Theoretically Speaking – An Autoethnographic Journey in Crossing Disciplines to Being-Becoming a Practical Scholar

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Abstract
Becoming a PhD scholar requires a change in identity and new ways of thinking. This is difficult for those from practical backgrounds who struggle to merge the theoretical/scholarly with the creative/practical. Moving towards the scholarly often calls for the unlearning of previously held truths. Starting autoethnographically, metaphorical drawings opened up space for critical reflection – crucial to researching oneself. Three metaphorical drawings were made for seminal points in my journey from a fashion design lecturer to a PhD scholar. Each drawing is accompanied by a short narrative and further analysed through conversations with my PhD supervisor. In writing the narratives and dialogue, deeper insights were gained in understanding the role of theory, allowing me to see how my identity was shifting into that of being a scholar. Simultaneously, using visuals as tangible objects allowed me to challenge the familiar while drawing on the resources of my practical background. The result was the inherent alignment of theory and practice, a deeper understanding of the changes within my identities and the alignment of my disparate selves. The use of visual methods has value for others wishing to find a way to bring the strengths of their current disciplines into a more scholarly realm whilst easing the transition.

Keywords: Discourse, arts-based research, metaphorical drawing, autoethnography

Introduction
Early-career academics often struggle to acclimatise to the demands of academia (Chitanand 2015; McMillan and Gordon 2017). Researching and writing from a scholarly stance requires a different way of thinking and many PhD students contend with developing this manner of thinking (Netolicky 2017). Becoming scholarly is made more difficult for those from practical disciplines (Ennals *et al.* 2015), such as fashion design, where scholarly research is not emphasised in undergraduate education (Harvey and Lucking 2017).

This is where I had found myself – I am currently grappling with my PhD in Education. I am a lecturer at a University of Technology, where I teach fashion design. I come from a practical background, trained in and now teaching a professional discipline which focuses on practical skills (Smal and Lavelle 2011). Becoming a PhD scholar required me to move into a scholarly and theoretical way of thinking. Yet, I found myself unprepared for the demands of a PhD in Education; unable to merge the theoretical nature of the PhD with the practical nature of my discipline.

In this paper, I explore my journey from fashion designer to academic scholar. My experience of moving from my practical everyday world to the theoretical world of scholarly research was difficult because it required renegotiating my identity. I questioned who I was as a lecturer and

a scholar. How had I come to be within my own context? In crossing disciplines from fashion to education, I was evolving and changing.

Visual methods and multidisciplinarity provide a diverse toolkit which has allowed me to bridge these disciplines and draw on the strengths of my practical background to interrogate who I am and who I was becoming. Using a multidisciplined approach, which included metaphorical drawings, narratives and conversation helped me to find a way for my disparate identities to communicate, rather than waging war with each other. The result is a deeper understanding of my own selves, embedded in the unique socio-cultural context which I occupy. As a lecturer at a University of Technology, teaching a professional discipline, moving into a theoretical world, my socio-cultural context shaped my becoming.

A multidisciplinary autoethnographic approach has value for others who may be crossing worlds from practitioner to scholar, or who are struggling to integrate the creative-practical into the scholarly-theoretical. I used autoethnography to give voice to my own experiences, hoping to bring to light ignored or unseen perspectives so that they might resonate with others.

Literature – Stepping Outside
Identity is an abstract but contextual construct. Our concepts of "self" are multiple, as we have different identities for each position that we take up in our day-to-day life. Stetsenko (2010: 7) argues that "social practices are viewed as producing not only knowledge but also *identities*" (emphasis added), and that these are contextual when understood in relation to our interactions. Identity is a resource which individuals use to navigate social relations, developing identities through and within social connections (Day *et al.* 2006). Thesen (2009) explains that identity is not separate from our actions, but instead, identities are *developed and performed* through actions within a socio-cultural context. We are who we are in the context of other people. We learn from others as we unconsciously adapt the socially negotiated ways of being (Dall'Alba 2009; Gee 2008; Stetsenko 2010).

These "ways of being" are Discourses with a capital "D" (Gee 2008), which refer to the collectively agreed ways for each social group to act, think, speak and be. Discourses – including subtle, unspoken and sometimes invisible aspects – are tied into how identity is constructed in different social positions. Being a member of a Discourse means not just saying the right words at the right time but *being* the right person. Membership shapes the way in which you think and who you are, moulding identities.

Fashion as a professional discipline is perceived as creative and practical, and is frequently seen as not scholarly or academic (Bill 2012; Harvey and Lucking 2017). This resonates with my personal experience, where my own "articulation into further studies" (Harvey and Lucking 2017:134) was difficult and I felt unprepared for the academy.

When I started lecturing, I had no training in how to teach. This is common in professional discipline education (Chitanand 2015). Adapting to the academic environment is difficult for discipline professionals who take on teaching positions (Ennals *et al.* 2015). I attempted to address my shortfalls as a lecturer through my own research. However, I could see that my informal learning was not addressing my underlying lack of educational training. The next step was to pursue my PhD in Education, where I could learn to be a better lecturer for my students and further my own growth.

Although I had expected becoming a PhD scholar to be difficult, I was overwhelmed by what it actually entailed. Much like Dillow (2009: 1338), who found herself caught "between the need to be scholarly and the desire to be evocative", I struggled to understand the role of theory in my study.

During PhD cohort meetings, I felt like an outsider. The other students had studied education in their undergraduate and master's degrees. They dropped the names of long-dead theorists,

spoke philosophically about the meaning of truth (socially constructed realities and positivist understandings of what it means to "know") and referred to theories like old friends (often by their nick names – what on earth was "SIT" (Social Identity Theory) anyway?). I attended these sessions mostly confused. I felt like I didn't belong.

I was an outsider to the School of Education, and the Discourse of educational research was another world entirely. How could I cross boundaries and step inside while still remaining true to my roots as a practitioner and fashion design lecturer?

Unlearning
As a fashion designer, I had been socialised into practical and visual ways of being. Trying to cross disciplines into education required me to not only develop a different, more scholarly identity but to learn how to think differently. In order to do this, I first needed to unlearn what I thought I knew. As a practitioner, I had "learned" that theory was something to fight with and that academics was a scary place where people "like me" didn't belong. To become a scholar, I needed to unlearn these "truths" and re-evaluate my understanding of research.

Through "the undoing of earlier learning" (Christie *et al.* 2007: 4), I could adapt to the very different ways of learning, thinking and knowing that being a PhD scholar required of me.

But how do we unlearn? Mannay (2015: 4) advocates using visuals "as a tool to fight familiarity and engender defamiliarization". Artmaking allows us to see in a new way, creating the space to "dialogue differently with one another" (Guyotte *et al.* 2018: 121). In doing so, we are able to shift away from the accepted and every day towards the unthought (St. Pierre 1997). This allows us to challenge and interrogate what we know or assume by bringing the hidden into sight. If using visuals in research can "literally help us see things differently" (Mitchell, Weber and Pithouse 2009), then my socialisation as a fashion designer could become a tool to help me gain new perspective in questioning my everyday experiences. Interrogating my assumptions and critically investigating the "familiar" would help me to unlearn and understand not only who I was, but who I am becoming on this journey.

The act of artmaking can carve out spaces for deep reflection, while capturing the "nuances" of one's lived experiences, where writing alone would not be enough (Guyotte *et al.* 2018). Integrated art allows us to "transcend language and cultural barriers" (Pratt and Peat 2014: 10), moving toward visual communication. Art has the power "to jar people into seeing things differently, to transcend differences, and to foster connections" (Leavy 2009: viii). As a fashion designer, I have seen the creative power of art to evoke strong reactions in viewers, disrupting the assumed. Using visuals allows scholars to approach research holistically and "merge their scholar-self with their artist-self" (Leavy 2009: 2).

I began my unlearning by drawing metaphors.

Methodology – Connecting Pen to Paper, Artist to Scholar
Intangible concepts like identity are subjective and difficult to quantify. Autoethnographic methods have forged a path to researching such matters gaining acceptance in mainstream research communities. Scholars like Bochner and Ellis (2016), Chang (2008) and Ellis (2016) have written extensively about the merits of autoethnography, explaining that the study of one's self can give voice to the unheard. In opening up these previously ignored experiences, we are able to create space for transformation, growth and healing (Ellingson and Ellis 2008).

Self-study methods allow the researcher to include their unique experiences and better understand the role of culture in practice (McDonnell 2017). It is especially important for educators to study themselves in order to interrogate the way things are (Barkhuizen 2008; Dall'Alba 2009), which echoes Mannay's (2015) call for defamiliarization. Autoethnography calls us to research the "intricately intertwined" relationship between culture and individuals

(Chang 2008 44), unpacking how we are connected to and constructed through our socio-cultural contexts.

Leavy writes about "a disjuncture between my researcher identity and artist identity" (2009: viii). She advocates for a holistic research approach which includes not only epistemology, ontology and theory, but aligns to the researcher's own practice. Traditional research methods have not allowed me to link theory and methods with my practice. I have struggled as a creative/practitioner to see how the theory/scholarly fits into my research. Leavy shows that arts-based research resonates with who one is "within and beyond the academy" (2009: viii). Theory is not a relegated aspect, but integral to the research design. In keeping with this, I have chosen autoethnography and arts-based methods to create a holistic approach to my study.

Articulating complex constructs like identity development is difficult in words alone (Thomas and Beauchamp 2011). Creating metaphors is useful in abstract thinking and in understanding deeper, embedded meanings (Tidwell and Manke 2009). I use metaphor drawing to communicate visually, moving beyond words and language, to interrogate the meaning of words, and to disrupt the familiar (Mannay 2015). Metaphor drawings provide opportunities for "creating multiple layers of reflection" which assist in generating "deeper and deeper understandings of our practice" (Tidwell and Manke 2009: 150).

Although the visuals used are important, they are only a part of the narrative (Mannay 2015). The stories we tell to explain these visuals, the interviews, the written prose which accompanies; all these form part of an existing narrative. For instance, how autoethnography aims to situate the self in context (Chang 2008), the visual must be similarly contextualised. Narrative and visual imagery work together to describe a concept, but the images cannot stand on their own, and the narratives are more engaging and enhanced by the visuals (Mannay 2015). For this reason, I used metaphorical drawings to unlearn.

My data analysis had three layers: the metaphorical drawings; written narratives; and conversations with others. I have drawn three metaphors representing the seminal points in my journey of crossing disciplines. The first drawing, *Reflective Stance*, represents my struggle with being an outsider to a new Discourse. The second, *Opening Up*, explains how my ways of thinking began to change towards this new discipline. The third, *Repositioning of Self*, captures how I have come to theory, having found a way for my artistic and researcher selves to merge.

Each drawing is accompanied by a short narrative to explain what is represented. These narratives provide a second layer of analysis, as they are a reflection on what was drawn and why. Barkhuizen (2008) argues that narratives allow researchers to reflect critically while opening space for the contextual, maintaining that teaching cannot be separated from the context in which it takes place.

The third layer of analysis comes in the form of a conversation with my supervisor, where in describing the metaphors, new data came to light. In the retelling, I am able to become more reflexive through the responses of others (McDonnell 2017). The conversations allowed me to contextualise each metaphor within my journey of being/becoming. I transcribed these conversations verbatim, creating a further and deeper reflection.

These drawings act as snapshots of frozen moments in time, capturing not only what was then happening, but also thoughts, emotions and beliefs. Thus, metaphorical drawings capture "transgressive data", which St Pierre (1997: 175) explains as "emotional data, dream data, sensual data, and response data". This transgressive data was important in understanding the fuller and deeper picture of my emerging identities. Using metaphorical drawings allowed me to capture the nuances of such data as tangible, tactile objects – physical drawings connecting my artistic self to my scholarly self. Bridging these selves allows me to bring my resources as a fashion designer into my new identity as a researcher, but it was only through the drawings that I began to understand this.

Although the methods used in this paper do not produce generalisable data, there is value in the personal data. Sharing these personal narratives can resonate with others, changing the way they view things, opening up new possibilities for ourselves and them. The retelling of our narratives on a public platform opens us up to dialogue and critique, which can deepen understanding and cause us to re-evaluate what we hold as being true.

Further, although positivist notions of rigor and validity cannot and should not be applied to qualitative studies (Dwyer and emerald 2017; Loh 2013), qualitative studies should aim for "trustworthiness" (Loh 2013). Each study needs be approached differently and there is no formula for trustworthiness, but overarching strategies can help ensure this – verisimilitude (whether narratives "ring true"); member checking (allowing others to read, comment and change what is written about them); utility (is the research useful and relevant to others?); and transparency (acknowledging biases, being overt about the processes which lead to the findings, as well as continual and evident reflection) (Dwyer and emerald, 2017; Ellis 2016; Loh 2013).

I have attempted to remain reflexive throughout this paper, and have quoted my narratives and verbatim transcriptions where relevant. Part of my data analysis comes from conversations with my supervisor, Prof. Daisy Pillay, and she has read and agreed to the publication of these quotations.

Findings - Theoretical war

Figure 1: Reflective stance

[Extract from *Reflective Stance* metaphor]
This metaphor depicts how I felt during the drafting of my PhD proposal.
The shimmering figures represent different theories and philosophies. They are unfinished, the lines stop and disappear in places. Their forms are unclear – half-seen and half-invisible. I couldn't clearly see or understand what these theories were meant to be. I felt like they were beating me down, using words as weapons, concepts I couldn't understand delivering blow after overwhelming blow. I kept questioning my choice to pursue a PhD in Education.

> Kaila: …when I started my PhD, I was struggling with it. Everyone was using these words I didn't know and speaking about these authors I had never heard of. Talking about these things that made complete sense to them, but because I was coming in as an outsider to the university and coming from a practical basis, I felt like I was fighting with all these theories. And I was trying to find a way in, but nothing made sense. And I felt really like… bruised…I was kind of like beaten down and just struggling…And these forms aren't clear, they aren't solid in my mind because they're so hard to pin down.

In explaining my metaphors to my supervisor, I was forced to reflect on the choices I had unconsciously made. She asked about aspects I had not considered. In explaining, I made new connections. In our conversations, I described the ethereal non-human figures as "different schools of thought". I felt lost in trying to understand which theories I should be using.

> Kaila: Whose shoulders are you going to stand on? In the beginning I didn't know any of this stuff. So, it was all just really overwhelming to be told you need to find a theory and then use it to ground you, when I had no idea at all.

During our conversations, she pointed out that I had drawn myself as "grounded". When I drew the metaphor, I had seen this as being beaten down, unable to stand up for myself. Her interpretation of my drawing opened up new meanings, allowing me to make new connections:

> Daisy: …You're still saying, "Okay, I am still very much grounded in my practice…" For me, you're still very grounded… "I'm stable. I'm not going to fall."
> (Pillay 2019)

I was drawing on my practice as a fashion designer and lecturer to keep myself from falling. It wasn't about standing up; it was about staying grounded in who I already was to find a new path to becoming. My artist self was *helping* my researcher self instinctively, even if I didn't realise it at first.

> Kaila: … I kind of thought about it always externally, maybe at surface level. But thinking about what you were saying about [the figures] being part of me and having an internal struggle. Maybe that's what it is a lot more. Because, when you are doing your PhD, yeah, it's really hard but no one sees you physically struggling. It's not like you go to war and come back and you've got wounds. It's all inside your head. But that…what's happening inside your head is basically a war [laughing].
> Daisy: Exactly, exactly…Every step of the way it's a war [laughing].
> (Pillay, 2019)

It was only through our conversation that I was able to see that I was waging an internal, but unnecessary, war with my own identities. Even though I felt like I was struggling, my artistic self had been trying to help me. The act of drawing allowed me to give my practitioner self a voice, but the process of explaining my drawing allowed my researcher-self to actually hear and understand the message.

Application – Theory inherent in practice
"You need to think through and *with* theory. *Theorise* what you are doing." The cohort leaders spoke with conviction.

Their words made sense on a rational level, but I kept thinking *how?!* How was I supposed to use theories to frame what I was going to do when I didn't know what I wanted to do?

Change is a process, and as I underwent shifts in my identities, my ways of acting, thinking and doing changed gradually. Catalysts for this change are hard to pinpoint. It was a series of smaller, seemingly insignificant experiences, interactions and thoughts. Perhaps it was a conversation with colleagues, chats with friends, maybe words said during a cohort meeting, something I read? But, as my ways of thinking changed, I started to understand what I was reading.

Pivotal was Davids and Waghid's (2017) argument that theory and practice are inextricably linked. In acting, we theorise even though it may not be conscious. We have not acted thoughtlessly.

In my practice, I knew that what I read changed how I thought about teaching and how I taught. But these thoughts were unconscious; that wasn't the same as theorising. Or was it? The theories I was reading about were not abstract concepts sitting behind walls of philosophical detachment, and not useful in my everyday life. Rather, theories were tools to understand my own context, to explain as well as guide my actions. Like Dillow (2009), I had come to understand the role of theory in my study.

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Knowledge is rendered significant when introduced "as practical, valuable tools applicable, and therefore meaningful, in particular socio-cultural practices" (Stetsenko 2010: 12). As I began to see that theory was relevant and helpful, it became meaningful and easier to understand. Leavy (2009: ix) explains that there is a "natural affinity between research practice and artistic practice". Leavy's (2009) argument that a holistic research approach is often impossible in traditional methodologies opens space for emergent methodologies like arts-based research and autoethnography. The natural link between art (my practice) and research (my theorising) is enhanced through these methodologies. If theory is inherent in practice (Davids and Waghid, 2017), aligning my research to my practice allows me to integrate theories which resonate with my practice.

Understanding how theory is inherent to practice, I noticed the influence which Gee's (2008) Discourse Theory had on my teaching. I was making the ways of being, thinking and acting like a fashion designer more overt for students. I was moving away from teaching knowledge and skills to teaching understanding.

I now saw theories as allies. Reading about Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979), which my cohort peers affectionately call SIT, I saw how it applied to my own life. Although I considered myself to be a member of the fashion design Discourse, I was a complete outsider in the Education Discourse. I was not part of the "in-group".

SIT posits that identity is formed through an individual's relationship with others. Who we are is shaped by belonging or un-belonging to social groupings. I had chosen to cross disciplines and become a member of an entirely different group. This group of Doctors and becoming-Doctors had well established characteristics and ways of being that I did not. Trying to find a way "in" required me to change *how* I was and *who* I was. As theory became an ally, I understood this group more. On an unconscious level, I was changing how I saw the world. The cohort sessions and supervision meetings were only part of it. My conversations with others reflected this change in thinking. I was using theory to build a framework which helped me to understand how I perceived the world and what was shaping my identities within my own context.

Figure 2: Opening up

[Extract from *Opening Up* narrative]
This metaphorical drawing crystallises how I felt as I was concluding my proposal defence. In contrast to the first metaphor, the figures in this drawing are solid, more definite. This represents how I have come to understand theory in a more explicit way. Here, the figures are not entirely human, but have their own characteristics. The figure on the left is more feminine, in blues and silvers. The figure on the right is more masculine, in metallics, reds and greens. They are unique, but still alien.

Kaila: …they're [the figures] very solid. They have a very definite presence because I've come to understand them, come to know them, come to form them through my own perspective.
Daisy: So, they're not…coming to get you. Rather, they're extensions of you. To think. Because they're your heads. You've got three heads now (Pillay 2019).

It was only in conversation about the metaphorical drawing that I was able to see that there was a deeper meaning. I had thought that I was drawing anthropomorphic representations of theories. Daisy pointed out that possibly these were "extensions" of me. Reflecting now, I can see that these figures could have been my different personalities finally speaking to each other, to me. They are helping me think, not waging an internal war.

People occupy multiple Discourses simultaneously (Gee 2008). Each person was raised into a primary Discourse – how you are socialised into your socio-cultural context as a child. Once we have reached adulthood, this primary Discourse becomes cemented into our lifeworld Discourse, who we are as an "ordinary" everyday person. Our lifeworld Discourse is our overarching identity, in all of our many positions. Secondary Discourses denote who you are within different specific social groupings, such as a professional or religious.

The metaphor drawing could be interpreted as my lifeworld Discourse represented by the middle figure. The other two figures could represent the conflicting secondary Discourses of practitioner and scholar. Following Daisy's interpretation of the figures as extensions of myself, the first metaphorical drawing shows the fight between my many selves, my many secondary Discourses, still forming and changing. Here, my previously conflicting secondary Discourses were now working side by side, with my lifeworld Discourse.

This metaphor shows a frozen moment in my journey, when I was starting to understand that theory was inherent in my practice. Here I was learning that I did not need to fight with these Discourses, that they were not contradictory. Reaching this point had not been easy:

> Kaila: Because I was crossing disciplines, I was crossing…institutions, and the way of operating. A traditional university versus a practical university. Reading about people I'd never heard of, reading about theories that didn't make sense to me. Making things go on a different level. Opening up that scholarliness was really, really difficult. And in crossing it, I've come to find that theory is an ally. Not something to be grappled with.
> Daisy: Something that supports you, rather than works against you (Pillay 2019).

Now I was able to see that I was supported by my practitioner self, not in conflict with it.

Thinking with three heads

Figure 3: Repositioning of self

> "I have a feeling there'll be a third one." (Pillay 2019)

A third metaphor for this journey? At the time I felt that I had reached the end of my journey to theory. Daisy saw something I didn't. As I transcribed our conversation, I started to see it too. Reflecting on our conversation, I began to see things differently.

The phrase stuck out:

> Daisy: …for me the opening up is bringing in these extensions almost that can help you. It's almost like having three heads. Instead of one head.
> (Pillay 2019)

[Extract from *Repositioning of Self* narrative]
Cerberus, from the ancient Greek myth, is the three-headed hound, the gatekeeper between worlds.

I've depicted my experience of moving towards a scholarly position using the metaphor of Cerberus. In this drawing, Cerberus is seated, and I am on his back. I am beginning to feel comfortable with theory, and use theory to carry me forward, like having three heads to think with. Cerberus is my three heads, allowing me to cross between the worlds of the theoretical, the practical and everyday life.

Each head has its own personality. The heads can look in the same direction, but sometimes they oppose each other. Each head has its own colour highlights to show the difference, but these are subtle, and blend into each other across the body of the dog. The overall base colour of Cerberus is a muted grey. I've used metallic colours to highlight and convey a sense of the otherworldly. The theories I use are not fully rooted in the everyday, but they have become a vehicle for me to move into that world. Stepping out from my "everyday", Cerberus carries me into the theoretical and philosophical worlds where the mythical PhD is found.

Often Cerberus is depicted as threatening, snarling and dangerous. In my drawing, he is playful and goofy. Now that I have come to understand the role of theory, I am not threatened by it. Cerberus is the conjoining of three identities into one body. This allows me to ride these theories and merge these Discourses in pursuit of my PhD. I have not tamed theory. Theory is my Cerberus, my friend and ally. Our relationship isn't one of slave and master, but an alliance of mutual agreement. I cannot force the theories to take me where they do not want to go, and I can get off if I find them going where I do not wish.

Cerberus is mythical in size. Large enough for me to sit on his back. He allows me to stand on the shoulders of my predecessors and see further than I could alone. He changes my vantage point. As in the myth, my Cerberus is the gatekeeper between worlds. He carries me over the threshold, from my practical everyday world into the scholarly realm.

As I ride into the war in my head that is the pursuit of the mythical PhD, I can cross worlds confidently knowing I am supported by Cerberus. He will guide me on the long journey ahead. After all, three heads are better than one.

I can now see that in the same way as the figures in the other two metaphorical drawings were part of me, Cerberus is also an extension of myself.

Conclusion
Like many PhD scholars, I have found developing a scholarly stance difficult (Dillow 2009; McDonnell 2017; Netolicky 2017). This paper narrates my journey from a practitioner fighting against theory to a practical scholar understanding how to use theory as a tool. I am a product of the Discourses I have been socialised into; my identities are multiple and fluid. Davids and Waghid's (2017) assertion that theory and practice are inseparably linked has been a point of departure, allowing me to open myself to the possibility that I can be many people simultaneously. Using metaphorical drawings has allowed me to access resources from my

fashion design discipline in pursuit of a more scholarly identity, not in spite of it. Arts-based methods have been a way to unlearn my assumptions, defamiliarizing my everyday life and opening up new possibilities.

Autoethnography focuses on understanding the "self within" context (Chang 2008). This paper explores how I have needed to understand the socio-cultural context of what it means to think, act and be a fashion design lecturer, and to unlearn "truths" which hold me back from becoming a scholar. Simultaneously, I use my contextual identities as resources to evaluate my experiences and understand who I am becoming. The use of visual metaphors allows me to see deeper; I gain a multifaceted understanding of my identities through a socio-cultural context.

This would be impossible to explore using a traditional methodology, and therein lies the value of these methods. The power of arts-based research is in its ability to jar us into seeing things afresh.

> Kaila: …seeing things differently…Because I can draw what I am thinking I can then view it outside of myself.

Thinking made tangible. The physical act of drawing.

> Kaila: But this is the marriage of the two…I don't have to choose between being scholarly and practical. I can be a practical scholar.

Internally, my three heads nod. Through this journey, I have finally found a way for my different identities to not only speak to each other, but to agree. Although my story is unique, my struggles are not. Using arts-based methods, metaphorical drawings and other emergent methodologies allows us to open up new spaces for growth and transformation. Transdisciplinary research becomes a powerful tool for any researcher to enhance their research – not just to see differently, but to see further.

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