

AUTOPHENOMENOLOGICAL ATTUNEMENTS AND LISTENING THROUGH EMBODIED ENCOUNTERS

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ABSTRACT. This paper explores the experiences of the co-authors engaging with the question: *What are our autophenomenological reflexive embodied attunements in engaging with listening and slowing down?* Using an autophenomenological process (Carter, 2016, 2022) to structure the inquiry, Carter and Klein reflect on how nature, breath, and movement are themes that reach across both of their embodied engagements, helping them to understand how radical listening and awareness are internal resources that foster encounters of affect (Massumi, 2015). Through attunement, the authors discovered a heightened embodied awareness and a universal connection to both human and non-human entities. Findings from this arts-based, collaborative process led to the development of an improvisation-based in-class activity and a model for future research.

HARMONISATIONS AUTOPHÉNOMÉNOLOGIQUES ET ÉCOUTE À TRAVERS DES RENCONTRES INCARNÉES

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article explore les expériences des coautrices qui se penchent sur la question suivante : *quelles sont nos harmonisations réflexives, autophénoménologiques et incarnées lorsque nous nous engageons dans l'écoute et le ralentissement?* En appliquant un processus autophénoménologique (Carter, 2016, 2022), Carter et Klein réfléchissent à la manière dont la nature, la respiration et le mouvement constituent des thèmes qui traversent leurs deux pratiques corporelles, les aidant ainsi à comprendre comment l'écoute et la conscience radicales sont des ressources intérieures qui favorisent les rencontres affectives (Massumi, 2015). Les résultats de ce processus collaboratif axé sur les arts ont mené à la mise au point d'une activité en classe fondée sur l'improvisation et d'un modèle pour de futures recherches.

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This paper uses autophenomenological processes, poetry and images (Carter, 2016, 2022) to explore how we utilized embodied encounters as a first step towards fostering radical listening. Through dialogic engagement and artful inquiry, we deepen our understanding of our positionality within the research. *Somatic education* (Eddy, 2009; Green, 2002; Hanna, n.d) and Artaud's (1975) *Body without Organs* (BwO) inspire a process of fostering encounters of affect (hope) (Massumi, 2015). As Massumi (2015) describes, hope does not project into the future, but instead lives in the present moment, which offers space for recognizing potential and possibility through experimentation. The somatic and BwO praxis that we both practice in our teaching, artistic inquiry, and research inform how *embodied reflexivities*, defined as being in the singular, present moment through noetic engagement (Carter, 2014), allow us to engage in radical listening (Kress & Kreuger-Henney, 2016). Radical listening implies:

being intentional about *hearing* and that listening is an ongoing act such that we continue to listen even after what is spoken has faded into the past. In this regard, participating in dialogue involves creating distance between us and our own symphony and, instead, listening for echoes across an expanse. (Kress & Kreuger-Henney, 2016, italics in original, p. 114)

In this research, our practice of radical listening is threefold: 1) listening to nature; 2) listening to one's inner dialogue; and 3) listening in discourse with each other.

CONTEXT

Autophenomenology (Carter, 2016, 2022) is situated within phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1965; Merleau-Ponty, 1996; van Manen, 1990) and seeks to open spaces rather than to occupy them. With a focus on positionality as a starting place, the process emerged organically for us when we began to work on the research project *Walking Alongside: Taking up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Teacher Education (TE)*. This research focuses on the objectives outlined in the graphic below and aims to curate curricular resources and targeted professional development opportunities for in-service English-speaking teachers in Quebec who are taking up the educational calls to action (#62 i and #63 i, ii, iii and iv) of the TRC.

Walking Alongside: Responsibilities and Redress in Quebec Teacher Education

Project Objectives: Addressing the TRC Calls to Action 62v, 63 I-iv for QC Teachers



FIGURE 1. Harju, M-L. (2022, Dec.) Project Objectives [Unpublished graphic]. Used with permission

The TRC was launched in 2008 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) and was intended to be a process that would guide Canadians through the difficult discovery of the facts behind the residential school system (Moran, 2015).

When we began the process of working with the project collaborators, it quickly became apparent that there were varying perspectives and ways of being amongst the team. As a cis-gender, female, fifth-generation Canadian settler of Scottish, Welsh and English descent, Carter brings a particular embodied experience¹ to this work, as does Klein who is a cis-gender, female, third-generation American settler of Czechoslovakian and German descent. In part, these settler identities are what led Carter and Klein to pause and consider more deeply how their positionalities and worldviews would inform this research. Early on in the project, Geraldine Standup, an Indigenous Advisor (Mohawk) for the team reminded us of the importance of slowing down and listening. In the context of the academic institution and its funding cycles, this can be challenging, leading to the inquiry: *What are our autophenomenological reflexive embodied attunements in engaging with listening and slowing down?* It can be a challenge to learn how to incorporate anything new into one's pedagogical practices, and life itself. For this reason, many traditions, thinkers, and institutions over time have tried to create steps that can be followed to assist. It is understandable that for an undertaking such as taking up the TRC's calls to action for education, some sort of process to guide this work may be of

importance. Because of our positionality, as non-Indigenous settlers, arts-based academics, and our familiarity with dance and dramatic traditions, autophenomenology became an entry point that allowed us to explore our experiences with attunements and make sense of engaging in this journey.

Below is a literature review on reflexivity and deep listening; concepts that underpin our approach to understanding our positionalities within this specific process and which guided the *Walking Alongside* research project. A description of the autophenomenological process is included, which then leads to our artistic inquiries through poetry, images, and movement. A description of the thematic emergences and further artistic inquiry synthesize the findings in a collaborative process and propel us to consider the pedagogical implications of our research together.

REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity can be understood as a way of addressing one's own "situated character" (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 200). To us, this means confronting the ways in which we conduct our research and how we treat the knowledge produced from it. All of this relies heavily upon our worldview, which inevitably has been shaped by our individual cultural and educational experiences. Reflexivity and positionality are closely related, such that as we move through the autophenomenological process, we remain sensitive to who we are within the work (Rossman & Rallis, 1998); thus, we make a commitment to staying reflexive throughout. In relation to this process and its connection to the *Walking Alongside* project, Simon and Dippo (1986) remind us to be cognizant of how empathy is affected by the historical and structural differences that help us to understand others as well as the conditions that limit those understandings. This will be further elaborated on later in a description of the autophenomenological process.

LISTENING

In considering education as a means of resisting contemporary neoliberal, neocolonial social structures that breed gross inequalities, alienation, and dehumanization of minoritized groups, the very acts of listening and loving with the intention of enacting change become, in themselves, radical. (Kress & Krueger-Henny, 2016, p. 6)

Utilizing autophenomenology, Carter and Klein engage in *radical listening* (Tobin, 2009, p. 505; see also Kincheloe et al., 2011; Winchell, Kress & Tobin, 2016). Radical listening is a concept originated by the late McGill professor, Joe Kincheloe, whose unpublished writings of the concept just before his sudden passing have been extended by his partner, former

colleagues, and students. Radical listening is a profound way-of-being in the world as a teacher and researcher in that it involves making a “commitment to dialogue in which the listener opens [themselves] to change by *hearing* [emphasis added] others and not imposing [their] own schema and judgment upon the other” (Kress & Krueger-Henney, 2016, p. 6). Thus, it is not only through listening but through dialogic engagement with others that one is helped to “...tune the ear to participate in and resonate with the voices of others” (Kress & Krueger-Henney, 2016, p. 8). Open-ended dialogue occurs, in which thinking is allowed to emerge in relational engagement, given the possibility of extending understandings of others by reaching beyond one’s own cognitive patterns while inserting oneself into others’ experiences.

Incorporating radical listening allows for meaning-making through the authors’ diverse experiences in drama and dance, finding relationality between these experiences and the research involving Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWK) (Diversi & Moreira, 2009). IWK is a term used to describe how the Indigenous people of a particular land relate dynamically to their natural environment and the ways in which they understand that relationship and use it to enrich their lives socially, culturally, and spiritually (Semali & Kincheloe, 2002). Finding relationality to IWK in this context entails: “[m]aking an effort to understand others’ standpoints without seeking to change them...(this) is a respectful way to deal with other’s ideas, thereby increasing the possibility of adopting good ideas associated with others’ culture” (Tobin, in Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. xix).

Brearley (2015) reports that deep listening, a similar concept created by Australian and Canadian community leaders, relies on the Indigenous wisdom of “learning, working, and togetherness” and links community with reciprocity to inform leadership practices (p. 91). Deep Listening involves “getting out of the way in order to open up a space in which genuine contact can be made. That space is a place of possibility, where current and emerging needs can be expressed and explored” (Brearley, 2015, p. 94). Deep Listening is regarded as a process in which an individual becomes more present with themselves in order to be able to listen and interact with other people or their environment, what Scharmer refers to as ‘presencing’, a blend of presence and sensing (as cited in Brearley, 2015, p. 94). Brearley (2015) elaborates: “The paradox is that the more we are present, the more we are able to get out of the way and become available for other people” (p. 94).

Another concept of IWK is ‘two-eared listening’ (Hogan & McDonald, 2021) and is explained as the reason that we are given two ears and one

mouth—so that we may listen and understand twice as much as we speak. As explained by Sawamaw Mi'sel Joe, “Deep listening requires the listener to receive new information through an open mind and to suspend judgment with an open heart” (Hogan & McDonald, 2021, Two-eared listening section). Singh Sikh & Spence (2016) endorse Krishnamurti (1993), who explains that listening/hearing arises from awareness of the present moment, but only if the listening occurs without the interference of thinking. Therefore, mindfulness, which emerges in the form of deep listening, two-eared listening, radical listening, or as meditation, is a practice of awareness, appreciation, and understanding of ourselves in order to open spaces for embracing and accepting others’ knowledge and worldviews.

Being mindful from Csikszentmihalyi’s (2008) psychological viewpoint is to be in command of consciousness with the ability to “direct attention to specific events (sensations, feelings, thoughts, intentions)” (p. 26), which comes with the understanding that human beings possess the ability to manage the quality of their experiences. Then, through mindful attention, radical listening involves directing our attention to hearing what someone is saying; what we hear depends upon our conscious listening. Conscious listening relies on attention, awareness, and experiencing an interaction with (as appropriate) the self, others, objects, and the natural world.

EMBODIED LISTENING

Educators have been integrating somatic practices into traditional dance training as a method for connecting body and mind through movement. Enghauser (2007) describes this as body listening, or a way “to attend closely to the processes, function, needs, and intuitions of the body within the context of dance” (p. 33). Physical and sensory awareness involving reflection and insights about how movement feels, results in whole-body attunements, which include both the mind and the body. This type of listening assumes that understandings arriving through kinetic awareness are a way for individuals to acknowledge habitual patterns and perceptions of themselves, others, and the natural world.

Eddy (2016) defines somatic education as “an embodied form of being present and aware” (p. 105) and draws parallels between somatics and movement meditation. She reminds us that with mental stress, there is often a physical response that occurs and argues that movement made conscious through somatic awareness expedites the process of returning to homeostasis (a state of calm) by “bringing attention to both the habitual

negative responses and potential new behavioral choices” (Eddy, 2016, p. 107).

Scharmer’s (2016) term *presencing* can be used to support this concept of awareness and is described as “sensing from our deepest source: that is, sensing and operating from one’s highest future potential. It is the state each of us can experience when we open not just our minds but our hearts and our wills” (ch. 2, para. 5). Somatic and presencing techniques in dance are familiar to Klein and have helped to inform her art and research practices. For Carter, an embodied attunement is connected with Artaud’s Body without Organs (BwO) theatre work, where: “...thinking means something more to me than not being completely dead. It means being in touch with oneself at every moment; it means not ceasing for a single moment to feel oneself in one’s inmost being...” (Sontag, 1976, as cited in Carter, 2014, p.8). Artaud explores the BwO further through the metaphor of the plague, which reduces a person’s body physically to one of liquefied organs, and which he contends, forces a society into a process of renewal (i.e. making Yourself a Body without Organs (BwO)). Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 2007) discuss how dismantling the organism, to become a BwO, is about opening up to levels and thresholds, generating passages of intensities that help unconscious significations that cling to the organism find release (as cited in Carter, 2014).

Somatic education and the BwO conceptualization also connect to the work of Miller (1994), who presents a rationale for the growing scholarship of contemplative practices within higher education. Miller (1994) explains that while contemplation is often connected to meditation, it can also refer to the “spontaneous and unstructured moments where we experience a connection with the ground of being” (p. 57), which “describes the unity between all things, human and non-human” (p. 56). As a form of self-learning, contemplative practices seek to bring presence and awareness to positionality through a merging of self/other by attending to an in-the-moment existence. “When we attend, we are present to what is in the moment, we create a gentle pause, or sometimes an abrupt stop, that loosens habit-ridden ways of seeing, being, and becoming in the world, habits that narrow possibility, and undo potentiality” (Walsh et al., 2014, p. 12). The contemplative practices that guide the autophenomenological process in which Klein and Carter engaged will be explained through a step-by-step process, which will then lead into a description of their individual and collective experiences through shared dialogue and art-making.

AUTOPHENOMENOLOGICAL EMBODIED ENCOUNTERS

To engage with embodied and radical listening, we use an autophenomenological process (AP) because in earlier research Carter (2016, 2022) found that this process allowed participants to recognize and attend to one’s positionality in an effort to reveal privilege and bias. The AP then offers participants an opportunity to deeply engage with others; in this case, it provides us a way to explore our inquiry question from Step 1 (Part 1) of the autophenomenological process, and to then understand the experience of the other in Step 1 (Part 2). In Parts 2 & 3 of AP, the synthesis of making meaning *together* offers, through artful inquiry, dialogue, and listening, a means to co-create new understandings in unexpected way(s). (See Figure 2).

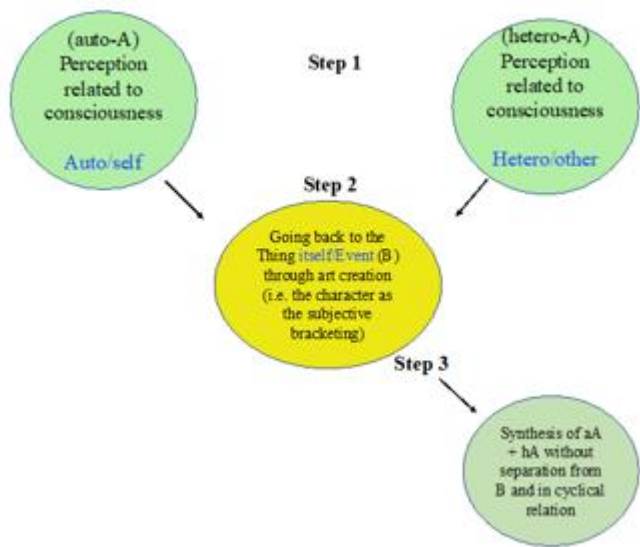


FIGURE 2. Autophenomenological process (Carter, 2022).

Autophenomenology (A) allows one to use embodiment to create learning encounters/attunements that foreground positionality. In Step 1 (auto-A (self)), the individual spends time *reflecting on their own experiences* to understand their history, identity, and subjectivity. In Step 1 (hetero-A (other)), the individual focuses on *learning from someone/thing else* about their perspectives/stories, requiring interaction.

In Step 2 of the process, shared experiences with fellow participant(s) and mindful and ongoing consultation occur with the intention of embodied

engagement. Step 2 requires dwelling within a liminal space of hope (affect) and becoming, beyond the internal and external territories of identity (signification). Step 3 offers an opportunity to understand the effect of Steps 1 and 2 on being and belonging. This step seeks to bring together diverse perspectives and experiences into a shared space. The autophenomenological framework is not linear; it is relational and presenting it through a step-by-step process may take away from this potentially iterative process because of the emergent understandings that may occur in Step 3.

To begin our inquiry, we engaged with Step 1 (auto-A (self)) on our own (and have represented these engagements in the individual explorations below). As described above, this step also became Step 1 (hetero-A (other)), as we read and reflected on each other's stories.

Growing separate but together: Carter's reflection (step 1, auto-A)

(Mount Orford, Quebec, August 8, 2022)

The rain was punishing and cold as I ran along the hiking trail filled with stones, debris, and puddles. At one point, I began to cry because I was overwhelmed with thinking about the objectives of the "Taking up the TRC in TE" project (previous name). But then I paused, and then completely stopped, I saw a tree, and wrote this down after my run:

There is a large tree growing straight up $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way from the bottom, a smaller tree began to grow side by side (in parallel) to the larger one...it grew straight until $\frac{1}{2}$ way up and then the larger one grew out at a 45-degree angle to the right. This made room for the smaller tree to move to the left in a new direction and grow upwards and for the larger one to continue to grow upwards—just as big and strong—but it had allowed the smaller tree to grow alongside until they were separate but together.



Carter's image of a similar tree growing with a smaller one side by side, connecting.

This is a teaching from the tree that began from a place of intense distress. I was crying that I was overwhelmed with the tasks before me, with not being good enough, or

knowing enough or being “the right person for the job” ...and then mad at myself because I am privileged to be able to ask the questions I am asking and to do this work with amazing people....

...at one point I called out to my ancestors...

I just stopped. I felt the rain pouring down on me fully and tears drained out of me. I stood still and I looked at the land in front of me, the trees around me. I smelled the sweetness of the rain that intertwined with a musky, earthy smell.

My whole body Inhaled. Exhaled. I felt a sensation deep in my centre.

I grew still and peaceful.

I saw the tree.

The lesson came to me with immediate understanding...and I recognized all at once, in a moment, that I have grown alongside others *who let me learn and think and grow alongside theories, words, feelings, emotions, ideas.*

I am not alone, I am connected to the vastness of questions, understandings, laughter, and song, that have come before me and will continue after.

Just like the trees grew together symbiotically, I have been able to grow/learn/become and be alongside.

Connected across space,

across time.

Dancing in the sand: Klein's inquiry (Step 1, auto-A)

One afternoon I headed out to the beautiful California coastline after a long meeting on Zoom. I was watching and listening to the waves when my attention was directed to a flock of birds overhead. I became interested in how they stretched their wings out in what seemed like stillness as they glided alongside each other and with the flow of the wind. At different moments, they went from a hovering/gliding position to flapping their wings to gain momentum and stay with their group. I then became aware of the waves as they crashed forward and then retreated, and realized that before the height of the crest, there was a moment of quietude. I appreciated that both the birds and the waves embodied moments of quiet, as complete stillness during flight or in the constant current of the ocean was not possible.

After my observation, I brought these concepts into a movement improvisation with the intention of embodying and relating to the environment, a field of dance known as ecosomatics (Bauer, 2008; Enghauser, 2007) which blends ecology with somatics. While moving, my attention was drawn to the coolness of the sand as it pushed between the spaces of my toes, as well as the curves, twists, and flow of my weight. The sand was soft and forgiving, and movements that would normally feel precarious on a dance studio's wood floor were suddenly fun, exciting, and done without hesitation. I thrashed and crashed, slid like superman, rolled around, and challenged myself to manipulate the sand in different ways. The sand/Earth supported and protected me as I gave in to gravity. However, I noticed that if I pushed against the sand, it also pushed back, as the various dips prevented me from feeling balanced on my own two feet. When I was finished and on my way home, I felt energetic and alive...and completely covered in sand from head to toe!



FIGURES 3A AND 3B. Images from Klein's improvisation.

THEMATIC EMERGENCES

In Step 1 (hetero-A (other)) of the autophenomenological process, the individual focuses on *learning from someone/thing else about their perspectives/stories*, which requires interaction. Interactive meaning-making is related to the notion of *being* as both the process of becoming (Nancy, 2000, as cited in Carter, 2022) and the evolution of one's *being* across the lifespan. Carter (2022) draws upon Nancy (2000) to contend that "meaning is itself the sharing of being" (p. 33) and that we are all connected to the circulation of meaning. Therefore, we are all part of each other's process of becoming. As complicated beings, we can experience multiple, intersecting identities, which are further challenged by our subjectivities: the "ways we perceive, feel, and express ourselves" (Wales, 2009, as cited in Carter 2014 and 2022, p. 32). In this research, the authors attempt to "bracket" their subjectivities, including both thoughts

and embodied experiences (Carter, 2022), in order to see/listen/hear something as if it was the first time. The bracketing is intended to open pathways to embrace new understandings as seen through someone else's experiences, not to literally experience it as if we were them.

Step 2 asks the individual to bracket their subjective self when engaging with the information shared in Step 1. With their original inquiry question in mind, Carter and Klein then spent time sharing and listening to one another's encounters and responding to the themes, images, and resonances that emerged. When considering one another's experiences with reflexive embodied attunements for slowing down and listening, three themes arose: 1. Nature; 2. Breath; and 3. Movement.

Nature

Carter and Klein each began their inquiries about deep listening and slowing down by spending time in nature. For Klein, dancing in the sand implicitly taught her about affect. "When you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected in turn, and in a slightly different way than you might have been the moment before. You have made a transition, however slight" (Massumi, 2015, p. 4). Hatcher (2012) describes this as "a move from inside to outside, both physically, spiritually and intellectually. Most importantly, a close engagement with the community and the cycles of Mother Earth must occur, reinforcing and expanding the engagement of the learner and the 'knowledge'" (p. 346).

Observing nature and consequently translating it into improvised, spontaneous movements allowed Klein to experience the natural Earth from the inside-out. Meanwhile, Carter found herself considering the larger *Walking Alongside* objectives of their joint research while running in the woods. When a sudden downpour called on her to pause, she listened...and a moment of peace and understanding emerged as the trees became her teacher.

In conversation, after reading one another's stories, Carter shared: *I think our stories of being in nature are connected with resonances, which kind of speaks about the interconnection and relationality that you were mentioning with Massumi... it has to be that in/external process...where there is learning and unlearning* (Carter, interview transcript, Dec. 14/2022). Though perhaps in the context of a description of an event in a paper such as this, being unsettled may appear to be a state that is decided, there is no real 'resolution' or finality to it. Once this process begins, it is an ongoing, never-ending movement into deeper becoming(s). A metamorphosis, and

another, and another. Staying with change is a choice to face the abyss, and once one edge is troubled, a new one appears. The entire body is affected...sounds are clearer, senses are heightened...paths that have always been tread are new for the first time and discoveries are explosions of delight as they unravel. And with this is pain, an intensity that is a movement beyond good or bad...it just is. Nature conspires to amplify such moments with her powers, and it is attunements in and through time that allow the state of “unsettled” to be endured. In fact, it could not be any other way.

While Carter’s experience was somewhat unexpected, Klein’s use of somatic principles as a means to structure her learning and unlearning began with intention and preparation.

Breath

Preparation began for Klein when she described:

Even when I am sitting at my computer, I remind myself to take those small breaks and just breathe...I actually try to distribute my breath into different parts of my body and to think about if I can possibly breathe and fill up my back with air. (Klein, interview transcript, Dec. 14/2022)

This imagery was something that was noticeable to Carter as a witness to Klein’s images of her movements on the beach. Also connecting to the theme of the breath was Carter’s illustration of her emergent experience $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way into a 10km run. Carter finds running to be meditative in that the rhythmic sound of her breath is connected to her mental and physical experience. During various parts of a run, she becomes aware of the change in her breath, her body, and then mind. Being mindful of the effect of the breath is a means to slow down and connect more deeply to thoughts, feelings, and embodied experiences, which then allows one to feel more centered and engaged with others in daily life: to be attuned for deeper listening.

Movement

When reflecting on their experiences with slowing down and learning to listen, Klein connected nature, breath and movements:

I’m reminded about walking meditations, sensing the energy from the Earth, and how gravitational pull has an effect on us. When you’re walking, you bring into your mind the image that with every step there’s an electrical charge that happens because of the Earth’s gravity and then you let it resonate up into your body... when we wake up in the morning, our cells are different from the day before, and we are like, as Massumi says, in a constant state of change. Your story about the weather and how

quickly it can change reminds me of the flux of our lives. I'm reminded about periods of intense chaos and then moments of quiet. It's what I experienced at the beach, realizing when the birds outstretch their wings and they're just flying together, they're not being still. They're being quiet and they're flowing together...because stillness is not actually possible. It's because everything is fluid and moving—your blood is pumping, your heart is beating, your lungs are expanding. It's not possible to just be still. But can we be quiet? (Klein, interview transcript, Dec. 14/2022)

Step 3: Synthesis: Understandings and attunements with/through embodied encounters

If it is, as Klein states, not possible to be still, how can we learn to become quiet?

In the final step of the autophenomenological process (Step 3), Carter and Klein use artistic inquiry to reflect on the three emergent themes (i.e. nature, breath, and movement), and on residue (what lingers and remains after embodied encounters—the deeper understanding that is not a reminder of the sublime, but an imprint of it) (Carter, 2014, pp. 89-90).

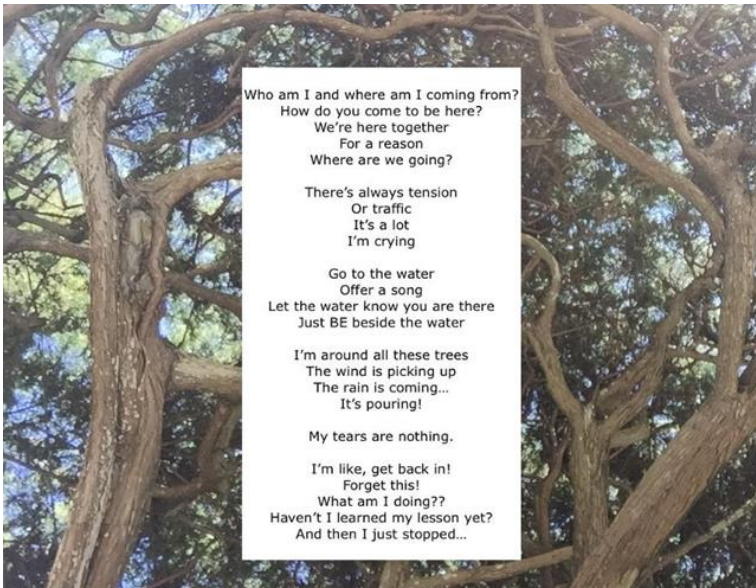


FIGURE 4. Klein (2022). A found poem and photograph, combining texts from Carter & Klein's interviews/conversations.

In thinking about the relationality between listening that occurs when self/other interact, the authors connect with ideas of affect (Massumi, 2015), or “the power to affect and to be affected” (Spinoza, as cited in Massumi, 2015, p. ix), which includes being wide-open, engaged, patient, and aware of one’s abilities for transformation/change as a ‘thing-in-the-making’ (Massumi, 2015).

ATTUNEMENTS

Self and Mother Earth can be connected by helping the learners re-establish themselves as part of nature rather than separate from it. This often involves a re-adjustment of the senses and a fine-tuning of the powers of observation. (Hatcher, 2012, p. 352)

Carter and Klein also consider the importance of defining the word attunement in relation to the AP process, as it includes not just a sense experience, but an embodied awareness that lends them towards new understandings. Ash and Gallacher (2015) unpack the concept of attunement through a variety of sources, including Heidegger and Radcliffe, to draw out the complexities of both human and non-human interactions. For them, attunement is more than a feeling; it is attending to an experience using the whole body to sense the vibration and tone of other beings and objects. While they describe this experience through the metaphor of tuning a musical instrument, they deepen the authors’ understanding of attunement as a form of embodied methodology: “...attunement can be defined as the capacity to sense, amplify, and attend to difference” as well as the experience of “sensitizing our bodies to appreciate and understand the complex material forces that structure situations beyond the envelope of human emotion” (Ash & Gallacher, 2015, p. 73). The bodily sensitivity they describe guides the understanding of the embodied encounters with the environment that we experienced during this process, Carter with the rain and trees, and Klein with the birds and waves. This attunement connects with Einstein’s “everything in life is vibration” since the universe is literally made of molecules (human and non-human) that vibrate, and so by connecting with nature and the breath, new vibrations and frequencies are amplified.

CONTEMPLATIONS

Reflecting on the affects of our encounters within nature has helped us to recognize how dialogues, within which radical listening occurs, necessitate a liminal space between listening and processing, between what is heard and formulating an individual response. The need to honor and give time to creating and fostering a space where: *if it is not possible to be still, we can*

become quiet is a significant emergence from this inquiry that will continue to resonate within the pedagogical, artistic, and research spaces that the co-authors navigate. The potential impacts of this approach are far-reaching. Connecting conversations around embodied ways of learning and knowing, poetic inquiries, learning new teachings from nature, and entering into deep dialogical relational learning are ways of theorizing that are oftentimes undervalued and underrepresented within academic discourses. Experimenting within this writing space was not only academic, but emotional, creative and a movement towards experiences with consciousness that often defy language, writing, and words. By agreeing to co-create a space in which boundaries are faced, edges and fears explored and the sharing of ideas that are: vulnerable, curious, and caring, *there is a revolution*. In educational structures that normally seek to constrain, measure, categorize, normalize, and capture, the impact of this work is, in its recognition, that something different can be done, because we are changed in the process.

This collaborative process has provided an opportunity to practice deep listening and reflexivity through artful creation, which offers a model to use within the goals of the *Walking Alongside* project. Specifically, there are a series of *Listening Hour* sessions planned with/for pre-service teacher education students at a Canadian university. These *Listening Hours* provide a liminal space between the conclusion of a required Indigenous education course taken as a part of the Bachelor of Education degree and students' third practicum. Offering students an opportunity to listen to one another's thoughts post-course, and to co-create collaborative artful inquiries (i.e. collage, found poetry, photos) about how to integrate the theoretical information learned, is a rupture to the course work/practicum model that currently exists. Based on our inquiry in this paper, the *Listening Hours* will begin with the setting of mindful intentions, a focus on one's breath, and occasions for students/participants to experience nature and movement.

Additional unlearning that emerged through writing autophenomenologically with a layering of texts and conversations, are the de-constructions of hierarchies, specifically as they relate to the knowledge of creation in academia. For example, Carter is an Associate Professor and Klein's PhD supervisor. However, because of the nature of the reciprocal engagements and different experiences that we brought to this exploration, the spectrum of power was troubled, requiring Carter to unlearn her status of supervisor and leader in this process and to instead share power for the direction of the work, the experience, and the

outcomes. A condition for this unlearning is related to living within the spirit of being able to give and to receive during relational dialogue.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In the AP process, positionality is confronted when the listener is attuned to the perception of self through the lens of someone/thing else. Is it possible to really hear what is being said and how do you know you are hearing it as intended? Is the openness to affect/change enough? We believe that intention should be followed by action, and that our experiences within embodied encounters can move beyond these two authors to consider the larger impact that the AP process can offer. We are drawn to the idea of it becoming a framework for an in-class activity for co-creating understanding and acceptance of difference. Since improvisation appears in both theater and dance, we imagine that adopting Tanner and McCloskey's (2022) improvisational ethos to understanding difference can provide a unique approach to such an activity: "Such an ethos might offer an approach that allows educators and scholars ways to imagine disrupting ideological or practical scripts, especially in relation to race, and instead welcome the unexpected or the strange" (p. 7). An improvisation ethos, then, is one that:

1. Honors the affirmational philosophy of "yes, and"
2. Works in service of the collective
3. Shares power with others
4. Offers a non-judgemental, non-evaluative space for creation
5. Perceives, accepts, affirms, and builds off of the offerings of others. (Tanner & McCloskey, 2022, p. 6)

For this activity, we adopt the traditional classroom 'ice-breaker' of interviewing a classmate and then introducing them to the class, but with the addition of the embodied encounters/attunements, as described earlier. Our hope is that students will feel comfortable in revealing aspects of themselves that they wouldn't normally share in a classroom space, and because there is a level of trust involved in this activity, it may not be appropriate as an ice-breaker for students who are meeting each other for the first time. Instead, it can be incorporated later into the curriculum after students have had the opportunity for multiple interactions.

Activity: Who am I?

Step 1 (auto-A) begins with the question for Person A: *Who am I and where am I coming from?*

Person A tells a short story about themselves through voice, movement, or both to person B. The movement can be small and gestural or larger, dancier movements depending on their level of comfortability.

Step 1 (Hetero-A (other)) is the step in which we learn from someone/thing else about our perspectives/stories. In this step, person B then introduces person A back to themselves by spontaneously improvising using dance and/or acting as a reflection back to person A. Some questions to guide this step: What parts of person A's story made the strongest impression upon you and how can you retell the story of how this person 'came to be here'? What does their journey to this place look like in movement or sound? Was it a smooth pathway or were there obstacles to hurdle over? Can you develop a character based upon their story and create a context in which that person exists (as you see/perceive them)? Consider the themes, images, and resonances from their story.

Both parts of Step 1 (auto-A and hetero-A) are then repeated for Person B telling their story with the guiding question: *Who are you and how do you come to be here?*

Step 2 requires interaction between person A and person B in which they speak about their experiences of Step 1. Consider this statement as you reflect upon these encounters with each other's stories: *We're here together for a reason.* Are there any significant themes or differences that can be extracted from your individual journeys to this place together?

Step 3 offers an opportunity to understand the effect of Steps 1 and 2 on being and belonging by co-creating something new. Consider this: *Where are we going? How will we get there? Does one person lead and the other follow or do we 'walk alongside'?*

As Tanner and McCloskey (2022) also point out, "Improv is not about acquiring simple knowledge or discrete skills—it is about practicing how to move through the world in affirmation of difference (p. 7). The proposed AP process and the improvisational exercise above provide the opportunity for individuals to experience a step towards transforming (or metamorphosing) our pedagogical spaces. The sense of being-becoming that we confronted begins with recognizing the *potential* of embodied encounters with self/other by asking questions like "what-if" and "as-if" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 51). In improvisation, potential is

recognized by the “yes, and” philosophy. “Potential is abstract by nature, in the sense of not yet being this or that, here nor there” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 41). Not unlike our experiences of life itself, there are twists and turns that cannot be predicted. We flow through these situations attempting to find balance somewhere in the middle. Yet, the future holds these unpredictable and diverse potentialities, but they can exist only if we are open to listening to/for them by attuning our whole-body proprioceptive faculties. Learning and unlearning from each other and *walking alongside* human and non-human entities requires attunement to the potential of being-becoming a different version of ourselves through affirmation and acceptance of difference.

We wonder, when entering a relational place of possibility and presencing if the real result (as it were) is to take flight? Where boundaries and frames are lifted and, as Klein learnt when she took off her shoes in the sand, we strip away all of the external indicators that bind us. To become quiet. At peace. Attuned to/with/connected to the mystery of it all.

NOTES

1. Stating one’s positionality at this point in time/history has become a performance that verges on the commonplace. We have nevertheless honored this convention in relation to our standpoints as “settlers,” considering what it means to be doing decolonizing/reconciliatory work. However, this being said, we simultaneously contend that stating one’s positionality in this way is problematic and paradoxical given the process we are describing in this article, and the way(s) in which identities are constantly in flux/emerging and our perceptions of self/other shift and change.

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