

**MIGRATING THROUGH *CURRERE*:
A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A CANADIAN
TEACHER**

CANDACE P. LEWKO

B.F.A. (Dramatic Arts), University of Lethbridge, 1996
B.Ed., University of Lethbridge, 1996

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Dedication

To my family—I thank you all for your patience, guidance, and love.

To my son, Aiden Carlos—*Filho*, thank you for all your encouragement.

To my friends—for enduring alongside me.

To my teachers—both past and present, wherever you may be.

Abstract

The research questions of this thesis, “Migrating Through *Currere*: A Narrative Inquiry Into the Experience of Being a Canadian Teacher,” are three-fold: What is the experience of being a Canadian teacher? How do personal and trans/national migration histories influence this experience? How does being a teacher of English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language of adult immigrant and refugee students affect this experience? The aim of this thesis is to better understand how auto/biographical migration stories are connected to a pedagogical life and how this connection influences a teaching praxis. The following quotation sets the teacher in migration: “What is the experience of being...a stranger in a land not one’s own” (Pinar, 1975a, p. 399)? Curriculum reconceptualist theory asks the teacher to engage in processes of self-reflexivity in social, historical, and pedagogical contexts. The experience of being a Canadian teacher is reflected in my family’s and others’ migration stories during the first wave of migration of immigrants to Alberta. Four narratives of my own arose out of self-reflection on topics of identity, culture, home, location, and ethnicity. Each narrative is developed using William F. Pinar’s (1975a) method of *currere*. The narratives are interspersed throughout the thesis from the regressive to the synthetical moments of *currere*; they are juxtaposed against autobiographies written by first and second generation Canadians. A review of the literature illuminates the works of educational philosophers such as Maxine Greene and contemporary curriculum scholars including Ted T. Aoki, Dwayne Huebner, Janet L. Miller, Leah Fowler, Erika Hasebe-Ludt, and Cynthia Chambers, in addition to Pinar. The inquiry reveals how a historical return to the self can inform the teacher of the meaning of the teaching experience found in the pedagogical, lived, and historical

circumstances of the self and other. A new awareness of the teaching self emerges in the foreign and familiar of the classroom. Tensions found in dichotomies of language, culture, and ethnicity become generative spaces to reflect on the experience; home becomes a portal through which the teacher views the world with empathy. The teacher lives perceptively in a culturally diverse classroom and amongst the complexities of another's life circumstances.

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Introduction

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time

—T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

This thesis is a narrative inquiry into the experience of being a Canadian teacher. It is an intertextual analysis of autobiographical and narrative writing. The experience of being a teacher is examined in different contexts such as the historical context of migration, the pedagogical context of a teaching situation, and the experiential context of being an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language teacher. Researching in this diverse framework demands engagement with the past, present, and future. The Canadian teacher is researched as a temporal being; the teacher lives simultaneously in the culture and history of the self and the other (Pinar, 2004). A conscious return to cultural and historical sites of the self and the other transforms the teaching situation into a lived space. In living pedagogy, the teacher surpasses all assumptions about the self and seeks to engage in and reflect upon the world of the teacher and student. This creates a dialectical relationship, and it expands the awareness of the teacher in a teaching situation (Aoki, 1986/2005).

The discourse of curriculum reconceptualism (Pinar, 1975a) invites teachers to engage in an intense examination of the self, while living in a teaching situation. The teacher resides in a zone of tensionality between the two curriculum worlds of *curriculum-as-live(d)* and *curriculum-as-plan* (Aoki, 1986/2005). Living in these worlds

opens portals to an embodied curriculum, which means to be alive and present in the pedagogic situation. Multiple modes of being a teacher are explored through one aim of this thesis, which is to self-reflexively re/live in the culture of the self and the world of the teacher. William Pinar (1975a) writes that “[b]efore we learn to teach in such a way...we must become students of ourselves, before we can truthfully say we understand teaching” (p. 412). To understand the meaning of the teacher in a teaching praxis demands a returning to one’s self. Pinar’s method of *currere* (1975a) enables the teacher to revisit the historicity of the self. Pinar develops four steps of *currere* that provide the momentum for the teacher to travel temporally in processes of self-reflection; the steps are: *the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetic*. As in a moment of reflection, passing through each phase of *currere* has the potential to uncover the multiple layers of meaning held within a teaching praxis.

Similar to the processes in *currere*, Ted T. Aoki (1986/2005) invites the teacher to engage in a form of curriculum inquiry. Aoki’s curricular landscapes of *curriculum-as-plan* and *curriculum-as-live(d)* are the terrains from which the relationship between student and teacher is revisited in this thesis. Pinar emphasizes the importance of Aoki’s curricular landscapes when he says that one must “defamiliarize the familiar” (in Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 36) in order to understand the meaning of the “taken-for-grantedness” (p. 37) in a teaching life. From defamiliarizing the familiarity of the classroom and the people in it, the daily taken-for-granted situation in a teaching praxis, such as the relationship between student and teacher, emerges through the narratives in this thesis.

The thesis is thus written as a migration of text told through the voice of a fourth-generation Canadian teacher of multi-ethnic origin, specifically of Italian, Swedish,

French and Ukrainian descent. The following research questions guide the inquiry: What is the experience of being a Canadian teacher? How do personal and trans/national migration histories influence this experience? How does being a teacher of English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language of adult immigrant and refugee students affect this experience?

Methodology

This thesis attempts to explicate being, meaning, and experience in two identity contexts: Canadian and teacher. I look to the event of migration as a link to the experience of being in the world as a Canadian teacher of adult immigrants and refugees. I pay attention to the events in the autobiographies written by a first generation Swedish-Canadian and a second generation Canadian, which serve to reveal the experience of migration. I use autobiographical narrative and prose as a method of inquiry to understand the self through the stories lived out in teaching. The plots and characters in the autobiographies and narratives let me into the intricate and layered experiences of immigrant life stories. The life of the person inside the text is intensely examined using Pinar's method of *currere* (1975a) to articulate the connection of the migration experience to a teaching praxis. This thesis does not attempt to identify the meaning of the experience of being a Canadian teacher by isolating a specific ethnic group and focusing on the cultural qualities and traditions of that group. Rather throughout the inquiry, the auto/biographical texts reveal the experience of being a Canadian teacher taken up in the central research question: What is the experience of being a Canadian teacher? This question becomes a portal to the narratives—a back and forth discussion that does not take one standpoint.

Currere begins with engaging in self-reflexivity. Engaging in self-reflexive processes invites the teacher to “study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding” (Pinar, 2004, p. 35). The educational experience comes to life through a complicated conversation with the self (Aoki, 1986/2005; Pinar, 2004). The conversation between person and text generates meaning

from the educational experience. In order to explore these relations in the educational experience, I enter into a biographic situation (Pinar, 2004) of time and place. The biographic situation contains two contexts: the historical and the pedagogical. The historical context is the first wave of migration of Europeans to Alberta in the early 1900s. The pedagogical context is my teaching praxis, where I reflect on my experience of being a teacher in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. The students are adult immigrants. I pay attention to the stories that they bring into the teaching situation. When I write the narratives, I focus on the tensions present in the teaching situation. The tensions are comprised of events of teaching and learning that occur in the classroom. The tensions are also my hopes for students understanding themselves in their language learning. My students live culturally unchanged in the teaching situation. Rather, they approach English as a way to understand themselves in their new country of living. The tensions arise out of living together as student and teacher in the classroom. The teaching situation is “a lived situation pregnantly alive in the presence of people” (Aoki, 1986/2005, p. 157). The tensions that arise out of living in the teaching situation shed light on how my immigrant students perceive themselves through their own stories, and in a Canadian classroom. This produces a tensionality in the pedagogic situation (Aoki, 1986/2005) that begins the construction of the plots and characters for the narratives that I write in this thesis.

The questions that come from contemplating meaning of the self in the educational experience come forth from the questions of *currere* (Pinar, 1975a). This form of questioning seeks to explicate the meaning held in the relationship between the self and other. The questions are dynamic. The initial questions of *currere* begin my first

reflection on the experience of being a Canadian teacher. The questions evolve throughout the thesis, as I move deeper into reflection. The questions of *currere* I seek a response to are manifold: What does being a Canadian mean? What does it mean to be a fourth-generation Canadian teacher? Why am I a teacher? How does understanding my immigrant students in a teaching situation influence my teaching praxis?

The questions of *currere* continue while I reflect on being a teacher in the two teaching worlds of Canada and Japan. Japan was the second country I taught in; Canada was my first. Teaching in the geographical location of Japan extended my understanding of being a foreign teacher in a country that was not my own. I travel back and forth between these two teaching experiences to gain an understanding of my self as a Canadian teacher. While I also reflect on the meaning of the self in-between the two teaching worlds of my home country and Japan, further questions emerge: What does it mean to be a teacher in a country that is not my own? Why did I travel to Japan to teach English-as-a-Foreign-Language? What has become of my teaching self from being in two worlds of teaching? The questions of *currere* begin my initial encounter with narratives for the inquiry, while I contemplate being a teacher in the pedagogical experience of the Canadian classroom and historical experience of migration. The narratives are in part a response to the questions of *currere*.

I relive the history that tells of my great-grandparents' migration to Alberta. I contextualize their migration stories within the larger history of migration to gain a better perspective on the migration experience. Narrative is one way that I retell the migration experience from the perspective of a teacher who is in migration. In the writing of the narratives, I focus on specific events from my childhood, such as the experience of

growing up in a culturally diverse family. I write event by event, moment by moment and, in some cases, by quoting my grandparents as they told their stories to me. I reflect on the themes that come out of the narratives. I consider these themes while revisiting the experiences from my teaching praxis, and I recall my immigrant students' stories about their own experiences of coming to Canada. Some themes that remain consistent throughout the narratives are that of perseverance in learning a second/additional language. Immigration experiences enable me to interpret the broader transnational migration stories concealed in grand narratives of nation building. These experiences help me to reconstruct parts of my historicity and to relive my more immediate experiences of being raised by an immigrant family. The narratives bridge the rupture between my past and my present teaching situation. To bridge this rupture in knowing, I attempt to articulate the world of my hometown and the immigrants who lived in it. They were my neighbours and acquaintances of the family, and they are integral to my understanding of being in cultural difference. This first view of worlds outside my own expands the possibilities for understanding the experience of being a teacher in multicultural contexts.

Pinar (1975a) speaks of realizing the journey of *currere* and the reasons one will use to embark on the journey. One of the questions of *currere* for this thesis asks why I traveled to Japan: What drew me to become a teacher of English-as-a-Foreign-Language? Pinar writes that "one's reasons for traveling are often not one's own" (p. 404). The reasons for my migrating may have been the unfinished stories, the fractions of the stories and the truths left untold or unwritten. In this contemplation of the connections of fragments to the greater whole of the truths of my being, and to the storied knowledge

that I acquired while growing up, the notion of traveling or becoming the traveler takes a sharp turn.

I reflect on the migration journeys that my great-grandparents took in their own migration story. I am a teacher in migration when I reflect on living and teaching in Japan. I migrate further into unknown teaching landscapes. These landscapes are a contrast from the ones I know in Canada. One of the unknowns in this context is language. I reflect on living with/in a foreign language; when I live in a new language, I better understand worlds that are foreign to me. As a teacher in an English-as-a-Foreign-Language classroom, I sympathize with the students who are learning English as a second language, because of my own difficulties in learning Japanese as a second language.

The following questions of *currere* are ones that I reflect on in a planned curriculum (Aoki, 1986/2005): How am I to teach English as a foreign language if my students speak Japanese? Who am I as a teacher in this new teaching experience? I move back and forth in the questions of *currere* which linger in the space between a *lived* and *planned* curriculum (Aoki, 1986/2005). My journey to Japan begins with the foremost reason why I wanted to expand my teaching experience: I wanted to learn how to teach in a country other than my own. I entered into the international teaching world with my heart open for change in the teaching self.

My first moments teaching in a Japanese classroom are instrumental to understanding my first view of a foreign teaching world. The daily customs and operations of the Japanese high schools where I taught were unfamiliar to me. The classes were about 45 to 50 students each. I taught three to four classes per day. I was accustomed to learning all of my students' names in Canada, so learning a hundred or

more names became cumbersome; I could only recognize faces. There were other difficulties present in a Japanese classroom. My students and I did not speak the same language. The presence of Japanese and English in the classroom complicated communication between my students and me. I was mindful of the tension between English and Japanese, but I felt discouraged in my new position as a foreign teacher. My presence as a Canadian teacher in a Japanese classroom was another difficulty that I faced: Were my students going to be accepting of the way I taught? I ventured through these difficulties, and I hoped to build a relationship with my new students; this depended on how I positioned myself as a teacher in their learning world.

The sight, sound, and feel of a Japanese classroom influenced my initial perceptions of a foreign classroom. I tried to grasp what it meant to be a foreign teacher in a classroom that was a contrast to the one I knew in Canada. The room was quiet, and if someone spoke it reverberated with sound. The classroom was humid in the summer and cold in the winter. The extremes in the feel of the classroom affected the aliveness of it. Teachers would be seen lecturing while students slept at their desks. The classroom seemed motionless; students sat in rows and when the bell rang all leapt up to begin yet another class. The classroom did not feel alive to me. At times, I felt like a beacon standing in front of the classroom, even though my students' eyes were cast down. I wondered if my students understood my teaching at all.

Pinar (1975a) posits that through the method of *currere*, we soon come to know that the sense of exploring one's life journey "lies in one's experience...of oneself, of others...of journey and pilgrimage" (p. 404). When I revisit the teaching world of Japan, I enter into the classroom as a Canadian teacher. I relive the teaching experience in the

Japanese classroom. This experience reawakens my experience of being a Canadian teacher, as I contemplate how leaving Canada to teach in Japan is an event of migration.

Pinar's notion of bracketing "the educational aspects of our taken-for-granted world" (Pinar, 1975a, p. 406) prompts me to question what my taken-for-granted world was prior to Japan; I also wonder how my taken-for-granted world was altered after teaching in Japan and then returning home to Canada. The responses to these questions linger further as I begin to explore them in Pinar's (1975a) suggestion of bracketing or loosening of one's consciousness. Bracketing enables a release of the "cultural conditioning and...other-directed thinking" (p. 406). Bracketing allows the teacher to free-associate, as Pinar suggests, with different ontological modes of being. In this free-associative method of exploring the self, I give my self permission to "fall into past experience...to relive early and present experiences" (p. 408). For example, when I wrote about my international teaching experience in Japan, I reflected on the meaning of persevering in lands outside my home country. Self-reflectively, I reflect on the world of teaching in order to explore identity landscapes that give meaning to the experiences I have lived.

Similarly in another context, Hélène Cixous' (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) notions of the *unknown* and *difference* are also used to enter into the narratives of self and teacher. Cixous says that the events in a text do not take place sequentially or as experienced in the real world. I enter into narrative possibilities from the perspectives that arise from my contemplating being a foreign teacher. These perspectives give way to the possibilities of the experience of being a Canadian teacher. According to Cixous (1997), the site of the other written in a text awakens the unknown of self; the self cannot be

awoken through experiences owned by the self. For example, I do not describe immigrants and their experiences as written in grand narratives of historical accounts of migration, as this would detract from the possibility of arriving at meaning.

I reflect on growing up in a multicultural family that brings forth memories of my first multicultural experience. The event of being raised in a multi-ethnic family carries meaning in the context of being a Canadian teacher of a multicultural classroom. Cixous (1997) writes that the truth of the self “echoes through our memory, through our body, through foreign memories with which we communicate through subconsciouses” (p. 68). Memories expand the truth of the self. The teacher lives in the teaching situation, and a new teaching self unfolds from the historical-present (Pinar, 2004).

A complicated conversation (Aoki, 1986/2005) with the past forms a portrait of being a Canadian teacher. The conversation between past, present, and future provides insight into my teaching origin. Curriculum reconceptualist theory posits that “man [sic] is a transcendent being” (Huebner, in Pinar, 1975b, p. 241). The imagined self comes into view through a reflection on the lives of the self and other. Cixous (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) states: “We never see ourselves; we are always blind; we see of ourselves what comes back to us through (the difference of) the other... There is a point where the unknown begins” (pp. 16-17). The teacher as viewed from a universal perspective coupled with the teacher as viewed from a historical one invites a world of responses to the question of who one is in relation to the other.

A section in Cixous’ book titled “It’s the Other Who Makes My Portrait” (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) centers on a discussion of layered meanings of being. In these layered meanings of being, *I* and *the other* enter together into the question of “Who am

I?”, but I initially did not consider how *the other* relates to the meaning of being a teacher. However, the subtext of the research question for this thesis was reworded to “Who *you-me*” (p. 14)? This rewording of the question for considering identity in relation to the other gives way to a more layered conversation with not one voice that speaks to experience but rather multiple voices that speak more holistically to identity.

Conversations reveal a multitude of voices that can bring forth meaning from in-between the text. The voices in the text become sites of conversations inlaid into a narrative portrait of conversation. The teacher’s voice is not singular in this conversation; it is inclusive of all other voices that speak to the experience of teaching.

Looking to the difference of the other in “a world of face-to-face living” (Aoki, 1993/2005a, p. 211) restructures the question of being Canadian from a “Who am I?” to “Who am I with?” I live in the collective experience of migration not only in the past and present but the future as well. The past leads to moments of birth, death, and marriage. The past is lineage, roots, and origin. It is a history where people depart from homelands and arrive in a new country. Tracing stories of migration begins the routes and the roots of the narratives. The experience of settling and homesteading amongst ethnic difference in classroom and home is also explored.

To make meaning of our own histories is to approach our lives with awareness. When I stand back from meaning-making and review it from a greater distance, the narratives become clearer, more intentional, and directional; I gain a greater sense of understanding the purpose my historicity serves in the formation of my identity as a teacher. They provide the momentum to travel as a transmigrant and to return to a past suspended in the world of the Canadian teacher.

I listen to life stories from my classroom and relate them to my own. Landed immigrant and refugee students speak of their homes and countries as landscapes of solace or aggravation. My students are open to sharing and speaking about home. The conversations that revolve around this topic are transformative possibilities for understanding the experience of being a Canadian teacher. Home and classroom are two landscapes in which I contemplate the meaning of a Canadian teacher. How is a classroom similar to a home? How does being home affect my teaching praxis? My refugee and immigrant students return to their experiences of being in foreignness. Leaving landscapes of familiarity and arriving in other landscapes of unfamiliarity becomes one site from which the topics of home land are explored. Displacement such as by forced evacuation brings to the exploration of home a new meaning and possible narrative: What does displacement mean for the classroom or the student who arrives into learning as one who has been displaced?

I engage in dialogue between past and present. I dwell within storied spaces looking to the self as the site of inquiry. Aoki asks: “What insights, what deeper seeing....does [the] story allow” (Aoki, in Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 18)? What does Canada mean when language and culture illuminate the nuances of another’s life story? Language and culture are two topics used to interpret the experiences of living and teaching in multi-ethnic contexts. The teaching world can be viewed from an “astral way” (Cixous & Call-Gruber, 1997, p. 189). Viewing the classroom from a universal, or world, perspective expands the meaning of a Canadian identity. How has another’s history affected my being a Canadian and a teacher? Past stories echo the experience of being a teacher. But in a multiplicity of stories, there are traces that the teacher can follow to

better draw the self out of the histories in order to see the self in the historical complexities of one's life. What is the language that speaks to these historical events?

The relationship between the foreign and the familiar is a “world-wide resonance” (Cixous & Call-Gruber, 1997, p. 189) in a classroom that contains generations of students and teachers. The “geography of...genealogical memory” (p. 82) locates people in their original landscapes and follows generations of people to their new home lands. I trace genealogical memory migration routes that my family and my students traveled from. Tracing diverse histories of arrival and settlement of people to new countries and places of learning allows me to imagine the classroom as a new country that I am about to settle in.

The histories I trace are the threads that weave the thesis together into a migration story. The histories, in their compilation, become my own migration story of being a fourth-generation Canadian teacher. The narratives aim to reveal truths of the self (Pinar, 2004) set in the multiple plots that originate from my hometown and my classroom. I depart from the locations of home and classroom and enter into a biographic situation. From inside this biographic situation key narratives arise out of reliving those moments that speak to me about the experience of being a Canadian teacher. The narratives are entitled as follows: *Homesteading Origin*, *Being in Ethnicity*, *Making a Home in the Cellar of My Heart*, and *Cultivating Language*. Each narrative is presented in a different font to illustrate the distinctiveness of the writing from the rest of the thesis. The change in font also signals a deeper reflection on the topics; these reflections are transposed into narrative.

Through each narrative, I explore my lived experiences of growing up and teaching in multi-ethnic communities. I return to the community of my classroom, and further beyond, to the geographical location of Lethbridge, Alberta. Through self-reflection, I re-enter ancestral homes and explore my unconscious knowing of foreignness that originated in these homes. I shift through different moments in time and experiences, while remembering my life in Lethbridge as a fourth-generation Canadian. I recall the sights and sounds of being in ethnicity and, more particularly, the feeling of living with/in foreign languages. I explore the impact this memory has on my being a teacher of English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language.

Through narrative inquiry, I reflect on my resistance (Pinar, 1994) to being in foreignness (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997). Resistance to being in foreignness is not defined for this thesis as a confrontation or conflict between my self and other people. Rather, resistance means hesitation. For example, when I look into the unfamiliar found in a teaching situation, this generates uncertainty. The unfamiliar may be the languages, cultures and traditions of my immigrant family and students. Being in uncertainty brings to my consciousness different ways of seeing and being within foreignness in the classroom. A new awareness, or a new way of looking at the world, begins to come forth. I stand on the outside of the biographic situation contemplating my entrance into it. As I reflect on the multiple teaching experiences held within a biographic situation, I bracket the experience so that I am able to reflect on the implications resistance holds in an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom.

The thesis is divided into four broad topics of exploration. They are: identity, culture, language, and ethnicity. The topics are further divided into sections of this thesis

that explore each topic in more detail. The first section entitled *Where I Come From: The Autobiographical Framing* sets the migration, historical and autobiographical contexts of the thesis. In this section, I explore the multi-ethnic origins I come from, the culturally diverse community I grew up in, and my experience of being a teacher in Canada and Japan. I loosen these experiences from my past and bring them to my present teaching praxis. I explore the connection between past and present teaching experiences, in the context of ethnicity and historicity.

The next section of the thesis, *Inherited Stories*, bridges my prior experience of living in culturally diverse communities such as teaching in Japan. The experience of living in Japan is a reflection of teaching with/in the multicultural community of a classroom. More specifically, this experience connects the experience of growing up in my hometown Lethbridge, Alberta to the experience of teaching in an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom. This moment of reflection moves me out of my past and into the possible futures for interpreting the experience of being a Canadian teacher.

Further sections of the thesis, *Bridging Identity and Ethnicity* and *Being in Language*, move me out of reflection and into an analysis and synthesis of living and teaching with people in multicultural experiences. I explore the stories that my immigrant students bring into the classroom. The writing in this section begins to guide me into understanding how living in another's experience of learning bridges the dual experience of being in ethnicity and language.

I travel across the geographical and pedagogical landscapes of my storied knowing through the section entitled *Inherited Landscapes of Storied Knowing*. I return

to what awareness has emerged from the experience of living as a multi-ethnic teacher in Canada. I bring home this understanding in *Homesteading Understanding: Being a Citizen of the Curriculum World*. I synthesize the meaning of being a Canadian and teacher in the experience of an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom, and I revisit key themes that arose out of the narratives. I culminate with the implications the research holds for a teacher of immigrants and refugees to Canada. More particularly, I bring home an articulation of the experience of being an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language teacher in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

The thesis becomes a new country that I arrive in as a fourth-generation Canadian. I travel amongst the narrative plains of being Canadian and look to “the voices in history” (Miller, 2005, p. 75) that guide knowledge of my personal and academic life (Pinar, 1994) into a more whole and less fragmented understanding. The historical, emigrational moments which invite and expel people from one country to another unfold through narrative writing and interpretation. Each story triggers another written through autobiographical journeys of understanding. This thesis is a journey that uncovers the early layers of where I live in my teaching situation (Pinar, 2004); I re-experience being a fourth-generation Canadian captured in multiple waves of migration.

The Theoretical Framing: Pinar's *Currere* and Biographic Situation

This thesis is centered on Pinar's notions of *currere* (1975a) and *biographic situation* (2004). *Currere* is (in) motion and in its "Latin infinitive form of curriculum means to run the course" (p. 35). The method of *currere* allows one to explore the self while in the act of running the course. It provides the momentum for the runner to return to the past while remaining in the present and contemplating the future. *Currere* gives momentum to run the course between the "temporal and conceptual" (Pinar, 1994, p. 19) connections of a personal and academic life. It is perpetual.

Currere is an autobiographical method. Its *regressive, progressive, analytical* and *synthetical* steps (Pinar, 1994) are used in this thesis to explore the connections of an academic life to a personal life. Perspectives from the historical and present moments of *currere* are undergirded with intentions to seek a way of viewing one's self temporally from the past, the present, and the future. The regressive step of *currere* enables one to embark from the historical present to moments of the past that began the historical shaping of the self; the purpose of the regressive phase is to "capture the [past] as it was" (Pinar, 1994, p. 21). The regressive step is intricately related to the progressive step: it is a returning to the self to contemplate the future. In the regressive step, one returns to the biographic past. The biographic past is not akin to the literal past but rather "exists presently, complexly contributive to the biographic present" (Pinar, 1994, p. 22). To be in the past also means to locate the self in the past and to "get 'underneath' the layers where one lives, to earlier layers where one can...[reach] more truthful versions" (Pinar, 2004, p. 55). Locating in the past means to "bracket the past in order to look at what is not ordinarily seen, at what is taken-for-granted" (Pinar, 1994, p. 22). When entering the

past, Pinar suggests to not interpret at the first moment of entering a biographic past but to reflect on and “uncover [the] self” (p. 55).

In the progressive step of *currere*, one looks “the other way...at what is not yet the case, what is not yet present” (Pinar, 1994, p. 24). In this phase, one “imagines who one is not” (Pinar, 2004, p. 55) and becomes present as one was for the past. Stepping out of the past and into the future, the teacher looks at how the present is formed into the future, and what images of the future self arise from reflecting on the past of the educational experience. The mind travels back and forth between the past and the present to the thoughts and images of the self hovering in the moment of reflection. It is in this moment that possible futures are imagined. Pinar (1994) suggests to record these moments and to describe them. In this stage, the aim is to “allow buried visions of what is not yet present to manifest” (p. 25). I dwell in this imagined future by excavating stories that reveal “fictive representations of who I might be” (Pinar, 2004, p. 55).

In the analytical step, the interpreter “describes the biographic present, exclusive of the past and future, but inclusive of the responses to them” (p. 25). In this phase, the interpreter describes what is taken for granted. The interpreter conceptualizes and loosens what is imagined for a possible future and studies the “fundamental biographic theme(s)” (p. 26). The interpretations of what is imagined and their juxtapositions in past, present, and future become a matrix of the “future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both” (p. 26). It is an examination of what the past means for the present and the present for the future.

In the synthetical moment, one looks to the “biological concreteness of being” (p. 26). The interpreter looks to the voice of the self that responds to who the person is in this

moment as it illuminates the present. It is a moment of looking to “deeper knowledge...to one’s evolving biography...to point of view...and the content of one’s stream of consciousness” (p. 26). The synthesis of all moments revisited in *currere* composes a revelation of the self while in a *biographic situation*. A *biographic situation* “suggests a structure of lived meaning that follows from past situations, but which contains, perhaps unarticulated, contradictions of the past and present as well as anticipation of possible futures” (p. 36). Pinar’s process for entering a *biographic situation* asks one to consider the question: “How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?” (p. 37). For this thesis, I locate my self in a “historical time and cultural place” (p. 36). I imagine possible futures and identities. I consider my historicity, while transmigrating between personal and pedagogical histories. Migrating through *currere* then begins the forming of an embodied curriculum where ethnicity, culture, race, identity, pedagogy, and place shape an understanding of the experience of being a Canadian teacher.

The Origin of the Thesis

The stories of my life begin with members of my family who immigrated to Canada in the early part of the twentieth century. They told me stories about their own migration experiences. To enable my self to return to their narrative accounts of migration, I journey across an “immense landscape of the *trans-*, of the passage” (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 52). I also take on the role of a transmigrant. The prefix *trans-* joined with *migrant* illustrates the action of a person traveling across storied landscapes of migration. As a transmigrant, I travel back-and-forth between first countries and second countries, and I return to each story to revisit its potential significance for myself as a Canadian teacher. I travel between the familiar and the foreign of the experiential, temporal, geographical, and pedagogical dimensions of the narratives. The zone between the *live(d)* and *planned* curriculum worlds of my everyday real-world experiences and pedagogical situations become the place in which I contemplate the significance of being a Canadian and a teacher. I become a part of the migration and teaching stories that speak to the experience of being part of the larger social and historical contexts of migration.

Aoki’s concepts of *curriculum-as-live(d)* and *curriculum-as-plan* (1986/2005) are used to engage in critical reflective processes of the self. Aoki refers to the *live(d)* and *planned* curriculum as discourse to mediate the meaning of being beyond immediate interpretations of the self. The discourse of each curriculum orientation is also used to uncover “the hidden ‘true’ interests embedded in some given personal and social condition” (Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 106). To facilitate this discourse, I situate my self in an embodied curriculum or in *live(d)* experiences. I position my self with my students while

they live out their migration experiences in my classroom. Their migration stories become ones that I contemplate for my own narratives.

I look beyond the presumptions held about the self and reflect upon the possibilities of understanding being as a teacher, not only in personal and historical situations but also in pedagogical ones. I liken the teaching situation to the event of migration. I explore the self in pedagogical and historical landscapes within this event, and this process opens spaces for possibilities to understand the self in a teaching praxis. I explore the self in the landscapes of Lethbridge, Alberta, the town I grew up in. More specifically, I explore the cultural landscapes that drew me to become a teacher of immigrants. I return to one foreign country in which I taught. Japan is the location where I became a teacher in a foreign land. I faced difficulty in learning a new language, adopting new traditions, and adjusting to a new culture. I entered into a teaching situation in which at first I was unable to communicate with my students. This teaching situation challenged me. Like my Japanese students, I was learning a second language. Learning Japanese opened my self to understanding my students' difficulties with learning a second language. Learning alongside my students illuminated my own difficulties in learning how to be a teacher in a foreign land.

Aoki describes a definition of praxis as “a way of knowing in which the subject within a pedagogic situation (like a classroom) reflectively engages the objective world” (Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 116). By looking at the objective world from *live(d)* experiences, I am able to view the human situation in a teaching praxis as one of embodiment and belonging. I can then look to the meaning that the story offers and listen for the meaning held in the narrative.

The purpose for this thesis is to understand how auto/biographical migration stories are connected to a pedagogical life and how this connection influences a teaching praxis. Aoki's definition of praxis, which he describes as a "way of knowing...in a pedagogic situation" (Aoki, 1983/2005), offers possibilities for understanding what meaning is held in being a teacher; the teaching situation represents the histories and the people who are a part of those histories. Praxis, as defined by Aoki, is where teaching is lived out and a mutual understanding between student and teacher comes alive. In this moment of rebirth, an understanding of the consciousness of the self as teacher is heightened. The pedagogic situation which contains histories of both student and teacher provokes the teacher to contemplate the presence of the teaching self in a given historical moment, whether it be in the *planned* or *lived* moment of teaching. My way of knowing my self as a teacher comes forth in two teaching situations: one in Canada and the other in Japan. Teaching in Japan was an unknown to me. I had to relearn how to be a teacher again; I had to learn the Japanese high school curriculum, and a new way of teaching in a foreign classroom where English was not the first language. I opened my self up to my new teaching praxis and my teaching situation began to come alive. My students and I became responsive to each other in our own difficulties of learning a foreign language.

Aoki (1983/2005) further suggests in his discussion of praxis the value of considering meaning of being a teacher. He proposes that living in pedagogy is to engage wholeheartedly in a teaching life. Living heartfully in teaching opens up ways of seeing the self outside the planned curriculum. Contemplating what a teacher means to teaching (Aoki, 1986/2005) requires one to engage in a self-reflexive process and to consider all the participants in a teaching praxis, such as the students: What is the significance of the

other in the pedagogic situation? By standing meditatively outside the planned moment of teaching, the teacher is better able to view the implications for knowing the self as an engaged historical and teaching being. Further to his own definition of a teaching praxis, Aoki also quotes Aristotle when he says that the teacher in his or her praxis engages in “holistic activity of the total person—head, heart, and lifestyle, all as one” (Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 116). Praxis then is not viewed as an instrument to better teaching practice. Living wholeheartedly in pedagogy connects the teacher to the human subjects (Pinar, 2004) in the classroom.

There have come moments in my teaching situation in Canada when students came to class not ready or capable of learning. Their real world experiences affected their learning. Some were living in trauma and others in avoidance of it. The student entered the class for the first time apprehensively. Fowler writes that “[n]arrative research can serve as entry points or gates to understanding across differences, borders, and ruptures” (Fowler, 2006, p. 31). For some immigrants arriving in Canada for the first time, those first few months, or even years, are spent crossing geographical borders and adapting to a new way of life. Food and shelter may be scarce and parents or guardians missing in the students’ first country. Scarcity, lack of security, and suffering enter into the classroom and alter the world of the teacher. The circumstances of another’s life are brought into the teaching situation. Differences and borders begin to form. These borders can be the languages spoken other than English and, the more apparent ones, the borders that surround the countries my students come from. Ruptures in understanding can be caused by misunderstandings, misconceptions, or presumptions. These ruptures cause a breaking apart of the relationship between the student and teacher. The possibilities for mending

these ruptures require a conscious recognition, an acknowledgement of the assumptions the teacher holds of herself and her students. This opens spaces for healing in the classroom. The assumptions that cause these ruptures in the teaching situation are initially healed with compassion.

Different perceptions that the student and teacher have of each other begin to form in the Canadian classroom. Differences become more apparent when my students and I speak about where we have come from and what languages we speak. But as we speak about these differences found in language and first country, we become conscious of each other's presence. In the relationship of student and teacher, we interact in landscapes of difference. We become percipient in a context of historical difference. We move further into our histories and into our life stories. We become aware of our differences, our "shared lands and languages of being" (Fowler, 2006, p. 31) that exist in the classroom. Returning to our origins and histories through story brings together disparate lands.

I uncover the language and the voice to "tell the experience...that exists either in the common world or the private world" (p. 30). Fowler indicates that when engaging in narrative analysis, the self becomes the site of inquiry. From the self as the site it is possible to uncover those stories of the teaching self—the self becomes the site from where the narrative is set in motion. The teacher returns to the narrative in processes of self-reflexivity and explores the plot, the characters, and themes. I do this when I return in narrative to the home of my Ukrainian great-grandparents. This home is the site where I was immersed in Ukrainian culture and language from the early years of my life, although I cannot speak Ukrainian. I return to the scenes in a Ukrainian home that

introduce me to being in difference. This home was one of my first worlds where I lived amongst people who spoke little or no English. These people, who were my great-grandparents and acquaintances of them, were not born in Canada. When I returned to these scenes while researching this thesis, I began to wonder how being raised as a child in a multi-ethnic home influenced my becoming a teacher of immigrants. The narrative return to my childhood home(s) makes it possible to seek out the meaning of the self as teacher in a context relevant to the larger scene, or in the case of this thesis, the larger historical context of migration. The narratives emerge from autobiographical writing in the form of migration stories. The narratives become tensioned by the possibilities the stories carried in their power “to direct and change...teaching lives” (Fowler, 2006, p. 146).

Fowler (2006) relays a metaphor of the self as seen in a narrative. She says that narrative is like a mirror in which one can catch a glimpse of the self in a reflection of the self: “the teacher-in-me is looking in a textual mirror when I read the stories I write about teaching” (p. 149). Looking at my self as I would in a mirror, that mirror being narrative inquiry, is one way in which I can gaze upon the teacher in me. The narratives that I write while in reflection reveal a mode of being a Canadian teacher. Perceptions of the self are uncovered in the narratives. This elevates the understanding of what I mean to my teaching. I look at a reflection of the self in order to see all perspectives that composed a portrait of the self. Fowler writes that “[f]rom one perspective, an action has one meaning; from a different perspective it has another” (p. 127). The texts, or narratives, mirror a living history in my teaching. I relive “educational narratives” (p. 151) and examine the socio-historical and professional self and look to “an honest match in the

‘living out’ between our theories and our practices” (p. 127). While living in my own historicity through narrative, a portrait of the self comes forth through the experiences of being of multi-ethnic origin and growing up in cultural diversity. These experiences are relived in my hometown of Lethbridge, Alberta, while growing up in the 1970s.

Lethbridge is a culturally diverse community. The city is one context where I gather meaning in a teaching praxis and a sense of the professional self set in varied landscapes of being. This context becomes a site where I also begin to challenge the assumptions I held of people outside my Lethbridge home.

Cixous (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) posits that history is influential in the formation of identity. Cixous writes of the self as having lived in foreign and textual worlds; she resists the single view of the self as seen by the self. She views her foreignness as a voice that speaks to her identity; she explores her identity through her originness. She writes about the meaning of the self in the intertextuality of identity. She suggests that “[o]ne must open oneself, one must make room for the other. Accept an entirely amazing change in the economy that is produced: *less self*” (p. 110). Difference and sameness are two contexts I use to explore the self as influenced by the other. When immigrants arrive into my classroom to study English, I often wonder what their perceptions are of me as their teacher. Cixous writes that “[s]trength does not come from preservation (of the same) but from the interruption of alterity. My life comes to me from the other” (p.174). My life as a multi-ethnic teacher comes to me from my students. My students bring their own lives into the classroom. We recognize each other’s lives as integral to our first understanding of each other, and we live together in learning and teaching.

I become more aware of my teaching self in my teaching world when life stories are mutually shared in the classroom. Life stories are unfamiliar, at first. This interval of being in unfamiliarity creates a space, or an opportunity to reach for the familiar found in the foreign. My students and I begin to learn about each other's lives in the context of a classroom. We ask questions of each other. We ask where we come from and who we are. We ask about family left back in the first country and how we came to be where we are now. We begin to conversationally sketch a portrait of each other. I begin to compose a portrait of the historical and pedagogical self by looking at being in difference. What does it mean to be in difference? Asking this question requires a persistent re-evaluation of the self in social, historical, pedagogical and personal contexts. Cixous writes about the personal "interior voyage" (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 105) of the self. I look not only to the outside of the self and my mere presence in the classroom but to the interior of the foreign self dwelling within another student's life circumstances.

Pinar asks: "What is the experience of being...a stranger in a land not one's own" (Pinar, 1975a, p. 399)? I seek to articulate the experience not in the histories already told but through my own experience of being a teacher in land I am not familiar with (Greene, 1973). The terrain is my classroom. It is a place where possibilities to be re-awakened lie. It is a place where I feel up-rooted by the presence of my students who come from countries that are unfamiliar to me. I cannot easily bridge my self with my students and their countries. There is uneasiness. Outside of this hesitation, I interact with my students' stories to interpret what significance our first meeting will have for my teaching; I attempt to make my self familiar by sharing my world with them. I tell them where I come from, who I am, and what I do. Making my self present begins a

pedagogical dialogue. Even though the geographical location of Lethbridge, Alberta may be foreign to the immigrants who enter my classroom, the locality of the classroom becomes a setting in which the historical circumstances that we have arrived into as student and teacher are waiting to be taken up in the act of reflecting upon the self and the world. In this reflection, new histories come forth in the boundless space of teaching.

Engaging with the past harmonizes the unknowns with the knowns of my understanding the experience of being a Canadian teacher. As I contemplate my self in the movement of the dialectic, Pinar (1994) speaks to the significance of engaging in dialogue: “In order for a dialectic movement to occur one must abandon the solipsistic world of abstraction and enter the material world of concrete individuals” (p. 101). These traditions are maintained externally. But internally there lies a yearning to return to the actual places that are home for me. These places are the home shores from which my ancestors left. Their autobiographical shores were the beginnings of their stories. The beginnings of the stories are the locations from which my own stories grew. My stories merge with another’s. I venture to the unfamiliar narrative landscapes and seek to join my story with another’s. This story becomes one comprehensive land of understanding where the waves run cyclically, as in the movement of *currere*. In the wave of *currere*, the questions persist: What will this land look like? What will it have to offer me? What will the hardships be? What is the language of this land? Will I die in this land? Will I give birth here? What will happen to me? How will I be in this new culture?

The Autobiographical Migration Stories

Pinar’s method of *currere* asks one to contemplate the relationship of the self to the world: “What do I make of what I have been made of?...What is to be the relationship

of the knower to the known” (Pinar, 1994, p. 204)? I linger within the “response-ability” (Huebner, as cited in Pinar, 1975b, p. 231) of the questions. I have become a transmigrant who seeks to settle within a historicity between the zone of being Canadian and teacher. I join Canadian and teacher and embark into migration experiences. My past exists in multiple horizons of becoming (Gadamer, 1975). The experience of being in an untold story lingers in the horizon. The horizons never deplete. I rise higher above other approaching horizons to see well and to see the reality of others.

Personal and professional stories become the country from which I embark and return to. I seek further stories relevant to understanding the self in a relationship of teacher and student. Leah Fowler (2006) writes of the importance that stories can serve for teaching: “[W]e need to engage in stories about teaching lives and to tell, write, and rewrite our lives as specific individuals who are mattering fields-of-self, worthy of narrating and being narrated” (p. 106). More importantly for Fowler in her research, using life stories supports the matters that are worth storying. The emigrational experiences worth storying are the histories from which “I” as a teacher emerge.

A shift in my educational world occurred two-fold: when I went to Japan to teach English and when I returned to Canada after having taught in Japan for five years. This shift is defined as how I understand my self as a teacher and how I view my teaching self in the presence of my students. The entrance into an educational reality produces a “response-ability” (Huebner, as cited in Pinar, 1975b, p. 231) and a “conversational possibility” (p. 231). The response to being in the teaching worlds of both Canada and Japan creates a site for a conversation. I converse back and forth between the teacher I was and the teacher I have become, in the geographical locations of Canada and Japan.

The response to the experience of being a Canadian teacher is held within each of these teaching experiences.

I excavate stories from my experience of being a fourth-generation Canadian teacher. The stories come from the countries and classrooms that I have taught in; they also come from the towns that I have lived in. They inform me of what being a Canadian teacher means in the context of the teaching situation; the stories expand my awareness of being a teacher in a multicultural classroom. Janet L. Miller (2005) writes that through autobiography one can seek out “multiple identity constructions” (p. 50) of the self. She states that autobiographical writing is not intended to be a “cultural script” (p. 54) but rather writing that speaks to the narrative possibilities for understanding identity. Autobiographical writing is not used for summarizing factual events of a particular experience that lead to superficial understandings of identity. The writer remains “permanently open” (p. 55) to the story and “recognizes the constructing and reconstructing of experiences and identities as interpretive” (p. 56). I return to the first generation of my family, my great-grandparents, to investigate their experience of migration. Each of their experiences was told to me in story. Their stories and migration experiences are the starting points for the narratives that I write.

I return to my teaching world and to the locations of home and classroom. I write on topics of culture, history, home, and language. These topics provide the foundations from which an articulation of the first experiences of living and teaching in multicultural contexts can come forth. How can I represent the “cultural codes” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126) and articulate the discourse from my everyday experiences? From the sites of home and classroom, four narratives arose out of exploration and reflection on being a fourth-

generation Canadian teacher. The cross-cultural traditions I experienced in the multi-ethnic communities that I grew up in are the genesis for the narratives I write.

The multiple perspectives from which being a Canadian teacher can be reviewed emerge from the action of living in the world. At one point in the writing of the narratives, I was looking to the students as the object of my experience (Aoki, 1986/2005); I was not looking to them as contributors to it. The narratives resulted in a retelling of the teaching experience rather than in an engagement with and an interpretation of them. The intent is not to retell the experiences of teaching and being of multi-ethnic origin. The aim is to engage with the past and keep in view the experiences that re-emerge by reflecting on my own historicity. Reflection keeps in view the present and increases awareness of the experience.

I relive being in cultural difference in the location of my teaching experience. The subjects that I explore in my teaching experience are the human and academic ones (Pinar, 2004). English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language is the subject that I teach, and the learners in my classroom are newcomers to Canada. My interaction with the spheres of the learner and the subject enable me to engage in exploring the interiority of the self as teacher (Pinar, 2004).

Countries outside my own teaching world exist in my teaching situation. The people who come from countries outside Canada bring into the classroom their perceptions of the worlds that they come from. As their teacher, I share my perceptions of the country, the province, and the city I come from. I share my perceptions from the experience of growing up as a child in a multi-ethnic community. By doing this, I hope to understand my students' first homes. My students give back when they share perceptions

of their home countries through their own stories. Those initial perceptions of home influence their view of Canadian life and my own view of my life growing up as a granddaughter of an immigrant family. My students and I experience through all senses the migration experience. I transpose this experience into the narratives I write for this thesis. The pedagogic situation, my classroom, becomes a new country that my immigrant students and I walk into daily. It is a situation characterized by diversity in “a unitary world” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 127).

The multiple and historical perspectives written in the narratives persevere while I critically explore what being a Canadian means in multicultural contexts of home and classroom. I return to my childhood homes and reflect on the experience of being in language. The conversation circles that I sat in as a child were held in languages other than English. The people who held these conversations did not intend to alienate me from their conversations. From this experience, I reflect on my reaction to being in these conversations and how this influenced me as a teacher of students whose first language is not English. I self-reflexively gaze upon the original landscapes from which I came and the languages that came with these terrains. The autobiographies, the stories-told-to-me, and the narratives I write serve as the foundation from which I can explore the varied identity landscapes of Canadian and teacher.

Ivor Goodson (1998) describes autobiographical modes as “cartography of the self” (p. 4). My teaching world is like a map that guides me to the world of my students’ stories. Embedded in these worlds are further landscapes that temporally, spatially, and socially (Goodson, 1998) move me into another’s life story. I contemplate the meaning of another’s life history for understanding the experience of being a Canadian teacher in

stories not my own. I follow in roots and routes of migration to understand my own historicity as a part of the larger immigrant history. Two autobiographies from my family provide a textual past that I can return to so that I can explore the migration experience. The autobiographies were written by a first-generation Canadian, my great-grandfather Erik Erickson, and a second-generation Canadian, my grandfather John Erickson.

Autobiographical connections disclose implicit knowledge of self-knowing (Smith & Watson, 2001). One way in which autobiographical narratives can be plotted and read are “by chronology, with the narrator looking back upon the life course and organizing the segments of telling according to the movement of historical time” (p. 71). My own narratives of displacement, home, and language are also written in response to the reading of other autobiographies. The narratives are an attempt to reveal the layers of meaning and histories that surround me as a Canadian teacher, the knowledge that needs to be excavated from the reading of another’s life story. The narratives I write do not retell my life story as a series of historical events. Centering my attention on first-hand narratives written and preserved by my own family during migration and settlement provided me with the more immediate experiences that I could draw from to interpret migration and settlement experiences.

Great-grandfather Erik Erickson’s autobiography was the first that I read. He is a Swedish, first-generation Canadian. I read Erik’s first to focus on the actual event of migration. I wanted to experience through his writing what migrating might have felt like, looked like, or sounded like, in text. The autobiography is a nine-page autobiographical fragment written in 1955. The events I focus on from his life story were about his decision to come to Canada as a boy of eighteen years of age, the socio-

economic circumstances in Sweden that prompted him to find better work in Alberta, the events that surrounded his arrival to Canada, and the processes he took to homestead in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. He describes in detail the events surrounding his decision to migrate to Canada from Sweden. Aside from the events, he is partial to writing about the people in his life that he remembered most such as his family and friends. He also writes about his work life from childhood and onwards to the moment where he decides to emigrate to Canada. The latter part of the autobiography speaks to the experience of homesteading and building a community of friendships in the district where he settled. Erik's writing moves back and forth between the landscapes he first sets foot on to the people that inhabit the landscapes.

I return to an immigrant's perspective of migration to Canada written in an autobiography. Erik's emigration provides insight into the experience of migration. His autobiography that he began to write in English during 1955 speaks to how he attempted to make connections with his past to his present. Knowing Erik's life story enables me to contemplate what insights are held within my students' migration experiences, and my own to Japan.

Erik's autobiography speaks primarily of making a home in another land and to the differences between his home country Sweden and Canada. I contemplate how this might be similar to my students' entering an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom for the first time. Erik's autobiography presents a challenge though: the writing does not disclose the details about his migration; it is a chronological account of the events of migrating and settling. He does not let the reader into his story; however, when I engage with narrative inquiry to respond to and write on topics of lineage,

language, culture, identity, and ethnicity, the possibilities for understanding Erik's migration come forth more readily. My writing begins with remembering my great-grandparents' and grandparents' life stories. Although they did not reveal all the facts of their stories, I am able to piece together the larger story with the fragments from the smaller, less detailed stories.

My family stories of migration to Canada do not readily reveal the thoughts and feelings of leaving a home country so much as the stories about beginning a new life in Canada. The settlement stories are more of a reaction to departure. The event of leaving one country and arriving to another is a means for me to understand an experience of migration. I explore this space in the narratives I write about my teaching in a foreign country. But what is not told in the story speaks louder than what is told. I lived in multiple languages; however, I was unable to respond in my great-grandparents' maternal tongues, when they spoke of their experiences of being immigrants in Lethbridge. From this experience of being in language, I explore the possibilities the untold stories hold for understanding being in a country not one's own.

Each family member's voice is unique to the narratives I write. Some of their stories were told in different versions, and there was a constant return to a history that the author(s) felt might be lost or forgotten. This may be one reason why Erik felt it important to record his life story in the manner that he did. His act of writing was like a textual rebirth of a new life. He attempted to articulate in English, his second language, memories of his childhood. He returned to his home country Sweden and to his experience of migrating to his second home Canada. He preserved his life story, written shortly before his death. I could see his will to maintain the many parts of his life he

remembered most from Sweden and integrate them into his Canadian life. The theme of preservation arose out of his autobiography, and a narrative about a theme entitled *Making a Home in the Cellar of My Heart*. First language and cultural traditions brought from a home country are now a part of the stories I revisit about teaching in a multicultural classroom. The action of preserving stories enables my students to live in their home countries while living and learning in contexts of cultural difference.



Figure 1. A Portrait of Great-Grandfather Erik Erickson

Erik's son's autobiography, *My First Ninety-five Years in Alberta* (Erickson, 2005) is another life story written with the purpose to preserve and recount the personal experience of growing up in one's homeland. The author, John Erickson, is the son of a Swedish immigrant family. Like his father's first autobiographical return to his arrival to Canada, my grandfather John began his writing with his parents' settling and homesteading in Alberta. John's writing is in effect a continuation of Erik's writing. John reviews in his autobiography different moments of his life as a second-generation Canadian, a father, and a grandfather. I read his autobiography to trace the "historical

person” (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 59). I remember my grandfather well as he was present in my upbringing but have only come to know Great-grandfather Erik through his life stories.

When I read John’s life story, I consider my experience of being raised in a family of first-generation Canadian immigrants and simultaneously reflect on my current teaching situation that includes my students who have immigrated to Canada. My teaching situation is the point of origin from which stories of another’s life comes forth. Like the autobiographies, the stories my students tell enable me to explore the spoken and unspoken in the context of my Canadian classroom. The English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language teaching context is one place where I listen for the stories living in the spaces between home and second country. Waiting for my students to tell their stories is a pending invitation into their lives. In anticipation of entering into their stories, I re-enter my homes and go back to the scenes of living in and learning about a second, a third, and sometimes a fourth language. I write autobiographically to preserve the experiences I know from language learning experiences. I return to my students who are learning English, and I reposition my self as a teacher in their stories to root my own stories in their lives.

I explore a life story from the multitude of terrains that I have traveled upon as a multi-ethnic teacher. The cultural landscapes that I grew up in become layered upon my students’. When I become aware of my students’ life stories, their histories are transformed from the singular view of where one comes from to a collective view of home which acknowledges a foreign country as a shared home. I transpose the notion of

home into the classroom where in this context the narratives primarily interplay between topics of identity, ethnicity, and culture midst the curriculum world of living pedagogy.

I move back and forth from my history to another's, and in this movement the theme of displacement arises. It is a theme articulated in letters that I reviewed for this thesis. I chose to read letters because they focus on the experiences of immigrants and their children, living in a post-migration situation. This form of text is a condensed history. One particular letter tells of a fragment of history written from the perspective of a second generation Swedish-Canadian. Harry, the son of my great-grandfather Erik, wrote about his success with becoming a pilot for the Canadian army during WWII. The letter reveals Harry's dilemma about leaving farming. The letter continues with a discussion about his own father's expectations to continue with farming. Harry writes through retrospection. The series of letters written to his brother, my grandfather, reveal a snap-shot of the effects migration had on identity and, more particularly, perceptions they had of themselves.

One specific letter from the series was written in 1942. In this letter, Harry invited my grandfather, who was a farmer by trade, to explore the opportunity of joining the Canadian Air Force. Harry's request was specific in that he encouraged my grandfather to cease farming and leave the life their father had begun when he arrived in Alberta. Harry was a second-generation Canadian who initially began in his father's footsteps by working in farming and lumber yards, yet, he soon discovered that joining the Canadian Air Force would give him the prestige farming wouldn't. Harry alluded to the prestige of serving as a Canadian soldier. The dilemma my grandfather faced was whether to continue with farming, a career which his father had worked so hard to maintain or leave

it to begin a new career that would grant a more financially lucrative future. My grandfather remained in his immigrant father's footsteps and continued farming.

Alberta was changing, as the letter implies, due to the onset of WWII. Harry suggested to my grandfather that by joining the Air Force, my grandfather would find the financial security farming in Alberta would never provide for him. Harry was articulate in his letter and outlined a possible new path for his brother to follow. Although Harry believed that leaving farming would bring success, it was not the success that Harry perceived his parents wanted for my grandfather. Harry was caught between his parents' expectations to farm and his own expectations to take part in a new prosperity Canada was offering—becoming a Canadian soldier. To carry on in the tradition of farming was a conflict from which Harry fled. Harry broke from the tradition of farming and became a pilot; my grandfather remained a farmer. Harry's letter explores the dilemma of staying within the tradition (of farming) or venturing into uncharted landscapes. He searches for his potential, as does my grandfather with his turning down of Harry's offer to join the Canadian army. My interpretation of Harry from his letter is that he desires to belong. He reshapes his identity by becoming a pilot. Harry's letter follows:

Edmonton

Feb. 11/42.

Dear Johnnie,

And I had a talk last Sunday along the same lines that you & I discussed the week before. After considering all the pros and cons, I am still of the same

opinion—that it is in the best interests of both you and Dad to revert from farming into some more profitable occupation.

Farming is now more of a gamble than ever, considering drought, hail, world prices, etc. There are many positions open now, which offer steady remunerative, earning power. You have the best chance in the world to establish yourself now in something that you like, and in which there is a future. After the war, opportunities for entering new fields will be very limited, and only those with extensive training will have a chance.

In the seven years you have been farming, you've been merely marking time, cutting yourself off from the advancement which you're capable of. In addition you'll find, in another few years, that Barbara Jeanne will be under quite a handicap should she continue her education under the same conditions.

Should you desire to enter the Air Force, you would stand an excellent chance of advancement. By all means you should demand a commission with your experience. Besides assuring you and your family a steady income, it eliminates all worries in regard to your medical and dental care.

Should you and Dad decide to continue farming, to put it bluntly, I'd say that you both were crazy. I have recommended this same course of action [and] I am more confident than ever that my deductions are correct. Should you decide not to quit farming you're going to cut Dad's throat as well as your own.

You have the chances now of feeling freer than you've felt for a good many years, and a great many worries will be lifted from Dad's shoulders. So why not take advantage of it now?

Harry

AC2 Erickson, H. H.

R143234

#3 Manning Depot

Edmonton, Alberta



Figure 2. Harry Erickson in Canadian Air Force Uniform, 1942

Identity, as perceived from the context of the classroom, is explored from historical and experiential locations of home. Harry's letter is one artifact that provides the context from which experiential accounts of living in pre-WWII Alberta can be explored. Harry's life context also provides the basis from which I can explore my own career shifts in teaching. I left teaching in Canada to become a teacher in Japan. Harry's history and mine are woven together. I read his letter to understand his opinions about leaving not a country but one career path to begin another. I left my career path in Canada as a teacher to begin a new path as a teacher in Japan. I wanted to explore the thought of being a teacher from two countries. As Harry had explored his career opportunities in his letter, I also wondered what other paths this would open up in my life. Harry wanted to be elsewhere in his work life but with that came a sacrifice; Harry diverged from his father's emigrational paths. These emigrational paths were some of the first ones set into the ground when Erik arrived to Canada. To leave those paths was a risk, and Harry took this risk. I was told that leaving teaching in Canada would be a risk. I was told that I would lose my place and my teaching position. I felt as if I were losing my home. But ironically the thought of losing my home drew me closer to leaving Canada. I pursued the idea of teaching in a foreign country; this path led out of my hometown Lethbridge and to another in Sendai, Miyagi, Japan. I was on a journey, and I remembered my family's migration stories which taught me how to migrate with awareness.

Where I Come From: The Autobiographical Framing

Identity—who we are, where we come from, what we are—is difficult to maintain...

[W]e are the “other,” and opposite, a flaw on the geometry of resettlement, an exodus.

—Edward Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*

I am Ukrainian, Italian, Swedish, and French. I am Canadian. I explore being a fourth-generation multi-ethnic in the geographical location of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. I take a critical look at the meaning of the teacher self in the locations of home, culture, and ethnicity. The experience of living in the homes of my Ukrainian family is more immediate to my understanding the story of their lives as immigrants growing up in Lethbridge. Unlike my Swedish family who recorded stories of their migration journeys from embarkment to settlement in Canada, my Ukrainian family did not share their stories in this form. Their life stories do not exist as written texts; therefore, I write the stories in the way that they were told to me. I write of enduring alongside them in their learning of the world around them, and in that world we persevered together in language, and in times of intolerance and prejudice. We never spoke English together, and I never learned to speak any of my ancestral languages. They told me stories about their lives, in their English. Sometimes, they would break into their maternal tongue when they couldn't find the words in English for their story. And now I tell about their lives and mine in my own story. The stories are utterances of events concealed in preconceptions of my identity: “We live in a world of partial knowledge, local narratives, situated truths, and evolving identities” (Lyotard, as cited in Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 147). I learned to understand my self in the homes of my great-grandparents and now do so through my classroom. My first home in Lethbridge is only a part of the world that I live

in. My world extends out into other worlds and in them truths of the self linger. The classroom is an extension of the world I grew up in as a child. My first teaching world is situated in Canada, and the second one in Japan. These two worlds, outside of the ones from my childhood, become two contexts in which my identity of Canadian and teacher is realized.

Two experiences that remain important for my understanding the experience of being a Canadian teacher is the moment of settling in Japan. The other is my first experience teaching in a program outside the official Program of Studies in a Canadian high school. I consider both teaching experiences significant for reaching “truthful versions” (Pinar, 2004, p. 55) of the teaching self. I return to Japan through autobiographical writing to understand my teaching and living within foreignness. The experience of teaching in Japan reminds me of how I felt those first moments setting foot in my Japanese classroom: nervous and anxious. I converse back and forth between homesteading truth and the significance of my historical self for my teaching praxis. The experience of my Swedish great-grandfather’s arrival to Canada and my experience of living and teaching in Japan are two historical moments that I return to, in order to re/live the experience of migration. Our experiences are alike; they become a “common language” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 389) that I speak to articulate a shared history.

My First Teaching World

In order to get a career started, I went to university. After completing a Fine Arts degree in Dramatic Performance, I entered the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge. Becoming a teacher was not my first choice for a career. I was a drama major intending to travel the country and perform in theatre productions. I had dreams of

opening my own theatre company and often wondered what the name of it would be. The acting world was not an easy world to live in. I spent days auditioning for theatre companies only to be turned down. I started to take a turn towards a career that I felt might be more fulfilling, more gratifying than being in the constant competition of the theatre world. I had taught drama and dance and thought that I would try my hand at being a classroom teacher.

I was drawn to teaching because of the great teachers I had had in my life. These great teachers encouraged me and gave me confidence to move along the paths life had to offer; but even with such direction, I didn't feel confident. However well my mentors had shown me those paths to follow in theatre, I hesitated, wondering how it was possible to become the same teacher who instilled in me the confidence to move forward in my life.

My wanting to be a teacher was much more than imitating the behaviour of the ones who taught me. To be a teacher was to be someone who connected to students in ways that others couldn't. To be a teacher was to understand my students' lives. These moments of contemplating the teacher I would become led me to seek again those paths other great teachers had left. I uncovered those paths and with the encouragement that my mentors had given me. I became a high school teacher.

I entered the teaching profession to teach in a high school program called the Integrated Occupational Program. This program was designed for students who could not succeed academically in core courses. Students in this program needed life skills in order to be successful in any aspect of their lives. These skills began with how to read the phonebook to how to read labels on bottles of medicine. I drafted lesson upon lesson that introduced them to building reading and writing skills that they would use in the real-

world situations. Through my eyes, novels such as *Lord of the Flies* or *Of Mice and Men* contained real-world and universal themes. These books, however, were deemed by the curriculum as unsuitable material for these students. Teachers who taught this program before me advised me to not use these novels, for it was better to stay with content more relevant to students' real-life situations.

My students brought their lives into my classroom, every day. They also challenged what I brought to them as learning and resisted any suggestion I brought forward for a class project. One day, I asked them if I could take a picture of their skateboards for a classroom newspaper. They accepted. This was a turning point in our relationship; however, some students still glared at me and others gave me nothing but a blank stare. Their skateboards were the only meaningful things in the classroom. If any one dared show an interest in learning outside the skateboards, such students would be mocked by their peers. It was a tough class to be with, but I made it through to the end of the semester. I breathed a sigh of relief and took the next step forward in my teaching year. I taught Art the following semester and the same boys walked in with smiles on their faces, a contrast to what I had seen from their first moments with me.

I continually reflect on my first day of teaching in the Integrated Occupational Program and meeting my students for the first time. I was apprehensive; I could not predict what this classroom of new students and I would become. The school administration forewarned me about how difficult this class would be to teach, but nothing stopped me from making that first day as meaningful as possible.

The class, which was a group of seven boys, came from various socio-economic backgrounds. Some came from homes of violence and neglect yet others from ones of

non-violence. One boy didn't have a home; however, he lived in a youth centre. I read about his circumstances in the school files prior to meeting him. His life was recorded on paper and sealed in a file forever. It seemed that his life did not evolve from the files that preserved story after story of misdemeanours he committed in the town in which he lived. All of his troubles were brought to school and held tightly in files for future teachers to read. These files reminded me of a "Beware" sign posted on the lawn of a home about to be demolished: Keep out! After that moment of being let into his life by meticulous recordkeeping, I decided to never revisit these files again. The details of his personal and school life were depressing. It made me feel like he was unapproachable. I didn't believe that this very same life I had read about would be brought into my classroom, so I decided that I would get to know him—and in my own way. It was the permanence of those records that challenged me to explore beyond what other teachers had conceived him to be. My students' stories were already told, but compassion guided me to begin understanding their life circumstances outside the territory of a file.

One of the mandates of the program was to help these students become contributing members of society. The day they walked into class I smiled. I greeted each with a "Good Morning," yet each boy walked by me without even a hello. Not one glanced my way. I felt defeated, but the courage in me continued. One boy who was new to the program was not on my roster; I introduced myself to him, and he sat with eyes cast down. He leaned forward and put his head on his desk. He eventually fell asleep.

I continued to get acquainted with the rest of the class. Brent and Matthew, those names that I remember most, had nothing to say at all. Brent wasn't present even though he was sitting before me. He seemed preoccupied, daydreaming, yet looking right at me.

Matthew warned me that he would probably not ever come back to school after this day. And the others sat in fear of another student who was already threatening to harm someone. The first day was proving to be awkward and challenging. I was trying to get through the roster which was starting to take up most of our first class together.

Brent and Matthew were the first two students who I had most conversations with, but the rest remained cocooned in stillness, or shyness. One boy who had been quiet during the introductions suddenly raised his voice. He revealed the names of several of the other boys who had not given me their names. Finally an ally! This boy was met with a loud “Shut-up!” And the banter continued. I could not stop the exchange of words that continued in my new classroom. During this moment, the sleeping boy’s voice finally emerged after what seemed a lengthy time. He had decided to join in. He was the one who had given me a number instead of a name. He refused to tell me his real name. Amidst my trying to draw out his name, the words “idiot,” “stupid” and “pig” broke off into silence.

The student who came with a number broke the awkward silence that had filled the classroom. I heard “James!” come from his mouth. And again, “It’s James!” After the burdensome task of memorizing his eight-digit number name, the name James replaced the number, and we began to have a conversation. The moment James revealed his name to me became an invitation to learn more about where he came from and who he was.

Once again, I introduced myself to James as Miss Lewko. James’ arrival into my classroom was a reminder to be mindful of other students who entered into my teaching life coming from and living in similar circumstances that James came from. In my present teaching life, I set aside James’ circumstances and make more room for myself to

prepare for the next student. Many students who came from a similar world as James would come and go. I never saw James after that school year: Where is he? Has he changed his name? What has he become? Is he alive? His story continues in my life.

Being a teacher in this program was heart-opening. I wanted to learn more about what other teaching worlds had to offer. After one year of teaching, I began the journey and processes of applying to teach in a foreign country. My decision to teach in Japan was met with hesitation from both family and friends. On the one hand, my family had encouraged me to live a new life in teaching, while, on the other, they could not understand the relevance of my wanting to live and teach in another country. Through the eyes of my family, Canada is a comfortable place to live and raise a family and to uproot the self for the experience is not enough for most: My comfort in being around people who lived in different circumstances than me stemmed from the days of growing up in Lethbridge, which was a culturally diverse town. I wanted to experience being in difference, as I grew in my teaching. Being in difference challenged me, and I was growing in my own understanding of my teaching self. I resigned from my position and left Canada July 1st. I wished the nation Happy Birthday from the airplane and looked down at the graded prairie. I wondered when I would see the Rocky Mountains again. My inroads were taking me to a world foreign from my own. I landed in Tokyo, Japan, alone.

Through *currere*, I transmigrate from landscape to landscape, and I arrive at the port of my classroom, where I am granted entry into a new country. I become a resident of this temporary place. I seek community in it and become a citizen in a curricular landscape. This classroom is a place that I now call my country. It is an impermanent place for my students, similar to the action of migration, a coming-and-going motion, and

sometimes an action of unsettlement. When I reflect on the foreign places I settled into in my life, I mostly remember Japan. I entered into this foreign port that at first was incomprehensible; but it became a place that altered my perception of teaching. I arrived at the other side of the world as a foreign teacher.

My Second Teaching World

I arrived in Tokyo where the first change occurred: my name was changed from Candace to *Kyandasu*. I did not know how to write my first and last name in Japanese. The immigration officer could not read or pronounce my name. He asked me: *Doko kara kimashitaka?* Where do you come from? *Doko ni ikimasuka?* Where will you go? *Shigoto ga arimasuka?* Do you have work? I could not understand what he was saying, at first.

The immigration officer just stared at me as I stood in front of him, wondering why I had ever come to Japan. He eventually asked me in English the questions he had first asked in Japanese. As the officer attempted to translate my responses in English to Japanese, he had already translated me; I was a *gai/koku/jin*—an outside/country/person. His English came out in sounds that were to my ears pieces of words put together to make sentences. He was helping me. It took me back to the time I struggled with understanding the languages spoken by my own family. I tried my best to communicate with this unfamiliar person, and suddenly, I became aware of this portal I would step into for the next five years of my life.

I stepped into a new geographical landscape. The sights of this country disoriented me. The sounds of it caused me to close my ears. The country, it seemed, never slept. The smells were not the ones I was accustomed to. Everything around me seemed so fragile that I could not touch it, for I did not know how to reach out to this

country. I could taste the salt in the air coming off the Pacific Ocean, and the humidity came upon me like a warm embrace from my mother. All my senses stood alert to this newness. Questions about my soon-to-be country came to me through the sudden introduction of the pace and momentum of this land. As I sat in a car that was taking me to my new home, I thought once again about why I had come to Japan; the questions became a loud voice that beckoned for a response: How long will I stay here? Will I ever see my family again? Will I die here? Will I ever bear children? Will I ever return home? Who will become my friends? Who will my students be? How will I teach them? Where will I go next? As a Canadian and a teacher, I stepped further into Japan remembering my life in Canada, and keeping it close to me.

I arrived in Japan as an obvious stranger. I could not speak Japanese. Not being able to speak the language kept me in a silent world for many weeks. Every time I opened my mouth to attempt some phrase from the book I carried around with me, my Japanese could not be understood. I got lost because I could not read signs and was at one time found crying in the middle of an alley by an elderly Japanese woman, an *obaachan*. These narrow alleys were like the cornfield mazes I ran in, growing up as a child. These tracts of land taught me how to be brave and patient when I felt lost. I would call out to my friends who were just on the other side of the corn stalks. Our voices became the maps that would guide each other out. And we made it, laughing that we had thought we were lost forever.

But now in this urban maze, my fear heightened at each wrong turn. In Sendai, the city in which I would live, each alley would lead out to another street heading in a different direction. I was taking turns but not knowing the map I held in my hands. It was

in Japan that the expansiveness of the distance between my Lethbridge and my new city grew. This expansiveness of my new country became more noticeable with every attempt to navigate this strange city, and strange language.

I had left the comforts of my home country. I adapted quickly though. In this adaptation process, I learned to filter the contrasts between my own country and Japan. The differences I noticed were rich in meaning. Japanese people moved differently, much more quickly than the pace I was used to in Lethbridge. People in Sendai were always trying to run for the buses, the subway, or the trains. The country was on time. If there was an earthquake, it would upset the whole schedule of the country. The city was crowded. I was jammed into many trains during rush hour by train operators wearing white gloves. I stood in these trains suffocated by people. In order to pull myself out of these moments of suffocation, I imagined myself near the Oldman River, breathing in the scent of the willows that grew near the banks of the river. I imagined the vivid, jagged edges of the Rockies to the west. The image of an expansive reflection alleviated the containment and loneliness I felt, and I grew accustomed to being in my new city in Japan, knowing that on the other side of the horizon of the Pacific Ocean was Canada, waiting for my return.

As the days progressed, I became more homesick. I wondered why I had come here and why I had left my home country. My head grew tired of trying to communicate in a language that was only comprised of OK—a universal phrase that I used because I did not speak Japanese. I was living in Sendai, Miyagi, which is located in the northern part of the main island of Honshu. It is a coastal city as large as Vancouver, and it is located between the Pacific Ocean and the mountains. In the summers I could visit the

beaches and in the winters ski in the mountains. It was a city formed in between two different landscapes, one of mountains that reminded me of my home country, and another one of ocean.

Sendai is a city noted for its countryside appeal. The people and the place are referred to as country folk, or *inaka*. Cherries, apples and rice grow around the countryside. Some of the best sushi is served around the prefecture and the best sake brewed in the distilleries in the towns surrounding the city. The food changes every season. Cherries appear for a short time in summer, then yams and potatoes close to fall, and oysters in February. The dress of the people would also change. I learned to follow the seasons carefully.

In its history, Sendai was run by a samurai lord called Date Masamune. His castle sat high atop a hill that overlooked Sendai. He wore a patch over his eye. He carried his *katana*, his sword, in his hand and rode an elegant horse. The statue of his horse shows it rearing high into the sky. It was his companion taking him to new lands below his castle. I imagined Date Masamune peering down at nightfall, wondering how his people were doing. The castle is a strong presence in Sendai, and the sun shines around it from dawn till dusk.

I met many people who were descendents of samurai, while living in Sendai. I met humble people who had come from the countryside of the prefecture. Their Japanese was not the Japanese I was beginning to learn. It was a dialect that was spoken with a very small mouth. The sounds were more of z-s and s-s. It was called *zuzu-ben*, which is the dialect spoken in that region. The dialects varied from city to town, and I often found

myself struggling, trying to understand another variation within Japanese that was being spoken around me.

Centuries before, worldly wise poets traveled the region in which I lived. Basho was one poet that I started to become familiar with; his poems were commonly read to me in Japanese by a man whom I called my Japanese father. Basho roamed the seaside of Matsushima. Matsushima is a coastal area lined with small, pine-tree islands. Fishermen would fish this area for oysters, and one could see seagulls hovering over the nets at harvest time. It was through Basho's haiku that I began to take notice of the nature around me in Japan. I became more aware of the change in seasons and the energies that each had to offer. This change would ignite in me a sudden awe of the beauty of the country:

I hear the beautiful sounds, his eyes closed as he speaks, it is at this moment that I am noticing sound more than ever, but not the sounds that I am hearing at home; no mantle clock, no robins. And through the staccato sound he bows slightly, at this moment, apologizing for taking my time to listen to him. The smell of the tatami mat creeps into my nose and the humidity is a blanket of warmth. I see the sweat crocheted onto his forehead. I can catch the words and images he is seeing in his mind. *One of the seven most beautiful places*, the staccato continues, his mouth a small opening of a straw. This is Matsushima. His eyes are closed as he speaks: *koko ni wa watashi no jitaku desu*. "This is where my home is," he says...I can see the beauty even though I cannot speak his language. I imagine his home, even though it is not mine. He shares it with me; it is a place we return to together. He is the living artifact of this moment, soon gone with his language. This old man—his

body the pines that stand tall in Matsushima. Basho came here. It is beautiful.

(journal excerpt, 2005)

My consciousness of being in seasons built in me a sense of appreciation for not only the things around me but also the people that had come into my life. I soon began to make many friends after my arrival and most took me under their wing. I also started to learn the language, learning greetings and salutations. *Ohayo gozaimus!* “Good Morning!” was an important phrase that I would say every time I walked into work or a home. It was a greeting that acknowledged whomever you met at the start of the day. I carried this manner with me to Canada and still say “Good Morning!” to anyone I meet.

I learned conversation and began to construct questions. I carried a notepad around with me and wrote down what I had to say if I had to go shopping or to the bank. I would study on the trains and listen to this new language being spoken around me. I watched people’s faces and began to mimic them with their nods and bowing. It was all becoming comprehensible to me, and people began to understand me. I could carry on a conversation and became very courageous at initiating one. Sometimes my accent was not so good, and the elderly had an especially hard time understanding a *gaijin* (foreigner) speaking Japanese—no matter how understandable I thought my Japanese was.

I would sit with friends and they would tell me stories. One of my best friends was a sixty-year old woman named Nobuko. She would tell me tales of Japan which were told to her by her mother. The world of *Nihon* was mystical; Japan was born from the sky and the earth. Sometimes, I could not understand her stories told in Japanese, but she kept

telling them anyway. I never wrote them down but remember them like the ones my grandparents used to tell me.

Similarly, I have listened to my students' stories, and they have expanded my understanding of their lives. These stories are like foreign lands themselves; they are places of misunderstandings, of biases, rituals, traditions, and hope. These moments in the stories are about hiding in churches during genocide. They are of a father's life being taken by another hand or of teaching blind children in war fields. They are of the beekeepers and the honey makers in far away lands. They are of the days walked to reach freedom. The stories let the light through in the darkened corners of the world, and they continue until a vision of a safe life illuminates the world of a refugee seeking solace in a new home. My students' storied paths cross cultures and borders, and for a very brief time, I meet my students in the intersections of their stories and histories on route to home; the course takes me to the narratives which guide me to better understanding: I enter each story without apprehension, as living in a foreign country has taught me see and listen well.

Reflecting on My First and Second (Teaching) Worlds

I entered Japan cognizant of my purpose to teach English. What was most unsettling for me was that I didn't have a history in Japan. I was beginning again and learning how to be a teacher once more. I had to learn how to take care of myself better. While learning how to navigate around the country safely, a constant memory of perseverance trailed close behind; I continued to remember my great-grandparents' migration stories about their coming to Canada. My own stories about Japan were also in the making. The moment of stepping into a new teaching situation in Japan brought me

back to the taken-for-granted moments I had left behind in Canada. I took for granted how my Canadian students, in their own difficulties of learning and living, could help me to see mine better. I entered my new teaching world mindful of the people in it.

I wanted to belong to a teaching community, so I sought out other foreign teachers who shared the same difficulties in adapting to Japan. We practiced our Japanese together, and we exchanged ideas for teaching English. We also shared the problems we faced in our new classrooms, which were one mainly of communication. The difficulty of navigating through Japanese was one challenge that I was confronted with daily. I could not discern between the levels of formality in the language. Honorific Japanese was impossible for me to learn, although I had some foreign friends who could speak it. And because I was a woman, there was a way for me to speak Japanese. I often, by mistake, slipped into a slang way of speaking Japanese. The Japanese women were quick to correct me. As I continued to live in the language, I began to see beyond the immediacy of my new hometown, Sendai.

Teaching the Japanese high school curriculum was another difficulty I faced in my new work environment. Learning the curriculum was similar to learning a foreign language. The document had to be read to me and then translated. While listening to hours of being read to, I faced uncertainty in this new teaching situation, and I began to doubt my self. During this moment of hesitation, I would return to the first of my teaching days and remember the boys who walked into the classroom shrouded in doubt—and my own doubt as well. However unsure I felt, I persevered in my learning of the Japanese curriculum. And as the days progressed, my presence as a Canadian teacher grew. My voice became more audible as I learned to speak Japanese better, and teach in a

Japanese classroom. Living as a foreigner and not a citizen of a country caused me to think about the other countries I had come from. I wondered what it meant to be a citizen of a country that I lived in but did not belong to.

When I was in Japan, I was often asked where I came from. I would respond that I was Canadian but would also speak about where my great-grandparents came from. Explaining that I was not Ukrainian or not Swedish but Canadian only was met with looks of confusion. I became very good at explaining Canada's history of migration, and its multiculturalism. Retelling my story connected me to the fragmented stories of my own life.

I reflect on the situation of being a Canadian teacher in Japan, and the moments when I was denied entrance into a different community. I faced ambiguity and intolerance in Japan. I could never enter the shops that had signs on the windows which said "No Americans," even though I was Canadian. I was denied entrance into a public place. Even though I was teaching English, I wasn't allowed to attend the school curriculum meetings because I did not understand the Japanese curriculum. These moments when entrances to places of learning and living were closed to me now remind me to approach closed doors mindful of their potential to be reopened.

I reflect on my adult immigrant students, who at times, feel that the entrances to their new learning worlds are closed to them. Language is one barrier that prevents newcomers from entering into places of work and learning. Yet, other barriers are less discernable. They are the lived experiences from home that the students carry with them, in their migration to Canada. They hold these experiences close, like a precious gift. These experiences are relived in the classroom; they are lived out in the form of stories.

My students' stories enable me to see the potential of the teaching self in foreign worlds, when I listen anew (Pinar, 1975b) to the worlds of the self as a country and the countries from which I come.

I often think about the five years I spent living and teaching in Sendai, never forgetting the first moment I cast my eyes upon the *ajisai*, the hydrangeas, which lined the outer temple walls. I would sit in these temples absorbing the purples and pinks and blues, falling into meditation. Ironically, in these moments of nothingness, *mu*, and quietude, I imagined my self back at home in Canada but was suddenly brought back to reality by the thought of leaving the security Japan had given me. I had grown in confidence about my teaching practice. But as an expatriate returning to my home country, I felt gratitude because my country would welcome me home once again, and I would begin a new life, never forgetting the life of a foreigner. I had left my home country before, but now felt that I was leaving another home. I began my next migration. I returned to Canada to live and teach again. I brought back with me *omiyage*, gifts in the form of memories.

I returned to Lethbridge and immediately noticed its expansiveness and the blue sky running along the horizon. I had never seen wide-open spaces in Sendai, for they were covered with buildings; yet the horizon of the Pacific Ocean was a sight to see upon my return. My first sight of the Rocky Mountains was momentous. This site was significant because it reminded me of the taken-for-granted beauty of the prairies which was my home. All of my senses were heightened. I had never really noticed the prairies before. Now, they were a vibrant yellow color in the season that I had arrived back home. I could hear every detail spoken in conversations. My senses were attuned to everything

around me. I had learned a second language, and at the same time I had learned to listen with awareness. Now unexpectedly, the English spoken around me in Lethbridge was more pronounced than ever, yet the voices seemed discordant because I was accustomed to the Japanese accents spoken around me. Being in cultural difference was where I truly wanted to be. The now familiar experience of learning a second language provoked me to begin teaching English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language to immigrants to Canada. Once again I was about to meet people from different parts of the world. I had finally returned home, and memories of Japan followed close behind.

The narrative that follows in this section was written with the goal of piecing together the many stories that were told to me about where I came from. Before I began writing *Homesteading Origin*, I remembered my first migration to Japan, with intentions to live and work in a foreign country. I wrote the narrative with the goal to relocate myself into multiple stories of originness. The narrative was written as it had been told to me. It identifies through time, place, and history an understanding of my own identity as a Canadian. The narrative speaks to the culturally diverse worlds found in home and country and to the interrelatedness between the unfamiliar and the familiar. The experience of sharing in the customs and traditions brought into my classroom from other nations reminds me of the old-country traditions I was brought up with. As my immigrant family integrated into their new Alberta communities, they were also at the same time integrating their life stories into the larger ones of migration. The narrative is comprised of several voices, primarily my own, as I retell the stories that were pervasive in my upbringing. The stories are fragments of larger stories. There are multiple characters and plots in the narrative that are tied together and written against time. The narrative in its

culmination acts as a homestead site. Homesteading within this narrative acts as a further point of departure to other narratives I write in this thesis to understand my being a teacher of multi-ethnic origin.

Narrative: Homesteading Origin

Sometime at the beginning of May 2006, I found out that my Swedish great-grandmother had been sold as a child to a wealthier family, a family that could better care for her than her biological one. My grandfather, her son, never knew this until sometime in 1997, when he was 90 years old and had traveled back to Sweden. A distant cousin of my grandfather had discovered this fact and felt compelled to tell him. My mother, who accompanied my grandfather on this trip, said that there was a sullen look of shock on his face, a heavy moment of silence because he never knew. My great-grandmother Hedvig had never told anyone. Great-grandmother Hedvig seemed regal to me; she was also a good mother to my grandfather. She was often described as cold yet loving, hard yet soft, and distant yet caring. My family teasingly calls me 'Hedvig;' I am an impression of her; I am conscious of her presence in me, the sound of her name, the tone of my voice abrupt as hers. I am a representation of her. I often wonder what her real name was, the one her mother called her as a child before bedtime.

When great-grandpa Eric (sometimes spelled Erik) arrived into the North-West Territories (now Alberta), he felt it was time to marry and invited great-

grandmother Hedvig to come to the Dominion of Canada. He had “proved up” his land near Wetaskiwin and often spent time looking around the homestead to see if it was fertile. He was a Lutheran man who was enticed by the lure for free land in Alberta, Canada:

As for a homesteader...he left Sweden to Trondhjem [sic], Norway and then to Liverpool, where he boarded a ship bound for Montreal...at just 19 years of age with very little money, in a strange land, no job and little knowledge of the English language. (Erickson, 2005, p. 1)

Great-grandfather Erik and his friend Oscar (sometimes spelled Oskar) filed close to each other; Erik filed on N.E- $\frac{1}{4}$ -20-46-17 W.4th and Oscar became his neighbour. Oscar later stood up for my great-grandfather at his wedding. My great-grandfather's homestead can be located on one of those very old maps, the cartography so detailed that I am realizing how significant Alberta has been for my family history.

It seems that my family has never left Alberta since 1904, the time when their story in Alberta began. Within the larger story is one smaller one. The story tells about my Swedish great-grandmother never coming to my great-grandfather's deathbed. His deathbed perhaps reminded her of the life she lost in Sweden and the sacrifices she made immigrating to Canada. When he

eventually passed away, she took his wedding ring and sold it to buy a new hat. My grandfather kept those hats long after her death, for just enough time for me to try them on and play dress-up. The hats eventually ended up in a green garbage bag tucked away in a cool basement. I would sneak down and dig through the bag not realizing the history contained within it, the history of giving something up to get something better. I admired my great-grandmother for her hats; I loved the colours and the textures of them; she even had faux fur and feathered ones. Yet she never went to great-grandfather Erik's deathbed. That story bothered my grandfather so much that he told me one day over a cup of coffee, a conversation more with himself than me. Great-grandmother Hedvig's character was such that she came across as the wise, kind, and caring person a mother should be. She grew an orange tree in her apartment in Edmonton, the city she eventually retired in. You could even pick oranges from this tree. Little ones, tiny mandarins like the ones eaten at Christmas. My mother says that when she was a little girl, my great-grandmother had bought her linens. She used the word *linens* rather than the word *bed sheets*; linens indicated the finer things in life, probably the things my great-grandmother never had being a new immigrant to Canada. My mother always got white beautiful linen, and so did I eventually.

Soon after the story about the linens, my grandfather wrote how great-grandmother Hedvig endured being alone while great-grandfather Erik was gone working on the railroads. He wrote about how she raised four children, but not about how two of the siblings became estranged from my grandfather because their future husbands and wives insisted they never meet again. Nevertheless, my great-grandmother was always described as a hard worker whose dedication to her new life in northern Alberta as a devout Lutheran became so mythologized that it passed down like a stream of water on a slope to a river.

I became the first female great-grandchild to be born on the Ukrainian side of the family in five generations. The Ukrainians are reputed to have worked hardest of all ethnic groups that came to Alberta, so much so that they became the ones that were recommended to begin breaking up the land, ploughing it, and readying it for living. They were often depicted as an ethnic group that was *unclean, stocky*, and who arrived in *herds*. Unlike the Swedish who were equally as diligent, the Ukrainians would become the *ideal immigrants* who would settle in the North-West Territories: “[A] stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is good quality” (van Herk, 2001, p. 192).

There is a photograph that contains five generations of my family. The photograph is a vantage point from a mixed history, a hyphenated naming of the heritage that I come from. The photograph is of me, my mother, my grandmothers, my Ukrainian great-grandmother, and my Ukrainian great-great-grandmother. My mother said it was rare to have five generations in one photograph. My great-grandparents said that I was a blessing to their new life in Lethbridge, where they would reside until the ends of their lives. This photograph is a fragment of a memory of their existences.

I hold many relics in my hands today and try to imagine my place, my purpose within N.E- $\frac{1}{4}$ -20-46-17 W. 4th. Those coordinates give me a place of origin and a place to begin to trace the lines. The invitations to come to those coordinates, however, requested that my Swedish great-grandmother come to the North-West Territories, leave her adopted family to move to an adopted land, and begin life there. My family endured in many other ways; and I endure to discover through these relics of my Swedish, Ukrainian, French and Italian heritages and those relics that speak to the meaning of living in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. I am a woman of multiple family names: Zambon, Erickson, Lengel, Renville, and Lewko. I am part of the pioneer life of perseverance and determination. After 97 years of living and having celebrated Alberta's centennial, my Swedish-Canadian grandfather wrote:

We who enjoy the comforts and benefits of today's modern society owe so much to the pioneer men and women...Many experienced success and prosperity...Hardship, privation, heartache and sorrow was endured...we owe them a debt that is impossible to repay. (Erickson, 2005, p. 9)

I write myself into this history of privation and hardship with gratitude. I coordinate the coordinates into a comprehensive form of understanding about my place in Alberta, this foreign land sought out by my ancestors. Today, I am a Canadian teacher and my classroom a new country I am settling in. I want to understand the experience of what it means to persevere in sites so difficult to locate and live in. My ancestors sought out those sites and happened upon a lifetime of conflicts and indifferences in places they did not expect to end up in.



Figure 3. Five Generations of Maternal and Paternal Ancestry

The women in the photograph are the ancestral voices from which my knowledge of generational stories came. The women are my Ukrainian great-great-grandmother and great-grandmother, my grandmothers, and my mother. I am sitting on my Ukrainian great-great-grandmother's lap. My Ukrainian great-great-grandmother never spoke English but was able to communicate her experience growing up as an immigrant in central Alberta. I often wonder if her stories ever reached my ears as an infant. Knowing of her presence in Canada took me to new locations to seek out her history. I inherited her stories from my Ukrainian great-grandmother's lap. Her lap was the first home that stories of that side of my lineage were told from. I am a carrier of these stories that I now pass down.

Migration stories are the foundation from which I leave to consciously follow other stories so that I am able to pass into new landscapes. Knowing my ancestral stories brings me closer to my students' lives. I inherit another's story, and it is passed down yet again. The presence of a story opens up a portal to a meaningful engagement with the past.

I listen to Aoki when he asks: "What does the landscape say...to the landscape of curriculum" (Aoki, 1993/2005b, p. 295)? I envision my pedagogical landscape as a bridge to a historicity. The bridge is a metaphor that allows me to transverse and translocate back and forth between historical and curricular landscapes. Set onto these landscapes are original homes where conversations can be heard moving in and out of identity landscapes of being.

While persevering in the pioneer days of Alberta, my Swedish great-grandfather learned English. He did not attend any formal school but most likely had picked it up

while working on the railroad or in the lumber yards. He wrote about how he worked in different parts of Alberta. At one point he tells about going to the University of Alberta to become a large animal veterinarian. I have inherited the bag he carried from farm to farm and used to care for horses and cattle. I also have the booklet in which he would figure out the prices for his services. These are but a few of the artifacts that tell me more of his story. When I read his handwriting on the booklets, I imagine myself with him, following in his footsteps, moving about the prairie and tending to the animals. Knowing these stories adds to my own.

I inherited a box of letters written during the days of my family's settling into Alberta. At first, they were just letters to me. As I started to read them, I began to assemble the pieces of my own life history. The fragments of Erik's life preserved in this form of correspondence were the portions of the larger stories that allowed me insight into the deeper parts of the ones that were not written or told. Beyond the borders of the fragile paper and further in the sentences were the spaces that contained additional stories. These spaces came with questions like the ones asked when meeting, for the first time, a stranger or the self in the plot of a story. These questions come with intention. And when all the responses are put together, a story can be told. The stories are passed down from generation to generation. With each inherited story, a view from the world of the traveler emerges. Stories allow one to see well the life in the world of the other. Stories move beyond the self and into home.

The Historical Context of the Inquiry

A strange place it was, that place where the world began. A place of incredible happenings, splendours and revelations.

—Margaret Laurence, *Heart of a Stranger*

Canada is often referred to as an identity seeking nation (Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001). Since becoming Canada, the country looked to a form of governance that would acknowledge its First Peoples and ethnic communities as contributing to nation building:

[N]ation-making began with compulsions to pay attention to relationships between national identity and attachments to language, to history, to ethnic ritual and memory, and to the material world (including geography) that comprise or contribute to personal identity. (p. 154)

The historical context for the inquiry is researched from the first wave of migration of European origin immigrants to Alberta, Canada. The first wave of migration to this province occurred from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. At that time, Canada was a country referred to as “a nation of immigrants” (Roy, 1995, p. 200); however, in early twentieth-century Canada “xenophobia was common...as demonstrated by antipathy to ‘foreign’—that is, non-British—immigrants” (Roy, 1995, pp. 201-202).

There are many questions as to what constitutes a nation. The questions range from what makes a nation to what is contained in a nation. Ernest Renan (1990) in his essay “What is a nation?” addresses the histories that form nations. He describes a nation as one of many principles. It is one of temporality, desire, memories, legacies, achievements, glory, sacrifice, and love. Within nation exists the “race and language” (p.

19) of people who together have made sacrifices in the past (1990) and will continue in some form to build a nation for the future: “A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future” (p. 19). Nation exists as “moral consciousness” (p. 20) and it “demand[s] the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community” (p. 20).

In the anticipation of immigrants to its nation, Canada had taken on a series of projects preparing for the eventual arrival of people from other countries. The provincial governments began to consider how the labour of an immigrant would contribute to economic prosperity. The governments on both levels wanted to unify the country and used their immigration policies to do so. They sought to prepare the west of the country with “the policy of pushing the Indians out of arable lands of the prairie, and replacing them with white, agricultural settlers” (Miller, 1975, p. 70). Geographically, the east of Canada was bound to the west with a transcontinental railroad. The goal to unite east and west was inevitable.

Renan (1990) writes that “the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and also that they have forgotten many things” (p. 11). As initiatives to push people out to bring new people in continued, the federal government used the labour of the settlers to fuel the economy and strengthen its nation. Canada took up such commitments elicited from the British Empire. The Anglo-Canadian views for nationhood had strengthened with pressure from the British Empire. This idea resulted in other nations that existed within the nation being forgotten, and new ones moving in would begin the re-formation of English-speaking Canada. This was most prevalent with

indigenous nations. Progress was believed to have been made by pushing existing First Nations groups and those with lower assimilability into the periphery of the dominant Anglo-Saxon plan for province building. There were also ethnic groups who were perceived to be easier to assimilate (Miller, 1975). There was opposition to groups such as Asians settling in Alberta. Japanese and Chinese were excluded from the plan of province building. The provincial and federal governments would provide the necessary support to build a prosperous west of Canada. Still the question remained of “how unity could be maintained amidst diversity” (p. 71).

Cultural diversity or the inclusion of immigrants into Canada became a problem for the predominant Anglo-Saxon rural and urban communities, as well as for the political leaders who felt it important to inculcate newcomers into British ideals. To ensure that newcomers were adhering to the ‘Motherland’s’ ideals, a series of policies were proposed that if rigidly and strictly adhered to would ensure that new Canadians would be transformed into the British ideals held by the Dominion; these views were otherwise known as theories of assimilation (Palmer, 1976). These theories of assimilation included Anglo-conformity, where newcomers were to renounce their ancestral culture; the “melting pot” theory “envisaged a biological merging of settled communities with new immigrant groups and a blending of their cultures into a new Canadian type” (Palmer, 1976, p. 175). Eventually a multicultural view emerged that “postulate[d] the preservation of some aspect of immigrant cultures...within the context of Canadian citizenship...and political and economic integration into Canadian society” (Palmer, 1976, p. 175). Reformists, supremacists and imperialists also toyed with the idea of having Canada under one language. In this way, English would serve as the unifying

factor at the expense of cultural and linguistic preservation. The English-Canadian against immigrants joining their work forces raised concerns amongst the governmental policy makers who had invested in the vision of a unified Canada. More particularly in western Canada, the Slavs, Ukrainians and Russians were educated into ideologies of assimilation (Miller, 1975); the country was being developed into a nation which resisted the reality of its ethnic diversity. It was a nation that continually shifted in identity as newcomers arrived to it. In order for it “[t]o succeed as a nation, Canada needed to develop a system of governance that embraced the notion that identities...were not pre-given or discovered but were continually invented” (Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 154).

The vision of Canada as a nation was one of “unity in diversity” (Miller, 1975, p. 75). In the west lay an abundance of land sought after for provincehood. This terrain faced political, social and economic transitions that would alter its identity. While the federal government was attempting to resolve the significance and economic usefulness of the different geographical locations for the Dominion, some areas remained a constant fascination and intrigue. There was a territory called the North-West that contained mountains, foothills, plateaus, prairies, rivers, and lakes. The federal government, along with its provincial governments, staunchly kept within British colonial traditions, values and ideals in every aspect in the governance of Canada (van Herk, 2001). In the drive for finding a place to call a province and for the North-West Territories to be recognized as one, the Dominion saw this area more as a place of economic potential than one of a mere settlement location or an original place of naturalistic wonder. The Dominion leaders had invested their personal and political agendas into naming and claiming this land; this part

of the prairies seemed that it was being pulled back and forth between two purposes: the purpose a newly named province would serve the Dominion and the personal purpose it would serve its political leaders as a source of profit. The federal government wanted a hand in the restructuring of what was the North-West Territories. In the process of restructuring, the territory was being imagined as many names, and its new location was also being considered. In their quest to achieve provincial status, politicians suggested that a newly located area be situated between Calgary and Swift Current (van Herk, 2001). The future province of Alberta hadn't found its place with a name and location yet. The location and naming of the desirable arable land became a highly political battle fraught with dissention yet grandeur. At one point the territory was being conceptualized as "one big province" (p. 211) with another area joined to it. A proposal was brought forth to name the area Buffalo. It was turned down. Other endeavours were to break the province up into smaller territories, but that only brought with it "territorial independence" (p. 209). According to the multiple visions of nationhood, this new land to be named would be torn between political innovations and the histories of original settlements. As the land transformed so did its people, and names and identities were altered. Block settlements scattered the west (Palmer, 1976). These areas became places where non-British could pursue the new identity advertised in the rhetoric of the new wave of migration. Newcomers would be further assimilated into dominion ideals by being educated under Empire education endeavours. Many had come from peasant origins. The Canadianization (Palmer, 1976) of immigrants began; the strategy of assimilation saw ethnic groups grow into a new Canadian type; class and "[o]pprobrious names such as 'Wops,' 'Bohunks,' and 'foreigner' indicated class as well as ethnic

origin” (p. 180). Immigrants were seen as valuable and were needed to help the Canadian economy grow. Because of the Dominion’s political, provincial, and agricultural potential, the country had looked to other countries as far as Europe to help it grow. The land near the mountains was an economically viable location, desirable for its variable terrain of foothills and prairies. It was the ideal place where one could homestead, farm, and make a lucrative living. The West became a beacon in the ideology of Anglo-conformity (Palmer, 1976). This ideology “demanded that immigrants renounce their ancestral culture and traditions in favor of the behaviour and values of Anglo-Canadians” (p. 175). Immigrants were seen as valuable and were needed to shape the image the Dominion had of Canada.

The political leaders in their passion for nation building turned a blind eye towards the real conditions that the region was in prior to the first wave of migration. The Dominion had fallen into high unemployment and the population was dropping. The national census of the late 1800s showed emigration rates higher than immigration rates (Porter, 1967); those who had arrived prior to the first wave of migration were leaving Canada to work in other countries. In its economic restructuring and to produce better employment, the federal government continued to pursue the agricultural potential the west held. While this would undoubtedly produce wealth for the Dominion, the federal politicians in Ottawa still toiled with the ideas of how to keep people in Canada, and people who specifically could add to its economy.

First Nations or aboriginal peoples had experienced the effects of migration that displaced them from their native settlements and homelands. First Nations and French speaking Métis populations were relocated into prescribed and colonial reserve

settlements. They were involuntarily put into these places; the “[E]uropean occupation of what were boundless Indian territories was the first act of dispossession” (van Herk, 2001, p. 342). From the first wave of migration, diverse ethnic populations such as Chinese and Scandinavians had settled across the province and had become a part of the cultural and economical patterning of Alberta, where “the tug-of-war between newcomers and indigenous people [had] never been resolved” (p. 342). The railroads such as the early Trunk Line System, and the Canadian Pacific Railway, knit Canada together on the back-breaking labour of Chinese immigrants (van Herk, 2004). The federal government had ideas to sell farm land to begin the building of more railway systems and lines. On these trains came more settlers. An influx of Ukrainian immigrants settled onto the prairies. The prairies did not immediately open their arms to Ukrainians, nor did they welcome the migrant Chinese immigrants who had no intention of staying on the prairies; they were a class of newcomers that the Dominion had no use for. The Dominion began to relocate its newcomers into new community settlements and also into the values and beliefs held by the Empire. The education of newcomers would be the next best investment in nation building (Palmer, 1976).

Upon arrival, immigrants were placed into settlement locations, according to their socio-economic class and the trades and skills they brought with them from their home countries. The federal government saw it fit to place newcomers into trades that could best use foreign abilities to satisfy the goals sought out for economic prosperity. Newcomers brought with them remnants of their home countries: political, economic and social problems and “[immigrants] were not as successful in coping with consumerism and the industrial competence of the Anglo-Saxon...peoples” (Ryga, 1978, p. 70). One

example of such an immigrant class included people of Slavic origins that came from peasant backgrounds in countries that were suffering from political unrest and economic poverty. Canada provided its newcomers with incentives such as free land; the immigration efforts continued as newcomers learned to integrate into a new society. However, coming from previous lands that saw civil unrest only brought conflict with adaptation and settlement; ethnic traditions were diminishing and the immigrant communities became infiltrated with the ideals set out by the Dominion: “Arriving [in] [Canada], [immigrants] were subject to even further cultural erosion and division” (Ryga, 1978, p. 69).

As the new and potential citizens began to settle upon the prairie, the landscape began to change both socially and culturally. Authorities noticed that most immigrants required schooling and began to provide them with English classes. This plan would assimilate immigrants into not only Anglo ideals but also into “an imperialistic curriculum [which] was, in part, directed by a fear of the immigrant” (Palmer, in Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 157). There were conditions, however, about who was worthy to receive schooling. The potential to be educated was based on ethnic origin; some were thought to be challenging to educate because of their perceived unwillingness to assimilate into the new culture. The initial ideas of a unified Canada under one language, English, were failing. In the attempts to keep within Dominion goals for education, the immigrants’ practice of speaking in their own dialects, the freedom to worship in their own religion, and lastly, the right to be educated by a teacher from their own culture were discouraged (van Herk, 2001). The newcomer would also be assimilated into a colonial value system and to Anglo conformity in order “to become good British subjects—the

citizens of the Empire” (Troper, 1978, p. 17). Teachers of the time were often referred to as “educational missionaries” (p. 19) who roamed the prairies in search of immigrants who were required to learn English. The vision of a unified country under one official language became the rhetoric of government policies to educate its people. Foreigners arrived daily by steam ship from the mouth of the Great Lakes and boarded immigrant trains that headed for the prairies.

In the spring of 1904, a young Swedish immigrant arrived to the North-West Territories. My great-grandfather entered into the national and historical circumstances that I would inherit generations later. His historical circumstances would also invite me to contemplate the meaning of becoming and being a teacher in my own historical situation. Moments of his migration experiences were preserved in his writing of his life and then, years later, in his son’s stories that I would inherit. As the stories of passage from one country to another unfolded in the new homes of my immigrant family, somewhere midst the endeavour to homestead a nation, the geographical location of Alberta emerged.

As Alberta’s history was being rewritten, retold, and relived, émigrés began with their intentions to migrate to Canada. Alberta is the setting from which I translate my self into the experience of being Canadian. I place my self into autobiographical histories and listen for the stories passing through this historical juncture. I wait for those stories that never arrived; I tend to those that remain behind. I contemplate the what-ifs and the might-have-beens: What stories from history are excluded in this historical conversation? What stories are told rather than written? I return to the live(d) historical sites of the story.

Inherited Stories

It is the other who makes my portrait.

—Hélène Cixous, *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*

Home is one site to which I return to better see how living and teaching in cultural difference illuminates the familiarity of foreignness. The narrative that follows in this section of the thesis speaks to the experience of my being in the unfamiliarity of language and culture. The experience of being in cultural tensions that exist between home country and new country are articulated from the neighbourhoods that I was raised in. Lethbridge, Alberta is one home that I live in; it is a “tensioned space of cultural and geographic displacement” (Hasebe-Ludt, 2001, p. 149). I return to geographical, ethnical, and historical locations found in home, which enables me to uncover the meaning of home (country) midst another’s home. The classroom is an extension of a home in which my immigrant students learn to become community members in the world of learning.

Through the narrative *Being in Ethnicity*, I return to my homes in Lethbridge to uncover the meaning that home holds for the classroom as a place of living and learning in a new country. The narrative begins with an explication of the dichotomies found in the land surrounding my home, the people who live in the vicinity of it, and other homes of Lethbridge that stood far from my neighbourhood. I return to my initial perceptions of the land that surrounded Lethbridge and explore current and historical dichotomies found in home lands. I review how the multiple terrains found in and around a home have influenced my perception of the people who lived in Lethbridge. The narrative then shifts to specific homes of individuals. The individuals from these homes were prominent in my upbringing and understanding of old and new country. One home that I enter into is that

of a Czechoslovakian immigrant. The other home is my neighbour's, who was also an immigrant to Lethbridge. This neighbour was an elderly woman who lived one house down from my childhood home; I understood that she was of middle European descent. I leave the narrative as I rediscover the significance that old and new country holds for the experience of being a multi-ethnic teacher from Lethbridge; I relive the meaning of my multi-ethnic origin (Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, 2003) in the location of my hometown. What does the meaning of home suggest for the classroom?

Narrative: Being in Ethnicity

I was born on the wrong side of the tracks. This side of the tracks was the north side of Lethbridge. The different explanations of a North-sider are a permanent part of my growing up in Lethbridge. When I mention that I grew up on the north side, many retort, "Oh, you're a North-sider!" I live with the name North-Sider, and so does my family. This name gives the impression to people who are not North-siders that we are someone different. North connotes divisions. There are perceptions of North-siders that remain, and with which I have lived since childhood.

Growing up, I heard North-siders described as the following: North-siders have red necks. They have a sharp tongue and are quick to judge. If you see a North-sider coming, it is best to turn and go the other way. North-siders are tough both inside and out; they usually like to brawl because they are short-tempered. If you get into an argument, the North-sider will win. North-siders

have no sense of home. North-siders are like gypsies, always wandering around the city looking for a home. North-siders work in factories and on the railroads from dawn till dusk. Twelve-hour work days are a part of the North-sider work ethic. They work in hard-labour jobs such as mechanics or farmers. They are unclean and their hands are calloused, even the women's. North-siders save every bit of their money, and for all of their lives, never ever think of leaving Lethbridge, not even to go on a trip. North-siders are bums and will never amount to anything.

Through my eyes as a child, most of the people who lived on this side of the tracks did not speak English—at least not without an accent. They were people relocated far from the heart of the city. Some of these people lived in homes built onto the farmland that surrounded the city. These homes were invisible to most and would blend into the prairie. Upon a closer look, they lacked the colour of the ones painted in the yellows, greens, and blues on the south side of Lethbridge. The landscaping on the south side was exquisite and the lawns were kept trim. Flowers grew everywhere and sweet peas crawled up the fences. The sites of these homes seemed intimidating to me at times. My home on the north side was brown and it lacked the flowers and the colours that I had seen on the south side. My father was obsessive about mowing the lawn and often trimmed the bushes and trees to match the lawn. But I wanted to have

colour in my home, so I planted sunflowers, like the wild ones I saw growing in the coulees.

From the north side of Lethbridge, the Oldman River meandered around the ample farm land that surrounded the outer limits of the city. I could reach the river bottom by bicycle in minutes and view the expansiveness of the town, from the banks of the river. The land on the north side seemed ignored and dishevelled. There were remnants of its historicity: mine shafts, hay shacks, mounds of coal, ruins of a rural school, remains of farm houses, shanty towns, tunnels dug into the coulees, barbed wire fences toppled over, lines of train tracks raised above the prairie, only visible when one looked carefully into the distance. More deeply rooted in the ground were cement posts that were once the foundation of a town hall and, even more entrenched into the ground, the ruins of a temporary WWII internment camp. This is the land that I knew as a child and traveled along on my bicycle. This was my north side, its geography compelling me to seek out other traces of the past that existed around the *extremis* of the north side.

I continued to be drawn to the tall wheat and native grasses that grew near the yards of the homes on the north side. The spear grasses that poked into my ankles when I walked in the coulees never deterred me from venturing into these hills. I walked the coulees to explore the original foundations of homes that

once stood near the river bottom. These homes, when you would stand in the centre of them, welcomed the sun from morning till night. Some of them were built in a grove of trees that added shade in the summer; elms soared over the homes and brought coolness to them in the prairie summers.

I would often sit on a coulee hill and cup my hands over my eyes, blocking out the modern setting around me just to see what Lethbridge looked like before any other homes were built. In my range of vision, I imagined the naturalness of the land before any structures were erected, and I wondered what the land looked like before my great-grandparents arrived to Lethbridge. The land was expansive.

Of the present-day structures in Lethbridge, there is a railway overpass in the central part of the town that in my childhood compelled its residents to imagine the city as divided. The overpass separated the north side from the south; it fractured Lethbridge into two locations: the North-side was the place where the immigrants lived and the South-side was where the English speaking, non-immigrants lived. The overpass was like a portal where I would sit on my bicycle at its entrance and contemplate my fate should I pass through it to the south side. I was unfamiliar with the south side and seldom went there except to visit friends of the family and distant relatives.

Lethbridge in its entirety stands on the edge of a coulee facing two horizons, the east and the west. My hometown was the first place connected with my knowledge of my identity. It was two worlds which existed in my childhood past as a dichotomy of the "old country" and the "new country." My great-grandparents came from the old country. For them, the old country was the Ukraine or Sweden, the countries from which they came. They had friends who were also from the old country. Most of my childhood was spent listening to family friends speak in old country languages. While I listened to them, I wondered what an old country looked like. I also wondered what the homes looked like in these countries. I imagined old-country homes similar to the ones my great-grandparents resided in, in Lethbridge. The old country for me was my Ukrainian great-grandparent's Lethbridge home, and their garden. Old country was the Ukrainian they spoke that was woven with English; old country was the food they cooked. My great-grandparents seemed happy living in Lethbridge, as Ukrainians in old-country traditions. But I could tell that they missed the old country when letters would suddenly arrive from the Ukraine. I looked at the stamps on the letters imagining who the person was that wrote the letter, and if it was one of my long-lost cousins from the Ukraine that had sealed the envelope.

I lived mostly in the old-country world which was divided further into worlds of words that I heard such as "breeds" and "halfies." The people who

were “halfies” were ones that came from two ethnic origins. They were Ukrainian-Canadians, German-Canadians, Japanese-Canadians, or Polish-Canadians. Many people used this term “halfie” liberally, as if these people were not really Canadian at all. I was a “halfie,” I had decided. I was Ukrainian, after all. But I was also Swedish, French, and Italian. This complicated my sense of who I was.

Deeper into these worlds within worlds in Lethbridge was a language that people used to describe people they could not identify. These words were used as quick put-downs, and I often noticed that such words stayed with the person for all their lives. The “scrappers,” the “rednecks,” the “japs,” the “chinks,” the “pakis,” the “piyutes,” the “bible thumpers,” the “boat people,” the “bohunks,” my repertoire of slurs grew within the thought that no one was ever truly welcome.

Later in my teens, I became more aware that languages other than English began to divide my neighbourhood into parts. These languages were unfamiliar to me. They were spoken by the Vietnamese and the East Indians. It became a game for my neighbourhood friends and me to see if our new neighbours could understand what we were saying in English. We would spin English as fast as we could and weave it with a north-side slang. Some of this slang was a chant we had created in the forts we built in various backyards—uninvited, of course. Our

language was like a secret code that only we could understand. And of course, this was all a part of our game, for we really never meant to harm anyone. At times I felt ashamed playing this game, for I knew that these people were just like me—and the only thing that separated us was language.

Lethbridge did not have the discourse of which new worlds could be spoken about. There was an old-world silence about those people, including my Ukrainian great-grandparents. My great-grandparents were foreign to Lethbridge and for the remainder of their lives learned the new-country ways the town foisted upon them.

Most working class newcomers to Lethbridge settled in the north and, in their own way, built beautiful homes and kept luscious gardens. The Dutch, the Germans, and the Czechoslovakians my family knew kept neat flower and vegetable gardens. Agnes was one person who kept a yard with a vegetable garden that flourished in it. She was an elderly Czechoslovakian widow who lived in a very tiny house. She was a friend of my grandparents, and I spent much time with her. She lived two blocks away from me. The walls of her house had pictures of the Madonna on it, and an assortment of plastic flowers sat on her coffee table. The drapes were always closed as she was scared someone would peer into her safe haven. To fare off other scoundrels, a “Beware of Dog” sign sat in her porch window with the figurine of a Chihuahua with a bobbley

head close to it. She never actually owned a dog. She moved so quietly about her house that at times I thought she had died in the kitchen. But I would hear the high-pitched sound of the kettle, and in an instant, Agnes would appear with coffee for two in hand.

Agnes's accent reminded me that of my Ukrainian great-grandparents.

They were friends as well and often shared conversations in broken English, and sometimes in their own languages. They drank coffee together on Sundays, and I sat with them trying to discern from the topics of conversation their dialogues.

I would watch Agnes move about her house fixing the pillows on the sofa and rearranging the numerous vases of plastic flowers placed around the living room. Her eyes were eternally sad and her movements laboured by her weight. She seemed depressed and her smile forced, at times. Regardless, she was fond of me and often cooked Czech pastries so that we could have something to eat when I came over. At tea time she would talk about her son, and I listened to her speak and sometimes could not understand what she was saying. She spoke in an English that rolled around in her mouth, and I became very good at unravelling her words. She told me more about her son who seldom called or helped her. When he did come over, it was usually for a brief time. I had to leave when the son was about to arrive, for Agnes was not comfortable with me and him in her house. I think she wanted time alone with her son to catch up on how

he was doing. She would pack some pastries for me to take home, wave goodbye, and remind me to come back again.

I never met the son, but I did know his name. Sometimes Alex would drop by in the evening to check on her, and she would ask him to stay for supper. She cried every time he left and would then phone me. I sensed her unease with being in an empty home alone. I would go back over to her house where she would begin another conversation about Alex in English to begin with, and then slipping into her own language. I sat there waiting patiently, my thoughts and her speech dissipating into the quiet.

When I look back, I don't think Agnes ever wanted me to leave her house. I often saw tears in her eyes every time I walked out the door. She was proud of her home and family, and she told me about how she missed her country. The map of her homeland framed in gold would often come down off the wall, and in my hands would be a picture of the country she grew up in. She would point to the uppermost corners of the picture and then draw her finger to the centre of it. She was maybe showing me a path, a road, where she walked. My mind would wander when she would unconsciously slip into her language.

In my eyes, Agnes and the many other homes like hers, flourished in ethnic traditions. A traditional Ukrainian Christmas or Easter celebration was held in the heritage halls that lined the major streets on the north side. I shared

the ethnic traditions of my great-grandparents and their friends. I also attended celebrations where I would sit and listen to the foreign languages spoken around me. People would smile at me and I would smile back. There were people who spoke in sporadic tones and accents; I began to piece together the stories told from the conversations and would watch the expressions on people's faces. The stories became the discourse that elongated my understanding of my ethnic roots. I entered into the conversations of the old-country people. I joined the circles and began in English, the only language I could speak. I would remember Agnes, thinking of her house and my pretending to understand what she was saying.

There was another neighbour who did not invite me into her home but later would welcome me into her world with a kind gesture of peace. I never knew her name but knew that she was a grandmother. I had seen children near my age come to her house, and I went to school with one of them. My neighbour would sometimes smile, but I wasn't sure if it was a smile or a grimace. She kept her head covered, and it was difficult to see her face. She wore a *babushka* that covered her head so that her eyes could barely be seen—or to keep out the sun, as my great-grandmother Nana did.

The woman lived next door to my first childhood home and, like Agnes, was also a widow. Her husband had passed away one summer night. I looked

out my bedroom window, watching the ambulance drive away. Between my house and hers was a long caragana hedge. The hedge was a border between her world and mine. There were openings in this bush that my brother and I would sneak through to explore her backyard. It was full of trees, bushes, and a garden. In her yard, we would imagine that we were in a home away from home. We entered into her world and into her garden. It was expansive. I imagined that the openings in the hedge would close if she caught us and that we would become captives of hers, forever. One day we were caught. She suddenly appeared from behind a row of corn stalks and screamed at us in a voice that sounded like a chorus of croaking frogs in the ponds near the river. We ran for our lives towards the hedge. I was unable to get through a smaller opening in the hedge, until my brother's hand pulled me back to the safety of my home on the other side of the hedge.

We never played that game again but would peer over into her yard from the top of our roof, just to see what was becoming of the garden—and of her, of course. Our neighbour grew more accepting of my brother and me in her years. One day a hand appeared through the main gateway of the caragana. Crouched down on the ground, she held out root vegetables to us. She shook them at me, maybe saying “here.” I accepted her offering. Peace was made that day.

I entered many worlds in my home town. They were in gardens, ruins, and yards. I explored each of these worlds with my eyes wide open, all senses alert. In this new awareness, one day I heard my grandparents' friends call my grandfather a bohunk. He joined his friend in laughter. Bohunk was an innocent name, for my family. They never seemed to mind when they were called that word by their friends. Bohunk was also a funny-sounding word to me. I would laugh not knowing the vulgarity associated with it. I accepted my new name but knew deep down that this name was one that I had heard used for other Ukrainians, other than my family. I wanted to build a wall made of the strength of caragana branches. This wall would protect me from these names. As I grew up, I heard the name bohunk less and less. I started to discern between old-country and new-country living, and what living as immigrants in Lethbridge meant for my great-grandparents.

Seasons changed and I followed in them. In early summer, I would witness train jumpers leaping from boxcars, running down the embankment through the gates of the railroad yard, and standing on the sides of the roads hoping to catch a ride to somewhere. I would watch some ambulate to the north side, over the gravel mounds. Their figures would blend into the steel of the factories that lined the tracks, and the migrants would disappear into the

horizon. The smell of fried oils teaming from smoke stacks and the scent of feedlots were uninviting.

In this moment sitting on the north side, I also witnessed the callousness of people who sneered at the train jumpers who were sometimes looking for food, work, or a home. In this moment of un-welcoming, the North-side of Lethbridge becomes a place for me that is as uninviting as the north wind that swells over the coulee banks of the Oldman River. Such coldness dislocates life from the façade of warmth that lingers over the city. Yet, as uninviting as the north winds can be and, as unappealing as the divisions entrenched in the neighbourhoods in Lethbridge were, I continue to migrate back and forth between the homes in which I grew up.

Agnes's home is one site where I relive with her a life as an immigrant in Lethbridge. Her home is transposed into the classroom; the classroom is a place where I live perceptively as a teacher from Lethbridge. Looking perceptively to the classroom has brought home an understanding of the connection between homeland and foreign land. This connection acknowledges that home is a place where the teacher can live mindfully. When the teacher lives mindfully in her home, and shares in this experience, her students are able to hold their original home closer to the heart, even in the processes of adapting to a new home country.

In each process of adapting to a new country, the site of the old home becomes more distant. New experiences cover former ones. The experience of living in old and

new countries causes a tension that arises when home cannot be relocated. Lost homes are points of tension for my adult immigrant students. When my students write about their hometowns, they sometimes cannot remember the details of their homes. They become lost in their own frustration of trying to find the memories to write about. But defining home is not a matter of recalling the details about it. Home continues to be home in an embodied way, even in new circumstances and wherever the traveler resides.

I sense that my students become disorientated in their learning, when they are reminded that learning is a difficult place to be. Their homelands are a reminder of their first places of learning. These initial places of learning are distressing for some, yet learning in a Canadian classroom becomes a safe place to be a student. As a teacher of a student who faces trauma from former learning experiences, how do I acknowledge stories of strife in new learning contexts? My immigrant students' disorientation in their new places of living and learning becomes a tension between homeland and foreign land. However, this tension does not translate into apprehension. Living with tension brings about a new way of being mindful of bridging old and new country dichotomies. The classroom is a place of tension that evolves on a continuum of new experiences that each student and teacher bring to it. When a teacher resists tensions in the classroom such as the tension of first language over English, teaching becomes an impossible task to facilitate. Homelands fall away, and because of this, students become estranged in their new classroom once again. With each new experience that the student brings into the classroom, the pedagogic situation becomes a more whole and understandable place of living.

Lethbridge is divided not only geographically, into the north and south, but culturally as well. Growing up as a child in different neighbourhoods on the north side, I had difficulty adjusting to newcomers who began to take up home in my neighbourhood. The difficulty was that the amount of space available diminished with each new person. The notion of space, and tension that can come with space, is significant for the English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom. Cixous (1997) writes that “[t]he world is mistaken. It imagines that the other takes something from us whereas the other only brings to us, all the time” (p. 13). In my neighbourhoods, foreign languages seemed to replace English, and the feeling of less space became more prominent. The physical sensation of less space opens new portals to understanding how less space can contribute to living well in the classroom; the sense of loss of space transposes into my classroom. It allows me to open portals in these spaces tightened by new experiences and encounters with people who fill the classroom. I see the self as a teacher living in a spacious understanding of the foreign and the familiar.

The old-country ways that immigrants brought with them to my neighbourhood expanded my view of foreign worlds. Agnes’s stories were an articulation of the partial truths that she knew of Lethbridge. Articulation is brought to my understanding of the experience of living in cultural difference, when I return to my initial perceptions of being in foreignness. My other neighbours who were also immigrants to Lethbridge added to these truths. My experiences of growing up in Lethbridge enabled me to see foreign lands as spacious. Otherness expanded my perceptions of foreign worlds in which I found myself not prepared for (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997). Similarly, the

spaciousness of my classroom, allows my immigrant students to live more openly in this place. The classroom becomes accepting and inviting.

Otherness dislocated me from my own sense of home, as my home was becoming another's home. The suddenness of new immigrants arriving into my community interrupted my sense of self at home. I was used to the old neighbourhood, and I was familiar with the original people who lived in it. I was, however, "ignorant of [myself]" (p. 12). New human histories were being introduced into my hometown; I was "thrown into strangeness" (p. 10); however, being in strangeness opened up passages to rediscover the sensation of living with otherness. Cixous (1997) posits that it is the other who enriches our lives. What came to me from living with otherness enabled me to see myself in ways that could not be seen, otherwise. The history of the other unfolded into my neighbourhood; this unfolding continues into my present teaching situation. The position from which I initially viewed the other as distant from the self segmented my perception of the neighbourhood in which I lived. I readjusted my perceptions of otherness to view foreignness as essential to understanding the familiar and foreign of my neighbourhood. The experience of growing up in cultural difference caused my perceptions to expand, thus inviting the tensions between the foreign and the familiar to live in the classroom.

New-country and old-country identities are present in my classroom, and between these countries are "spaces of estrangement" (Benstock, as cited in Pinar, 2004, p. 50) that I seek to inhabit. When I inhabit estranged spaces, I begin to recover those fragments of understanding which are lost in adapting to a new home. In this process of inhabiting the foreign, I contemplate how to live, cognizant of the classroom that has reconfigured into a foreign country. The classroom becomes a foreign country when a newcomer to

Canada arrives in it. Memories of home fill the spaces with stories, and the gradual joining of old and new country begins to build the foundation of a new home. The stories from the original home close the space between the foreign and the familiar.

In my early years of teaching English-as-a-Foreign-Language in Japan, I wanted to share with my Japanese students where I came from. I attempted to close the space between the foreign and familiar by sharing stories about growing up in a multi-ethnic community. I hoped that my Japanese students would understand my home country through my stories and, in turn, they would share their stories with me. My stories did not reach them. I later recognized that what home means for one is not what it means for another. When I returned to Canada, the notion of home became ever more prominent, as I reflected on the absence of home while living in Japan. I wondered, as I began to teach English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language, how I was going to teach newcomers to Canada about their new country. Immediately, with all good intentions, I told stories about my experience of living in a foreign country; nevertheless, like in Japan, my stories of living in a foreign land did not reach my immigrant students. My stories did not arrive to their storied lands, even though we shared experiences of dislocation. I expected my students to empathize with my story, but theirs had not yet been told. I could not bring them to understand the meaning of home in Canada. I presumed this would enable them to see better the meaning of Canada from their new lives. The narrative *Being in Ethnicity* illuminates that within the dichotomy of old and new countries, old country or home country can live independently. Even in the tension of home country and new country, home is ever-present in the classroom.

The stories from home country are significant for understanding the experience of being a Canadian teacher. The voice of the teacher is ever-present. But in one personal, teaching experience, I could not find my voice to guide one student to an understanding of the importance of remembering her home. One of my students speaks about her mother who cannot adapt to the new-country ways that Canada is imposing upon her. My student wishes to marry outside home country traditions, and her mother has not given her blessing to this marriage. This student seeks out my advice; she asks me how she can teach her mother to be Canadian.

The response to my student's question lives in the narrative *Being in Ethnicity*. When Agnes explained the difficulties she faced in her life as an immigrant to Lethbridge, she did not overtly speak about her hardships through story but alluded to them in her constant use of native language and references to her homeland. Home country lived in her Lethbridge home. The new context in which she lived did not take away from her sense of home. Agnes's home country was present when she taught me about Czechoslovakia through the only photograph she had of it. It was a map of the country framed in gold. Her country was permanently bound through her stories; the photograph itself was a dynamic representation, perhaps a memory, of the exact moment and time when she left the country. She had difficulty leaving her home, but I understood where she came from, even when she spoke in her mother tongue. I became more perceptive of what home meant to her. Home was where ever the story lived.

When I return to my current teaching situation, I move towards empathy when I hear Agnes's voice in my student's plea for advice; her immigrant mother wishes for her daughter to abandon Canadian ways. I experience my student's tension through her

question about what being Canadian means. She asks this question to help her mother understand Canadian ways. She also wishes that her mother would be “more like a Canadian.” A tension begins to emerge from the space in-between first and second country. I do not assimilate Mother’s wishes into Daughter’s desires. My response resides in the layers of my experience of being a fourth-generation Canadian.

I reflect on my experience with living in similar questions, and I know that the response to the questions that concern identity, home, culture, and traditions come forth from multiple ways of seeing what being Canadian is. I explain to my student to let her mother find her own way through the difficulties of living as a parent in a foreign country. I also suggest that even though her mother is in a new country, old-country ways are her map to the foreign territory; home guides the heart through difficulty, and old country ways will allow her mother to better see the possibilities for living well in Canada. Mother will remain confident when she knows that her home has not left her or been taken from her daughter. Home opens more space for Mother to take in not only Canadian culture and traditions but also to remain with her home country ones as well. Mother becomes more attuned to Daughter’s way of perceiving her new home while her daughter understands her mother’s apprehension when new traditions begin to take away home-country traditions. Mother fears her daughter will lose her tribal language, a language that was only spoken to the daughter as a child. This student sees a reflection of herself in her mother. My student is an immigrant living and sharing in the tension of old-and new-country ways, and her mother also lives in the tension, despite her absence from the classroom.

The story of Lethbridge has been constituted by old-country worlds rooted in home. I look to the whole of one location, Lethbridge, and then to the details, the people in the story. My journey back to Lethbridge gives way to other stories such as the one of Agnes, and my other neighbour who initiated an act peace with my brother and me. This passing of vegetables was a gift. It was an act to bring peace between people. Even now in my teaching, my neighbour's extended hand reminds me to extend my own, beyond the boundaries and borders that surround the classroom. However foreign a student's past life is, however removed it is from the teacher's life, another's life is not a border to understanding the immigrant and refugee student. Borders indicate nations or countries. Borders are perceived to keep in rather than to let out. In the classroom, the teacher acts to remove these borders so that she is able to center on the presence of humankind in the teaching situation. Borders are permeated in the classroom when the teacher sees and hears the presence of the other. These borders are broken down when the teacher acknowledges and allows difference. The teacher's perceptions of her students expand when other-world experiences are given permission to live in the classroom. The teacher becomes more aware of her teaching presence in the classroom.

The experience of being a Canadian teacher continues as the teacher enters the world of the foreign. Seeing the world of the classroom not only through different eyes but also through different languages invites new openings to perceiving the other, the student, in the space of the classroom. These new perceptions are an entrance into a learning space where the teacher and student discover together that borders in culture and language do not encumber understanding—borders act to encourage dialogue. A foreign language is an obvious border to the ears; however, when the teacher enters the world of

her students through her own foreignness to teaching English-as-an-Additional-Language, a more perceptible understanding of the relationship between student and teacher opens up. A dialogue begins this relationship. Subsequent dialogues move back and forth between present and past lives. The teacher comes to know her students not only from the familiar but also from the foreign. The teacher lives momentarily in the foreign and becomes a temporary resident in the life of her immigrant student. The language spoken in the dialogues enables the fragmented life stories to be cultivated whole-heartedly through shared experiences of being in difference.

The space in which the teacher stands is between the familiarity of the classroom and the foreign worlds of her students. The teacher joins the familiar and the foreign when the past has informed her (Pinar, 2004). The past returns to the teacher through the familiar voices that speak about homeland and which resonate in the present moment of teaching. The classroom becomes home to “fragments of (past) others” (p. 54) that are captured in story. These stories sometimes sound familiar. In this familiarity, the plots and the characters are universal; the student and teacher share in the universality of the story.

I lived with Agnes through her experience as an immigrant in Lethbridge. Her experience moved me into new ways of understanding my students’ experiences as immigrants living in Lethbridge. As a teacher, I do not generalize the experience of one student to make sense of the experience of another. The experience of being a Canadian teacher is not that of one who teaches the subject only; the teacher mediates learning experiences beyond the classroom. These learning experiences are ones of how to live well in Canada. The Canadian teacher lives beyond the classroom. While cognizant of

her students' past experiences with learning, the teacher expands outward and opens herself to the experiences of being in learning with her students. These experiences come forth as a discourse for better understanding the experience of living and learning in a new home country. These experiences are transformed into a new telling and travel beyond home. They are woven into new stories of life in the second country. The stories, when written, connect old and new worlds.

The experience of living as a multi-ethnic in Lethbridge imparts the dichotomy of outsider and insider. The teacher is an outsider to the pedagogical situation. But from the perspective of an insider in the teaching situation, the teacher can better see her self and her presence midst her students'. The teacher as stranger (Greene, 1973) is a topic that I explore in the experience of teaching English to immigrants and refugees. I returned to the city in which I grew up conscious of the histories that grew out of the north and south sides. The breadth of understanding the Canadian teaching experience expands when the teacher stands inside the teaching experience and looks out—instead of standing on the outside looking in. Gadamer (1975) explains further the transposition of the self into the historical consciousness:

When our historical consciousness transposes itself into historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with our own; instead, they together constitute the one great horizon that moves from within and that, beyond frontiers of the present, embraces historical depths of our self-consciousness. (p. 303)

I recovered lost conversations from old and new countries in order to “recognize one’s own in the alien, to become home in it” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 13). The conversations are

the ones I engaged in with Agnes. These were spoken conversations where we exchanged our views of our neighbourhoods and the people in it. I saw Agnes's neighbourhood in these conversations. I saw the people she once lived with as she took the picture of her home country down from the wall. Another conversation was the one between my neighbour whose garden my brother and I explored as children. The conversation with our neighbour was a potentially lost one. This conversation, however, was not spoken. I imagined conversations with this elderly woman. She could not speak English, but I lived with her in her world.

As a Canadian teacher, I imagine my teaching self as a possibility for being with, not without. I persevere in conversations held in foreign languages. I attempt to recover those topics potentially lost in conversation. These conversations are not just ones of language but ones of an exchange between teaching and learning realities. These realities are cultivated in the old home and grown in the classroom.

The following section of the thesis responds to the experience of being in the foreign worlds of language and in the events connected to them. I connect my past experience of growing up in foreign languages with my present teaching situation. In the framework of *currere*, the past is significant for the present (Pinar, 2004). French, Swedish, Ukrainian, and Italian are the languages spoken in my homes, and a multitude of other languages are spoken in my classroom. Languages are the threads that connect the familiar to the unfamiliar. Language begins an articulation of my teaching world. My return to being in paternal and maternal languages begins a more whole articulation of the experience of being a Canadian teacher in an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom. I gaze intently upon the town and classroom in which I live as a fourth-

generation Canadian; I enter into the homes where ancestral languages live, and I listen absorbedly to the past from the present moment. I hear the languages in the stories which are “like a second language: as one reads language by the roots” (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1996, p. 84).

Bridging Identity and Ethnicity

When I name myself or when I am named by others, I am created (constructed or written) with identities, and these identities are multiple because I always occupy many subject positions—including teacher...believer. I have written myself and been written in multiple identities. Sometimes these identities are conflictual, possibly even contradictory, constantly in a process of change, malleable and tentative.

—Carl Leggo, *Living Poetry: Five Ruminations*

Curriculum reconceptualist theory emphasizes the “significance of subjectivity to teaching” (Pinar, 2004, p. 4). The teacher engages with and reflects on modes of self-understanding, which awakens the teacher in the pedagogical situation and illuminates the complexities of the self in the historical-present (Pinar, 2004). From a post-modern perspective, the world in which the teacher lives and teaches is a “constantly emerging reality; in which metaphor...is the main means of dealing with collisions between history and memory, language, and geography” (Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 147).

In this thesis, the experience of the Canadian teacher has thus far been relived in evolving realities of migration and teaching experiences. The fusion of history and memory creates a new horizon of understanding (Gadamer, 1975), or a perspective from which I can view the self in “the other situation in order to understand it” (p. 302). The *other situation* is the pedagogical one, or the learning world of my immigrant students. The meaning of the experience of being a Canadian teacher comes forth when I experience being in situations of otherness (Gadamer, 1975).

History, memory, and language converge in the site of an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom. History collides with memory in the teaching experience, where I interpret this collision to mean fusion. Collision in the denotative meaning can be defined as meeting with force. In experiential contexts of teaching, when two polar opposites approach each other, this event is interpreted as fusion. This event in a teaching situation is the meeting of contrasting languages, cultures, or life events. The life events experienced in my students' home countries are remote from the events that are found in my own (teaching) life. The stories that my students tell are sometimes indiscernible, or discordant to mine. They are stories that if not listened to carefully can be interpreted as irrelevant to the teaching situation, or to the moment of teaching. The intensity that results from the fusion of contrasting life events determines how the teacher consciously comes to a new awareness of the self in her teaching praxis; how the teacher reconciles the meeting of contrasting worlds gives way to a better view of the teaching self in the world of a second- or additional- language classroom.

Lived experiences of otherness are a means by which I can “engage in ‘a complicated conversation’ with... [the] [self]” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). In this section of the thesis, I seek to understand the “complex and shifting relations” (p. 24) held in the teaching situation. The relational aspects found in the classroom bring out the experience of living in-between the foreign and familiar. The narrative in this section, *Making a Home in the Cellar of My Heart*, explores the experience of teaching and living in imperceptible events and situations. This narrative reveals aspects of my teaching self (Pinar, 2004) that are difficult to locate in the reality or in the moment of the teaching situation. Through this narrative, I am “interested in how humans continuously adapt to

new conditions of experiences and, at the same time, reinterpret the past” (Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 147). The narrative moves back and forth between the geographical and pedagogical locations of homes and towns, and my classroom. It begins in the location of a family home in central Alberta. The narrative continues through time and moves into the setting of the classroom in which I currently teach; it then returns to the home of my Ukrainian great-grandparents. The narrative explores the experience of being in imperceptible situations encountered in my own teaching life. In this situation, my students and I share experiences of settlement and adaptation in foreign lands of teaching and learning.

The student in an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom is immersed in events of cultural adaptation and language learning. The teacher in her attunement (Aoki, 1986/2005) to a pedagogical situation of English language learners recognizes that for some students, learning English is their first experience. Often these learners are unfamiliar with the daily routines found in a (Canadian) classroom. This experience of learning English in this new environment is one of relearning how to live in a new home. As a teacher, I attempt through my teaching situation to connect memories to future stories, stories waiting to be taken up in the *progressive* phase of *currere* (Pinar, 2004), where I look to the “response to unanticipated biographic and historical events” (Pinar, 1994, p. 59).

My teaching experiences focus on notions of arrival and settlement in the pedagogical situation. Self-reflexively viewing the teaching self in moments of arrival and settlement to a classroom illuminates the dialectical notions of foreignness. The narrative *Homesteading Origin* revealed an emergence of the self in my own historicity. I

uncovered the layers of history that surrounded a Canadian identity. It was in this narrative that I began to piece together the multiple and historical horizons present in my teaching life. I brought these histories home through the narrative *Being in Ethnicity*. I returned to Lethbridge to understand how my interaction with otherness extended my knowledge of the people who lived close to me but came from far away countries. The different environments from which the experience of teaching English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language can be realized come from the experience of being in foreign languages and living within foreignness. When I was a child, living among foreign languages did not limit my perceptions of the foreign worlds that I was introduced to. Now as a teacher, these foreign worlds, and the maternal languages spoken in them, hold meaning for understanding otherness (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) in educative contexts. Aoki (1987/2005) summarized Gadamer on mother language in familiar and other worlds:

It is impossible, [Gadamer] argues, to understand what the language of the other world has to say if it does not speak into a familiar world that provides the point of contact with the text...the other world...is always understood...from the familiar world of the mother language. (p. 242)

Stories of difference in the classroom restore attunement to otherness.

Understanding otherness “evolves in the context of an individual’s life history” (Pinar, 1994, p. 41); understanding comes through “an articulation of the past” (p. 60) that is told in my students’ stories of escaping the presence of paramilitary to living in the semi-permanent home of a refugee camp. There are stories of one student who in her second country is turned away from school because of her religious affiliation. She desires to

make her home in learning but relives her fear of entering classrooms that, at one time, disturbed her sense of personal security. Entrance into my immigrant students' stories release me from my own lived experiences and into ones that are "unexpected and unprecedented" (p. 60). They are stories that I have never known before. The stories illuminate "fictive representations" (Pinar, 2004, p. 55) of my teaching self.

The classroom is a location where the value of first language is intensified when the thought of losing parts of home, or the self, comes forth. Losing a maternal language, culture, or tradition sends my students into anxious states of being. As a teacher of immigrants, I open ways for my students to relive their difficulties of loss. The story of a lost life, home, or language can be preserved, as I listen intently and share with my students my own stories of loss. The narrative *Making a Home in the Cellar of My Heart* is one such story of events in which I relive my unpreparedness in unpredictable situations. The cellar of a family home is one location in my memory where I came to see, hear, and feel the imperceptible. Through a return to the imperceptible, the sudden loss of the sense of self in new lands of living and learning are revived.

Cixous (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) speaks of the "cellars of the heart" (p. 70). There are unanticipated events from life that compel one who experiences the intangible to reach for the tangible. The tangible is something that can be grasped, and reached with understanding. The plots from my students' stories have had an everlasting effect on my perceptions of their lives. The plots live in me, and I remember their stories, as if they are my own. Some of the events from these stories are woven from the relationships from families far away—families I will never meet, except in story. When my students speak about their losses, I feel as if I am at home with them. I am a participant in their stories.

Cixous (1997) writes about fear: “[S]ometimes in fleeing it is life that we lose” (p. 25).

The fears and losses which approach my life as a teacher are a part of understanding otherness in teaching. I am initially fearful of understanding the unknown; I am unable to recognize my teaching self in loss but permit myself to experience a “situated place into which [I] [am] rarely thrown” (p. 26).

My students’ stories of loss remind me of one account that throughout my childhood became very difficult for me to comprehend. This story is about my grandparents’ child who passed away. Their daughter’s death came unexpectedly. The story of her death lives in my family. Similar stories of loss live with me in my classroom. I stand in my students’ shoes (Gadamer, 1975) to understand their circumstance but know that I will never fully understand their experiences as they have experienced them. But because we share similar stories found in contrasting life events, the stories together bring out compassion in the classroom.

Barbara Jeanne, my grandparent’s daughter, passed away in the cellar of their farm home located in Miquelon Lake, Alberta. I do not return to this narrative to mourn her death but rather to honour and celebrate the new meaning found in the experience of loss. I return to the Miquelon home every summer and sit in its ruins, now overgrown with bushes and trees. I contemplate the warmth of the dwelling which came from the presence of long-ago people who inhabited this home. I cannot locate the cellar but feel its presence close to the hearth of the chimney, which is still intact. The cellar and the chimney are located deep in the earth, so much that neither can be removed. The chimney reminds me of stories: ones that are rooted in the educational and human-to-human

experiences. The cellar is an imperceptible place; it conjures up images of obscurity and lifelessness. Yet on the contrary, it is used to preserve life.

What cannot be seen in reality is what is perceived from the cellars of the heart. From the depths of the heart comes compassion. Compassion is a difficult depth to reach. These depths are sometimes obscured by fear. Compassion, and then empathy, is one such depth that resurfaces in my teaching reality. The cellars become new locations in the heart where I become alive as a teacher.

Narrative: Making a Home in the Cellar of My Heart

I recall my grandmother's voice speaking about the event of her first daughter's death. My grandmother had asked Barbara Jeanne to go to the cellar and get some vegetables—she never came back up. My grandmother found her at the bottom of the stairs. The story ends with Barbara Jeanne having passed away in the car from pneumonia, on the way to the city hospital located far from the home they lived in near Miquelon Lake, Alberta.

My grandmother and grandfather used to sit in front of the mantle clock on the anniversary of their daughter's death and stare at the time ticking by, remembering the moment of her passing. One day, my grandmother told me: "The day of Barbara Jeanne's death your grandfather just got very silent and then he disappeared. He never spoke for days—for months in fact. He would go into the hen house, and then feed her kittens and her dog. The animals were

calling for her, you know. They knew. He was silent. And the day after her death, well, that's when your grandfather changed forever."

My grandmother sensed a change in my grandfather that I could not see. My grandfather never spoke about his daughter's death to me but kept a picture of her near his bedside, until the time of his own death. Lingering in the words of my grandmother, and the silence of my grandfather, are the effects fear can have on the heart. Suffering takes a voice; it is replaced with memories that disturb and, sometimes, prevent new ones from being born.

I am reminded of my immigrant students who come into the classroom, hesitating to enter through the door. The classroom is an unknown; I meet my students at the intersection of my classroom and their home country. The stories of their lives are welling inside them, waiting to be released. I imagine the classroom as a refuge for these impending stories. The classroom is for my students a place where adversity meets diversity. With our shared experiences, my students, and I have met grief and have faced the matters that life and death present, with suffering and compassion. I have learned to live with grief and courage, through my own experiences of being in sorrow. But how can I learn to reopen my heart when fear from my own past returns? How can I acknowledge the devastating stories of displacement and loss that come into my classroom? How can I dwell without trepidation?

Suffering takes on many forms; pain exists in memories of death, sickness, poverty, vigilantism, or war. Apprehension takes its place in the heart. However, when the unspeakable becomes the speak-able, stories are released. The following letter was written by Great-grandfather Erik to console the grieving parents of Barbara Jeanne. Sometimes the matters are so incomprehensible that words are needed to guide and to loosen the hold fear has on the heart:

Feby [sic] 28-43

Dear Ada and Johnnie,

Reid [sic] your wire and you have are [sic] heartfelt sympathy. But remember that is God's wish for a dear little soul as her to be taken from us. And she is going to be in a place at peace and rest. Life is just a matter of destiny and this is one of those few things we have no control off [sic]. So lets [sic] not grieve too much and live with the thoughts that some day we will meet our little angel in heaven.

As ever,

Dad

Barbara Jeanne's story lives in the cellar of her home. Despite its connotation of loss, the cellar is also a place of preservation—and of ambiguity. The image of the cellar door opens to the possibilities of understanding the sights, smells and sounds of foreignness. Foreignness is at first

incomprehensible. It is the look, sound, and feel of a life other than my own. I relive my student's fear of losing her tribal language, because English is 'taking over.' She cannot remember some the words and phrases her grandmother taught her. She has forgotten the home country recipes her mother taught her. And now my student wants to teach her daughter about the traditions and cultures from their home country. There is loss when one becomes foreign. Countries are lost, as well as families, and in some cases identities are cast away and new appellations take form. These are "imperceptible situations" (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 70) for the teacher to unravel within her teaching world. But however foreign to teaching and living these events are, they remain close to the heart. Great-grandfather writes in his letter to "live with the thoughts." My student lives with the thought of losing her home country in her new country of Canada. The phrase "live with" reminds me to live acceptingly of the matters that come into my classroom.



Figure 4. Grandfather and Grandmother Erickson With Their daughter, Barbara Jeanne

I return to another scene in my childhood which was the arrangement of a circle of chairs in a living room home in which neighbours and family would gather to socialize and converse on the matters the day had presented. The circle of languages, Ukrainian, Italian, and Swedish, enclosed a setting of a table where members of the family put order to discussion: the most prominent persons were my great-grandfathers, sitting at the head of it, eliciting the topic for the evening. I tried to bring my own voice forth amongst the assertiveness of the dialogues, but doing this only buried my voice deeper into the foreign languages spoken around me. I used my English but noticed that streaming from their mouths was another English not like my own. Those age-old conversations never seemed to settle. They were topics usually taken up underneath the portraits of my great-grandfathers—portraits placed on the wall as a reminder of their determination for their new lives in Lethbridge. There weren't any smiles in these sepia-coloured portraits.

One story I attempted to translate from these conversations was the one of my name. I overheard my name pronounced in a multitude of ways: *Candachi*, *Candace*, something in Ukrainian that I cannot remember and sometimes nothing but a gesture, a sound, or a quick nod of the head. When I heard my name, I listened intently. I was taught not to interrupt; I learned to wait patiently. But there were times that I became desperate to be heard, for I feared not being

heard. My English blended into the accents of the languages being spoken around the table, proclaiming the blue-collar work ethic that brought a living to the table I sat at every supper. I was reminded of the gratitude I should have for my family who worked hard to maintain a good life in Lethbridge. And I was reminded how hard my great-grandparents worked when they first arrived to Alberta. Their hard work as people who never went to school in Canada but who could speak English was a story that lived in my home. Hard work was the job of a railroader and coal miner. But I soon came to understand that the stories of hard work were not about personal success but of wanting to be understood.

In the process of learning what gratitude meant in the Ukrainian home I learned to share my voice in, I often went to my great-grandmother's house and sat with other women who would ask me questions in Ukrainian. I smiled and stared and looked back to my Ukrainian great-grandmother, waiting for her to translate. This scene from my great-grandmother's home became one in my teaching life, where I would help my students to translate the new world in which they lived.

I learned to remember because things can not always be written down. I learned to preserve memory like the vegetables that became the sauerkraut, the beets, and the mustard pickles in the jars my Ukrainian great-grandmother prepared when fall would change to winter. I watched my great-grandmother as

she would pull the vegetables from the garden and lay them on the cement to dry. I wanted to water the vegetables and bring them back to life but knew that soon they would be placed on the counter and left for pickling. The vegetables were put into jars and my great-grandmother's hands were so strong that when she closed the lids they were difficult to open. It was as if she never wanted the jars to be opened again. These jars of preservation belonged in the cellar, a room in the basement of Nana's home where we would go together and begin arranging them: last year's would move to the front and this year's to the back of the shelf. The jars were very cold, smooth, and some grimy. I felt lost in the cellar, for there wasn't any light, just the light from the entrance of its door. Nana could see in the dark and knew the shelves as if they were a map of her own routines in life. The shelves spoke in seasons and the freshest of the jars would not be opened most likely until the early winter. Nana never took my hand to help me, but I could feel her presence. I could hear her dusting the shelves and feeling the walls, the calluses on her hands sounding like sandpaper.

The cellar was a dark place. I could hear the conversations in the jars—the ones contained and the ones not allowed to be heard. One conversation was about my grandfather's brother who probably wasn't his real brother. I overheard one day that my great-uncle didn't belong to our family and that Nana had given birth before my grandfather was born. I would stare at my great-

uncle's face from that moment on, searching for the difference between the brothers. I could not see difference.

One time I was sent into the cellar alone. I noticed the piercing redness of the beets in the jars. The room was alive; there was breath in the jars sealed tightly so life could not escape. It seemed that there was no end to this room. Its vast darkness conjured up uninviting places. These places were the ones that never shone like the meticulous home of my Swedish great-grandmother or her silk-covered chairs that I sat on with my back straight, hoping I wouldn't break the hand-carved, wooden flowers that framed the backrest.

The cellar was a place of perseverance. Traveling down to the cellar took many years and, I shed private tears that my great-grandmothers never saw. Even the brightest of light can not take away the meaning the cellar holds for me, for it remains as it was, an everlasting symbol and test of emotional and spiritual endurance. I wanted to see beyond what couldn't be seen. I wanted to hear beyond what couldn't be heard. I wanted to believe that even in the most imperceptible places, life lived.

Fear is what cannot be understood: How does what is not understood affect my teaching? The cellar is apprehension that has transcended into my teaching. The cellars, as they existed in the two family homes from the narrative, are the contexts of the unexpected moments and events that enter into my classroom. The cellars are also stories

of attempted assassination, the loss of a child, or a mother or a father; they are the loss of hearing when suddenly a bomb ignites; they are the loss of a birth name. My students carry these losses. They are stories that define the present difficulties in becoming residents of a new country or of past difficulties of abandoning home. The past and the present together form a more complete understanding of how living perceptively in loss will revive the will to tell the story in places far from apprehension.

Stories from past and present live within me. They are stories of the unknown or the unexpected. Some of these stories are ones that cannot be easily revealed. My students forewarn that they cannot tell their stories. These stories are matters that have not been resolved, and they are difficult to release into the reality of the classroom, and to other listeners who might be carrying a similar story. Returning to the cellars of the heart enables me to speak to the matters that are interior to the heart. They are the matters that are more perceptible to the heart than to the ear.

The cellar door that I attempted to reopen through narrative acts to release a buried understanding of my identity as a teacher amongst the unknown ones from my past. Cixous (1997) speaks to the “secrets hidden in human relations” (p. 70) and “the circumstantial events [that] plunge the reader into cellars...of the heart” (p. 70). As I grow in my teaching, the events that take place in my classroom are at times imperceptible or, at the least, unpredictable. From the depths of my past are stories that shape the meaning of being a stranger to pedagogical landscapes. I return confident in my ability to navigate as a teacher.

The cellar signifies the ironic feeling of comfort while being in discomfort. The narrative speaks to unease in foreign landscapes. In my teaching, unease is a landscape of

displacement. The cellar speaks in a voice of diplomacy; it opens a space to bring lands together from diverse experiences of living and learning. The cellar is an inviting place to join in the recognition of foreignness. The invitation to dwell within fear together unites my students and me in experiences of learning and teaching. Our shared stories are from the common reality in which we live. In the recognition of the self in foreign places and spaces, I share in narrative a historical and autobiographical moment of the self immersed in-between the two curricular worlds of *curriculum-as-live(d)* and *planned* (Aoki, 1986/2005). The entrance to the cellar remains bright. I open my eyes to see the corners of the cellar that complicate the stories I know well. I travel with intention. This journey illuminates the fear of being in the unknown.

I look with my eyes wide open to the horizon of my being a Canadian teacher. I approach the cellar as a place of reassurance that I now recognize as one with a multiplicity of voices calling me to return to the horizon from which I emerge. Constance Blomgren (2003) states that “[f]ear begins and grows when we forget, ignore, or cut ourselves off from the root of our shared human identity and in this denial we feed the pseudo darkness and remain intimidated by its power” (p. 36). I blend into the roots of my own historicity; I live with the stories that accompany the matters life brings into my teaching praxis.

Being in Language

Language: forest with all the roots/audible

— H el ene Cixous, *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*

My students' stories become more pronounced when difficulties from their first countries are spoken about. My taken-for-granted situations in Canada become places I learn to grow in. Through my immigrant students' own experiences of living and learning in Canada, they have shown me how to face those taken-for-granted situations of safety and peace. Their stories illuminate the places I have fled from in my home, classroom, and country. I face these places more aware of what lives in imperceptible locations of teaching, and I see them as a home now, a place that I am more familiar with and comfortable in. In this new awareness, I return to these homes to rediscover what I had taken for granted. I took for granted the basic necessities in my life, such as the freedoms I have in Canada to be able to eat, drink clean water, and walk without persecution. From hiding from the paramilitary to sitting in a home during drought unable to eat, the stories are told in different ways. I reflect on my students' experiences, when they remember home: My student writes about her mother's death and how she now struggles in Canada without a parent. Another student frequently speaks about wanting to someday find her father who disappeared, while her family was in migration. My students invite me to walk in their shoes (Gadamer, 1975) when they invite me to listen to their stories. I become more aware and more conscious than ever. I transpose (Gadamer, 1975) my self into another's experience.

I once met a Ukrainian woman on a train while traveling to the south of Thailand. She asked what my last name was, and I told her that it was Lewko. She told me that my

last name meant “white” and “truth.” The experience of learning the meaning of my Ukrainian last name reminded me of Great-grandfather William Lewko’s arrival to Ellis Island, New York. The story was that his first name, which was spelled in Ukrainian as Wasyl, was changed to William. I contemplate Great-grandfather’s entrance into a new land with a new name, and I think about the loss of the name Wasyl, as I enter into the familiar yet foreign land of the classroom. I arrived in the port of the twenty-first century as a teacher with a Ukrainian last name. My accent is that of a teacher. I experience, daily, a migration of students coming in and out of the doors of the classroom. Walter Mignolo (1999) speaks to “the encounters between people with different approaches to language” (p. 303): What is the significance of these encounters between my students and me? What is spoken? What can be heard? Cixous (1997) similarly writes that “we hear what language says (to us) inside our own words at the very moment of enunciation” (p. 85). Eva Hoffman (1989) says that “nothing fully exists until it is articulated” (p. 29). I am an utterance of ethnicity. My exigency for preserving language is one where I am able to return again, to the places in the heart, when at one time I felt exiled in the space between language and non-language. Within the space between language and non-language are storied phrases of another’s life. These stories are fragmented. The fragments dislocate me from the layered landscapes of being a Canadian teacher. The return to these landscapes begins one narrative in which I cultivate in the experience of being in foreignness of language.

My Ukrainian great-grandmother was one of my first encounters with foreignness. What was my way of being in her world? Her world was comprised of the Ukrainian she spoke and the home she kept. Her home contained traces of her first home,

the Ukraine, which was a part of my home. I lived in the subtleties of the foreign worlds present in the homes I grew up in. Sometimes these subtleties spoke louder than the obvious; the obvious were the traditions we celebrated and the food my family ate. My nana opened her world to me through the country of the Ukraine. This experience in being in her language has now become central in my way of seeing the self in another's world, where I juxtapose the site of Nana's garden against my first and second teaching worlds. I look around me to otherness; otherness is immediate to my understanding about the relationship between the foreign and familiar, in the context of home. The relationship between the self and the other is a complex portrait to envisage when foreign languages and ways of living with them are introduced into the familiar worlds of home. Otherness contributes to an understanding of the self and the other, in locations that resemble home. I return to one home within a home where I approximate traces of the self, living in foreignness.

Narrative: Cultivating Language

He sat in a chair against the wall, knees high on the foot stool below him. He resembled a baby, one eating the dough, his toothless grin, lips folding around it passing sustenance to his soul. I sensed contentment in my great-grandfather's silence. He stared at the wall, as sounds emerged from his throat. He gave a small utterance of thanks, and my great-grandmother bowed, fervently kneading her dough.

I usually stood at the centre of this scene listening to the reverberating stillness—an unexpected offer. Great-grandmother Nana spoke to herself and

seldom shared her morning conversations that set out afternoon plans to meet acquaintances and attend to the must-visits for the day. Except for hers, my conversations were absent, the topics dwindling down into the abyss of non-voices that in their silence spoke over each other. Nana was lonely shutting, the doors to every part of her house. The home contained her. She wore her paths amongst it, ambulating in shuffles across the floor, peering down as if remembering in the moment that some task must be done. In that home, those shut doors kept me out of her rooms, except for the shrine-like one that contained the portrait of her Ukrainian wedding. I could barely make out who the young bride was and who the handsome man with dark hair was. Time changed the appearance of the people who now lived in this home.

There were occasions when the sounds of the shutting doors were louder than Nana's silence, although the clamour of her English was equally commanding and abrupt. I would see her step out of her shrine shaking her head. The portrait that most likely reminded her of the past and the union to the man who brought her here remained intact—a firm statement about her first life. I would turn to every sound she made, hoping that it would continue into a conversation and back and forth. Most of the time I would think about what I should say or how I could start the conversation. The questions persisted in my mind, waiting to be pioneered, and Nana remained distant. When I tried to

interrupt her busyness, the possibility of a conversation became even more remote. Her routine was a pattern I could not break; it was entrenched in her daily manner and goings about. I often had sudden urges to cry out in a strident voice that mimicked hers, to command her attention like she did mine, for this was the way she wanted to be understood. Her tone was abrasive yet filled with care and love. There was something peculiar about the way she ignored me.

Great-grandfather, Papa, was the translator of the household. Many times when I entered this home, he would smile, acknowledging my presence. Papa knew everything. He was a craftsman. At high afternoon, he would disappear into the garage where I would follow, listening for him to guide me through the dark of it. I remember his soft voice, for he barely spoke; I had to listen carefully. The shuffles and scuffs of his feet are rooted in my memory. He moved with intention, and his willingness to teach me wood crafting and gardening was a testament to his patience.

Papa's skilled hands tended the garden my great-grandmother and he mutually kept. Food was plentiful and abundant. Life was nurtured in their home, the silent brick house secluded in the surroundings of greenery. The garden he tended was one of raspberries and strawberries and the odd perennial that grew in between the berries. I witnessed the coming back of the perennials and waited for the exact moment for them to bloom.

My great-grandmother spoke to her garden in Ukrainian. The words were somewhat of a song and half-chant. She was at times disgusted that some plants had not grown and cursed at the weather that beat down on the fragile leaves as they peered through the earth. She often turned flowers' heads to the sun redirecting them to the light, as if the engulfing rays were not enough in her corner of the garden. She would scream at the slugs that lived under the vegetable leaves and take my hand to show me where the potato bugs were. Her garden was infested and this meant war! At times, I would watch her in her tirades. They were moments of incoherence, which were incomprehensible to me. And in a moment, as quickly as spring showers would end, she was back tending her garden with gentleness, her movements light and fair-footed. The garden grew above me, a tower of her corn, peas, potatoes, carrots, beets, radishes, lettuce, and cucumbers all in a row. Her language cajoled the vegetables into a growing frenzy, green and luscious. She was ever-present in my childhood, tending the language I borrowed to begin understanding my own caring and nurturing of the things and people I loved. However harsh and abrupt, her touch was delicate and her life as a Ukrainian embodied in her garden.

Our eyes would meet as she methodically plodded about the garden. I could interpret her every emotion by the strength she used to pull the carrots and

the frustration she felt when they were pulled prematurely. At that very moment I would open my mouth to speak; at the first utterance, her back would turn towards me, and her stocky figure would disappear into the blinding sunlight that shone into my eyes.

In my conversations with Nana, we never spoke. When she called on the phone, I would pick it up and hear the silence crackling and clicking—her tongue searching for the words. I imagined her bringing the words up from the depths of the garden, a place where she saved them in the roots of the plants. She stored her English in the ground.

“Nana?” I would ask. “Is that you?”

“Candace.” My name was not easy for her to say. It had a variation of a pronunciation, like a multi-syllabic name or another name she once knew. I became frustrated with her attempts to speak English to me. I hid when she called me in for supper. I pretended not to know that she was calling me, for the way she said my name embarrassed me. I would speak over her English and correct her. Her English did not sound harmonious like the sound of her Ukrainian. Her English was broken and cracked, much like the left-over vegetables from her garden preserved in the jars in the cellar for winter. Her English remained dormant.

In her later age, she reverted to speaking more to herself; and I still listened, waiting for my name. I was told a story about the night my great-grandmother passed away: She awoke in the middle of the night talking to herself. I imagined, though, this conversation as one of the many she intended to have. She spoke in Ukrainian in her last utterances of her life. The doctor called it “dementia.” In the midst of her rants, names suddenly returned to her. She had remembered and her voice rang out far across the rooms where other sickly people lay sleeping—dreams and nightmares.

Nana’s language wasn’t always complete sentences. In her imperfect English, she tried to close the silence between her language and this new foreign language. She was a Ukrainian that spoke in ways that showed the meaning of “care” and “nurture.” I observed her tending her garden, and now I tend my own versions of gardens, the at times incoherent languages of my students that circulate around the class. Being in a foreign language reminds me of my second world of teaching in Japan and how in my daily living, I struggled to ask for the things I wanted. I listen while in the cracks that I was brought to by my great-grandmother’s English. I have learned that to be in these cracks is to know that I am with my students in their own struggles to learn English—and my own to understand their stories. I allow my self to fall in these fractures of understanding where I am brought into translation; the meaning of the language

my students use, “the English,” is much like the broken one spoken in the Ukrainian homes I grew up in. I sit in silence, listening and seizing meaning the moment a language blossoms. This moment brings me to the memory of drowning Nana’s English with my own. It reminds me of the guilt I feel for what might have been my impatience with her learning English. I search for this reconciliation and look for a place in the language I speak. I look for my home.

At present, the garden is dug up in Nana’s home, and the conversations we once had are giving way to other stories. My story began in Japan when I remember waiting for someone to initiate a word, a greeting, a salutation. I return to the time when Nana searched for her own words; I was impatient with Nana’s journey in learning English. Her new home in Lethbridge was transposed into her garden. Her garden was her language. I could understand this language and the manner in which she tended to it. This enabled me to begin articulating the words “care” and “soft,” qualities that signified my teaching, growth and patience.

My students do not abandon their first home in their new learning experience. I bracket the moment when I tried to protect my self from the Ukrainian that I thought would take my English away; I depart from my initial perception of foreignness that I thought of as confining. Now, I welcome foreignness in my classroom, and the languages and the people who arrive into it. I open more space in my teaching praxis. It is a limitless and boundless site of learning.

The accents and tones explored in the narrative *Cultivating Language* uncovered discourse in the experience of being in a foreign language. The discourse begins with two

voices speaking in two separate languages: English and Ukrainian. The following questions came out of the narrative: What are the accents that I speak with? What are the ones which speak to my identity as a Canadian? What are the local inflections that speak to my identity as a teacher? Are they the accents of my great-grandmothers? How can I translate this discourse into my own teaching praxis and to speak of it so as to be inclusive of the other, the stranger that comes into my classroom?

The English that I grew up with resembled old-country languages spoken in coherent conversations. These compositions speak to my identity *with* my ancestors and my immigrant students, not apart from them. History has languaged our identities as multi-ethnics: as student and teacher we are settlers, immigrants, emigrants, newcomers. History then begins a further translation of being removed from origin: we are Ukrainian-Canadian, Swedish-Canadian. The hyphens separate homelands from new home countries. The dichotomy of the self in old country and new country exists as unified in the collective histories and voices of long-ago ancestors. Italian blended with Swedish blended with French blended with Ukrainian, I am the site blended into the foreign voices that speak to my identity. I am the location into which the voices settle. I hear a legacy of voices breaking through the hyphens and joining in a multiplicity of tones of otherness. Otherness is transposed into the familiar.

Curriculum reconceptualist theorists such as Huebner (as cited in Pinar, 1975b) consider the following while in the act of practicing a lived curriculum: “Curricular practice is not simply concern for the construction of the educative environment; it is also concern for human events that occur within that environment” (p. 265). In order to find the discourse to “describe and explain human events in educative situations” (p. 265) for

the human and historical event of migration, I look to “the linkage of biography to history” (p. 265). More particularly, the discourse in the narrative *Cultivating Language* articulates the stories of otherness that live in my classroom. The story is one that encompasses an event and a wave of migration. My classroom becomes home.

I am reminded of the uniqueness of my students’ stories when they speak about where they come from. Their stories bring togetherness into the classroom. At first, the stories seem commonplace. The students tell about how they migrated from country to country trying to find a new and safe home. For some students, home is freedom; it is a life without war and persecution, one in which people can live with a distinct voice and with choice. Stories heighten the experience of being a teacher. Stories can heal and are transposed from the past into teaching (Pinar, 2004).

Being a teacher of English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language is a place of being and living within tensioned worlds (Aoki, 1986/2005). The teaching world is dichotomous; it is split by the multiple experiences from teacher to student. In this place of being and living in dichotomies, my previous immediate concern for understanding why I am a teacher has suddenly become how I can acknowledge my students’ lived stories and my own *lived experiences* within a *curriculum-as-plan* (Aoki, 1986/2005). How can I, outside the rigidity of the teaching plan for the day, display my consciousness of another’s experience and my concern and care for another in my teaching? In this tensionality between these two worlds, I am reminded of one story which a student told of her parents being murdered in genocide. I revisit this moment of her telling the story when she writes it in a paragraph. When I read her paragraph, I try to bring together my world with hers—I wonder how this is even possible. I resituate my position from teacher

listener of her story. I listen without assessing her English or the story. In the tensioned world of student and teacher through the experience of her narrative, the story introduces fear into the safety of my Canadian world. I respond to her story in my own process of self-reflexivity. I cannot find a story from my world to share with her. What is common about her story and my historical situation? How should I comfort her? Would it be better to remain as an observer of her history? I immediately become displaced in my role as teacher and in my response to her narrative. My world and her world remain tensioned through her writing. Although my reality in my Canada is one of perceived safety and protection, in this moment, my reality becomes my student's experience with the murder of her parents. Her experience strikes my own core of existence as a Canadian teacher. I am alive as a teacher. She is alive. Aoki provides insight into living with tension in a teaching praxis:

[To] be alive is to live in tension; that, in fact, it is the tensionality that allows good thoughts and actions to arise when properly tensioned chords are struck, and that tensionless strings are not only unable to give voice to songs, but also unable to allow a song to be sung...that this tensionality in [my] pedagogical situation is a mode of being a teacher...marked by despair and hopelessness, and at other times, challenging and stimulating, evoking hopefulness for venturing forth.

(Aoki, 1986/2005, p. 162)

In my compassion for this student, caught in a world of civil war, the chords of tensionality ring with an altered tone. They become the song that continues into other teaching situations. The cadence of stories reveals their significance for my understanding the journey of all people's stories. I enter into a world away from my

world. I enter with my heart open to the dichotomous worlds of good and bad, foreign and familiar. I fuse these worlds with hope and foresight. I return to explore my senses of *currere* to see, feel, touch the world that I come from and the cultures that I encounter in my teaching: “I ...try to uncover layer by layer, from the outside in, from the top to the ground, from the abstract to the concrete place where teaching truly dwells” (Aoki, as cited in Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 17).

In the layers of my tensioned teaching experiences and the stories that are contained within these experiences, I return to Aoki’s *pedagogical watchfulness* and *thoughtfulness* (Aoki, 1992/2005), which guides me to understand my presence as a teacher in the historical-present. Being watchful and thoughtful points to how to be present in the dual identity of Canadian teacher. I attempt to “unfold layers of understandings” (p. 197) about my teaching praxis through reviewing my historical-present teaching context. My students often explain to me the relationships of teacher and student in their home countries. I often wonder if they carry these same expectations with them to Canada and if so, I contemplate how I can honour the relationship they had with their first teachers. I reawake to moments of perceptiveness.

I am homesteading. I arrive into the interiority of my own foreignness where the past always retells in different ways. My perceptions of this foreign interiority are put on course once again by being in difference. Being in difference opens my eyes and my heart; I wait for the next knock on the classroom door. When the door opens, I welcome the assemblage of generations of people and once again, my classroom becomes a place where migration takes its course.

Inherited Landscapes of Storied Knowing

[O]ccupying the lived and educational spaces between...one defamiliarizes the familiar
while making a home out of a strange new land.

—William Pinar, from *Curriculum in a New Key*

Maxine Greene's writing in *Teacher as Stranger: Educational Philosophy for the Modern Age* (1973) is persuasive. Greene explores what meaning can be held in a teaching praxis in the chapter "Teacher as Stranger". She conceives the analogy of a teacher as a stranger to illustrate the foreignness of the self in a teaching situation. In the wake of divergent social, pedagogical, and historical contexts, the implications for "what is experienced" (p. 272) between student and teacher affect the consciousness of the teacher. Greene writes about the teacher's inwardness. The teacher looks inward to understand her self in relation to her teaching situation, especially to the people in it. Greene (1973) elucidates that the teacher unconsciously submerges her self midst the changing exteriority of her teaching praxis. Conversely, how the teacher views her self in teaching affects the perceptions the students will hold of themselves.

Greene (1973) speaks to "how the teacher conceives the human being" (p. 99). My conceptions of my students who are learning English as an additional language are based on my experiences of growing up with foreign languages outside my maternal tongue. How I see my students as learners of English reminds me of my unsettlement with living in foreign languages, cultures, and ethnic traditions. Ukrainian and Swedish were familiar languages spoken to me as a child and in the homes in which I grew up. When I hear maternal languages being spoken in my classroom, I return to my homes that nurtured the experience of my being in foreignness. I was unable to understand the words

being spoken around me. I strived to connect to the languages and make them my own. I remember listening carefully to each sound and to each voice in the conversation. I relive those moments not being able to communicate in English with those who didn't speak English. This experience of being in foreign languages affects the way I live as a teacher, in my teaching praxis. Not understanding the languages my students speak does not separate me from them; rather, the multiple languages spoken in my classroom bring me closer to understanding their new lives as an immigrant in Lethbridge.

I empathize with my students who are themselves growing in a new language. I share with them my experiences of growing up in four languages, all of which were spoken in my home; however, I never learned to speak, read or write any of them. But I live with/in them. Ukrainian and Swedish were my first consciousness of foreign languages. I recollect living in the sounds of the foreign through the despair in my Ukrainian great-grandmother's voice, and through the abruptness of Great-grandmother Hedvig's Swedish. Living in the tones of an additional language opened my eyes in a more detailed way to the world in which I live as a teacher. I ponder my teaching self as one who was influenced to become a teacher out of the historical and emigrational circumstances I was born into. I emerged from a history of migration and now pass this experience on to my classroom. I am an inheritor of an immigrant past. It is a past that acknowledges the difficulties of learning how to continue in new dialogues of learning, when a homeland becomes the unfamiliar. My students and I endure together in conversations of settlement and adaptation. When I see my own difficulties with living in a foreign language, I am less inclined to surrender to the impulse to leave the situation. Shared experiences of being in foreignness are maps to unknown territories in language

and culture. The terrain of the classroom expands. When foreignness reaches the world of the Canadian classroom, the classroom and the people in it transform to live in these new territories.

My students continually return to their original homes through their stories. Narratives of departure from their home countries are permanent in the hearts of my students; narratives of arrival to Canada often express the first impressions Canada has left on them. These first impressions reveal that my students are able to move freely. They are able to breathe and live, and sleep soundly when tired. The constant change in moving from homelands to new lands brings about an awareness of home and becomes, in the location of Lethbridge, Alberta, yet another story. The experience of leaving a homeland involves a conscious return to homes within homes; traces of the self (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) are left behind in homelands, creating new routes to understanding the self in new dwellings. My immigrant students want to seek out these traces of the self, when they return to their own homeland stories. They are completing a journey into their own understandings of their former lives in the first country, in the context of their new countries. My students revisit home, as if for the first time. The first home is a permanent place in the heart and an enduring story in my classroom.

When I contemplate the meaning of language, dislocation, and identity in living pedagogy, I also contemplate my own departure from a foreign interiority to an exteriority of familiarity, in the experience of teaching. Greene asserts that “experience is continuous” (Greene, 1973, p. 158). My students tell stories that live in their past; they are unimaginable stories of human conflict, evacuation, and expulsion. I am foreign to

my self when my students' stories are far removed from my present circumstances. Their stories uproot me from my homes and from the way I know my self in my home country.

Miller (2005) refers to the self as *a version of* our stories of our selves. Multiple versions of the self become evident when I reconsider the meaning of the self in pedagogical contexts. The narrative *Homesteading Origin* revealed for me multiple versions of self told in stories by my family. I continually return to my own ancestral stories of migration to understand my students' who have spent most of their lives in resettlement. My students bring stories from their home countries into the classroom. I often hear the question "Do you think you will ever leave again?" and then the response, "No. Canada is my home, now." They recount their travels and years spent in first, second, and third migrations; Canada, for some, is a fourth migration. Most cannot remember their lives in their first country because they left it early in their childhood. Whichever country my students have come from, I listen to the stories, aware of their efforts to immigrate to Canada.

Some students recount moments in childhood walking for hours to get water from a community well. They speak about walking for two days to get to school and others about playing in the villages and never attending school at all. There are tender moments about learning how to speak a tribal language from a grandmother and how learning English is now taking away the memories of that first learning of ancestral languages. My students reminisce about the years spent living in refugee camps before coming to Canada, and they speak of the anxiety that comes with this waiting. Stories of language and perseverance open more space in my heart. When my students' stories begin to

approach the homes I grew up in, I begin to empathize with them; their stories are transposed into my own settling in the homes I grew up in and the countries I came from.

The meaning of home is diverse. Home can be shelter or a country in which one is born. A classroom takes on the life of a home. It is a comfortable place where new friendships are formed and family is welcome. It is a place of conversation, where new dialogues open, and new horizons of understanding are reviewed. Whatever meaning home holds for my students, finding that meaning becomes a journey in itself. The classroom becomes a settlement site where the freedom to move and breathe comes forth. Yet, as the immensity of living within a foreign life emerges, the reality of where and what home has become returns unexpectedly. My students tell stories to make sense of their new realities.

The narratives in this thesis are written from ethnic, cultural, curricular, and pedagogical locations. I move from the universal to the particular to focus on who I am and what I do within each of these locations. I travel alongside my students' lives and return with them to their home countries, by the stories they tell me. I listen to the foreign languages spoken around me in the classroom. Living in this new perceptiveness is a conscious living out of traces of ancestral routes left in my memory. Gadamer (1975) says that an awareness of our historical conscience opens when we travel into the "alien worlds" (p. 303) of our historicity. These worlds act to connect us to others in order that we can "embrace the historical depths of our self-consciousness" (p. 303).

I also listen for my students' English and through this additional language for their understanding of themselves as new Canadians. I listen to a story of one woman in my class who wishes for her mother to leave the old-country ways back home and to live

in the new-country ways Canada has to offer. I can hear Ukrainian returning when this student looks for an entrance into new country ways. I can hear Swedish when her mother yearns to return home to her country. The languages I grew up hearing in my home live in my classroom; they are spoken in diverse voices, multiple tongues, and shared stories.

I share stories to create common ground. This ground becomes one landscape in which my students and I reside collectively. In these shared lands, the notions of home, departure, and dislocation become another language I listen to in order to understand my foreignness in the classroom. Time and again, I return to stories about growing up as a fourth-generation Canadian of Ukrainian origin in Lethbridge. David G. Smith, in his essay “Halfbreed: A Canadian Existential View of Curriculum” (1973), provides insights into understanding what being at home means when one can articulate the place from which one comes. Smith asks a succession of questions significant for an initial understanding of the meaning of one’s culture: “What does it mean to speak of one’s culture? Is it simply an outward display of costume and ceremony, or are these only illuminations of a deeper inward reality? Is a denial of the latter an invalidation of the former?” (Smith, 1973, p. 57). What is the deeper inward reality of being a fourth-generation Canadian teacher? What effect does “[having] no sense of personal place” (p. 56) mean for the experience of being Canadian? When arriving at understanding the significance home has for the meaning of being a Canadian teacher, the teacher has essentially come home. Smith concludes that “one arrives at a sense of place the moment there is that certain feeling of deep acceptance of one’s fundamental humanity. It involves a sense of being understood and given freedom to ‘be’ without judgement and ridicule” (Smith, 1973, p. 61).

The homes I return to in my narratives are distant, yet remain close to my understanding of being a Canadian teacher. I do not seek to change these homes, as they will remain a part of the homelands that my family came from. I continue to live in my teaching. Homes are rooted in land. Grandfather John returned to his original homes when he was ninety years old. He revisited the towns that he was raised in as a child and the ones he raised his own family in. He continued to travel to the homes that he remembered well from his childhood: they were as small as a bridge and as vast as the lake into which his 1929 Ford Whippet plunged through an icy surface; others were as solemn as the country church yard's cemetery where most of his family is buried, and as everlasting as the hand-built, stone fireplace that provided the warmth and comfort the winter weather on the prairies couldn't. He would revisit these places many times over but commented in his autobiography that the memories contained within these homes "disturbed" him.

My interpretation of Grandfather John's use of "disturb" is to disrupt or displace. This word moves me into contemplation. He most likely recognized the obvious changes in the landscapes he grew up in. The house he had built was probably torn down and the land he had farmed grown over with trees. These were significant sites for him. He had invested the total of his energies making a home. John avoided writing in his autobiography about the memories that disturbed him. He never examined what disturbed him. The memories from his childhood homes provoked him to abandon his past and present homes; yet, because he abandoned his homes, I returned to them to uncover the stories buried in apprehension. When I am disturbed, I am able to move into new landscapes of understanding. This reminds me of how to live in my teaching praxis: the

teaching lands transform, and they are altered as each new student arrives into them. My students bring with them stories that are difficult for me to face in the comfort of my classroom. The stories disturb my sense of place; I make a conscious shift to understand my students' plight in understanding themselves in their new home.

The homes that I lived in disturb the present understanding I have of my self as a teacher of with multi-ethnic background. I reflected on my past homes and on my immigrant family who lived in them. The different histories that I entered into through the doors of the home that I was raised in now alter my consciousness of being a teacher. Like in my classroom, I meet with the human aspect of home; this is not the structure of the home—it is the people who come from homes. The narratives I write of home unite the diverse histories I come from and teach in. Understanding my home in teaching also means understanding the classroom as an extended experience of migration. Who am I in relation to the other? Identity begins with being at home or in a location or place of comfort. Cynthia Chambers in her article "Looking for Home: Work in Progress" (1994) writes of her dwelling through varied identities. I take from Chambers that "I am a...multiplicity of subjectivities that cannot be captured by one single identity...each of which was shaped by a different landscape" (p. 4). Each time I enter into new landscapes, the language to describe the teaching experience changes; I am able to discern the meaning of dislocation and home when I cultivate my self in my students' stories. A generation of migrating voices lives in my teaching praxis, and I move towards the stories that are looking for a home.



Figure 5. The Erickson Family Home: Miquelon Lake, Alberta

Homesteading Understanding: Being a Citizen of the Curriculum World

What would curriculum look like if we centered the school subjects in the autobiographical histories and reflections of those who undergo them?

—William Pinar, *Curriculum Theorizing*

The experience of being a Canadian teacher involves a dynamic interaction with one's historicity and a conscious return to the homes that exist in the home country and the classroom. The teacher strives to belong to the country of her classroom to which she is foreign (Greene, 1973). As new people, languages, and cultures arrive into the classroom, the presence of foreignness becomes pronounced. Once pronounced, the teacher is compelled to seek out the intersubjective spaces that allow the pedagogue to live as engaged with/in pedagogy.

The experience of being a Canadian teacher is relived in a history of migration that brought citizens from homelands to new countries of living. The action of transmigration between the foreign and the familiar lands of teaching and living is significant for this thesis. The merging of the unfamiliar with the familiar orients the teacher through recognizable terrains of living and teaching. The teaching situation is the primary context into which the experience of migration, homesteading, and settlement is reviewed. As teachers in Canada, we encounter new people in our teaching praxis, daily. It is a world where we come to know our interconnectedness in a teaching praxis. The world of the classroom does not exist beyond an understanding of the other; we come to know what teaching is through our interaction with new learners. Teachers and students share a familiar world of living and teaching. How is the world of the other to be understood in teaching?

Newcomers to Canada arrive into Canadian classrooms conscious of their new surroundings or places of learning. This consciousness is heightened by the unfamiliarity of it. These new places of learning are potential homes. The teacher returns to homelands through self-reflection and in order to keep home present in the classroom. The teacher explores the self in the foreign and the familiar landscapes of teaching and travels back and forth from the settings found in home/lands. Each setting is comprised of homes and lands of others. These settings are familiar views set in stories of migration, settlement and homesteading. Through migration experiences of long ago, people bring a home into a home. This event gives way to another world beyond the planned state of the classroom. The excavation of the teaching experience from foreign lands is one way that the experience of being a Canadian teacher could be explored. What does the teacher become after self-excavation (Pinar, 2004) from homelands and foreign lands?

The act of stepping out of the familiar and reflecting on the meaning of the Canadian teacher held in foreign conversations of the self and other, revealed the potential to understand the teacher self in foreign spaces. Narratives evolved from the space between the foreign and the familiar. One foreign space that was explored was the site of conversations held in foreign languages. The conversation about the experience of being a Canadian teacher revolved around the space between the self and the other. Experiences of being in the foreign compelled me as a teacher to reflect on reactions to first encounters with the imperceptible, or the unpredictable. For example, an unprovoked conversation shed light on a fraction of the experience of living in a multicultural community. It was a conversation that began with a question: *So do you know how to speak Chinese?* And then the response: *No, I am going to Japan, actually.* And finally the

response to response: *Ah! Chinese, Japanese—same thing!* The teacher in me engaged not only with the spoken response but also with the response to the unforeseeable that dwelled inside me. When as a teacher I am conscious of my own foreignness to the situation, I am able to live in the teaching experience more perceptively and with more “response-ability” (Huebner, in Pinar, 1975b, p. 231). Living in unfamiliar experiences joins the unknown and the known and expands my pedagogical perceptions of the world, and my own awareness of the teaching situation.

The joining of the foreign and familiar worlds found in the world of teaching guides the teacher to understand her students as residents of a classroom. The classroom is an expanse of learning and in it are distances that become difficult for a teacher of English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language to tread through, with awareness. Being in cultural distance is to live in dissimilarity. Part of the experience of being a Canadian teacher is to allow the self to live in a new awareness of teaching, when divergent ways of being in and interacting with the world enter into the classroom. The unfamiliar sounds of a non-maternal language are a tension in a second/additional-language classroom. The teacher lives in the tension not as she would live in apprehension; she lives in the assurance that with tension come new understandings of the relationship between the self and other. The tension of learning a foreign language is a pervasive one in an English-as-a-Second/Additional-Language classroom. The teacher of this subject focuses on English as a means to introducing immigrants to their new communities. But is language, either first or additional, the only means by which one can live well?

Being in language brings the experience of home country to a space where stories can be told. A newcomer’s migration story, that is, the human-to-human circumstances of

one's life, does not exist on the periphery of learning in a Canadian classroom. It exists in the interior of it and allows for valuable insights into the unfamiliarity of another's life. The experiences of living in a home country are not remote to the classroom. Life events such as civil war or genocide that are brought into the classroom as stories are not alien to the Canadian classroom. These events, however geographically or historically, removed live in the historical consciousness of the teacher, even though the teacher may not have experienced living in war. Are these events unknowable? What is perceived from these events is brought into the classroom, and the teacher engages with the human aspect of these events. The experiences from the students' home countries cannot be removed by guise of language learning. The experiences of another's life are integral to the teacher working through the unexpected in the classroom. Being a Canadian teacher is to live in the experience of the unfamiliar.

Being in a situation for which one has no language does not close the possibility for conversation. Remote voices calling from the distance trail into Lethbridge and into the home of a great-grandmother who calls me in Ukrainian to come home from a day's play. It is the scent of a home upon first entrance. Familiarity brings home comfort and sometimes allows for a different way of seeing. Newcomers arrive into the classroom with questions about how to live and learn in Canada. Life in a first country merges with life in a second country. Foreign and maternal languages connect immigrant communities to their new country. The fusion of first and second homes, and additional languages, expands into understanding of new homes. The first language allows for being in new worlds. The teacher is conscious of the foreign, and the classroom is understood as one that is universal in its meaning. When the teacher understands the past, the past becomes

inextricably related to the present in the experience of being Canadian and teacher.

Migration experiences speak to displacement and unsettlement where the teacher, in her own migration between past and present, lives out her life with her students.

The teacher arrives into the educational environment with preconceptions of who the students are. These preconceptions come from the situational aspects in which the teacher lives and teaches. They are shaped from the experiences that live in a past. Living in the pedagogical situation with awareness surpasses borders of understanding and expands awareness. The matters that are encountered in learning and living in a new country guide the teacher in her teaching situation. The classroom terrain becomes more recognizable, the sounds of voices more familiar, and the histories of others more pronounced. Being a Canadian teacher begins with living in unknown circumstances and with a new way of seeing the unfamiliar, unlike before.

Immigrant students, who are studying English as writing, inscribe their lives on paper, as writing about their first homes. The writing, in its permanence, provides insight into the home before migration. Before my students begin to write their stories, they sometimes share it through discussion and in an open space of trust. Their stories tell about the hardships they face as émigrés. But these hardships are not only of physical endurance. They speak about how they strive to keep what is important to them: their languages, traditions, and cultures. The heirlooms brought with them from first countries: a wrist watch to a few photographs of a father and a mother left behind in a home country, speak to the moments when my students take their first steps in telling their stories. Some had barely begun to walk on the land into which they were born when they had to leave their first country. Others had to take larger steps: saying good-bye to a

home and being cognizant of leaving. Within this cognizance, they stepped out of their first country and into Canada. For some, Canada became a continuation of learning about existence and survival, and such stories resonate in the classroom. Stories open ways to possibilities of understanding the connection of new home countries and homelands. The stories told reorient the traveler and homesteading takes its course. The teacher lives in the possibility of a renewed awareness.

Students speak freely about moments from their lives that sometimes disturb an understanding of life that revolves in and around the classroom. Some students share their stories of how civil war has changed their lives; however, there are subtleties in the stories, which are not spoken. When the teacher listens carefully, and heartfully, the unspoken guides the teacher further into her own understanding of being a teacher, in unfamiliar landscapes of teaching. One student cannot speak or write of the difficulties she faced in her own migration. The geographical and psychological terrains are difficult to traverse. She keeps them at bay and stares, lost in the memories of the events that brought her to Canada. She remembers these stories, which are difficult to retell. The stories come close to home, however remote they are from her. The stories come into the home of the classroom.

Ancestral stories of migration share a similarity with the ones my students write about. My students' initial stories begin with their first moments in Canada. They share those first experiences as if they had taken a trip somewhere they had never gone to. They write about the excitement of knowing they are going to Canada, but seldom do they write about the families and homes they left behind. Some never look back to see where they have come from, but when the story arrives, my students are compelled to

review where home began. Many students have traveled through many countries before arriving to Canada. Each migration brings more hardship. A mother tells of her migration from the south of her country to the north and then into a completely new country. She tells about how the “the enemies” had driven her tribe out. And at the moment she returns to her story, she cannot face the pain it has brought her. She becomes silent. Her story is not home for her. It is in these moments that empathy comes forth in the loss of a home. Devastation reroutes the heart. The teacher in her listening is not a bystander to the story. Through her listening, the teacher becomes a participant in the events and, from that, a deeper appreciation begins to radiate from the heart. The complexities that the stories present do not silence the voices, rather the silences resound.

Being a Canadian teacher evolves with each new encounter of the other in the teaching situation. The teacher returns to her taken-for-granted world to live in teaching and asks: Who am I *with* this student? Past experiences influence what happens in the present moment of teaching and allow the experience of the self and other in the educational experience to unfold. These experiences are cultivated in a shared historicity. This interaction reveals what being a Canadian teacher means in the junctures between language, ethnicity, home, and culture.

As teachers living in varied contexts of teaching realities, the stories presented through migration experiences allow teachers the capability to see beyond the immediate circumstances presented in a culturally diverse classroom. Foresight creates a new plain of understanding; better seeing creates presence. Being present in the story makes it possible to live in circumstances that are incomprehensible. These circumstances may be ones of alienation or impermanence. When possibilities to move forth from such

situations are born, the event opens a portal so that one is able to see the world with empathy. Stories converge when the story is realized; the teacher is able to live in the possibility of being in the world of another. A new understanding of the teaching self comes forth.

The experience of being a Canadian teacher takes on multiple meanings and is influenced by each new experience brought into the classroom. One experience comes forth as to extend into another's difficulties. Empathy opens paths to the complexities of another's life circumstances. The classroom is a place where difficulties in first language, home or country can be spoken about. It is in the location of a home where a positive tension emerges in taken-for-granted situations of teaching. Stories of tensionality such as immigrants' first experiences become spaces to reflect on when tension arises between two polar opposites. For example, English does not replace a first language. Rather world languages join English. This joining of languages becomes a comfort of being in home, and in the classroom, and a positive tension is struck (Aoki, 1986/2005).

The Canadian classroom is home. Students and teachers have inherited from each other how to live cognizant of places far from home. The homes that I have come from in Lethbridge still stand. I frequently return to the North-side and visit them. The homes have new owners now, and I notice immediately that the yards have changed: trees have been cut down and fences have been removed. The landscape has been altered but with each person a new, historical landscape emerges.

I see a reflection of a Canadian teacher sitting on the backyard stairs, watching Nana pick the weeds between the peas and the cucumbers. I notice the sweat on Nana's brow and her glasses falling into the dirt. I see her favourite black and green flowered

dress become covered in soil. I see her look to the sky to check the weather and the patterns of the clouds—perhaps hoping for rain. This is the story of where I live. This is the story I bring to my classroom. The expanse of the backyard, a terrain in which I grew up, becomes a space in my classroom where I listen well to original stories.

The classroom has become my plot now, and I tend the stories that grow in it. I listen to them, and I cultivate the sentences that grow within mine and my students' narratives. I welcome my students into a mutual space of understanding and in their moment of arrival, I hear their stories trailing behind them, wanting to join in a new history that is about to commence.

Epilogue

Located in the earth,
knowing the heart,
I will learn by heart
the earth's rhythms
rooted in humility
for forgetting and forgiving,
rooted in courage
for remembering and giving.

—Carl Leggo, *Writing Lives is More Than Writing Lines*

It is precisely the same time each fall that I hear the geese—the vibrant flutter of wings. Speckled bodies undulate across the sky. Their calls to one another are overwhelming, I cannot ignore their leaving. They settle along the Oldman River, thousands of them, and take flight at the slightest sound of the wind or the movement of the river.

Each season when I return to the riverbank to welcome back the geese, I take a moment to watch them; I am careful to not disturb the scene presented before me. The geese in their patterns of migration remind me of my ancestors on a steam ship bound for Canada, their bodies too wavering amidst the water and their reflections left near homeland shores. I imagine my relatives' faces, and my students', turned to the sky, counting the stars and the sunrises, waiting to see the horizon of the new land they are traveling to; yet trailing behind them are the thoughts of a home spilling down, spiralling into the water, floating and leaving a path that will enable the arrival of many more

people to foreign places. Living in a new country is contemplated, bringing home the voices that tell the stories and return in moments of clarity.

The rose bush in front of Nana's house is still there, and it looks well taken care of. It is a testament to her nurturing of the new home they arrived into as Ukrainians in early Lethbridge. This rose bush blossoms yearly in pinks. It calls me in the spring when I walk by this home to see what has changed. I migrate across Lethbridge and revisit the many homes in my memories of growing up as a child in a multi-ethnic family. Nana's house is owned by someone different now; this change is not easy for me. But I know now that this event moves me into new places in my teaching. With each new landscape a new way of being a teacher comes forth. This way of being expands the depth of my being a Canadian teacher. Borders do not divide my teaching landscapes. Another world is found by leaving one to discover what meaning dwells within home, and to say: "This is where my world began. A world which includes the ancestors—both my own and other people's ancestors who became mine" (Laurence, 1976, p. 219).



Figure 6: My Ukrainian Great-Great-Grandmother Mary Myshinyuk and Me

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