor of Education program led to a change in plan. Those difficulties – the 'silent moments' that inform Part 3 of this book – led to my work over the past 10 years in post-secondary teaching, educational research, and graduate studies, and ultimately to the doctoral dissertation that has become this book. Above all they led to my ongoing scholarly interest in moments within education when what is supposed to happen does not happen: when curriculum or pedagogy is resisted, refused, denied; when learners become stuck, frozen, or paralysed; when the self, as learner or teacher, grows silent.

The events enumerated at the start of this introduction are examples of such moments, each of which I either experienced personally or witnessed firsthand at some point during the almost 30 years I have spent in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational settings. Together, they are the kernels of lived experience that have become the empirical jumping-off points for this autoethnographic study. My descriptions of the events and their accompanying difficulties endeavour to articulate those silent memories, while my analyses explore and work with what

the events, difficulties, memories, silences – and ultimately the speaking –
evoke, provoke, resist, and refuse.

From a more abstract vantage point, the study arises from and works
with questions about those and other moments, and about larger is-
sues of identity, difficulty, and relationship in education. How do we,
as individual learners and teachers, make relations with ourselves and
one another, with knowledge, and with ideas? What is at stake in these
relations and in the identities that emerge through and from them?
How, and why, might they at times break down? Can they be remade?
How might they be remembered, thought and rethought, theorized
and re-theorized, over time and in light of their own reiterations,
transformations, re/in/con/versions, evolutions, even revolutions? In
tending to these questions my work moves along some complexly
interconnected routes: my remembered experiences as learner, teacher,
and researcher in education as well as my evolving relationships (also
as learner, teacher, and researcher) with discourses and literatures
that consider such experiences. What deepens my curiosity about the
questions is the sense that they are rendered difficult to answer by the
multiple tensions, silences, and breakdowns embodied within the mo-
ments which they are asking about.

In my earlier work on second language learning (Granger, 2004),
which theorized silence as a presence rather than an absence, psycho-
analytic theory was my hermeneutic of choice for reading language
learners' narratives about silence, and silence within those narratives,
as possible manifestations of intrapersonal loss, conflict, or anxiety ex-
perienced by some second language learners for whom acquiring a new
language might also mean acquiring, or making, a new self. This book
expands that concept of silence outward from language-related iden-
tity issues to other points within the educational sphere at which rup-
tures occur and inaugurate yet other silences. In viewing these silences
as manifestations of intrapersonal difficulties, disruptions or breakdowns
that may have been utterly unspeakable at the time of their occurrence,
and in some cases for many years afterwards, it melds together the three
components – the 'silent moments' themselves, my questions about the
making and breaking of pedagogical relations, and my relationship with
theories that invite thinking about both moments and questions – which
constitute the set of preoccupations informing this book.

My task, then, is to engage different kinds of silence, literal and met-
aphorical, that gesture to, implicate, or are symptomatic of particular
kinds of difficulty or disruption in the work of learning, teaching, and

learning to teach. I wish not to flatten their distinctions, but rather to invoke their commonalities: to consider how such difficulties challenge, resist, or even rupture the wishes and the work of education, writ both small and large, that a protracted conceptual and theoretical conversation with them might invite. This conversation maintains my previous work's primarily psychoanalytic orientation to reading and interpreting the experiences and their silences, and to exploring the questions, but supplements it with elements of critical and feminist discourse analysis.

Of course mine is not the only possible conversation that might be had within the realm of education. The moments I remember, the ways I remember them, and my theorizations and interpretations of them are all informed by multiple factors. First, there is my socio-cultural position as a white, heterosexual, dominant-language-speaking woman who came of age in a part of the world much less diverse than it is today, and in a historical moment in which much of the diversity that did exist – ethnic, linguistic, sexual – was flattened by discourses that denied difference and privileged the trope of 'equal treatment for all' (Harper, 1997a, p. 198).[1] Perhaps this positioning has to do with why my work, while it does engage questions of marginalization and equity, does so from a rather different vantage point than is usual in a North American (and specifically Canadian) context at the beginning of the twenty-first century. But that was not a choice; this book would be less authentic were I to don a cloak of marginalization of a kind and degree that I have not experienced.

My memories and interpretations, and my approach in this work, are additionally informed by my history as an adult learner, and by the discourses and conceptual/interpretive frameworks (primarily psychoanalytic theory and, to a lesser extent, critical discourse analysis) which I bring to bear on both the memories and their interpretations. More particularly, I trace my introduction to this orientation to a little paper by British psychoanalyst Winnicott (1963b), which I first read during those months in a teacher education program when my difficult practicum experience came close to convincing me that I did not belong in education at all.

'*Sum*, I am,' with its doubly meaningful title, addresses the issue of individuation, of the moment when an individual comes to understand him- or herself as separate from other individuals. It also pointed me in the direction of a way of thinking about individuals in relation with others, and with the world, that satisfied my disinclination to flatten either individuals or relations to sets of characteristics attributable to

groups or categories. Again, perhaps this was due to my feeling some-how marginal in spite of not belonging to an identifiable marginalized group. In addition, however, while I knew the tremendous importance of identifying, understanding, and working to change the social fac-tors and processes that privilege some and subordinate others, ap-proaches to doing so which appeared to reduce human experience to categories always seemed to me to be missing part of the puzzle: namely, that part that dealt with how individuals live, and move, and have their being within, or outside of, those categories.

'*Sum*, I am' was my introduction to psychoanalytic theory. And in-deed, while I do work with several other theories, it is no great stretch to read the conversation that forms these chapters as primarily compris-ing manifestations *in* psychoanalytic theory, *of* psychoanalytic theory, *in* and *of* particular times and places, all of which are at once both socially informed and idiosyncratic. In the process of manuscript review pre-ceding the publication of this book, one reader pointed out that 'these interpretations could only have been made by this particular author.' In some ways this is true of all books, but it struck me as very important, because it spoke to that uniqueness that lies at the heart of all our ways of being: each set of experiences is unique in its combination of time and place, inner perspective and outer context, and the individual re-sponses to those factors of the self that is doing the experiencing.

My own combination of influences and responses to experience has informed my choice of what book to write and how to write it. Paradoxically, however, it is also the reason why these were, in a sense, not choices at all. For if it is true, as that reader said, that I am the only author who could have written this particular book, it is also the case that this is the only book I could have written at this point in my own history.

So no, this book is not the only possible conversation. But it is one conversation. And, if all goes well, perhaps it will invite others.

Conceptual Framework: If It's Not One Thing, It's an Other

While it is crucial to recognize that the story these pages tell is em-phatically not the only story that can be told, the point also bears mak-ing that sometimes one person's remembered story, or interpretation of that story, can inform and even nourish another's memory, story, or interpretation, even if on their surfaces they are quite distinct. This is my first wish: that the moments I recall, narrate, and interpret may

open up possibilities for others to think in similar ways about different moments in education, or in different ways about similar moments, or even about different moments in different ways – because sometimes, there are surprises.

Teaching and learning, within an institution peopled by diverse individuals and beset by multiple demands and worries (from the pedagogical to the philosophical, the economic to the ethical, the political to the logistic to the technical), can be an intricate and opaque affair. These concerns imply multiple vantage points that are not unfamiliar to educators. Yet despite theorists' efforts to highlight these various preoccupations, much of current Western education, from curriculum documents to classroom practices, from preschools to universities and even to teacher preparation programs, persists in conducting itself as if such difficult moments were unheard of, progress and success were certain and unequivocal, and the uniform linear development of a homogeneous generation of learners were guaranteed – or, at the very least, that any detours along that presumed straight road of development were predictable, and could be either pre-empted or easily remedied by use of the correct strategy.

Perhaps we should not be surprised by this. Epistemologies informing present-day Western education have, for the most part, long understood progress in general as a steady and incremental journey toward a specific goal, and have privileged predictability and measurability along with Newtonian/Cartesian concepts of the rational, the empirical, and the scientific (see Mitrano, 1981; Britzman, 1998). Alongside this, the myth that education's goals represent consensus among interested parties (including governments, school boards, teachers, students, and communities) has persisted even when those goals either undergo significant change or compete with other goals (Prentice, 1977; Egan, 1997; Labaree, 1997). Only recently has this myth been met with postmodern and deconstructionist challenges (Taubman, 1992; Doll, 1993; Britzman, 1998; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2000; Pitt, 2003).

There are, for example, individuals and groups that dedicate themselves to promoting and implementing constructivism, learner autonomy, student-centred learning, and the like, along with feminist, antiracist, and anti-homophobic discourses and practices, all informed by an overarching ethic of care (see Noddings, 2003; Todd, 2003a), which direct themselves toward social change and the democratic participation of those involved in education. But the hegemonic work of

social and cultural reproduction which education performs, arguably both deliberately and by default, has kept responses to these challenges significantly at bay (Cuban, 1986, 2001; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Britzman, 1991). The visible structures, overt dynamics, and observable practices of mainstream schooling have changed less, and more slowly, than might have been anticipated (Cuban, 1993b; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Apple, 1996).

Hegemony notwithstanding, given the call to attend to all of education's participants in ethical and caring ways, it seems both curious and difficult to reconcile that an institution which on one hand traditionally favours the observable and the measurable and, on the other, explicitly dedicates itself to the success of all those it seeks to serve, should resist, and effectively keep silent about, what to the participant and even to the casual onlooker is evident: education does not proceed in a straight line. Though we might be forgiven for wishing that it did, or imagining or pretending that it does, if we visit a classroom even briefly, converse with a teacher struggling with a new curriculum, or recall moments when our own learning was sidetracked by theoretical, technological, or personal vicissitudes, we are compelled to recognize that our wish is probably futile, our pretence likely in vain.

For an ethical response to any difficulty to be attainable, education must recognize that that difficulty might be something more and other than a readily observed, easily overcome blip in an otherwise smooth learning curve. The idea that the difficult not only resides in specific subject matter, government policy, or institutional processes, but also lives in and acts upon (and at times silences) the psyche of the individual participant in education, points to the usefulness of studying those intrapersonal dynamics, and the moments where they fall silent, as a way to begin, ethically and with care, to respond to and work with the larger scenes – and the larger silences – of education.

This can mean trouble though, for while educators want to respond ethically and with care to students' difficulties and worries, it is not always easy to know what those difficulties and worries are. It is even harder to act ethically in responding, for example to a breakdown in meaning, when the possibility of breakdown is itself not acknowledged (Britzman, 1998). The problem of precisely knowing or clearly understanding another's difficulty, of hearing and responding fully to another's silence, is part of the more fundamental problem of that Other's alterity.

Knowing the Other may be more than a mere problem: it may be quite impossible. Working closely with Levinas's idea (1987, p. 83) that

the 'Other as Other is not only an alter ego . . . [but also, precisely,] what I myself am not,' Todd (2003a, p. 3) understands the Other's difference as 'absolute' and the Other as 'infinitely unknowable.' Still, Todd argues (p. 9), we must not be discouraged by this. For it is precisely the unknowability of the Other, in her words the nonreciprocity and fundamental strangeness that inevitably characterize and circumscribe self-other relations, which can give rise to the possibility for an ethical engagement with that Other, provided we give up the too-easy and even misguided belief that learning about other people is sufficient to generate an ethical response to them and, more generally, to difference itself. At the very least, it seems, such learning about can, in a Levinasian conceptualization, be only part of what constitutes an ethical response, since learning about or knowing about an 'unassimilable and unknowable alterity' (p. 9) can only ever be partial at best.

Learning *about* is insufficient: we must also learn *from.* Todd cites Freud (1919), Phillips (1998), and Britzman (1998) on the importance of distinguishing between the two processes. Britzman, Phillips, and Todd find psychoanalytic theories instructive for developing ways to learn from others, and Todd (2003a, p. 10) specifically identifies the encounter with otherness as both prerequisite to meaning-making and conducive to 'connections, disjunctions and ruptures' in the self. The qualities of the *encounter with* an Other and a *learning from* that Other may not be altogether oppositional, particularly if we consider that connections can form out of what is disjointed, that a rupture can become an opening, that meaning might be made from a breakdown in meaning. And in that sense, perhaps learning *from* another might engender learning, in the form of insight (literally, seeing-in), *about* one's self.

This may seem an obvious notion, but aspects of it are neither straightforward nor simple. My work is emphatically not a declaration that either the story of one individual's learning or the silences within that story can be extrapolated to another's. Even less does it claim that what can be interpreted from one story (or its silences) can be applied to all. To pretend that would be arrogant and, in light of the foregoing brief discussion of alterity, patently false. I share the view that each of us is other to, and in important ways unknowable by, one another. What is more, I contend, following the lead offered by psychoanalysis, that in profound ways we are unknown and unknowable even to ourselves. This idea, of the self's imperfect accessibility to itself, locates itself centrally in psychoanalytic theory's foundational concept of the unconscious; its paradoxical nature is summed up in Lacan's view that the self is 'other to itself' (Fink, 1995, p. 7).

But how are we to move from the self as *other to itself*, in important ways silent to itself, unknown and not-quite-knowable, to a consideration of those deeper silences, those perplexing larger unknowns? Perhaps a partial answer to that question lies within a curious double paradox: first, of trying to know that Other's interiority, which in the end is simply not knowable; and second, of the ways learning from others might disrupt the likewise not-fully-known and not-quite-knowable self. Todd takes the view that it is

> precisely because the Other is seen to be that which disrupts its coherency [that] the subject tumbles into uncertainty, its past strategies for living challenged by the very strangeness of difference itself ... In gaining insight, one risks altering the very parameters of self-perception and one's place in the world, and risks losing, therefore, one's bearings and conventions. (2003a, p. 11)

If this is so, and if, as Todd further maintains, 'the encounter with otherness becomes the necessary precondition for meaning and understanding' (2003a, p. 10), it may be that the personal (Pitt, 2003) and the anecdotal (Gallop, 2002) can help us. At least that is my second wish, an expansion of the first, as I offer my personal and my anecdotal: my silences made them (or allowed them to) speak. I take the position here, similar to my claim in the second language learning context, that autobiographical writing, and particularly autoethnography, can raise opportunities for thinking about how individual silences might resonate with larger institutional and cultural ones. Specifically, just as the manifest content of any story leaves something out, 'knowing' (or thinking we know) leaves out what is not and cannot be known, including, obviously, whether or not that unknown might itself be of use. Tolerating *not-knowing* might thus allow us to *think* – about, with, and through our questions.

The Shape of the Study: 'Every Moment Is Two Moments'[2]

The structure, content, and goals of this book are informed by the dual route I have taken in arriving at it: silent moments from my life in education, and the close reading-, thinking-, and working-through of those moments. These components work side by side and together in what is remembered and narrated, and in the larger silences in and around these moments and memories. More specifically, I start with narratives

of moments which vary in content and in form: a somewhat unconventional mix of journal entries and remembered experiences, personal observations and communications, classroom 'texts,' and artefacts of several kinds, all chosen for their evocative, even provocative, qualities.

Moments, stories, and silences constitute both text and context, and the book as a whole, with its aim of expanding and deepening thinking about intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional relations, is a circuitous and sometimes even messy engagement that doubles back upon itself again and again in a mutually recursive conversation between the personal on one hand and the culture of education on the other.

This introduction is bracketed by the first and second of what I am naming *circumnarratives*: short passages describing events outside the strict boundaries of the study but which nevertheless affect and guide what goes on within it. Here the form of my work resonates somewhat with that of Fowler (2006), who intersperses chapters about narrative research with tales of 'difficulty in teaching' that she calls *internarratives* (p. vii), as well as with that of Miller (2005), who follows Richardson (1997) in layering *interludes* between her chapters which 'explore and highlight the situated nature of knowledge-making that the process of rereading one's work compels,' and consider questions of ambivalence about the chapters themselves (Miller, 2005, pp. 9–10). While this book does not constitute a 'rereading' in precisely the same sense as Miller's, the work of turning and returning between the present and the past, and the relationship between events internal and external to the self, are cornerstones of my thinking.

The circumnarratives serve personal and methodological aims. They mark the idiosyncratic methodology that I develop, set out, and use, informing a significant part of my work's context. My reluctance to leave them out is supported by Behar's (1996) and Pelias's (2004) notions of heartfelt methodologies and by Fowler's contention that narrative can be 'a starting point for authentic research' (2006, p. 8), as well as for getting at 'untold and darker stories that need to emerge and be examined' (p. 27). Fowler distinguishes between such darker stories and the 'happier' (often fictional) tales of teaching that dominate, for instance, Hollywood's vision of education. My circumnarratives are not fictional, and they are not explicitly about teaching or learning, but I include them as *circum-* (or *meta-*)[3] level meditations on the processes of thinking about ideas, and about the work of writing, and equally as phenomenological reflections on real-life events that inform, interfere with, disrupt, and yet potentially enrich both the processes and the ideas.

The book is divided into three parts. Taken together, the chapters of Part 1 contextualize the whole work, and in particular its principal theme of silence, in terms of literature on ethnography, autoethnography, discourse analysis, and psychoanalytic theory. They also engage conceptual questions about the multiple, inconstant dynamics of forgetting and remembering, the partiality of narrative, and the complex pushes and pulls of the personal in academic writing to underscore the importance of finding ways of working with and through silence. These discussions are interwoven with a personal story, told several ways, which drives the making of a methodology for reading silence even as it explores the application of that methodology: two strands moving in a kind of hermeneutic choreography.

Chapter 1 traces a path through ethnography and autoethnography as research genres, and discourse analysis and psychoanalysis as hermeneutic frameworks, to arrive at my concept of *psychoanalytic autoethnography* as a methodological/interpretive process for reading personal narratives of difficult moments or silences. This is followed by a short, 'bare-facts' story of a refusal to learn – the book's first 'silent moment' – and a brief overview of branches of discourse analysis that invite thinking about what is both present in and absent from narratives of educational experience.

In Chapter 2, I recast a new version of those 'facts' from a different angle, in the light of Foucauldian and feminist theories of discourse. Raising the idea of recursion to consider how stories of experience, and reflection on them, can mutually inform and help to evolve one another, I call on psychoanalytic theory as a hermeneutic within the autoethnographic framework and use concepts of deferred action, repression, and memory to examine how moments are recalled, retold, worked through, reworked, and remade, again and again. This chapter also uses my narrative to introduce the notion of the personal in research, as well as some of the complex aspects of autobiography and memory that unsettle questions about the value to research of narrative generally, and autoethnography in particular.

Thus the first two chapters are a stepping-off point for discussing process, structure, and informing concepts. The third chapter follows Althusser and Balibar (1972, p. 28), offering a symptomatic reading that 'divulges [what is] undivulged' in a third articulation (or *re*-articulation) of the same narrative. In consultation with its psychoanalytic underpinnings – the interruptions of trauma, repression, desire denied – this reading works outward from my story's idiosyncrasies to reflect on how

desire in education is made from longings that contain, but are not fully contained by, genitally focused sexuality. This chapter, indeed all of Part 1, addresses thinking about desire in teaching and learning by showing how a learner's response to the traumatic disruption of desire, in the form of denial or repression, can work unconsciously to thwart personal and institutional objectives and to keep at bay both the curriculum and knowledge of the self and its desires in ways that seem counterproductive but are psychically crucial.

In Part 2, following the third circumnarrative, I shift the choreography of methodologies onto two stages in my theatre of reading-and-interpretation. The narratives of Chapters 3 and 4 comprise several texts which embody silences of various kinds. Each recounts or represents moments in educational contexts; all connect with broad educational concerns. Together they function as inaugural points for a twofold discussion comprising a critical discourse analysis and a psychoanalytic conversation: between relevant concepts, stories of silent moments, and the large pedagogical issues to which both are connected.

In Chapter 4 I move the theme of desire explored in Part 1 onto new terrain, to work with psychoanalytic considerations of curiosity and sexuality vis-à-vis the role of the unconscious in bringing desire to the forefront in an educational context, despite efforts and mandates on the part of the institution to bury that desire. I invoke several pedagogical texts, or moments, that embody different silences, first asking why young children's curiosity about their bodies poses a difficulty for education such that curricula and practice endeavour, however ineffectually, to silence that curiosity. Beginning with social constructs of children's sexuality and sexual curiosity followed by a critical reading of related developmentally appropriate practice discourse, I turn to Freudian concepts of polymorphous perversity, pleasure and unpleasure, repression, and defence against curiosity, to argue that children's unconscious wishes and desires, silenced in (and not consciously remembered by) adults, may return to make themselves heard from within those silent gaps. I then reflect on how, through this return, education and educators might be inviting in precisely the childhood curiosity they seem to want to shut out.

Chapter 5 considers a kind of silence inaugurated by educational changes such as those demanded by new technologies. Here I reflect on my own experiences and those of some teachers I have come to know through research, examining from a critical sociological standpoint some of the changes to teachers' work imposed by mandates for computer use. Looking next at how discourses of education create and

reinforce the teacher's position as classroom locus of knowledge and power, I show how computers can alter both the nature of the teacher's work and her sense of herself-as-a-teacher. Finally, I reflect on how computers and the relation of teachers and students to them embody a particular set of implications in which the psychical and the professional knit together and inform one another. I take up psychoanalytic notions of transference and the Lacanian mirror stage to read the computer itself as an artefact that can silence and dislocate the teacher and disrupt her relationship to her students, and the call to use it as embodying the demand that the teacher 'translate' herself in ways potentially threatening to her identity.

Following the fourth circumnarrative, Part 3 returns to some of the worries about writing the self raised in Part 1, expanding them into a self-referential meditation on the writing process. It then moves that meditation and its informing events into the uncertain world of the student teacher, for if practising teachers at times have trouble with multiple demands to change their practices and their selves, the trouble is doubled for those learning to teach. The student teacher – even the name is contradictory – is 'neither here nor there' and at the same time both here *and* there: teaching and learning, instructing and being instructed, talking and listening, assessing and being assessed. Despite efforts of teacher education programs, the individual learning to teach may be caught in a moment that is intense, complex, and ambiguous, and which embodies unique silences informed by that ambiguity.

In these chapters I look behind the difficulties to ask – Why are they difficult? And what are the qualities of the silences that serve as responses to the difficulties? Chapter 6 offers a theoretical speculation on difficult moments in the process of learning to teach, beginning with some of the preconceptions that student teachers bring with them to their preservice programs. It continues with a Foucauldian reading of the complex power relations that inhere in teacher education, and more specifically in divisions between teachers and learners, theory and practice, and old and new theories. This is followed by a psychoanalytic speculation in which I suggest that learning to teach parallels the second-language learning process, in that both may be marked by a partial inability to define, articulate, position, or express a self. I then invoke the concepts of mourning, melancholia, and object- and ego-splitting as ways to think about the psychical losses and silences that can accompany the gains inherent in the process of learning to teach.

Chapter 7 shifts to the landscape of a particular classroom, beginning with a meta-level reflection on the psychoanalytic concept of the

split-off intellect and an examination of how that concept has informed my own thinking and my work within, and outward from, my silent moments. I offer an autoethnographic case study, using narratives and textual artefacts from my practice-teaching experience as a locus for a twofold reading of the complexities of my relationship with my practicum host teacher. The first level of analysis explores the dynamics of that relationship using Foucauldian concepts such as discipline, authority, and resistance. The second part looks at some of the ways psychoanalytic notions of transference and (re)translation invite a consideration of interpersonal dynamics inside the practicum classroom. I use my experience to consider how those dynamics might echo other earlier ones, notably in the mother/child dyad, and to offer new ways to think about the complex silence of the student teacher as a kind of hyphenated individual caught in the liminal space of learning to teach.

Three parts; seven chapters; many moments. This work invites recognition of some of the psychical complexities and costs, as well as the benefits, of various pedagogical relationships. My goal is to contest assumptions that those relationships are constant, transparent, and straightforwardly understood, and to suggest that part of their significance and their usefulness may at times rest in the very opacity of their silences. My proposition is that education, rather than simply attempting to conquer or eliminate those silences, might do well to make the time and take the care to work ethically and compassionately with, in, and through them.

Onward: let us begin.

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PART 1

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