ROOTED: AN INQUIRY INTO NATURE SHAPING PEDAGOGY AND SUSTENANCE ON THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Education

in

Curriculum and Instruction

University of Regina

By

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Regina, Saskatchewan

February, 2017

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an autobiographical narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) into two research puzzles: First, how have experiences alongside nature shaped my personal knowledge landscape? Second, how is this knowledge negotiated on my professional knowledge landscape, and how does this negotiation shape or shift my pedagogy? With attention to Dewey’s (1938) theory of continuity and interaction in experience, Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) conception of personal practical knowledge, and Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) conception of stories to live by, I describe myself as a person who feels planted in nature. I also describe myself as a teacher of young children in school places. Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) conceptualize places inside-of-work as the professional knowledge landscape and places outside-of-work as the personal knowledge landscape. In this autobiographical narrative inquiry I inquire into moments of tension, as well as moments of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986), as I negotiate my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). I illustrate the implications of this negotiation for my pedagogy, as well as possible implications for curriculum making, teacher education, and further research. Key findings from this research position nature as an animate teacher, show that nature itself reflects narrative conceptions of knowledge (Dewey, 1938), and illustrate that, while teachers live in tension (Aoki, 2005) as they navigate around competing and conflicting stories of school, there are possibilities for negotiating around tension to feel sustained, or rooted, on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am enormously grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Lee Schaefer, for his time and patience, thoughtful orientations to this work, and for teaching me in the big way that nature does, by provoking me to ask what counts, to ask how I know, and to ask why it matters.

I am grateful to my co-supervisor, Dr. Nick Forsberg, and committee members Dr. Sean Lessard, Dr. Valerie Triggs, and Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball. Thank you for your flexibility, time, and interest.

I am grateful to Dr. Janice Huber, who encouraged me to begin this journey and whose dedication and attention to the knowledge making of children, teachers, and families is inspiring.

I am grateful for the funding I received from the Regina Public School Division and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research from the University of Regina.
DEDICATION

To my husband James: Thank you for supporting, cooking, listening, counselling, and believing in me as I embarked upon this journey; for encouraging me to stay with it despite tension and lost moments, and for reminding me to stop typing and go outside. Your partnership sustains me.

To my family, Melinda, Chris, Michael, Amanda and Jacob: For all the pretend fruit bat hanging, testosterzone tending, crab apple picking, pansy planting, fish dam wandering moments that were shaped by you, and for the letter from the May Tree that made it come to life, thank you. You make me who I am.

To my grandparents Ken and Mary: Thank you for making your favourite place, Tara Mara, into my favourite place, and for the view that showed me the bigness of the wind, the greatness of shooting stars and lightning strikes, and the roots of my family.

To my students: Thank you for sharing pieces of you with me. You are all the reasons I come to school each day! For tending and learning from the garden with urgency, curiosity, and absolute disregard for the schedule, and for bravely protecting bees, I admire you.
POST-DEFENSE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Jean Clandinin, my external examiner: It is a true privilege to be able to share this work with the very person whose own ideas and methods inspired me the most. Your insightful questions and reflections throughout the defense process have given me a lot to think about. I greatly appreciate your being a part of this work. Thank you.

To Dr. Shadi Beshai, the chairperson: Thank you for the calm, considerate nature and thoughtfulness with which you led the defense procedures.
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In The Qu’Appelle

a smeared mosaic

connects an endless blue sky

sweet breaths drifting loose...

Thwack!

guest cabin door snaps shut

lazy happy takes over

CHAPTER ONE: NARRATIVE BEGINNINGS AS A PERSON PLANTED

Some of my most vivid and influential memories are centred in places where the breeze blows, where rough and tall grasses graze against my ankles, where tree branches are more glamorous than castle walls. Growing up I felt that no place was better than a nature place, and still feel that way today. Communing with nature was a large part of the familial and cultural landscape in which my parents raised me, my brothers and my sister.

The poem above is one I wrote more than ten years ago for my grandparents, who helped us to grow up in a special place they now call home. Named Tara Mara, the family cottage in the Qu’Appelle Valley was often dubbed my favourite place as I grew up. Many years later, I now know that there is no one favourite place for me. Rather, there is something that seems to travel within me, tying all of these sweet favourites
together. Woven beneath the surface of this cottage-lazy-happy, of a deep friendship with a white flowered tree, of remembered traces in carved wooden birds scattered across the country, is some thread that ties together who I am. I have come to know that where I feel a strong connection to the magic of nature is where I will feel whole. These places are home for me, all of them. It’s as though no matter where I go, or where I grow, these places remain my roots. I often stop to wonder, how did I come to feel so planted in these places, so planted in nature?

This simple wonder began to take shape as a research possibility in the fall of 2013 when I attended a workshop for the Little Green Thumbs program in Regina, Saskatchewan. This program supports teachers in planting an indoor vegetable garden inside of their classrooms. I am a person who feels planted in nature. I am also a teacher who works with young students in their first years of school. I applied for the Little Green Thumbs program with a sense of astonishment. Could it be true? Did someone really want to help me garden inside with my young students?

This seemed different than professional development opportunities I had been given in the past. In this one, I saw myself. I saw my extraordinary mom tending to her snapdragons, her precarious morning glory vine, her overflowing pots of lobelia and peppery nasturtium. I saw the two of us wandering the aisles at the garden centres in the spring so that I could pick the annuals, almost always pansies, which I would get to plant in my garden outside the playhouse windows. I saw my dad watering his collection of hostas in the aptly named testosterzone around the side of the house. I saw the choke cherry tree we planted one mother’s day and tasted the tart, dry berries it eventually
produced. I glimpsed a freezer full of chopped crab apples the whole family had helped to harvest, and lips, purple after picking endless Saskatoon berries from the bushes lining the family cottage, desperate to save enough for Grandma’s pie. I saw my fingers squishing our miniscule strawberry harvest into batches of tiny jam, just enough to top a few crackers, and felt the triumph from waiting until the carrots were finally big enough for us to rinse off under the garden hose and pop into our impatient mouths.

As I began the journey toward becoming a Little Green Thumbs teacher, these early stories of me and my family and nature played fresh in my mind. They revitalized my sense of what it could mean to be me, while at the same time being me, the teacher. The Little Green Thumbs program began to represent a sort of imagined bridge between my early self, or my outside-of-work self, and my inside-of-work self. This was outside, but inside.

A possibility for research came from wondering about the shape of, or the need for, this sort of bridge between outside-of-work experiences and inside-of-work experiences, and from wondering about the stories which shape who I am on both sides of the bridge. At the Little Green Thumbs workshop, I felt a sense that the stories I told of myself as being planted, those berry picking, pansy planting, tree climbing stories, were affirmed by the people, also teachers, who surrounded me. I felt awake, excited, and inspired. Yet in this excitement, as I listened to a presentation by Julie Johnston (2013), there also seemed to be tension.

Johnston (2013), a teacher, has spearheaded the planting of a large school garden which is cared for, harvested by, and shared with the entire community, and has
implemented a school-wide composting program in which all of the school’s paper
towels and lunch scraps are composted. From experience, she knows that building a
green space inside of a classroom can sprout more than just plants.

Even in a short time and in my own local context, I can see that the environment
around me is changing rapidly. Changing forests, water systems, weather patterns and
ecosystems are something I think about often. These changes affect the health of our
planet, its resources, and its people. Our students will grow up in an unpredictable world.
They will inherit challenges we cannot imagine, including environmental challenges,
resource management challenges, and development challenges. It is possible that they
will need skills to solve these problems that we do not yet possess. Johnston (2013)
pointed out that if the goal of education is to help students be successful in their world,
then we must find ways to help students learn how to navigate these unpredictable
challenges. This caused a considerable amount of tension for me when I realized that I
agreed and that, despite having a rich history rooted in experiences with nature, I didn’t
know how to do that for myself, let alone my students.

Furthermore, in an outside-of-work place, my early stories of feeling planted in
nature reverberated loudly, clearly shaping what I know and how I live. In an inside-of-
work place, this beginning of my journey as a Little Green Thumbs teacher was the first
time I had seen my early stories of feeling planted as connected to my pedagogy. I
started to feel a tension on this metaphorical bridge between outside-of-work and inside-
of-work places.
When remember the first Little Green Thumbs workshop I attended, it is not in isolation that I remember the unpredictable challenges Johnston (2013) spoke of, my feelings of excitement, inspiration, and tension. Along with this experience, there are flashes of a favourite tree, a remembered sunset on Camel Hill, a fern with a name at Lac MacDonald. These are my early stories of nature, my early stories of outside, and they seem to profoundly shape who I am and what I care about. In order to navigate moments where I experience tension, I naturally draw on these early stories to help me understand who I am and who I am becoming. In this case, I draw on these early stories of myself in hopes that I can better understand the tension between my outside-of-work and inside-of-work places. In the same way that the Little Green Thumbs program seems to literally bring the outside inside, I wondered if there are ways in which my outside-of-work self comes alongside my inside-of-work self, bringing my early stories of feeling planted in nature alongside pedagogical stories of working with young students.

On this metaphorical bridge between outside-of-work places and inside-of-work places is where a two-fold research possibility was born. First, I knew I would need to inquire autobiographically into my experiences of feeling planted in nature. In this way, I imagined I could conceptualize this outside-of-work place and better understand how my early stories shape who I am and what is important to me. Second, I would examine the ways in which these outside-of-work stories shift or shape the way I work alongside students at inside-of-work places. In other words, I would examine ways in which my early stories of feeling planted in nature might have the potential to shape or shift my pedagogy. I wondered, how do conceptualizations of who I am outside-of-work shape
my pedagogy inside-of-work? Specifically, how do conceptualizations of who I am alongside nature shape my pedagogy?

To consider these questions is to consider the way in which my experiences with nature shape my knowing both personally and professionally. This consideration positions experience as knowledge, that is, that my experiences in outside-of-work places alongside nature have shaped what I know, who I am, and what is important to me. I wanted to inquire into how this knowledge of and from nature, shaped in outside-of-work places through experiences alongside nature, may shape or shift my pedagogical practices.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) help me to think about knowledge in these ways with their conceptualization of what they call personal practical knowledge. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) recognized that teacher knowledge was more than just knowledge of theory that could be applied to practice. They began to argue for “a conception of teacher knowledge as embodied in persons, as context dependent, as weaving life experiences, both the personal and professional, together, and as moral and emotional knowledge” (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014, p. 25). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) showed that practice is an embodiment of teacher’s knowledge, and called this personal practical knowledge: personal knowledge that is expressed in practices. Thinking about my knowledge of nature, shaped in outside-of-work places, as personal practical knowledge, is what leads me to wonder how this knowledge shapes my pedagogical practices in inside-of-work places.
In the next section, I explain how this shift in thinking about personal practical knowledge led me to make several turns in my understanding of the narrative nature of knowledge. Like Connelly and Clandinin (1988), I began to draw on John Dewey’s theory of experience (1938) to conceptualize that knowing is rooted in experience. Dewey (1938) believed that every social science inquiry should begin and end in experience, because experience shapes all knowledge.

In chapter three I explain why beginning and staying in experience makes the methodology of narrative inquiry most suitable for this research. Narrative inquirers believe that “experience is the fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry – narrative or otherwise – proceeds” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 38). Narrative inquirers consider experiences through the three lenses of place, sociality, and temporality to understand who participants are and are becoming throughout time, in places, and in constant interaction with social milieus (Clandinin, 2013). This three-dimensional, contextualized understanding of how my outside-of-work knowledge of and from nature comes to shape my inside-of-work practices is sought using a methodology of autobiographical narrative inquiry.

In chapter two I address key narrative turns which helped to contextualize early understandings of my experiences and allowed me to frame the inquiry theoretically. I address how the work of Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey (2014) helped me to shift my understanding of outside-of-work places and conceptualize these as places on my personal knowledge landscape. Similarly, I explain the shift in my understanding of inside-of-work places and how I came to conceptualize these as places on my
professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014). In subsequent chapters will follow a presentation of the methodology used for the inquiry, a three-dimensional framing of my inquiry into field texts, and a discussion of possible implications from this research.

As a starting place for this work and to be used later on as field texts, several stories were written in the form of poetry. One of these is presented below to provide context throughout the next two chapters. This poem is representative of my shaping experiences with nature, a snapshot of the stories that live and grow within me.

1.1. Deep friendship with a white flowered tree

*The May Tree*

*Playing Stellaluna hanging upside down from the branches, a million fruit bat memories*

*Striped bridges to the playhouse roof*

*Bridges to imagination, to adventure, to my own spaces*

*Writing secret berry messages on the highest branches*

*Coming home early for two weeks in May, soak in the smell while it lasts*

*White petals snowing down even a block away*

*Windy day*

*The day when Dad had to cut the swinging branch down*

*Disease*

*Unsafe*

*Calls of “supper!” and bravely leaping off the playhouse roof to catch the branch*

*Big swooping swing*

*Land on the cooling ground*
Run in to the dinner table

Receiving a stamped letter from “The May Tree” in my second year of tree planting

A cold, rainy, buggy day in the middle of a nowhere forest

Containing two blooms, one dried, the other a few days fresh

Tears and then feeling warmth from the inside out

Feeling loved by a tree and by my family

Knowing that The May Tree brought us together though I was miles and miles away

The next summer when Grandma Rosie passed away

I couldn’t make it home in time

Hearing the news on the crackly satellite phone

Laying down in the tent, feeling a faraway sadness

Day off in Mackenzie

Finding a tiny growing May tree down a back alley

Coming back to fill a small corked jar with blooms

My connection to home

Hangs as the welcome to our tent for the rest of the summer

The day I know is coming...
CHAPTER TWO: NARRATIVE TURNS IN UNDERSTANDING

In the previous chapter I explain how I began to wonder about the way in which experiences alongside nature shape my pedagogy, which is to consider the way in which experiences with nature shape my knowing both personally and professionally. Drawing on Connelly and Clandinin (1988), I began to think of my knowledge of and from nature, developed first in outside-of-work places, as personal practical knowledge. In this section I describe several more shifts in thinking which helped me to understand the narrative nature of knowledge and the temporal, social, and placed-based contexts in which knowledge is shaped.

This chapter will show how I came to understand that knowledge is narrative and comes from experience, that personal practical knowledge is embodied personal knowledge expressed in practices, and that this is knowledge teachers draw upon as they shape their pedagogy. I will show how I came to re-conceptualize the outside-of-work places and inside-of-work places described in chapter one as the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape. I will also show how, with these understandings, I was able to move forward in designing an autobiographical narrative inquiry into how nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape, and how negotiating tensions between my personal and professional knowledge landscape shapes or shifts my pedagogy.
2.1. Toward understanding the narrative nature of knowledge

The conception of personal practical knowledge by Connelly and Clandinin (1988) was born in their observation that there were many gaps in the research around teacher knowledge. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) noticed that conceptions of teacher knowledge were often limited to the theoretical knowledge that teachers applied to classroom practice, but sensed that teacher knowledge was more than just theory applied to practice. Connelly and Elbaz (1980) had previously written about teachers’ practical knowledge, which they saw as a unique body of knowledge held and structured in terms of a teacher’s practical purposes. Thinking with this notion of practical knowledge from Connelly and Elbaz and with Polanyi’s (1958) notion of personal knowledge, Clandinin and Connelly began to think about teacher knowledge as personal practical knowledge, a “narrative composition composed in each teacher’s life…and lived out in practices” (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 25).

Thinking with the ideas of Connelly and Clandinin (1988), I began to understand personal practical knowledge as embodied personal knowledge that is expressed in practices. I began to think about my experiences alongside nature, my stories of the May Tree, of Tara Mara, of digging and climbing and harvesting with my family, as more than just stories. I began to think of these experiences, these stories, as my personal knowledge of and from nature. I could see that these experiences had taught me things, had shaped what I know and how I live. Furthermore, I could see how this personal knowledge of and from nature became practical for me in outside-of-work places. Learning to tend to plants and grow and harvest food became embodied knowledge that I carried forward with me into my adult life, which became practical as I began to plant
and grow and harvest in my own yard. In high school the knowledge I had embodied from growing up in tents and on trails in the summers led me to join the outdoor club, where knowing how to set up a tent and paddle a canoe and start a fire became very practical. In later years this personal practical knowledge showed up every day as I worked as a tree planter, living outside for months at a time. In outside-of-work places, my personal knowledge of and from nature was clearly practical. In so many ways, I could see this knowledge expressed in my everyday choices and actions.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) suggested that, more than this, personal practical knowledge is teacher knowledge. That is, that my personal knowledge could be practical in inside-of-work places as well. I realized that I had not previously conceived of my personal knowledge of and from nature as something expressed in inside-of-work places. Knowing how important my personal knowledge of and from nature is to me, and how greatly it seems to shape my life outside-of-work, I wanted to understand how this knowledge was expressed inside-of-work.

In the previous section I explain how I saw myself reflected in the professional development opportunity of the Little Green Thumbs program. I saw myself alongside my parents, tending the yard, and my siblings, picking berries, and the May Tree, climbing its branches. I wondered why this knowledge had not seemed practical before in inside-of-work places, when outside-of-work it so clearly was. It did not seem like knowledge I had often used at work, beyond growing bean sprouts each year and taking students on park walks with socks over their shoes to collect all kinds of seeds in the fall. Perhaps Little Green Thumbs was a way that my personal knowledge could become
practical in inside-of-work places too. The Little Green Thumbs program offered a chance for me to literally bring outside, inside. With this shift in my understanding of personal practical knowledge, I began to wonder if the Little Green Thumbs program also offered me a chance to bring my outside-of-work self to inside-of-work places. In other words, I wondered if Little Green Thumbs was an opportunity for me to express my personal practical knowledge of and from nature through pedagogy.

I sought to understand more about how the experiences, the stories I had lived alongside nature, became my personal practical knowledge. Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) understandings about the experiential nature of knowledge were guided by Dewey’s 1938 theory of experience. Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience was based on two main principles, continuity and interaction. Dewey believed that all experiences were continuous, that “every experience is a moving force…its value can be judged only on the grounds of what it moves toward and into” (1938, p. 14). Thinking with this theory of continuity in experience, I wondered if my experiences living alongside nature led me toward and into wanting to teach alongside nature as well. Dewey also believed that experiences are transactional, or interactive:

An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment…The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy. (Dewey, 1938, p. 17)

This led me to wonder about nature as an animate part of my knowledge making. I wondered if it was possible for nature to be an animate teacher on my personal knowledge landscape. I began to understand that my experiences alongside nature shape
what I know about nature, and that this knowledge shapes further experiences I have.

Together, Dewey’s (1938) conception of the continuity of experience and his conception of experience as transactional help me to further understand Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) conception of personal practical knowledge:

The two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from each other. They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience. Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones. As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue. (Dewey, 1938, p. 18)

Thinking both with John Dewey’s (1938) conception of experience and Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) conception of personal practical knowledge helped me to understand the value of experience. I realized that I believe that experience is the root of knowledge. I could start to conceptualize my early experiences alongside nature as educational, as knowledge-making experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (1999) helped me to further conceptualize my experiences of feeling planted in nature as shaping my stories to live by.

Learning to conceptualize personal practical knowledge led me to wonder which kinds of personal knowledge were practical in inside-of-work places and which kinds of personal knowledge were only practical in outside-of-work places, and to wonder if there was a possibility to shift this. I began to see that experiences of being in relation with
nature, my feelings of being planted which are embodied and which travel with me always, may influence the way that I practice teaching.

2.2. Toward understanding layered knowledge landscapes

I began to wonder more about what these outside-of-work places and inside-of-work places actually looked and felt like. In chapter one, I described the bridge I imagined crossing each day between these two places as I entered and left the professional space. I explained how a possibility for research came from wondering about the shape of, or the need for, this sort of bridge between outside-of-work experiences and inside-of-work experiences, and from wondering about the stories which shape who I am on both sides of the bridge.

As I began to consider this space in between outside-of-work and inside-of-work, I came across the conceptualization of knowledge landscapes by Clandinin, Schaefer, and Downey (2014) in their narrative inquiry which seeks to understand how people who left teaching within their first five years were or were not sustained in the profession. Clandin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) build upon the conception of personal practical knowledge by writing of the landscapes in which this knowledge is learned and expressed. First conceived of by Clandinin and Connelly (1995), the term landscape is used here as a metaphor to describe the narrative contexts in which teachers live, work, and are knowledge holders. In coming to describe these contexts, Clandinin and Connelly note:

A landscape metaphor is particularly well suited to our purpose. It allows us to talk about space, place and time. Furthermore, it has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships.
Understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places, and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places and things, we see it as both an intellectual and a moral landscape. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 4-5)

The professional knowledge landscape for teachers, then, is the context which people enter into when they become teachers. From their narrative inquiry, the researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) conceptualize that the professional knowledge landscape is layered over and within another context: the personal knowledge landscape. This is the landscape in which a person lives from his or her earliest moments. This is another landscape in which experiences shape personal knowledge (Polanyi, 1958), the embodied knowledge of a person. Thinking with the work of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014), I came to think about places inside-of-work and outside-of-work as the professional knowledge landscape and the personal knowledge landscape.

Re-thinking these two spaces as landscapes resonated strongly with me. The expansiveness of a landscape metaphor allowed me to draw together what I had been learning about personal practical knowledge, Dewey’s theory of continuity and interaction in experience, and the narrative nature of knowledge. Marmon Silko (1996) writes that we are part of landscapes rather than simply in them: people are not simply in a place, they are in relation with place, and with people in places, throughout time. Conceiving of natural places outside-of-work as places on my personal knowledge landscape, I see myself in relation with nature, in relation with The May Tree and the mother’s day chokecherry tree and the hostas in the testosterone. I see myself in relation with people alongside nature, such as my parents who planted and tended the yard with
me, my siblings who picked berries with me, and my grandparents who shaped our summers at Tara Mara in the Qu’Appelle Valley. Conceiving of places inside-of-work as places on my professional knowledge landscape, I began to wonder how and if the continuity I experience on my personal knowledge landscape, as my stories of being in relation with nature become personal practical knowledge, crosses over into my professional knowledge landscape. Originally, I had asked how who I am alongside nature shapes my pedagogy. Now, this wonder began to take a more theoretical shape. I began to ask how my experiences with nature on the personal knowledge landscape shape or shift my pedagogy on the professional knowledge landscape.

Originally, I thought of these two landscapes as parallel, separate places that I would enter and exit as I crossed the imaginary bridge coming to and leaving from work each day. My understanding of this shifted when I read Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey’s (2014) conception that a person does not step out of his or her personal knowledge landscape when entering into the professional knowledge landscape. Rather, a person lives in these two landscapes simultaneously. When I step onto the professional knowledge landscape, experiences from alongside nature on my personal knowledge landscape do not leave me but rather shape and influence what I experience there, which is consistent with Dewey’s (1938) theory of the continuity in experience. In this way Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) imagine that professional knowledge landscapes and personal knowledge landscapes are in relation.

As the researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) wondered about the lived stories shaping teacher attrition, they began to understand how personal practical knowledge is
expressed across both knowledge landscapes. The researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) use a metaphor of rootedness to describe how, even as teachers grow into professional knowledge landscapes, they remain rooted in their personal knowledge landscapes simultaneously. In the case of the participants in the study, it became clear that the moments in which they felt most sustained on professional knowledge landscapes were moments in which they felt coherence (Carr, 1986) between these spaces and their rooted knowing on their personal knowledge landscapes. This metaphor of rootedness resonated strongly with me as I thought about the way I had described myself as planted in nature.

With these new understandings about knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014) and personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), I began to wonder again about the tension and inspiration I felt simultaneously after the Little Green Thumbs workshop. I wondered what my rooted stories were, and furthermore how these stories which keep me rooted in my personal knowledge landscape influence my sense of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) or tension when I travel simultaneously to the professional knowledge landscape.

2.3. Conceptualizing the research puzzle

In chapter one I began to illustrate experiences alongside nature that make me feel planted, describing cottage-lazy-happy, deep friendship with a white-flowered tree, and remembered traces in carved wooden birds scattered across the country. I briefly described remembered sunsets on Camel Hill, a fern with a name at Lac MacDonald, tiny batches of finger-squished strawberry jam, and purple saskatoon berry lips. I described how these experiences alongside nature, my narrative beginnings (Clandinin, 2013), led
me to apply to the Little Green Thumbs program and how I began to notice tensions between my experiences outside-of-work and inside-of-work.

In this chapter I have illustrated several theoretical shifts in thinking that have occurred as such tensions became wonders and, eventually, research puzzles. Thinking with the work of Dewey (1938) I came to understand that knowledge is narrative, that knowledge comes from experience as transactions take place between people and their environments (interaction), and that the knowledge acquired from each past experience becomes a compass for how to approach next experiences (continuity).

Thinking with Connelly and Clandinin (1988), I began to think of my knowledge of and from nature as personal practical knowledge, the embodied personal knowledge I express in practices, and began to consider this personal practical knowledge as a potential well from which I draw as I shape my teaching practices. Thinking with Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) I began to re-conceptualize the outside-of-work and inside-of-work places I had described as the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape.

From the work of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey, I began to see “narrative understandings of knowledge, knowledge landscapes, and identities understood as stories to live by, as tightly entwined” (p. 31). I began to see my early stories alongside nature, the stories that make me feel planted, as stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999), as the rooted stories from which I have grown. When I attended my first Little Green Thumbs workshop, I began to wonder if there were ways in which I could express my personal practical knowledge of and from nature through pedagogy. Knowing how much my stories to live by, the ones that make me feel planted in nature, count on my personal
knowledge landscape, I wondered if they also count on the professional knowledge
landscape.

The two-fold research opportunity I spoke of in the first chapter of this paper has
taken theoretical shape after thinking especially with the works of Dewey (1938),
Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1999) and Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014). I
imagined two research puzzles: First, how have experiences alongside nature shaped my
personal knowledge landscape? Second, how is this knowledge negotiated on my
professional knowledge landscape, and how does this negotiation shape or shift my
pedagogy? To inquire into these research puzzles, I used autobiographical narrative
inquiry, a methodology which is described in detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVE INQUIRY AS A METHODOLOGY

Narrative inquiry is the key methodology for this research. As Clandinin and Connelly illustrate, “narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus.” (2000, p. 20). Narrative inquirers view experience as a storied phenomenon, with attention the key terms of *living, telling, retelling, and reliving* (Clandinin, 2013). Just as people live in stories and tell stories about their experiences, when we inquire into those lived and told stories, it also becomes possible to retell them. Furthermore, as we think with our stories from the commonplaces of place, temporality, and sociality, we may find ourselves beginning to, in a sense, relive our stories (Clandinin, 2013).

In order to inquire into how experiences alongside nature have shaped my personal knowledge landscape, and how this knowledge is negotiated on my professional knowledge landscape with possible implications for pedagogy, I first considered the narrative nature of knowledge. Drawing on Dewey’s theory of experience (1938), I conceptualized that knowing is rooted in experience, and therefore knew that I must begin with experience as the launching point for inquiry. Drawing on the work of Clandinin (2013), I also conceptualized that the metaphorical three dimensions of the narrative inquiry space (place, sociality, and temporality) are woven into experience and, therefore, knowing. Just as Marmon Silko (1996) writes that we are part of landscapes rather than simply in them, people are not simply in a place, they are in relation with place, and with people in places, throughout time.
With this in mind, it seemed important to inquire into the research puzzles in a way that was relational, three dimensional (place-based, personally and socially contextualized, and temporal), and in a way which could honour the transactional and experiential nature of knowledge. In this chapter I contextualize the nature of narrative inquiry by discussing how it sits in relation to several dominant research methods, explain what it means to engage in narrative inquiry that is specifically autobiographical, as this inquiry is, and clarify the design considerations and methods for this inquiry.

3.1 Narrative inquiry in relation to other research methods

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) address the borderlands between several research methodologies and through their work I illustrate why narrative inquiry provides the most suitable theoretical frame for this research. Drawing on the work of Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) helped me to better understand how the ontological commitments of narrative inquiry differ from other theoretical frames. Coming to understand these borderlands was an important part of my coming to understand narrative inquiry and choosing to engage in this type of research. Explaining how narrative inquiry is situated in relation to other dominant methodologies helps me to explain my decision to engage in narrative inquiry for this research. It is important to note that contained within the comparisons below are some broad generalizations. It is in no way my wish to say that all post-positivist, or all post-structuralist, or all neo-Marxist, or all narrative inquiry researchers think in the same way. Rather, the following discussion is intended to illuminate how the paradigms that shape post-positivist, post-structuralist, neo-Marxist, or narrative inquiry methodologies shift how research is seen and interpreted.
It would not have been appropriate to inquire into my experiences with place from a theoretical standpoint of post-positivism. As Clandinin and Rosiek write, “post-positivist philosophies begin with epistemological commitments and treat ontological commitments as secondary considerations” (2007, p. 43). In other words, a post-positivist researcher may begin with a theory of knowledge, and from there make claims about the nature of reality.

Consider the way a post-positivist researcher might view the stories of the May Tree presented in chapter one. To a post-positivist, these words may not be seen as valuable research data due to the lack of sample size and the very personal and subjective context in which the stories are told. Consider the lines: *Tears and then feeling warmth from the inside out/ Feeling loved by a tree, and by my family/ Knowing that the May Tree brought us together though I was miles and miles away.* These lines are steeped in the personal connections and experiences of me and my family. For a post-positivist researcher, it would be important to limit attention to the context in which people experience place, because reality is seen as outside of human experience and therefore attention to the contexts where people experience place would not allow a reductionist view.

A post-positivist researcher may not be interested in this research puzzle because of the limitation on quantifiable data. The word images of the May Tree from chapter one would not allow the post-positivist researcher to collect data objectively and make generalizations based on patterns in the data. It would be difficult to look at this field text with the intention to categorize it and either support or disprove a theory.
In contrast to post-positivist philosophy, narrative inquiry necessitates drawing attention to the transaction between participants and the multiple contexts which weave throughout their lives. Narrative inquirers, with attention to Dewey’s conception of experience (1938), begin with ontological commitments which are pragmatic, and then consider epistemological commitments. In other words, narrative inquirers believe that, “experience is the fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry – narrative or otherwise – proceeds” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 38). To a narrative inquirer, experience is reality, and therefore the way to know a person’s reality is to travel to their experience through narrative tellings and retellings (Clandinin, 2013) of that experience. Though a post-positivist researcher may criticize a narrative inquirer for not remaining objective during research, a narrative inquirer would not be concerned about objectivity in the same way. As Orr (2004) points out, the discovery of knowledge cannot be categorized in an objective way: “Passion and personality are embedded in all knowledge, including the most ascetic scientific knowledge driven by the passion for objectivity” (p. 31).

It would also not have been appropriate to enter into this research from neo-Marxist or post-structural frameworks. According to Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), “For the Marxist, the fundamental motivation for their analysis is the observation that large-scale social operations conspire not only to physically disempower individuals and groups, but also to epistemically disempower people” (p. 47). In this way, Marxism might provide a lens to look at colonial worldviews that shape our perceptions of nature as a resource which can be owned. A neo-Marxist researcher might consider the
contradiction between dominant social practices which are environmentally exploitive and the finite reality of natural resources.

While neo-Marxism might be a valuable method from which to inquire into the conservation of natural resources, or colonialism, these aspects are not the focus of this inquiry. Rather, in this inquiry the phenomenon under study, my shaping experiences with nature and their influence on my professional practices, positions nature not as a resource, but as someone or something to be in relation with and to learn from. As a narrative inquirer I do think deeply about the sociality of my experiences and the dominant social forces that perhaps shape them. In this thesis, I want to be attentive to conditions of place and temporality in addition to conditions of sociality, which makes narrative inquiry a more suitable methodology.

Similarly to Marxist philosophy, post-structuralism assumes that reality is created outside of people’s own experiences, in this case by the overarching shaping presence of dominant discourse, the historical “linguistic and narrative structure of knowledge” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 52). A post-structuralist reading the word images of The May Tree might consider the ways in which historical dominant discourse determines how the writer relates to place. Though post-structuralist researchers are interested in the narrative structure of knowledge, the writer’s narratives might be taken away, deconstructed and analyzed, and built back up in a way that makes the stories fit within the epistemological frame. To a post-structuralist, reality is not created by experience as people transact with the many contexts in their lives, but by the transcendental conditions.
shaped by historical linguistic discourse. Reality is created for people by contexts, not by people in context.

The viewpoint that nature can be animate, and that a person can build solidarity with and be in relation with nature, is central to this inquiry. What I sought to understand through this inquiry is necessarily complex, contextualized, and relational. In my opinion, post-positivist, neo-Marxist, or post-structural theoretical frames would not have provided a suitable lens through which to understand how nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape, and how the negotiation of my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape shapes or shifts my pedagogy.

In a narrative inquiry, “a relational and transactional ontology precedes [the] research, because stories are about what happens to and between people” (Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013, p. 583). A narrative inquirer does not seek to understand participant stories in order to make them fit into a predetermined epistemological frame. A narrative inquirer seeks to understand participant stories in order to understand who participants are and are becoming throughout time, in places, and in constant interaction with social milieus (Clandinin, 2013). There is room, conceivably, within narrative inquiry for transactions to occur between people and places themselves, room for nature to be an animate and dynamic shaping influence on one’s lived and told stories. To inquire into the word images of the May Tree from a theoretical framework of narrative inquiry is to think with stories of the May Tree through the lenses of place, temporality, and sociality. Below I explain how autobiographical narrative inquiry differs from narrative inquiry.
3.2. Autobiographical narrative inquiry

It is important to understand that this narrative inquiry is autobiographical, positioning myself as both researcher and participant. Clandinin (2013) points out that, “all narrative inquiries begin with an autobiographical inquiry into who the researcher is in relation to the phenomenon under study, which helps to set the personal, practical, and theoretical or social justifications and shapes the emerging research puzzle” (p. 191). An autobiographical narrative inquiry, similar to auto-ethnography, is research that stays focused on the inquirer.

Justifying questions such as “so what?” and “who cares?” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 35) can often be pointed around autobiographical narrative inquiry. In an effort to better understand what autobiographical narrative inquiry is, how it can be done, and what justifications there are for engaging in it, I searched for examples of autobiographical narrative inquiries. One that resonated strongly with me is a reflective paper by Trudy Cardinal (2011) in which Cardinal describes the impact of autobiographical narrative inquiry on herself and her family after engaging in the process for her master’s research.

In her study, Cardinal (2011) used a method of autobiographical narrative inquiry to better understand her experiences as an Aboriginal student becoming an Indigenous researcher. She describes how in the first two years of graduate studies, the writing of a master’s thesis was often referred to as a mere stepping stone toward attaining a Ph.D. This bumped up against Cardinal’s lived experience. In her research, Cardinal sought to understand the responsibilities of an Aboriginal graduate student engaging in research with Aboriginal peoples in ethical ways. In order to feel confident engaging in
Indigenous research alongside other Aboriginal peoples, Cardinal decided that she needed first to make sense of the tensions she experienced as an Indigenous researcher in the making. Where others had seen the writing of a master’s thesis as a stepping stone toward attaining a Ph.D., when Cardinal chose to engage in autobiographical narrative inquiry, the writing of her master’s thesis became part of her journey toward becoming an Indigenous researcher who is confident, belongs, and can engage in Indigenous research in ethical ways.

To do this, Cardinal (2011) looked first at her own experiences in graduate school and inquired into the tensions and bumping points she had experienced thus far. Inquiring autobiographically into her experiences of becoming an Aboriginal Indigenous researcher helped her to understand the impact of these tension-filled moments throughout her graduate studies on her identity and sense of belonging as a part of the research community. As with all narrative inquiries, tensions, or bumping places, became points for inquiry. Cardinal (2011) noticed that these tensions, these bumping places, throughout her graduate studies journey, were inviting her to look closer.

“As I moved from field text to research text, I identified tensions and bumping points I experienced in coming to understand Indigenous research. As I read, reread and inquired into the field texts, I began to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of these moments on my identity, my stories to live by, as researcher in the making, and on my sense of belonging.” (Cardinal, 2011, p. 80).

Cardinal (2011) wrote of her sense of transformation during and after engaging in autobiographical narrative inquiry, noting that she found “a way of negotiating entry back into the communities [she] had drifted away from and into relationships [she] had lost forever” as well as “a space where [she] could feel safe enough to become the Indigenous
researcher” she imagined becoming (p. 88). Justifications for autobiographical narrative inquiry, possible answers to those often pointed “so what” and “who cares” (Clandinin, 2013) questions, can be found in the way Cardinal (2011) speaks of transformation and negotiation. Before engaging in autobiographical narrative inquiry into her experiences in graduate school, Cardinal did not feel confident in her own identity as an Indigenous researcher nor in her ability to uphold the essential ethical principles and responsibilities of engaging in Indigenous research. Throughout the process of autobiographical narrative inquiry, Cardinal (2011) was able to negotiate the tensions she felt in the midst of coming to story herself as an Indigenous researcher and as a result began to feel not only that she was capable of engaging in research alongside Aboriginal peoples in ethically responsible ways, but that she had a greater, and more personally relevant, understanding of what it meant to engage in such research. It was only through this “giving importance to [her] own story” that Cardinal was able to understand the kind of researcher she needed to be (2011, p. 84) in order to give importance to the stories of others.

When I studied Cardinal’s 2011 paper, I was keenly reminded of the two knowledge landscapes Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) had described: the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape. I began to wonder if the tensions Cardinal experienced in her graduate studies courses were created by a feeling of incoherence between Cardinal’s personal knowledge landscape and professional knowledge landscape. Whereas on her personal knowledge landscape Cardinal described herself as “a non-Cree speaker, distanced from the extended family and [her] mother’s home community”, on her professional knowledge landscape,
Cardinal was encouraged to go into the same community that she felt distanced from and conduct research that would be, she was told, a stepping stone toward attaining her Ph.D. (2011, p.79). While, on her professional knowledge landscape, Cardinal describes tensions around choosing a research topic that would make a difference in the lives of Aboriginal people, on her personal knowledge landscape Cardinal describes how her own concerns about belonging and identity within the Aboriginal community did not seem to fit with her professional intentions. I began to wonder if the negotiation Cardinal wrote about, of the tensions she felt with the label “Indigenous researcher” (2011, p. 84), was in some ways a negotiation that happened between her two knowledge landscapes. I began to wonder if the sense of transformation Cardinal (2011) wrote about was in some ways a reconciliation of who she is on both knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014).

Clandinin (2013) points out several practical and theoretical justifications that are apparent in Cardinal’s research, including that the research highlights “the relational aspects that link narrative inquiry with Indigenous research methodologies” (p. 193). These types of practical and theoretical justifications are more likely to become apparent later on in the inquiry rather than to be predicted at the outset. Freeman (2010) describes the nested, contextualized understandings that come from “situating the experiences of the past in relation to what has happened since, as understood, and re-understood, from the present, via hindsight” (p. 60). The process of telling and re-telling personal stories from a present vantage point allows narrative inquirers to build contextualized understandings about their embodied knowledge, their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), which can lead to any number of personal, practical, social, or theoretical transformational shifts.
Cardinal (2011) writes, “the reflection on my graduate studies experience allowed me to see how my intellectual knowing of Aboriginal culture continues to emerge, however my embodied knowing has always been there, and only now can I see it and understand what it is that I live” (p. 88). My own personal justifications for this inquiry are similar to Cardinal’s. I sought to understand how my intellectual knowing of myself as a person alongside nature and as a teacher alongside students continues to emerge, while discovering what embodied knowing has always been within me, and how this embodied knowing shapes what it is that I live and what it is that I teach. I also wondered if there is a way to negotiate the ways I live in both knowledge landscapes, so that I am able to remain “rooted” (Clandinin et al., 2014) in my personal knowledge landscape while simultaneously living and teaching in my professional knowledge landscape. To do this I needed to do as Cardinal (2011) did and inquire into the tensions I experience as a teacher living in two knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014) simultaneously. In the following section are the design considerations and explicit methods used for this narrative inquiry, as well as further considerations unique to inquiring autobiographically.

3.3. Methodology and design considerations

Inquiring into my experiences of relating to nature from the theoretical frame of narrative inquiry allowed me to inquire into the phenomenon in a very contextual way. I sought to understand how nature shapes my stories on the personal and professional knowledge landscape, throughout time, in relation to place, and in interaction with social milieus. Clandinin (2013) outlines several design considerations which should be addressed before beginning and throughout a narrative inquiry. These are detailed below.
3.3.1. The inquiry space

As part of the process of thinking narratively, narrative inquirers frame the research puzzle and conceptualize the narrative phenomenon under study. It is important for narrative inquirers to “begin with an autobiographical inquiry into who the researcher is in relation to the phenomenon under study, which helps to set the personal, practical, and theoretical/social justifications and shapes the emerging research puzzle” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 191). By beginning to tell stories of being in relation with the May Tree, of feeling inspired, but also noticing tension or bumping following the Little Green Thumbs workshop, I demonstrate my personal justifications for this inquiry. In this case, the entire inquiry is autobiographical. This does not mean that the narrative accounts and field texts which I will inquire into remain entirely personal. My stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) are shaped by social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives, which situate this inquiry as social and complex even though the stories are told from an autobiographical viewpoint.

It is important to consider that narrative inquirers come alongside participants, and the lived and told stories of participants, in the midst of their living. Clandinin (2013) uses the term *in the midst* to describe the way in which researchers’ and participants’ lives come together while being simultaneously shaped by “past, present, and future unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives” (p. 43). Using the term *in the midst* is a way to acknowledge that the lives of researchers and participants do not begin and end with the inquiry. Before entering into the inquiry space autobiographically, I stopped to imagine how retelling and reliving my early stories may intersect with the stories I am living and telling currently, especially professional stories.
which happen in the midst of the inquiry, and continue long after the inquiry has come to a close. As I tell, inquire into, and retell my own stories of experience, I am simultaneously living out stories and imagining future stories to live by. As the stories I tell are inherently social, temporal, and rooted in places, so too are they influenced by the social, temporal, and place-based contexts which I am in the midst of as both researcher and participant.

Narrative inquirers begin to imagine the study by thinking with their autobiographical narratives and by conceptualizing the field of the inquiry space (Clandinin, 2013). This relational space, the field, might be the space where inquirers come alongside participants in the midst. For example, in their narrative inquiry Huber, Murphy and Clandinin (2012) show how they each came alongside various children, teachers, and families as they inquired into the curriculum making spaces of children. In one example, Clandinin enters the inquiry in the midst of stories being lived in a grade three classroom (Huber et al., 2012). The time and space in which Clandinin lives alongside the teacher, students, and the family of one student become the relational space which is called the field (Clandinin, 2013).

For Cardinal (2011), the field became the three-dimensional space where she began to inquire into the tensions she experienced as an Aboriginal student becoming an Indigenous researcher, via narrative retellings of her experiences in graduate studies classes and reflective papers. As I entered into this narrative inquiry autobiographically, the field became the three-dimensional space where I began to inquire into my own experiences with nature on two landscapes, via narrative fragments and poetry, and by
the reading of literature which helped me to think with my experiences. Clandinin describes the way in which “who the characters are in people’s stories, the plotlines people choose to tell, and the audiences to whom they tell” (2013, p. 193) shape autobiographical narrative inquiry. For Cardinal (2011), autobiographical narrative inquiry was intensely shaped by her family, her shifting sense of identity within two communities, and a plotline with many bumping points between these two spaces. For me, autobiographical narrative inquiry is also intensely shaped by my family, as seen in many of my early stories throughout this paper. However, the inquiry is also intensely shaped by nature, a sense of relating to and learning from nature, and wondering how this shifts what is important across two knowledge landscapes.

3.3.2. Field texts to research texts

As the inquiry process unfolds, field texts are composed. In a narrative inquiry, the term field text is used in place of the term data, as a way to show that the texts composed are experiential and subjective, rather than objective (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Field texts are records of what has taken place in the field. These may include field notes, transcripts of conversations, artifacts, photographs, writing by participants and researchers, artwork, memory box items, documents, annals and chronologies, and other records which capture the lived and told stories of participants and inquirers. It is important to note that field texts can remain highly interpretive (Clandinin, 2013). This is not a problem, however, for narrative inquirers, as it is often possible to see how more complex, varied, and in some sense more holistic, understandings and insights come to light when the field texts are interpreted from many vantage points.
Cardinal (2011) chose to use all of her writing and assignments from her first two years of graduate school as field texts. Clandinin (2013) describes how as Cardinal “undertook the move from field texts to research texts – that is, the analysis – she used tensions and bumping points as key analytic concepts” (p. 192). Upon identifying these tensions in her field texts, Cardinal (2011) “searched for common threads” and “began to create research texts” (p. 83).

The field texts that became important within this inquiry are poetry, photographs, narrative fragments and reflective notes, some of which were composed during my own graduate studies courses. Field texts become interim research texts, and interim research texts become research texts, through interpretation and retellings (Clandinin, 2013). It has remained important, given the autobiographical nature of this narrative inquiry, which positions me as both researcher and participant, for me to think about the concept of interpretation. Carr (1986) writes “stories remain in memory and open over time to multiple interpretations, rather than to a single correct reading” (p. 241). I wondered, what implications does it have for this research that both the field texts, and the re-reading, re-telling and interpretation of field texts to create research texts, are told from my own voice? Does this mean that the research will not be objective enough, will not be exposed to multiple interpretations?

Drawing on the work of Kerby (1991), I was reminded that a narrative inquirer is not necessarily concerned about objectivity in the same way as a researcher with different ontological commitments. Kerby writes “the past may be narrated in many ways. It is very easy to believe that the past is something irredeemably fixed and determined behind
oneself, for in a certain sense this is true…But there still remains the all-important question of the meaning of the past for me now” (1991, p. 30). What is important in this research is not only which stories I tell and re-tell from my past experiences, but how I can interpret those stories to be meaningful and relevant to the research puzzles now. Since narrative inquirers believe that, “experience is the fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry – narrative or otherwise – proceeds” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 38), telling and re-telling my own past stories from the vantage point of the present is a way of coming alongside experiences to begin to inquire.

What is important, then, as an autobiographical narrative inquirer, is to pay attention to the three-dimensional nature of the inquiry space. That is, to the social, spatial, and temporal contexts that both shaped the experiences which happened, and shape the present vantage point from which they are re-told. Clandinin writes “the past is always told from the present time, place and relationships. What meanings we make – that is, how we tell those remembered stories – are told from the now” (2013, p. 195). The process of narrative inquiry involves paying close attention to the time, place and relationships, both past and present, which shape or shift the meaning of experiences.

In several ways throughout this research I sought response from others in order to expose field texts to multiple lenses and interpretations. Near the beginning of the research I met with a works in progress group. Later on I participated in a group of writers interested in examining their relationships to place and land, where one of my field texts was composed. Both of these processes helped me to make insights into the
experiences I was thinking about, however the final research texts and interpretations still came from my own vantage point, using hindsight as Freeman (2010) suggests.

I sought response from my family at times throughout the inquiry process. I worried that I had to duplicate our experiences from so long ago in an exact way, in a way that would match with how each person recalled them. Clandinin, drawing on the work of Kerby (1991), points out that “Kerby’s work draws attention to a linear view that holds that now we have only recollections, artifacts, and nothing more. Kerby argues, however, that our recollections and artifacts are always reconstructed. It is this view that is shared with narrative inquiry” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 194). In other words, it is okay to reconstruct the stories that have shaped us, and it is inherent in this process that we will reconstruct them from our present context and vantage point. In this sense, Cardinal (2011) did not use her field texts of graduate papers and journal entries as duplicate images of past experiences, but rather as points of tension from which to inquire by retelling what she experienced. I became more comfortable with presenting my reconstructed recollections to my family, and to be certain of the significance they held for me.

Clandinin draws on these ideas from Kerby (1991), Freeman (2010) and Carr (1986) to “highlight how our experiences in the past are embodied in our lived and told stories. We carry them with us” (2013, p. 196). The process of autobiographical narrative inquiry is to inquire into field texts, with attention to the three commonplaces of place, temporality, and sociality, in order to understand the embodied experiences that are carried within the inquirer and shape the present and future contexts in which the inquirer
lives. For Cardinal (2011), the process was to inquire into narrative accounts of her graduate studies experiences, with attention to the tensions she felt as an Aboriginal student becoming an Indigenous researcher and as a person who felt distanced from her own Aboriginal community, to understand the embodied experiences carried within her which would both cause her to feel such tensions and allow her to negotiate a way through them. For me, the process was to inquire into narrative accounts of my experiences alongside nature, as well as of my experiences of as an educator, with attention to the tensions I have felt as someone who feels planted on my personal knowledge landscape, yet does not always see nature valued on my professional knowledge landscape. By doing so, I hoped to understand the embodied experiences carried within me which would both cause me to feel such tensions and allow me to negotiate a pedagogy whereby I can feel planted on my professional knowledge landscape as well.

3.3.3. Relational work

Clandinin (2013) draws ample attention to the importance of relationships when designing and living out a narrative inquiry. At each turn of the inquiry, from the very first imaginings of the research puzzle, to the negotiations of how to come alongside or hear participants’ lived stories, to the co-composing of field texts, interim research texts, and final research texts, narrative inquirers remain in dynamic relation. Not only do narrative inquirers consider the relationships between themselves and participants, but also “the relational between the person and his/her world; a temporal understanding of the relational between past, present, and future; the relational between person and place; the relational between events and feelings; the relational between the physical world and
people; the relational in our cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives,”
(Clandinin, 2013 p. 23). Thinking relationally becomes part of thinking narratively, and
attending to the ways in which the inquiry may have shifted or changed participants’ or
researchers’ stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) is important.

The insistence that narrative inquirers are constantly in relation lead me to
imagine the ethical considerations that may come with writing autobiographically. I saw
that it would be important to acknowledge throughout the inquiry that both field texts and
research texts are interpreted from my point of view, as much as I may try to consider
narratives from various perspectives. Even as I live out this inquiry autobiographically, I
remain in relation with the people, including students, and places whom I may tell stories
of. These are not the stories they tell of themselves, but rather the stories I tell of us in
relation. In this light, I have not used real names in my study unless where I have
permission to, and have been careful to situate retellings in my own experience, rather
than risk making assumptions about the experiences of others.

Ethically, I am committed to remaining attentive to the stories I am living, not just
the stories I am telling and retelling. Before beginning the inquiry process, I imagined a
possible bumping between this retelling of my past stories and the living of current
stories alongside family members, students, colleagues, and friends. I imagined this as a
sort of commitment to live in the present moment, and I imagined it to be ethically
important. I did not want to be inattentive to present and future experiences by focusing
so intently on past ones. For example, in many of the field texts I wrote in which I tell
stories of myself alongside students, were experiences with students that I worked with in
previous years. I wanted to be careful not to put those remembered and retold stories in
front of ones I currently live alongside a new community of students.

Clandinin (2013) urges narrative inquirers to consider the positioning of narrative
inquiry when designing and imagining the research process. It is important to remember
that “the knowledge developed from narrative inquiries is textured by particularity and
incompleteness” (2013, p. 52). These kinds of understandings may lead more towards
wondering and imagining alternate or shifted possibilities and less to broad
generalizations and certain answers (Clandinin, 2013). Because narrative inquirers work
from different assumptions than, for example, post-positivist, post-structuralist, or neo-
Marxist researchers, narrative inquiries may not lead to the development or confirmation
of existing theories of knowledge, common themes, taxonomies, and empirical data in
ways that research undertaken under a different methodology might. I address the
borderlands (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) between some of these methodologies earlier in
this chapter.

3.4. Moving forward

Keeping in mind the above design considerations, I imagined how I might begin
to navigate the narrative inquiry space autobiographically. I began to autobiographically
write field texts in the form of poetry and narrative fragments which would help me to
inquire into the research questions. Each of the field texts is a narrative representation of
my experiences alongside nature within various landscapes. Several of these field texts
appear within the final research text, while others do not.
I began to inquire into these narratives with careful attention to the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry (place, temporality, and sociality), using tensions and bumping points as key analytic concepts. I drew especially on the research of narrative inquirers such as Clandinin (2013), Connelly and Clandinin (1988), and Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) to guide my process and help me to think about personal practical knowledge, the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape. I also drew on ideas from others such as Naess (2008), Newberry (2012), Epstein and Oyler (2008), Lugones (1987) and Greene (1995, 2001) when interpreting field texts and creating research texts. These ideas and inquiries are discussed in greater detail alongside narrative retellings of experiences in chapters four and five of this paper.

As it is with all narrative inquiries, I entered into this research in the midst of my own unfolding life. As such, certain field texts document how the telling and re-telling of my stories alongside nature intersects with the stories I am living in the present time, especially pedagogically on my professional knowledge landscape. For example, I inquired into how my early stories of relating to and learning from nature led me to apply for the Little Green Thumbs program. I also reflected upon my more recent experiences of gardening alongside students in the classroom. By inquiring temporally into these intersections between past and present stories, I hoped it may become possible to imagine how my stories of being in relation with nature shape or shift my current and future stories to live by. I hoped it may be possible to imagine ways in which my own pedagogy is shaped by relating to nature. In the following two chapters I represent what I learned during the process of autobiographical narrative inquiry. In the final section of
the paper I present a discussion of several social and practical implications for this research.
CHAPTER FOUR: NATURE AS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE

The focus of this chapter, through inquiry into field texts, is to illustrate how experiences in and alongside nature have helped me to see nature as a teacher that has profoundly shaped my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin, Schaefer, & Downey, 2014), and in turn my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). To begin the chapter I show how engaging in a pilot project with grade one students in 2014 helped shed light on the complexity of personal knowledge landscapes and how they shape individuals stories to live by. While reflecting upon the pilot study alongside students, I became more awake to how Clandinin and Connelly (1988) and Dewey (1938) conceived of the narrative nature of knowledge. As my understanding of the knowledge landscapes grew and shifted the research began to take its shape as an autobiographical narrative inquiry into my knowledge landscapes.

*Before*

*Writing about place, about feeling planted*

*Wondering about outside, about learning, about sustaining*

*Wondering about counterstories, about communities, about doing this differently*

*Now*

*Drawn back in time to those stories, those places*

*(Re)live, (re)tell*

*But it is not just me this time*

*Who else is here? Who else is planted? How can we learn of each other’s worlds?*

*Maybe my stories can start to build bridges*

*Between worlds*

The above is a field text from a paper I wrote after a pilot project with several of my grade one students in 2014. When I first began this work, after attending my first
Little Green Thumbs workshop, the original shape of the research puzzle was quite different. While I had noticed unmistakable tension between the stories I lived alongside nature outside-of-school and the stories I lived alongside students inside-of-school, I had not yet conceptualized these places as the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014). I did not yet have an understanding of personal practical knowledge or stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), and was only just beginning to understand how Dewey (1938) and Clandinin and Connelly (1988) had conceived of knowledge and experience as having a continuous and interactive structure. What I knew was that I loved to be outside, that there was something about nature and my experiences alongside nature that made me feel planted.

I felt tension at the Little Green Thumbs workshop when Johnston (2013) pointed out the threatened state of nature, and named all of us – myself and my students included – as the stewards of its sustainability. I determined, rather hastily, that if my students were to be the stewards of the nature I so loved, then it would be my role to shape and strengthen their connection to nature.

Thinking about the May Tree, a friend I had grown up with, I realized that the tree seemed to be a sort of bridge for me when I grew concerned about the sustainability of nature. Because I could ask myself, “who would I be without that tree?” I could also wonder with equal importance about who any of us would be without a similar connection to some natural place. Because I could ask myself, “what will be lost when the tree is gone?” I could also wonder with equal importance about what would be lost
when other natural places are gone, polluted, or exploited. I decided to introduce my students to my friend the May Tree, curious about their own connections to nature, and curious about the conversations we could have about nature together, with the May Tree as a sort of bridge between our varied experiences.

This pilot project was to set the stage for my later research. My original intentions were to work with children and possibly their families as participants to find out how nature was shaping the children’s experiences in school. I now see that I was curious about their personal knowledge landscapes. I introduced my students to the May Tree by reading them the poem I had written under the white snowy blossoms of another may tree. I showed them photos and artifacts and read them tree books such as *Our Tree Named Steve* (Zweibel, 2005) and *The Gift of the Tree* (Tresselt, 1992). I asked interested students to illustrate the pages of my poem, curious what connections and experiences they would bring to the project, whether related to nature or to something different in their lives.

The student artwork and stories from this project are not included here, however I inquire into what I learned pedagogically from the process in greater detail in the next chapter. What I want to acknowledge in this section is how engaging in the project alongside my students shifted the intentions of my research and influenced my decision to engage in autobiographical narrative inquiry, rather than narrative inquiry alongside children as participants. When I read my poem the May Tree to students, when I showed them artifacts and photos, the first thing they did was start to tell me stories. Each one of them had a lot to say, a connection to the house they had once lived in, a memory with a
brother or a grandpa, a description of their own favourite tree. One student brought me her copy of *The Giving Tree* (Silverstein, 1964) to share with the class, telling me that the tree and the boy in the book love each other like the May Tree and I love each other. So many new connections were made during the process, and I characterized them as bridges. I felt I had glimpsed a little more of who the students were, and that they had glimpsed a little more of who I was. In this sense, the pilot study seemed to give students the opportunity to teach me about their personal knowledge landscapes (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014). From the research of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014), I am conceptualizing students’ personal knowledge landscapes as places outside of school.

What I learned from the students helped me to reimagine my thesis. As I tried to shape a research puzzle including children as participants, I realized that I was making assumptions about the would-be participants that I wasn’t comfortable with. As I imagined children who I might invite to be part of the research, I realized that I assumed nature would be as important to the participants’ personal knowledge landscapes as it was to mine. I realized that what they knew from their personal knowledge landscapes was not necessarily the same as what I knew, but seemed to be equally as important in shaping their stories to live by. By structuring the research in a way that would focus on experiences with nature, something very personally important to me, I could potentially silence the participants’ personal knowledge landscapes. I had been thinking about my experiences alongside nature as the relational bonds which helped me to think about environmental sustainability as an adult. In a way, I had already decided what this meant: that children should have many rich experiences alongside nature in order to grow
into people who care about sustaining it. I was already answering my own questions and, even more uncomfortably, I was answering the questions for my would-be participants. I began to notice the incredible diversity in the personal knowledge landscapes of the students. It was in coming to know bits and pieces of their personal knowledge landscapes, as they told stories from places outside of school in response to my poem about The May Tree, that I became more awake to the nuances of my own personal knowledge landscape. I realized how little I had explored my own personal knowledge landscape and how it was shaping the pilot study, my thesis work, and perhaps my own pedagogy (Clandinin et al., 2014).

It became clear I was trying to do two things at once – think about environmental sustainability and where the intentions for it are born, while at the same time sustaining, or making important, my own stories of feeling planted in nature. Not only was the lens I was working from too broad, but I would in a way be asking other people, the participants in the research, to sustain my conception of myself as someone planted. Focusing the research on the sustainability of nature felt problematic, as by doing this alongside other participants I would be telling them that nature must be fundamentally important to them. I first needed to explore my own stories of being planted in nature, and how these stories felt sustaining for me, and in turn shape, and continue to shape my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014).

As I read more about the personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014), I came to see that I needed to better understand how my personal experiences alongside nature shaped my own stories to live by. Perhaps by doing so, I could begin to
understand how to ask my students to tell their own stories, without making assumptions about what should be important within those stories. Cardinal (2011) was able to understand the kind of researcher she needed to be through “giving importance to [her] own story” (p. 84). Eventually, I realized that I needed to understand the shape of my own personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et. al, 2014) better before asking students to help me understand theirs. Clandinin (2013) writes that narrative inquirers need to “engage in intensive autobiographical narrative inquiries as part of our narrative beginnings” in order to begin to understand the shape of the inquiry as well as “who we are, and are becoming,” in relation with particular phenomena (p. 43). The students showed me that I needed to inquire deeper into my own narrative beginnings, my personal knowledge landscape, before I could move forward in understanding how these ways of knowing shape my pedagogy and in turn my relationships with nature and students.

4.1. Nature and knowledge

Encountering Greene’s work (2001) helped me to further conceptualize nature as a part of my personal knowledge landscape. I was struck by how she writes about the concept of wide-awakeness in encounters with the arts. I saw a great similarity between what Greene refers to as art and what I refer to as nature. Nature, like art, provides an expansive sense of possibility, a sense that there is always more (Greene, 2001). Below in one Greene’s quotes, I replace the word art with the word nature to give both a visual and metaphorical example of what I mean:

But our lives remain the ground against which we experience works of [nature]. There is a sense in which coming in contact
with a work is like meeting another human being. Meetings of this sort can never take place in a vacuum, in isolation from lived biography. But when persons open themselves up to one another, there is always a sense of new profiles to be experienced, new aspects to be understood. So it often is in encounters with [nature], if we are open, if we take the time. If we attend from our own centres, if we are present as living, perceiving beings, there is always, always more. (Greene, 2001, p. 16)

Throughout this chapter I think with stories of meeting nature at places of the May Tree, Tara Mara, and the Mint Julep, in much the same way Greene wrote about art. My meetings with nature do not take place “in isolation from lived biography” (p. 16). Rather, meetings with nature in many ways become my lived biography, my personal knowledge landscape, and in turn a part of my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). While Greene (2001) writes specifically of encounters with the arts in her conception of what it means to be wide-awake, in her work I see Dewey’s (1938) theory of interaction and continuity in experience, from which narrative inquiry as a methodology branches. Dewey wrote that “even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy” (1938, p. 19). In much the same way Greene suggests that a person who experiences art is interacting with the artwork in a way that is almost “like meeting another human being” (2001, p. 16). Dewey wrote that the knowledge and understanding a person gains from one situation “becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing with the situations which follow” (1938, p. 18). Similarly, Greene wrote that “our lives remain the ground against which we experience works of art” (2001, p. 16). My experiences have taught me that my life also remains the ground against which I experience nature, and perhaps it is that nature remains the ground against which I experience life.
When I think with Greene’s (2001) conception of meeting with art as “like meeting another human being” (p. 16), I am reminded of the insistence by Connelly and Clandinin (1999) that thinking relationally is part of thinking narratively. As Greene (2001) shows, art is something to be in relation with in an animate way, in an aesthetic way that while different for each individual, if attended to from our own centres, our own personal knowledge landscapes perhaps, there is always more. If we are present as living alongside and within this art, new aspects may become understood and new profiles may be experienced. As I replace the word art with the word nature I find the same aesthetic and animate resonance. Just as art allows each of us to attend from our own centres, personal knowledge landscapes, so too does nature. This animate, relational conceptualization of nature has helped me to further understand the profound shaping that nature has had on my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014) and in turn my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). In the following sections, through inquiry into field texts, I attend to how my experiences in and alongside nature have shaped my personal knowledge landscape.

4.2 Inquiring across time, place, and in relation

Thinking with the ideas of Greene (2001), of my meetings with nature as shaping my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014) and in turn my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), I began to think about the experiences that make me feel planted in nature, and searched for an appropriate way to express them. For me, these stories were embodied, they came with smells and sounds, they were accompanied by the feeling of sticky seaweed or scratchy bark or cool grass on my toes, and they seemed woven together. I realized that telling my stories could never help the listener
live those same smells, sounds, and feelings. Rather, if I chose an artistic form of narrative, such as poetry, perhaps I could harness the unique power of the arts to “release the imagination” (Greene, 1995, p. 27) and open up my stories in a way that would allow both other listeners and myself space for interpretation and inquiry. By illustrating my experiences poetically, I hoped to ignite and make space for the sense of “wide-awakeness, perceptual aliveness, the sense of discovery,” that Greene speaks of when she writes about engagement with the arts (2001, p. 21). I turned to poetry in an attempt to shape the “circles of quietness that have to be drawn in order to enable persons to take their own time in grasping the appearance, the shape, and the sound of things,” and from a desire to “articulate what has been made visible in the everyday world” (Greene, 2001, p. 21). Reflecting upon the pilot study undertaken alongside children, while setting out upon a more autobiographical inquiry, I came to see the inquiry space as being open to multiple possibilities. In much the same way that art means diverse things to diverse people, nature can carry diverse meanings as well.

From these circles of quietness, I began to inquire using the three narrative inquiry commonplaces of temporality, place and sociality. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) describe the narrative inquiry space as three dimensional. The first dimension, temporality, draws attention to the temporal nature of the phenomenon being studied, that is, that people and events have a past, present, and possible futures. The second dimension, sociality, draws together both the personal conditions and social conditions a narrative inquirer is concerned with. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) explain that, “by personal conditions we mean the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions of both the inquirer and participant. By social conditions we mean the
existential conditions, the environment, surrounding factors and forces, people and otherwise, that form the individual’s context” (p. 480). The third dimension of narrative inquiry, place, draws attention to the “specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events take place” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). By inquiring into poetic narratives from the three commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place, I hoped to cultivate the wide-awakeness and perceptual aliveness (Greene, 2001) necessary to understand how nature has shaped my personal knowledge landscape.

In chapter three I explained the methods followed while engaging in this research. I began by autobiographically writing narratives which would help me to wonder about how experiences with nature on my personal knowledge landscape shape or shift pedagogical practices on my professional knowledge landscape. These narratives became my field texts. Drawing on the work of Clandinin (2013), Connelly and Clandinin (1988), and Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014), I inquired into the field texts while thinking about personal practical knowledge, stories to live by, and personal and professional knowledge landscapes. Also drawing on the ideas of researchers such as Naess (2008), Newberry (2012), Epstein and Oyler (2008) and Greene (1995, 2001), I began to inquire into the field texts with careful attention to the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry (place, temporality, sociality), and in relation to the central questions which form this research puzzle. Below I inquire into narratives from The May Tree, Tara Mara, and The Mint Julep to show how nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape.
4.3. Home tree

The May Tree

Playing Stellaluna hanging upside down from the branches, a million fruit bat memories

Striped bridges to the playhouse roof

Bridges to imagination, to adventure, to my own spaces

Writing secret berry messages on the highest branches

Coming home early for two weeks in May, soak in the smell while it lasts

White petals snowing down even a block away

Windy day

The day when Dad had to cut the swinging branch down

Disease

Unsafe

Calls of “supper!” and bravely leaping off the playhouse roof to catch the branch

Big swooping swing

Land on the cooling ground

Run in to the dinner table

Receiving a stamped letter from “The May Tree” in my second year of tree planting

A cold, rainy, buggy day in the middle of a nowhere forest

Containing two blooms, one dried, the other a few days fresh

Tears and then feeling warmth from the inside out

Feeling loved by a tree and by my family

Knowing that The May Tree brought us together though I was miles and miles away

The next summer when Grandma Rosie passed away

I couldn’t make it home in time

Hearing the news on the crackly satellite phone

Laying down in the tent, feeling a faraway sadness

Day off in Mackenzie
Finding a tiny growing May tree down a back alley
Coming back to fill a small corked jar with blooms
My connection to home
Hangs as the welcome to our tent for the rest of the summer
The day I know is coming...

I wrote previously of the May Tree as a bridge helping me to think about the sustainability of nature. More than this, the May Tree is a bridge to my first home, not just the building in which I lived, but home as Naess (2008) conceived of it, as “where one belong[s]” (p. 45). This idea of home as part of myself, according to Naess, delimits an “ecological self, rich in internal relations to what is now called environment” (2008, p. 45). With the intention to attend from my own centre (Greene, 2001) as I seek the sense of wide-awakeness that may allow me to understand myself, I realize that somewhere near that centre of myself is the May Tree, rooting me to the place where I belong and to my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014). Even as it grew in the backyard of my first home, from a youthful thing to a gnarled, bumpy, twisted and strong elder, it also grew into me. Strong enough to support four rambunctious siblings climbing, swinging, leaping, hiding; stable enough to hold tree forts and striped bridges and pretend fruit-bats; a good listener who could keep the secrets of first kisses and secret berry messages; and always, always home to stand, to keep watch, to welcome, to wave. As an adult, even when far from where the May Tree grows, its presence as strong, stable, and always there helps me to navigate difficult moments, such as persevering through the mental and physical challenges of working as a tree planter, or grieving the loss of my great grandmother from a distance.
I am reminded again of the works of Dewey (1938) and Greene (2001) who suggest to me that my life is the ground against which I experience nature, while at the same time nature is the ground against which I experience life, that lessons from my friendship with a tree live at the centre of me and show me how to navigate next situations, how to find home-as-belonging, even home-as-belonging-with-nature, as I move forward in life. Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) describe the personal knowledge landscape as the knowledge landscape we come to know first, which is “shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, familiar and institutional narratives” (p. 183). As I think about my relationship with the May Tree, it is characterized not by seemingly passive verbs such as connect or remember, but by verbs with a much more animate quality, such as welcome, wave, support, listen, and trust. I notice that the May Tree is an animate being in my life, which dynamically shapes my personal knowledge landscape. In this way I can see that many of the social, cultural and familiar narratives which shape the landscape I came to know first were in themselves shaped by and within they May Tree, within nature. Naess (2008) writes, “we may be said to be in, and of, nature from the very beginning of ourselves” (p. 82), just as Clandinin et al. (2014) note that the personal knowledge landscape is the first landscape we come to know.

As I inquire into the field text of the May Tree, I am attentive to place, but particularly attentive to the relationship between the narrative inquiry dimensions of place and sociality (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The dimension of sociality is shaped by personal conditions as well as social conditions which form individuals’ contexts (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The dimension of place is described as the “specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events take
place” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). Thinking with stories of the May Tree shows me that place, in this case the specific concrete, physical place that is the May Tree, shapes many of the personal conditions, such as “feelings, hopes…and moral dispositions” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480) as well as the social conditions that form my context; the people who have loved the May Tree alongside me, my family, shape my relationship to place.

Thinking about the social conditions of this place also awaken me to the type of environment that was created by my parents in relation to nature. Climbing the May Tree, while perhaps risky, was not deterred by my parents. Naming the May Tree, waving to the May Tree, and laughing with the May Tree was not only accepted, but encouraged by my parents. Inquiring into these aspects helps me to wonder more deeply about the sociality of this place, and how it continues to shape my personal knowledge landscape and the relationship I have with nature. It also awakens me to the diverse social conditions that may accompany nature for many of my students.

Climbing trees, and building tree houses seems to becoming less and less common. The dangers of falling now seem to supersede the creative, majestic things that can happen when children engage with trees in this way. Naming trees, waving to trees and interacting with trees as if they are living, might be construed as odd behaviour, as behaviour that is not socially acceptable. In turn coming to know from a tree, coming to know from nature, seeing nature as a teacher often seems to bump with the dominant knowledge that counts, and the dominant ways that people come to know.
It is in thinking about place and sociality that I see the implications to my own stories to live by, and to how I understand learning and knowledge. It is also through this inquiry that I see how profoundly the May Tree has shaped my personal knowledge landscape.

4.4. The changing view

_Tara Mara_

_A creaky old tree house with a view, some choke cherries_

And the privacy to sing, sing, sing on a hot summer day

Dare my uncle each spring: who can be the first in the water?

_Boat rides with Gramps to the middle of the lake_

_Quiet time_

_Look at the sky_

_Staying quiet the longest wins you a nickel, maybe even a quarter_

_Two brothers, two sisters, a secret place_

_Wade in the water down forbidden banks, climb scraggly roots to the top_

_To the clearing which only the four of us know_

_Camel Hill and the changing view_

_A disappearing fox family_

_Bulldoze_

_Bulldoze_

_The secret stairs, grown over past bursting_

_Enter a narrow pathway where the world seems silent, even eerie_

_Every trip down is a daring adventure or a chance to think_

_Dance to Orange Sky in the kitchen, from on Grandpa’s feet to in Grandpa’s arms_

_The Fish Dam_

_Stinky mud and fish bone finds_

_Crowded minnows swim into my hand in the fish ladder_
Wade the fast water in rolled up pants
A half-frozen creek where a sister clings to a pillar and is saved by a brother
A confrontation with a close-up pelican
Long walks with a book, finding independence on the way
Family stories of spirits in the valley, connected to ancestors in the wind
Laying on my back on the mint julep, counting shooting stars or lightning strikes
Generations of the same view, painted at sunset

Just as Naess (2008) suggests that we are “in, and of, nature from the very beginning of ourselves” (p. 82), Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) suggest that we are in, and of, our personal knowledge landscape from the very beginning of ourselves. The researchers (2014) note:

It is within personal knowledge landscapes shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, familiar, and institutional narratives that our first stories to live by come into being. It is within those early personal knowledge landscapes that we begin to live out our stories to live by and, in living out those stories to live by, our identities are continuously in the making. (p. 183)

Just as I feel planted in nature at Tara Mara, our family cottage where my maternal grandparents now live, Tara Mara is planted within my personal knowledge landscape. It shapes my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) and roots me to the moral and intellectual landscape in which I have been from the very beginning of myself (Clandinin et al., 2014).

The specialness of this place partially stems from temporality, from the way it was woven into my life before I was even born. I can look up at the mantle above the fireplace and see two paintings of the same sunset view, painted by two different generations. As I retell stories of that sunset view, I do not so much think about those
stories as think with them. Clandinin (2013) draws on the ideas of Morris who wrote that, “thinking about stories conceives of narrative as an object. Thinking with stories is a process in which we as thinkers do not so much work on narrative as of allowing narrative to work on us” (2002, p. 196). All of our stories of this place have been working on me from as far back as I can remember. Thinking with all of these complex, nested stories of my experience with the valley and how they weave together my past, my present, and my forward looking stories helps me to see what is important, what counts, on my personal knowledge landscape. As I live “the stories planted in [me]” (Okri, 1997, p. 46), they continue to work on me, rooting me in and shaping my personal knowledge landscape.

The poem illustrates several of the place, temporal, and social conditions (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) that inform my identity. Thinking with the quiet time shaped by Gramps and the lake alongside conceptions of stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), I can see that on my personal knowledge landscape, I came to live by stories of stillness and listening. Coming to know about stillness and about listening is something that took me a long time and a lot of practice, as I spent much of my early years talking and bouncing with very little pause. At first, my motivation for attempting to be still and listen while floating in the middle of the lake was grounded in the nickel, or sometimes quarter, that would go to the sibling who could remain quiet the longest. Over time, my motivations for engaging in this ritual began to shift. Instead of seeking a prize for forcing myself to remain still and quiet, I began to seek the stillness itself, and to let nature do the talking. In these still, quiet moments, I began to listen to the waves slapping against the boat, and to the voices of wind, birds, and insects. Eventually, I
learned to draw inward and listen to myself, able to sit with my own thoughts and feelings. As Dewey’s (1938) theory of continuity would suggest, quiet time moments continue to inform my stories to live by. At one time, a practice of stillness seemed unnatural to me, and I required extrinsic motivation to try it. Because of the shaping socially by my grandpa, my siblings, and the voices of nature, and because of the shaping temporally by engaging in this ritual over and over, as an adult it seems unnatural not to practice stillness. While it is not often anymore that moments of stillness, of quiet time, occur specifically from floating on Katepwa lake, as an adult I actively seek still moments, both to listen to the voices of nature and to my own self, knowing that the prize is a deeper relationship with both nature and myself.

While attentive to temporality, place, and sociality (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006) as I think with my stories of Tara Mara, I am especially attentive to the way that my relationship with nature over time allows me to see bumping, tension, in how nature is viewed by the dominant social structures that also shape my context. During each visit to Tara Mara, I drive past Camel Hill with its two humps, next to which an RV park now sits. Every time I drive this section, I remember the day my siblings and I hiked our ritual Camel Hill, only to look out over the peak of the bank and, bulldoze, bulldoze, see a giant hole where the neighbouring hill used to be. We saw a crater stretching back to the highway, soon to be filled with the newest development of cottages and homes. I was quite young, but old enough to remember feeling the gravity of it. Dominant social structures, such as the structures of ownership and land title that allowed a development company to purchase and bulldoze Camel Hill’s neighbour, position nature as a resource, and position human desires as more important than the needs of the rest of nature. The
gravity I felt was, in a sense, my noticing the bumping between these dominant conceptions of nature and the conceptions of nature, as friend, as teacher, as having a voice, I had come to know over time.

Camel Hill’s neighbour housed a family of foxes once. I know because while hiking with my siblings one summer, we met them by absolute chance. Caught by surprise, it was the briefest of moments before they disappeared back into their den, leaving only a few littered bits of animal fur, maybe from a hare, scattered around the entrance. I don’t recall how much time passed in between the meeting of foxes and the erasing of an entire hill. In any case, those foxes were the first thought I had when we discovered the crater next to a sign that read Spruce Village Estates. Thinking with Dewey’s theory of continuity and interaction in experience (1938), I can see that this interaction, this story of change from when I was young, is one that continuously shapes my desire to sustain nature even today. It is one of the stories behind the tension I felt at the Little Green Thumbs workshop when Johnston (2013) talked about the threatened state of nature, and named myself and my students as the stewards of its sustainability. The May Tree taught me to ask “who would I be without that tree?” and “what will be lost when the tree is gone?” and to wonder about what will be lost when other natural places are gone, polluted, or exploited. In the same way, the disappearing fox family and Camel Hill and the changing view taught me to ask “whose home is here?” and “who decides whose home is here?” and to wonder about my role in such decisions.

Changing views, both naturally occurring and as a result of human development, are views I notice because of my sustained relationship with nature in places like Tara
Mara over time. Noticing change and caring about it is a big part of what counts, what is important, on my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). Without all of those years climbing Camel Hill over and over, I may not have taken a second look at its neighbour hill, or lack thereof, the summer it went missing. Camel Hill and the fox family are examples of nature on my personal knowledge landscape shaping my identity in a continuous way (Dewey, 1938). Inquiries into field texts from Tara Mara show that changing views, especially from places where I have spent enough time to feel planted, and where this time was shaped both by relational personal conditions, and by dominant social structures, shape my personal knowledge landscape and my desire to live by stories of sustaining nature.

4.5. The bigness and the smallness

From The Mint Julep

It’s the view I like the best. Where I can open my eyes to the bigness.

The bigness of the sky where it melts into the water, glinting and broken into a million wavy pieces.

The bigness of the cascading valley hills that crest the horizon, but seem to keep going – the bigness of wondering where they lead.

The bigness of the wind and where’s it’s been today; maybe over the humps and coulees of the place we named Camel Hill, where the disappearing fox family once lived; maybe over the wing tips of a pelican seeking breakfast at the fish dam; maybe anywhere, before reaching my cheek, my hair, as I stand taking in the view.

Where I can see the bigness, and the smallness too.

The smallness of the first white-humped-spotted spider I ever saw.

The smallness of the split second when we met before it scuttled back into its crack of earth.

The smallness of the chokecherries, dropping silently from the ledge and the smallness of their tiny ‘plop’ in the water below.
The bigness of the ripples they make.

It’s the view Grandpa sees as he waves and waves and waves until the paddlers and their canoe are too small to see, the place from which he spots them returning and is ready to call out.

It’s the view I am rewarded with after climbing the many railway ties up from the water’s edge, panting breath, dripping hair, seaweed toes.

It’s a view for morning hot-chocolate sipping, especially on foggy days when you’ve almost beat the sun out of bed.

At night, it is for counting lightning strikes and shooting stars.

On days when the view is especially big, small, and everything-I-need all at once, I can take a few extra minutes sipping it in.

No one will mind.

They know this view.

This is a view for sharing with mothers and sisters, brothers and fathers, cousins, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and four-legged best friends.

It is captured in smeared brush strokes that rest inside on the mantle, a painted-at-sunset, generation after generation after generation view.

I stand here and look, really look, at all the bigness of the sky and all the smallness of spiders, and at all the spaces in between.

I can see the shape of my family in the never-cresting, never ending hills, and on the wind that travels from maybe anywhere, to reach my cheek, my hair, as I stand taking in the view.

I wrote the above piece during a writing group as a participant in the research by Audrey Aamodt entitled Becoming Unsettled Again and Again: Thinking With/in and Against Autobiographical Métissage (Herbison, 2016). With attention to contested conceptions of wilderness presented by Newberry (2012), we were asked to write autobiographically about a wilderness place. Finding it difficult to choose one place in particular, rather I decided to write about a space which comprises many of my encounters with so-called wilderness. Newberry (2012) uses the terms nature and wilderness interchangeably because “they so often signify the same idea of natural-ness,
of existing before and beyond cultural and built environments” (212, p. 34). The dominant conception of wilderness Newberry describes is “a sublime landscape” and a “space away from home”, a conception which she challenges in her work (2012, p. 35). This idea of wilderness/nature as “away from home” also conflicts with conceptions of myself as planted. For me, the nature in my stories is home, is profoundly shaping the personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014) that is the home of my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

I have come alongside Newberry’s contested conceptions of wilderness many times as well. I have been the canoe-tripper, trail-hiker, carefree-camper viewing wilderness spaces “as if they were straightforwardly pristine and ahistorical” (2012, p. 37). When I wrote about receiving a letter from the May Tree during a season of tree planting, I described a nowhere forest, as though it were empty of all but the black flies and the sheets of rain and the tiny planted pines that coloured my viewpoint at the time, and privileged instead the nature of the tree that I already knew, that was my friend. I can understand when Newberry writes of a wilderness that is viewed as a “frontier of redemption”, re-inscribing a “conceptual Western dualism separating people from nature” (2012, p. 35). However, the nature I write about in this work and want to become more wide-awake (Greene, 2001) to, is not separate from people at all, nor is it a space away (Newberry, 2012).

Standing on the Mint Julep, taking in the view, I can almost see in ways that are back and forth, in ways that cross from the past, into the present, and back again. From this temporal vantage point, I am grown, looking at the blanket of valley hills as they
swoop and dip across the lake, and at the same time, in a continuous and interactive way, I am eight, looking up at my older brother as he reaches for my hand to help me up the forbidden bank, sand filling my water shoes as my older sister councils me to grab onto this root, or that. I am here, looking at the bright morning sky in its shifting patterns, and I am there, lying on my back and looking up at the lightning strikes Gramps calls the greatest show on earth. It is now, and I squint my eyes at the shimmering water that is like a shattered mirror, and it is then as the water rushes around my ankles, tickling my calves, then my knees as I follow my mom and dad across the fish dam flow for a glimpse of what is on the other side.

This view holds that sense of temporal expansiveness that Clandinin and Connelly (1995) referred to when using the term landscape. Woven into this view are mothers and sisters, brothers and fathers, cousins, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and four-legged best friends, but also a disappearing fox family, pelicans, lightning strikes, shooting stars, and the big ripples of small living things. From the Mint Julep I can see that the social and relational shape of my personal knowledge landscape is not only filled with people but also with nature as an animate being. From this view, I can see that nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014) as it weaves together the social, temporal, cultural, linguistic, intellectual and moral roots that make up who I am and what I am about, that make me feel planted.

I am awakening to the potential complication of describing myself as planted. While participating in the writing group where I wrote *From the Mint Julep*, I was prompted to reflect upon my stories of so called wilderness with attention to Newberry’s
presentation of wilderness as contested and as socially and politically constructed (2012). Newberry points out that the terms nature and wilderness often signify the idea of “natural-ness, of existing before and beyond cultural and built environments” (2012, p. 34). Wilderness, Newberry contests, is not something that just is, not something that exists outside of human history, politics and activity. Rather, it is a “particular and changing story we tell of geographical space” (2012, p. 34). Similarly, my stories from the Mint Julep are particular, being from my perspective as the story teller. They are also changing, being shaped by shifting familiar, cultural, linguistic, and social conditions that inform my context. Newberry (2012) suggests that nature is not isolated, that it is also shaped by these shifting conditions. Thinking with my experiences from the Mint Julep alongside the ideas of Newberry (2012), I can see that both nature and my personal knowledge landscape are not isolated, but complex. Even as I position myself as the story teller in these stories, there is no me, the story teller, without these many aspects shaping my stories to live by.

Newberry (2012) suggests that there are many aspects shaping nature as well. Conceptions of wilderness/nature, Newberry shows, can often be simplified and incomplete, as is evident in the making of wilderness maps:

The maps, without my pencil etchings, indicate buildings, roads, marshes, rivers, lakes, land and rapids, but tell me very little of the social, cultural, or political history of the space beyond those buildings and roads. National and provincial park maps come pre-annotated with campsites and portages (but not Aboriginal history and present, the location of culturally modified trees, the presence of sacred sites, or the existence of land claims, for instance), in effect, parcelling a geographic space and claiming it for the tourist. (Newberry, 2012, p. 35)
What Newberry (2012) illustrates is that maps are always partial, that in their simplicity they are not able to make evident the social, cultural, and political conditions that complicate conceptions of wilderness/nature. Just like nature, the personal knowledge landscape cannot be reduced to a map. Just like nature, it is necessarily complex, shaped by shifting social, cultural and political conditions. These contested conceptions of wilderness by Newberry (2012) help me to think about how little I may come to know about the personal knowledge landscapes of others unless I first pay very close attention to the many complexities they are shaped by.

Reflecting upon the pilot study with students from 2014, I came to see that nature means different things to different people, and that there is incredible diversity in the personal knowledge landscapes of people. When thinking with my stories from the Mint Julep alongside Newberry’s (2012) contested views of wilderness/nature, I wonder again about the diversity in the personal knowledge landscapes of myself and others. I especially wonder about the complexities in the knowledge landscapes of students, whose personal knowledge landscapes are shaped by particular cultural, historical, linguistic, familiar, and social narratives that shift as students move in and out of school stories.

By noticing the resonance between the way Greene (2001) describes art and the way I describe nature, I conceptualized that meetings with nature do not take place “in isolation from lived biography” (p. 16). In the same way, meetings between students and teachers do not take place in isolation. I wonder what could result if teachers began to think about and pay closer attention to the complexities of the personal knowledge landscapes of students. I wonder if doing so could open up in teachers a sense of “wide-
awareness” and “perceptual aliveness” (Greene, 2001, p. 11) to the personal knowledge landscapes of students, creating new possibilities for both teachers and students as they meet not in isolation, but in complexity.

Inquiries into field texts from the Mint Julep illustrate that personal knowledge landscapes, including my own, are shaped by complex cultural, social, and familiar conditions that shift. These inquiries also illustrate that one of many social conditions that shapes my personal knowledge landscape positions nature as an animate teacher.

4.6. Narrative threads from nature on the personal knowledge landscape

When I think with my experiences of nature and how they shape my personal knowledge landscape, I see several common narrative threads that tie my experiences together. Below I have attended specifically to the temporal and social nature of these narrative threads, thinking with the three dimensions, or commonplaces, of narrative inquiry (Connelly, & Clandinin, 2006), knowing that each thread is shifted and shaped by the three dimensional space that includes the social, personal, place and temporality. As I notice narrative threads linking my experiences alongside nature to my personal knowledge landscape, I recall the narrative structure of knowledge conceived of by Dewey (1938) and by Connelly and Clandinin (1988). Connelly and Clandinin refer to narrative as “a story of a life as a whole” and note that “many of the most important educational experiences in our narratives occur outside of school” and that “such experiences are educational” (1988, p. 27). The ideas of Dewey (1938) and of Connelly and Clandinin (1988) helped me to realize that experience is the root of knowledge, and therefore all experiences are knowledge-making experiences; for better or worse. The
ideas of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) helped me to realize that these knowledge-making experiences occur both on the professional knowledge landscape, the context I enter into as I live out stories of being a teacher, and the personal knowledge landscape, the context in which I have lived from my earliest moments, and continue to live within.

Below, I think further with the three dimensional narrative inquiry space as well as the narrative threads linking my knowledge-making experiences alongside nature on the personal knowledge landscape. In agreement with Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey, I see “narrative understandings of knowledge, knowledge landscapes, and identities understood as stories to live by, as tightly entwined” (2014, p. 31). From inquiring into field texts from the May Tree, Tara Mara, and the Mint Julep, I am beginning to understand more about my stories to live by, and what is important, for now, on my personal knowledge landscape.

4.6.1. Attending to the temporal nature of the threads

Thinking temporally, I can see that the element of time is something that is present in each of the stories that I tell. Each of my stories involves spending a lot of time getting to know a nature place. I spent much of my play time and thinking time growing up either under the May Tree or in it, or sometimes even drawing pictures of the May Tree or painting it. The same can be said of Qu’Appelle Valley, where Tara Mara and the Mint Julep are, which is where I spent much of my summers growing up, which is where several of my ancestors first settled, and which is where my maternal grandparents now live. Thinking temporally also leads me to consider the repeated
rituals created within my family of going camping every summer, or of leaving a carved wooden bird behind at each campsite. Sometimes, though I didn’t spend a lot of time in one place, the ritual of being in an outside place time and time again, and the coherence created by leaving a wooden bird behind in each place time and time again, ties all of these places together and creates that same effect of a bigger story through time. I can also think about temporality in the sense of slowing down time. For example, as one of my students suggested after hearing me talk about the May Tree, making time to go and find an outside place to just be still and listen is important to me. These moments of intentional slow motion have helped me to create a strong relationship with nature and build solidarity (Epstein & Oyler, 2008) with nature on my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014).

Rereading my stories helps me also to notice a certain tension that presents when I think about my experiences temporally. I notice the tension that exists between the way the places I love once were, and the way they have changed throughout time to become different. I can see this in my remembered sadness the day that the swinging branch was cut from the May Tree, or in my anxiety for the looming moment of the day I know is coming, the end of the May Tree’s life, and especially throughout my stories of Tara Mara and its many changes. I also notice a tension between how dominant neo-liberal views in society view both nature and time as commodity and resource. Experiences with logging companies when I worked as a tree planter, where thousands of years of forest growth are clear cut to manufacture lumber products for profit, sit in stark contrast to watching myself grow taller alongside the May Tree growing taller, or comparing the water levels at the fish dam each year over sustained periods of time. During the making
of a clear cut, thousands of years of complex forest growth are felled in mere hours. 
Noticing these tensions helps me to better understand my stories to live by (Connelly & 
Clandinin, 1999), and in turn helps me understand how these stories to live by are shaped 
by, and are shaping, my personal knowledge landscape. 

Dewey (1938), theorizing experience as the root of knowledge, wrote that continuity and interaction are the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience, writing of experiences, “because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones” (p. 18). As I move from interacting with the May Tree, or Tara Mara, or the Mint Julep, to interacting in new situations on my personal and professional knowledge landscapes, stories of these places do not leave me. As I pass temporally from one situation into another, prior experiences inform my present and future experiences. Morris (2002) conceptualized that, when we think with stories, these stories work on us. For example, stories of the changing view from Camel Hill and the disappearing fox family were working on me as I experienced the work of tree planting for the first time. While I had felt the gravity of the erasing of an entire hill as a young child, as an adult I witnessed the erasing of entire forests by logging companies who appeared not to feel any gravity of their actions at all. My experiences with the changing view from Camel Hill informed the tension I felt working for a company that would clear cut forests for profit. The feeling of gravity I experienced when Camel Hill’s neighbour was destroyed informed my even deeper, highly tensioned feelings when seeing large scale clear cuts for the first time.
When I spend time in a nature place that I grow to love, I grow planted in that place, therefore making it harder to uproot myself from it. Because I have a relationship with nature, I care when it changes, and therefore care about sustaining it. From inquiring into the temporal nature of narrative threads between my stories alongside nature, I can see that I live by stories of spending time with and in nature, of seeking stillness and moments of slow motion with and in nature, and of being attentive to and at times resistant to changes to nature, especially those caused by people.

### 4.6.2. Attending to the social nature of the threads

Thinking socially, I see narrative threads of building relationships with other people within the setting of mutually important places. My love for the May Tree is wrapped up in my love for my family, and also in their own love for the same tree. It is my parents who watched the May Tree grow from a young sapling. It is my siblings and I who created forts, bridges, swings, and secret berry messages together under and in its branches. It is my mother who sent me a letter from the May Tree in my second year of tree planting, showing just how well she understood my love for its blooms.

Within the place of the valley, it is my Grandpa who took us out onto the lake to just be still and listen, my Grandpa who danced with me to Nat King Cole over and over, and my Grandma who taught me to make saskatoon berry pies and how to pick the ripest berries from the bushes lining our property. It is my parents who showed us the glory of stinky mud at the fish dam, my siblings who adventured up Camel Hill with me over and over and noticed the changing view, and my ancestors who painted the same view
overlooking the mint julep at sunset. My love for the valley is again steeped in my love for my family and in their love for me and for the same rolling hills.

When I think about what I have learned through my experiences alongside nature, I notice that it is not only the people in my stories who have been my teachers. Certainly, my parents, siblings and grandparents have shaped my relationship with the May Tree and the nature spaces at Tara Mara in the Qu’Appelle Valley, but just as certainly, the nature in these places has shaped my relationship with parents, siblings, grandparents, and myself.

On my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014), nature is an animate teacher. Making a space for me to sit, to watch, to listen, to feel, nature at the Mint Julep taught me about stillness and about patience. I saw that I could be still, and the world around me would keep moving. In these still moments I learned to think about bigness, the enormity of the way things are and the vastness of everything I don’t know. Retelling and rethinking my stories, I can see that to sit within nature became a way for me to find the circles of quietness (Greene, 2001) from which to question and wonder. I wondered about smallness too, and asked if, maybe, it was like bigness, in the way that even tiny chokecherries could make bigger and bigger ripples, and in the way that even one tiny white-humped-spotted spider could make such a big impression in my memory.

Greene (1995) writes, of teachers who can “see big”, that they are “teachers who provoke learners to pose their own questions, to teach themselves, to go at their own pace, to name their worlds. Young learners have to be noticed…they have to be consulted; they have to question why” (p. 11). This is the way that nature teaches me,
with its provocation to ask why and with an invitation to notice its own bigness (and the smallness within). Elsewhere in the valley, I learned about finding independence along the way, and learned to both question the changing view and accept it. Within the branches of the May Tree I learned to revere a living, animate being and saw that I could be in relation with the tree. In the process of retelling my stories I learned that there are also gaps in my understanding, stories that are silenced in the spaces between mine, that there is still so much more complexity to become wide-awake to (Greene, 2001).

Thinking with the work of Epstein and Oyler (2008), who studied the process of solidarity building among students in a social action curriculum, I wonder if part of what makes me feel planted in nature has to do with a solidarity with nature itself, a rootedness that causes that perceived distance from nature to diminish. I see now that all of my growing and learning and memory making alongside the May Tree, or the valley, has allowed me to build solidarity with nature. I have listened to its voices, spent important time connecting with special nature places, and now even I myself feel planted in the earth. The role of my parents and the community of others who were a part of my growing up seems enormous in this. We have camped in many places over the years, and there are so many individual campsites which I still remember with remarkable clarity. This is because there was something special about each one, and because my parents taught me to see it. I remember a campsite at Clear Lake where my dad fashioned a horse from a fallen tree, and I had made an instant play mate. Or the campsite at Lac MacDonald where my mom pointed out the way the ferns looked like fancy dresses and my dad coiled a fallen sprig into a doll for me to spend time with. I remember feeling sad when leaving these places, and my dad creating the tradition of carving a small wooden
bird from a stick which he would perch in a tree to leave behind each time we left a special place. I feel a part of me is planted in all of these places, which is why it is hard to leave, and why it is even harder to imagine the loss of these places, or the ruin of them.

From inquiring into the social nature of narrative threads between my stories alongside nature, I can see that I live by stories of being attentive to relationships between myself and people as well as relationships between myself and nature. I can see that I live by stories of being a learner whose teachers are both people, such as family members, and nature, such as trees and spiders. On my personal knowledge landscape, I live by stories in which I desire to stand in solidarity with nature as an animate being.

Thinking socially also leads me to notice the tension around conceptions of myself as planted, of nature as teacher, of people standing in solidarity with nature, when compared with dominant conceptions of nature. Dominant social structures parcel nature into pieces that human can own, buy, sell, rent, chop, bulldoze, and develop. In these ways, dominant social structures position nature not as a teacher, but as a resource, and position people as separate from, even in domination of, nature rather than in solidarity with it. These tensions, already present on my personal knowledge landscape, are especially evident on my professional knowledge landscape, and are a central focus of the next chapter.

4.7. Sustenance and tension: Personal and professional knowledge landscapes

Stories of friendship with a white flowered tree, and of traveling back and forth across time in the Qu’Appelle Valley, make me want to sustain nature, but also show that nature sustains me. Of course, it sustains us all with life giving resources, but it sustains
me in a way that is more than that. My stories alongside nature live at the core of who I am. I have been in, and of, nature from the very beginning of myself (Naess, 2008). It has been, and is, a respected teacher on my personal knowledge landscape. It shapes the “social, cultural, linguistic, familiar and institutional narratives” (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 183) which inform my identity on this first knowledge landscape.

Nature sustains me on my personal knowledge landscape. If it grows the roots that make me feel whole, identified, affirmed, knowledgeable, understood, and if these roots are planted in my personal knowledge landscape, what happens when I enter the professional knowledge landscape? As I enter the professional knowledge landscape, the social, place, and temporal conditions that surround me and inform my context shift.

On the professional knowledge landscape, I enter the institution of school, a space explicitly shaped by the same dominant social structures that bump with conceptions of myself as planted, of nature as teacher, of people standing in solidarity with nature, even on my personal knowledge landscape. I enter into a space where, often, “the construct of wilderness as a sublime landscape, as a frontier of redemption, and as a space separate or away from home, all re-inscribe a conceptual Western dualism separating people from nature” (Newberry, 2012, p. 35). If, on the professional knowledge landscape, people are often considered separate from nature, am I to be considered separate from nature once I enter that space? On the professional knowledge landscape, I enter a space where the lessons that nature taught me on the personal knowledge landscape are often contested, shifting the personal, temporal, place, and social conditions that surround me and inform my context. For example, whereas nature at the Mint Julep taught me to see the bigness,
and to wonder about the big ripples of even the smallest of things, on the professional knowledge landscape I am asked to compartmentalize what I know into various categories of teacher knowledge, and what my students know into various categories of student knowledge. It is required of me to measure knowledge and understanding, to document such measurement, to report it. It is required of me to regulate the number of minutes I commit each week to teaching language arts, science, math, social studies, health, art, and physical education, in a way that is very different from the bigness of the wind in the valley and the way it links together everything it touches. Often the planted person I know myself to be on my personal knowledge landscape feels tension in this other landscape.

In this chapter, I have shown that nature is an animate teacher on my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014) and have shown that nature shapes my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). In the next chapter, I begin to examine what this means for me as I cross over into the professional knowledge landscape. I inquire into experiences as a teacher that contribute to a sense of tension or a sense of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) as my personal knowledge landscape and professional knowledge landscape intersect. From inquiring into experiences on my personal knowledge landscape and from noticing that there are different social, place, and temporal conditions on my professional knowledge landscape, I have arrived at two research puzzles: Knowing that I feel sustained on my personal knowledge landscape as I live by stories of feeling planted in nature, how can I negotiate a feeling of sustenance on my professional knowledge landscape when there are tensions? Knowing that nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape, how does my personal knowledge landscape
shape my pedagogy? In the next chapter, these questions are addressed as I inquire into experiences where I introduce students to the May Tree, and bring outside inside through the Little Green Thumbs indoor gardening program.
CHAPTER FIVE: NEGOTIATING THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE: IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY

Gather under a May Tree, early June
Rub the bark, pat it
Sniff the white blossoms
Twirl as they fall and get stuck in our hair
Listen to a poem about a white-flowered tree
Stillness
And questions
And stories that come from so many directions all at once
I think we’re building a bridge between our worlds

In the previous chapter, I described a pilot project I engaged in with my grade one students, in which I introduced them to the May Tree through poetry and artifacts, invited them to tell stories to each other that the May Tree inspired, and invited them to illustrate the poem I had written. The intentions for this project came from a curiosity about children’s personal knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014) and, I now realize, from a desire to show my students something of my own personal knowledge landscape. By inquiring into poetic narratives of my experiences in and alongside nature, I was able to show that nature is an animate teacher on my personal knowledge landscape, that it sustains me and profoundly shapes my stories to live by. I also began to show how conceptualizing nature in this way, as an important part of my personal knowledge landscape, often bumps with dominant ways of understanding knowledge and dominant ways of understanding how we come to know.
In this chapter, through my inquiry into field texts, I begin by illustrating the bumping places, tensions that become apparent as I attempt to negotiate my personal knowledge landscape within my professional knowledge landscape. I then show how this negotiation in turn shifts and shapes my pedagogy. As I shift during this chapter toward attending to my professional knowledge landscape, I think with the work of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) and their conception of teacher knowledge in which “people do not move out of their personal knowledge landscapes when they become teachers and step into professional knowledge landscapes”, but rather live “in both knowledge landscapes simultaneously” (p. 195). Consistent again with Dewey’s theory of continuity in experience (1938), my experiences alongside the May Tree and its secret berry messages, at the Mint Julep and Tara Mara where I am nature with my panting breath, dripping hair, seaweed toes, do not leave me when I enter the professional knowledge landscape. I do not walk a balance beam back and forth between these two knowledge landscapes. Rather, as Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) imagine, my professional knowledge landscape is set within my personal knowledge landscape.

Personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) is embodied personal knowledge expressed in practices, and is knowledge teachers draw upon as they shape their pedagogy. Drawing on the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1988), and consistent with the view that the professional knowledge landscape is layered within the personal knowledge landscape, Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) began to imagine that personal practical knowledge spans two knowledge landscapes and that it can personalize the professional knowledge landscape. In their narrative inquiry which seeks to understand how people who left teaching within their first five years were or were not
sustained in the profession, Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) build upon the conception of personal practical knowledge by writing of the landscapes in which this knowledge is learned and expressed. Participants in their study told stories about moments in which they came to teaching, engaged in teaching, and left the teaching profession. Finding many narrative threads between participants’ diverse stories, the researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) show that the participants felt most sustained as teachers when they were able to find coherence between their personal knowledge landscapes and their professional knowledge landscapes. The researchers explain:

Drawing on a metaphor of being rooted in their knowledge landscapes, we see how each teacher’s roots, rooted first in their personal knowledge landscape, sustain them when they are able to tap into their professional knowledge landscape, just as tree roots provide sustenance for a tree when it is rooted well enough to gain nutrients. If tree roots are not able to establish themselves in the soil, the roots do not provide sustenance. If the ground in which trees are planted does not allow them to root, the trees fail to find the nutrients necessary to thrive. (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014, p. 196)

The metaphor of rootedness resonates strongly with how I have described myself as planted, as a person whose personal knowledge landscape is strongly shaped by belonging in nature. The antonym of rootedness, uprooted, also resonates strongly with moments on the professional knowledge landscape when my personal knowledge landscape has felt displaced, when there was a sense of incoherence between my personal and professional knowledge landscape. Inquiry into these bumping places lead me to thinking about moments when I felt sustained, when there was a greater sense of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) between my personal and professional knowledge
landscape. Both the bumping and coherence have allowed me to better understand how these experiences continue to shift my stories to live by, and in turn my pedagogy.

5.1. Uprooted

When Cardinal (2011) inquired into her experiences in graduate school as she searched for ways to identify as an Indigenous researcher, she used tensions and bumping points as key moments for inquiry. In a similar way, moments of dissonance invite me to look closer in an effort to become more wide awake (Greene, 2001) to the “meaning of the past for me now” (Kerby, 1991, p. 30). Aoki (2005) writes that “to be alive is to live in tension…it is the tensionality that allows good thoughts and actions to arise when properly tensioned chords are struck…tensionless strings are not only unable to give voice to songs, but also unable to allow a song to be sung” (p. 162). As I turn my attention toward the professional knowledge landscape, I notice that the knowledge I have acquired from nature on my personal knowledge landscape is often at odds with the grand narratives of nature and the nature of knowledge.

Dominant views within the institution of school characterize nature/wilderness as a space away from home (Newberry, 2012), as a sanitized boxed up subject area. While content about biological systems, chemical reactions, and the environment may be valued, it is not nature that teaches us about these things. It is often times a teacher, a textbook, and a classroom that facilitate this learning and often times encourage us to see small (Greene, 1995). This is different than my understanding of nature, which resonates much more with Greene’s notion of seeing big. Seeing big awakens me to what I know about bigness from the wind and ripples, and my sense of feeling planted, my sense of
home-as-belonging-in-nature. Seeing big in regards to nature and knowledge, helps me to further understand how difficult it can be to position my personal knowledge landscape within the professional knowledge landscape. In the section that follows, I inquire into three moments when my knowledge, conceptualized as narrative knowledge that was shaped by nature in my personal knowledge landscape, bumps with the way knowing and learning are conceptualized on my professional knowledge landscape.

5.1.1. Tensions with nature as away from home

The very first year that I planted a vegetable garden inside with my students through the Little Green Thumbs program, I received an email from a parent in late November, just as the little seedlings were sprouting their true leaves, almost time to transplant them. The parent of one of my grade one students expressed disappointment that we would have plants in the classroom this year, and asked if I could move the garden to another room in the school or consider moving her daughter to another classroom. The email seemed accusatory to me at the time, as the parent wrote on to say that her daughter had not slept for a week, kept up at night by a stuffy nose that surely must be caused by the plants in our classroom. The email went on to say that each year she and her daughter wish for snow to make things easier on their allergies, and now that their wish had finally come true, I had taken it away by planting the tomato, bean, basil, and cucumber seeds with the class. When I sent the email to my principal to ask for advice in how to respond, I was surprised to learn that she had received one as well. The principal wanted to know whether I had filled out the appropriate paperwork (a permit) to have plants indoors.
Thinking with narrative conceptions of knowledge, I now see that the garden became a way for me to root my personal knowledge landscape within the professional knowledge landscape. While the garden to the principal or the parent may have simply seemed like a neat way to spruce up a classroom, to me it was a way to infuse what I had learned from the May Tree in the professional knowledge landscape. *Stinky mud and fishbone finds*, and climbing under the snowy white blossoms of my favourite tree were a part of the very shape of me, and the garden became a way to bring the shape of me into the professional knowledge landscape.

At the time I reacted by feeling threatened. I felt justified in wanting to protect the garden and the learning opportunities I knew it would afford my students. Outwardly, I tried to respond with compassion to the parent, invited her to come and tour the garden, and asked if we could try to problem solve a solution together. Internally, I now see that it was not the garden that created the feeling of being threatened, it was that my personal knowledge landscape was becoming uprooted from the professional knowledge landscape. I felt a tugging dissonance, an interruption to my stories to live by, to the confidence I had felt earlier in the year as I had watched the students learn in ways that I had on my personal knowledge landscape.

I had watched them learn that seeds wear coats, and that if you unzipped each coat, inside you would find everything needed to grow a whole plant. I had watched them running into the classroom first thing in the morning, grabbing a ruler to see how much the sprouts had grown overnight, lying down on their bellies to get eye-to-eye with the leaves and then *swearing* that they had seen one waving to them. After learning
about photosynthesis, I walked in to find a student lovingly breathing on the plants – giving them a little extra CO2. I had heard whispered phrases of *you can do it* from student to plant, and even once witnessed a little boy singing a good morning song to the tomatoes. On my personal knowledge landscape I had learned that plants and trees were animate. I watched as my students learned from the plants, spoke to them, and cared for them in ways that positioned them, the plants, as members of the classroom. I watched as the plants became knowledge holders, they became the teachers, as the students experienced the inner workings of a simple garden. Like my experiences learning from nature, I watched as the students became inspired, curious, community builders. The letter from the parent, and the reaction from the principal although literally asking for a garden to be removed, were in actuality asking for me, my personal knowledge landscape, to be removed from the professional knowledge landscape.

Throughout the year there was more problem solving to do, as the student was not allowed to come on walks outdoors with the class or attend field trips with outdoor components. I was discouraged from taking the students out to the front lawn for our morning circle time, something I typically practice on fair weather days. School was expected to be an indoor space, kept so separate from nature that indeed the only living things allowed in a classroom (without the appropriate paperwork) are humans. I didn’t know how to make this fit with what I knew was important. With my experiences on the personal knowledge landscape telling me that nature is home, is “where one belong[s]” (Naess, 2008, p. 45), and this experience on my professional knowledge landscape telling me that nature is away from home (Newberry, 2012), I felt a sense of being uprooted.
When I think with the tension I experienced as a parent and administrator confronted me about gardening inside with students, I realize that the knowledge that I believe counts is not necessarily the same as what the mandated curriculum outcomes, structure, policies, and methods of assessment in schools tell me is knowledge that counts. From thinking with Dewey’s (1938) conception of experience and Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) conception of personal practical knowledge, I conceptualized my experiences alongside nature on my personal knowledge landscape as educational, knowledge-making experiences. Schools, through mandated curriculum outcomes, structure, policies, and methods of assessment communicate a different message: perhaps that knowledge-making happens outside of experience, largely on the professional knowledge landscape, or within the space of school. Orr (2004) wrote that, “by what is included or excluded, students are taught that they are a part of or apart from the natural world” (p. 12). On my personal knowledge landscape, I learned that I am a part of nature, while dominant structures on the professional knowledge landscape, such as the requiring of permits to interact with plants, insist that I and my students are apart from nature, which can cause me to feel uprooted on the professional knowledge landscape.

5.1.2. Tensions with knowledge as disconnected

I was approached by a colleague responsible for covering the social studies outcomes for my class who wanted to know why I had already taught the students about recycling and composting, even though it falls under the interdependence category of outcomes in social studies. I attempted to explain to my colleague that I didn’t know how to not include investigations into recycling and composting as we engaged in inquiries into gardening and food production, and as we learned about respect and community.
On my personal knowledge landscape, nature taught me to see the bigness by introducing me to the big ripples of small living things and to the root systems of trees, which connect dozens of individual organisms to each other underground. Because this knowledge is embodied personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), on my professional knowledge landscape it informs the way I view supposedly distinct subject areas. In the same way that all living things in nature are connected, I view knowledge and learning as connected, which bumps up against the categorized subject areas implemented in the institution of school.

Greene (1995) applies the ideas of seeing big and seeing small to education, writing that the vision that “sees things big brings us in closer contact with details and with particularities that cannot be reduced to statistics or even to the measurable” (p. 10). In contrast to seeing things big, to see things small is a detached point of view that looks at schooling “through the lenses of a system – a vantage point of power or existing ideologies – taking a primarily technical point of view” that is “preoccupied with test scores, ‘time on task’, management procedures, ethnic and racial percentages, and accountability measures, while it screens out the faces and gestures of individuals, of actual living persons” (Greene, 1995, p. 11).

On my personal knowledge landscape, learning to see big means learning to look for the relationships that connect things together, that make everything interconnected. On the professional knowledge landscape, it sometimes feels like I am being asked to see small, as Greene (1995) implies. I am asked to see small by categorizing curriculum into many distinct subject areas, such as social studies and science.
While my colleague questioned why I had crossed the line between social studies and science, to me that line looks far more blurry than distinct, so blurry that I often wonder who gets to decide where the line resides. Mandated science outcomes for grade one ask teachers to guide students to observe the characteristics of living things and to explore how living things meet their needs. Mandated social studies outcomes for grade one ask teachers to grow an awareness in students of how humans rely on the natural environment to meet needs, to explore the relationship between humans and nature, and to recognize human responsibility toward stewardship of the natural environment. Informed by the bigness, the interconnectedness, stemming from my personal knowledge landscape, I see an unending web of connections between these outcomes. Humans are living things, and interact with natural and constructed environments to meet their needs. Humans are both in relation with nature and are nature, just as my stories from Tara Mara showed me, with my panting breath, dripping hair, seaweed toes. Humans can both consider stewardship of the natural environment as well as receive life giving resources from it.

Engaging in recycling and composting with students is as much an act of stewardship and interdependence as it is an act of scientific hypothesis and observation. It can be scientific and social in nature, as well as artistic (arts education), linguistic (language arts), physical (physical education), and numerical (mathematics). While, on my personal knowledge landscape, nature taught me to see big in terms of the way everything is connected, on the professional knowledge landscape, my colleague wondered why I had crossed the imaginary line between our disciplines of responsibility. Whether attributed to a difference in our two personal knowledge landscapes, or to the
shape of the institution in which we come to professional knowledge landscapes, or both, this interaction again left me feeling uprooted.

5.1.3. Tensions with students as meeting or deficit

Twice each year I am asked to measure and compare student knowledge so that my principal can compile the data – a set of green and red bar graphs alongside percentages of students in each grade who have reached a certain reading level or demonstrated proficiency on a division-wide math assessment. Teachers measure these language and mathematical skills with assessments that are described using the term value added assessments. Although value added assessments are said to be based on growth, the knowledge of students is measured and compared to normative standards and given a status of meeting or deficit. For grade ones, meeting is determined to mean that students can read a book that is called level eight based on its difficulty. At the end of each year I am handed a colour coded bar graph – green for meeting, red for deficit – and there is a moment each year when I hold my breath and wonder what this data means. What does it mean for the students whose bar graph is coloured red at the end of the year? Does is mean I have failed? Does it mean the students have failed? Has someone failed?

When I think with the values I know from my personal knowledge landscape, assessment that is described as value added, yet labels students as having meeting or deficit knowledge, bumps and causes me to feel tension. On my personal knowledge landscape, various teachers, such as my parents, the May Tree, my siblings, and Camel Hill, taught me the multiplicity of things that count. My parents, by encouraging my
friendship with the May Tree, helped show me that nature is animate, that my knowledge from nature as an animate teacher is valuable, that it counts. On the professional knowledge landscape, what counts is a standardized set of norms determined by those outside of relationship with teachers, students, and families. Standardized assessments name specific reading and math strategies as the most important knowledge students learn during each school year. Privileging the mandated curriculum and defining success based on meeting these standards at a specific time positions the knowledge students bring with them from their own personal knowledge landscapes as deficit or less important. Measuring students, and measuring knowledge, in this way bumps with my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) and my personal knowledge landscape.

Building upon the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1995), Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) call attention to “competing and conflicting stories that [live] both within…teachers as well as between teachers and their particular professional knowledge landscapes” (p. 164). The researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) note especially that as teachers express their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), they do so in institutional spaces that originate outside of each teacher’s own experience, creating a sense that teachers must navigate around various competing and conflicting stories of school as they develop their own pedagogies based in what they know and what they have experienced. The space of school, originating outside of my own experience, is shaped by grand narratives of nature and conceptualizations of knowledge which bump up against the stories I live as planted on my personal knowledge landscape.
The knowledge that counts in the (standardized) *value added assessments* on the professional knowledge landscape is knowledge “taking a primarily technical point of view” and is “preoccupied with test scores, ‘time on task’, management procedures, ethnic and racial percentages, and accountability measures, while it screens out the faces and gestures of individuals, of actual living persons”, or in other words, is knowledge which sees schooling small (Greene, 1995, p. 11). In contrast to this, my personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), acquired alongside nature on my personal knowledge landscape and on my professional knowledge landscape, shapes me to see pedagogy that conceptualizes schooling as big (Greene, 1995). Naming students as having deficit knowledge because they did not meet the standard, which was decided outside of relationship with students, does not match my understanding of *bigness*, both from Greene (1995) and from nature on my personal knowledge landscape.

Lugones (1987) wrote of spaces similar to the personal knowledge landscape and professional knowledge landscape, but characterized them as worlds, constructions of a portion of society between which people travel. While similar to the knowledge landscapes conceived of by Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014), it is important to note that while Lugones (1987) conceptualized that people travel back and forth between almost parallel worlds, Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) conceptualized that people live in both knowledge landscapes simultaneously.

In their narrative inquiry into the curriculum making and assessment making worlds of children, Huber, Murphy and Clandinin (2012) draw on the ideas of Lugones (1987) to describe world-travelling as “being constructed, and constructing oneself
differently in different worlds” (p. 109). The researchers (Huber et al., 2012) describe the tension that became apparent as the participants involved in the narrative inquiry, children, travelled back and forth between familiar and school worlds of curriculum making, writing that “the more different their two worlds were, the greater the children’s embodied tensions appeared to be as they travelled in both worlds” (p. 136). While I may live in both knowledge landscapes simultaneously rather than travel back and forth between them, there seems to be a shift in how I am constructed on each knowledge landscape. Like the children in the narrative inquiry (Huber et al., 2012), my embodied tensions seem to increase when constructions of myself on each knowledge landscape bump.

When I think with stories of standardizing what is important to know and when is important to know it, I realize that, on my personal knowledge landscape, I was largely in control of the standards I wanted to achieve, of my rate of growth. For example, my parents did not tell me when to start climbing in the branches of the May Tree, or how high to go. They did not point out that my twin brother could already climb higher than the big knot in the trunk, and grow worried that I couldn’t yet do the same. Instead, my personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) and stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) were shaped as I interacted with nature at my own pace. At Tara Mara, there was no time limit placed on learning to swim. If I tried and was not ready, my parents did not view this as a failure or view me as deficit. Rather, with each experience I grew my understanding of swimming, and these understandings came with me as I tried again and again until I succeeded. Relational social conditions and continuous temporal conditions at places of the May Tree and Tara Mara showed me
what was valuable and showed me that learning and growing do not happen in the same way and at the same time for everyone. The experience of the pilot study showed me that perhaps students live in personal knowledge landscapes with diverse social, temporal, and place conditions, just as I do. Sensing that there is diversity in the personal knowledge landscapes of students bumps with using assessments that have the same expectations for everyone.

From inquiring into my own personal knowledge landscape, I know that my experiences off the professional knowledge landscape are knowledge-making experiences that shape my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). While this knowledge that I carry within myself is not always measurable, it is the knowledge that continuously informs me as I encounter next experiences (Dewey, 1938). I feel uprooted when students are not able to learn, and demonstrate their knowing, in a way that is coherent with my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Inquiring into my own personal knowledge landscape helped me to realize that students live in diverse personal knowledge landscapes as well, where knowledge-making experiences inform their own stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Because my tensions with calling student knowledge meeting or deficit come from an incoherence between my two knowledge landscapes, I wonder if measuring success in a standardized way causes tension for students as they attempt to negotiate their own stories to live by within the place of school.

Awakening to the personal knowledge landscapes of students, thinking with Greene’s (1995) conceptualization of seeing schooling big, and thinking with Clandinin,
Schaefer and Downey’s (2014) conceptualization of rootedness, leads me to wonder how often students’ personal knowledge landscapes are uprooted. Below, I think with experiences when I have felt sustained, rooted, on the professional knowledge landscape. I wonder if there are ways to shift and shape my pedagogy that may also help students to feel rooted in schools.

5.2. Negotiating a pedagogy of sustenance

About five feet by four feet, a collection of big green containers sit puzzled together near the sink, close enough to receive natural sunlight from the big window that faces east, but receiving the bulk of life-giving-light from the ultraviolet lamp that hangs from the ceiling. Add in the ballast, the fan, the cooling tube and its vents, and all in all it looks quite a bit like an elephant who watches over our plants from above. A fan gently blows on the now mature tomatoes, basil, cucumbers and purple peacock pole beans, because without wind to stand strong against they will grow weak and limp. The students know how the containers work: working in pairs, one student pours water down the long tube that leads to the reservoir at the bottom of the container while the other student watches the bottom of the tray for drips – the signal that the reservoir is full and it is time to move on to the next bin. They know that the columns of soil that they pressed and packed into the corners will facilitate wicking, as the water is sucked up through the soil to the plant roots, not too much and not too little, just the right amount. From the garden, they know. What else do they know, and from where or whom do they know it?

In the first two chapters of this paper, I describe how my early stories of being in relation with nature and desiring to sustain and help students relate to natural places led
me to apply to the Little Green Thumbs program. Drawing on Dewey’s theory of continuity and interaction in experience (1938), I can see that my stories of berry picking, tiny-batch-jam-making, crab apple slicing, pansy planting, tree climbing and fish dam wandering led me toward and into the Little Green Thumbs program. Now, the way I teach daily, and the way my students learn daily, is largely shaped by interaction with the garden at the back of our classroom.

Lugones (1987) writes that those who world-travel do so with an attitude of playfulness and flexibility, inviting constructions of themselves from one world to negotiate space into the other. Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) conceptualized the professional knowledge landscape as layered within the personal knowledge landscape, and imagined that personal practical knowledge spans both knowledge landscapes. This conceptualization of the two knowledge landscapes as layered, rather than as two separate, parallel worlds, invites the sense of playfulness and flexibility that Lugones (1987) wrote of.

Even as dominant ideologies shaping the story of school construct me in one way, in moments when my personal knowledge landscape is able to tap into my professional knowledge landscape, in moments when my personal practical knowledge can span both landscapes, I can instead show the way that I construct myself, leading to a greater sense of rootedness (Clandinin et al., 2014). In this section I inquire into how gardening with students through the Little Green Thumbs program creates the sense that my personal practical knowledge does span both knowledge landscapes, as Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) suggest.
The professional knowledge landscape is a tensioned space where I sometimes feel uprooted. The classroom garden helps me to find a sense of playfulness and flexibility as I seek to negotiate my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape. My inquiries below show that when gardening with students, I feel more able to navigate around competing and conflicting stories of school (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995) and to construct myself (Lugones, 1987) as a person who is planted, creating the sense that, while I may at times feel uprooted, I can also feel sustained on the professional knowledge landscape.

As I inquire into my own feeling of sustenance while gardening with students, I begin to wonder more about the knowledge landscapes of students and how they might navigate around competing and conflicting stories of school. If the garden creates a sense of playfulness and flexibility as I seek to negotiate my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape, can it also create the sense of playfulness and flexibility that would allow me to world-travel (Lugones, 1987) to the knowledge landscapes of children? If the garden helps me, on my professional knowledge landscape, to live by stories that are coherent (Carr, 1986) with my personal knowledge landscape, could it influence the way children live by stories in coherent ways at school?

5.2.1. Shifting toward pedagogy that is relational

Every few days, someone volunteers to be our class bee, brushing and gently flicking each of the yellow tomato blossoms with a finger or a paintbrush to pollinate them. Together, we have learned that bees, with their pollinating power, are vital to the world’s plants, and therefore all of us animals too. After reading Hey Little Ant (Hoose
and Hoose, 1998), we have had numerous conversations about how various situations might look from the perspective of a bee, particularly situations in which a bee encounters children playing at recess, or vice versa. Whereas in September a stray bee made for a hostile encounter, complete with all the screams and swats of bug battles, by May, each bee that buzzes onto our playground is practically given a security detail – arms out, nothing to see here – as three students protect it until it buzzes on.

On my personal knowledge landscape, nature is an animate teacher. In relational social conditions at Tara Mara and under the branches of the May Tree, bees, spiders, trees, seaweed, and even rocks are all creatures with whom I see myself in relationship. When students and I attempt to take the perspective of bees and ants, nature becomes an animate teacher to be in relation with on the professional knowledge landscape. When my students and I practice taking the perspective of bees and ants as a result of what we are learning about pollination in the garden, it is as though my narrative roots, rooted first in my personal knowledge landscape, are able to tap into my professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin, Schaefer & Downey, 2014).

As I watch students giving bees a security detail on the playground, and as they learn – from the garden – to care for bees as valued members of the community, there is the sense that my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) on the personal knowledge landscape are also stories I can live by on the professional knowledge landscape. In contrast to moments when I feel uprooted, in moments like this I feel sustained. In moments like this, it is clear that the knowledge that counts in my classroom is more than the standardized, measurable, skill-specific knowledge that is
supposed to count at school. As the garden, and the inquiries it inspires, help root me to
my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014), I can negotiate a way to
navigate around the green and red data charts and the isolated subject areas that leave me
feeling uprooted.

The garden shapes our classroom community in many relational ways. It might
be during the sharing of responsibilities such as watering, pollinating, and grooming the
garden, during moments when the garden and students are in parallel, or during drop-
everything-moments when students hug and high five and wonder and squish together in
an effort to get as close as possible to the unfolding event. Year after year the garden
becomes something that is shared among all of us in the classroom, similar to the way in
which nature shapes my relationships with family members on my personal knowledge
landscape. Social narrative threads of nature as animate, and of nature as shaping
community, are consistent across both knowledge landscapes when I garden with
students.

Clandinin (2013) urges narrative inquirers to consider “the relational between the
person and his/her world; a temporal understanding of the relational between past,
present, and future; the relational between person and place; the relational between events
and feelings; the relational between the physical world and people; the relational in our
cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives,” (p. 23). For narrative inquirers,
thinking relationally becomes part of thinking narratively. The relational considerations
Clandinin (2013) urges narrative inquirers to consider are much more visible in the field
text in which students stand in solidarity (Epstein and Oyler, 2008) with bees, than in the
field text where students are measured as meeting or deficit based on normative standards.

Through inquiries into field texts from teaching in relationship with the garden and with students, I can see that I feel more sustained when thinking relationally and thinking narratively become part of my pedagogy. I wonder how shifting toward a relational pedagogy might reflect students’ stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), their personal knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014), and the diverse teachers who show them the multiplicity of what counts.

5.2.2. Shifting toward pedagogy that is continuous and interactive

Garden moments and the way they shape our classroom space are unpredictable and change from year to year. There are moments when the garden and students are in parallel – one grows while the other grows. The beans climb their trellis bit by bit as a group of students plays bump, a dice game, beside them. The leaves rustle in our makeshift wind as several students nestle into the corners for some quiet reading time, or to make a drawing or journal entry. And then there are drop-everything-moments. Such as when two boys wondered which was taller today - the basil or the tomato sprouts – and the whole class gathered to compare them by connecting rows of cubes. Eight cubes high for the basil. Six cubes high for the tomatoes. Three for the cucumbers. Eighteen for the beans! Just like that, months before it appeared in my yearly plans, we had begun to learn about measurement. We once used a piece of string to measure one coiling bean shoot as it wound itself around the trellis, and discovered that, stretched out, the bean shoot was much taller than our ceiling! Our principal walked by at just the right moment
to witness a huddle of squealing, cheering six year olds high fiving (gently) their new superhero.

This story of emergent measurement helps me to think with Greene’s (1995) seeing big. In the same way as nature does on my personal knowledge landscape, the garden had allowed me, and now my students, to see the bigness, connecting and uniting knowledge and discovery across the blurry lines of subject areas. The garden teaches me and my students in the way that nature taught me on my personal knowledge landscape – in the way that it provokes learners to “pose their own questions, to teach themselves, to go at their own paces, to name their worlds” (Greene, 1995, p. 11). The garden encourages me and my students to see big, even as dominant structures within the school system ask me to see small (Greene, 1995). Math, social studies, science, health, language arts, music, visual art, drama, and physical education all have a place in our garden, making our days more fluid, more like the bigness of the wind and where it’s been today and the bigness of the ripples of small living things.

In the same way that learning alongside nature on my personal knowledge landscape is continuous (Dewey, 1938), that it travels with me no matter where I go, learning alongside the garden seems to be a continuous process for my students. What they learn about pollination as they undertake the work of it themselves inside moves them to bravely body guard the bees they meet outside. As they try the foods they grew themselves at school, parents report that they are more willing to try new vegetables at home as well. They measure in the garden and then remember how to compare as we take up measurement outcomes during math. When one asks, but what do they eat for
**lunch?**, and we investigate root systems, they tell the kids in their lunchroom all about minerals as they suck juice up with a straw, and may even give a rare performance of the photosynthesis song. Thinking with the ideas of Dewey (1938), these are educative experiences that are opening doors for other educative experiences. Maybe there are even bigger transfers of learning. Does the sharing of garden responsibilities, harvest, joys, and sorrows influence the way they share their toys, their turns, their ideas, their space with each other?

When I watch students drop everything to interact with the plants, like when they act on their urgency to measure and compare seedlings, I notice that they do so without regard for the rigid timetable of school days, which again provides rooting for my personal knowledge landscape as I remember the freedom of learning from nature. Their urgency to measure the seedlings, to investigate the first purple bean blossom, or to save a ladybug from the cold winter by sneaking it under the folds of a cucumber leaf, supersedes the recess bell, the start of a writing lesson, or a teacher asking them to line up at the door by the time they count from ten to zero. Each year students ask me repeated questions in an attempt to understand what is meant by the naming of subject areas; questions such as, *what is math? What is science? What is social?* The longer I teach, or the more attentive I become to the tensions between my two knowledge landscapes, the harder it is to answer the students in a way that makes sense to me. Informed by *the bigness of the wind* on my personal knowledge landscape and by Greene’s (1995) conceptualization of seeing big, I see subject areas as connected, not distinct. By scheduling the school day in chunks named by separate subject areas, schools construct knowledge and learning as chunked up and separate. From their wondering *what is math?*
I can see that this may not be coherent for all students. From noticing the way students interact with the garden in a continuous way, rather than a halting, scheduled way, I wonder if they are *seeing big* (Greene, 1995), seeing in an interconnected way, and I wonder if seeing in this way is carried with them from their personal knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014).

When I think with these moments of emergent curiosity alongside Dewey’s (1938) conception of continuity in experience and Greene’s (1995) seeing big, I see students trying to navigate around stories, which may conflict with stories from their personal knowledge landscapes, of learning as time-tabled and as categorized into separate subject areas. When I conceptualize the garden as my animate co-teacher in the class, the construction of learning as time-tabled is shifted, as the garden does not grow in line with our scheduled thirty, sixty, or ninety minute blocks of scheduled time at school. When I encourage students to drop everything and act on their urgent curiosities, I shift toward pedagogy that is interconnected and interactive, a pedagogy of bigness rather than smallness, that is continuous rather than halting and scheduled. Pedagogy that is continuous and interactive sustains what I know from my personal knowledge landscape, and allows me to feel rooted on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). From watching students act on their urgent curiosities without regard for schedules and subject areas, I wonder if shifting toward pedagogy that is continuous and interactive is also sustaining for students.

### 5.2.3. Shifting to pedagogy that is personalized

*He talks about the trees he knows from his old town*

*She wants to bring a book about a boy who loves a tree, or a tree who loves a boy*
He shares a tree memory from when his dad was still alive
We talk about letters, and being far away from home, and death
We read *Stellaluna* and she shares an upside down memory from Spain or from Germany or from both
We read *The Giving Tree* and she talks about the way time passes from there to here
Some tell stories about missing people or missing places
Others talk about favourite branches, or tree fort inventions, or ways to have fun
In almost every story there are people
Brothers, sisters, cousins, moms, dads, grandpas, grandmas
We read *Our Tree Named Steve* and she talks about loss or endings
These stories of trees are not just stories of trees
These stories of trees are stories of us

When I introduced my students to the May Tree during the pilot study and as we read the poem, touched the bark, sniffed the blossoms, looked at photos, read stories and made art, something magical happened. I had showed them a glimpse into my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014), and they began at once to show me glimpses into theirs. It was near to the end of the school year and I felt it had been a great year for community building within the classroom. It was the first year I planted the garden with students and I was amazed at how it had brought us together.

During our morning circle the students shared not only how they felt each day but also news of milestone events in their lives, pride at learning how to skip a bar on the monkey bars, the death of a family pet, and countless funny jokes and unique humour. We had grown close, however the experience of sharing the May Tree with the students brought out such a fast flowing stream of new stories, different experiences, memories, and feelings that I realized I knew them only in little pieces. It was during the May Tree
project that a student spoke for the first time about the passing of his dad the previous summer, remembering the game they used to play together in their own backyard tree. A student who had travelled to Germany earlier in the year and who had been very shy about discussing her German roots and talking about her trip or language, opened up and told us all about her cousins and *die eiche*, the oak tree, whose particularly twisty branches they enjoyed hanging upside down from. It was as though sharing my personal knowledge landscape had invited the personal knowledge landscapes of students into the space of school.

Greene (1995) writes that works of art “may radiate through our variously lived worlds, the wounds and the scars and the healed places, the empty containers and the overflowing ones, the faces ordinarily lost in the crowd” (p. 28 – 29). It felt as though by sharing stories from my personal knowledge landscape, particularly in a poetic and highly interpretive way, student stories that had been lost in the crowd were invited to the forefront. The experience of engaging in the May Tree project with my students inspired me to inquire autobiographically into my stories of feeling planted, in order to become more wide awake (Greene, 2001) to the nuances of my personal knowledge landscape. At the same time, it showed me that my students had rich moral and intellectual knowledge, acquired on their own personal knowledge landscapes.

In the years since the pilot project, and especially from inquiries into tension and sustenance on my professional knowledge landscape, I have become more attentive to how nature – the garden – like Greene’s (1995) art, radiates through our variously lived worlds and invites to the forefront “the faces ordinarily lost in the crowd” (p. 28 – 29).
For some students, the garden seems to become a way to share themselves, their personal knowledge landscapes, with the rest of the class. One student who had moved from a farm a few hours away shared stories about his own family harvests and how they had all worked together – even the three year old - to plant potatoes. Another invited her grandmother – an absolute expert on plants, she said – to help us transplant the seedlings, and her grandfather – an absolute expert on compost, she said – to help us start our first vermicomposting bin, showing us some of the diverse teachers from her personal knowledge landscape. A student who had recently decided to become a vegetarian (ethical reasons, he explained to us often) seemed just a little extra proud of our vegetables, and they later featured heavily in his genius-hour (independent research) project. I can see now that gardening, inviting nature to be my co-teacher in the classroom, not only helps to root my personal knowledge landscape in the professional knowledge landscape, but is another way in which I make my own personal knowledge landscape visible to students and invite them to make theirs visible as well. When students make their personal knowledge landscapes visible at school, they also make visible that they are experts in their own lives, that the experiences they have lived are knowledge-making experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

In the first chapter of this thesis I described how, as I began the journey toward becoming a Little Green Thumbs teacher, imaginations of gardening alongside students began to revitalize my sense of what it could mean to be me, while at the same time being me, the teacher. From inquiring into tensions, I know that there are varied constructions of me on two knowledge landscapes. Adopting an attitude of playful, loving perception (Lugones, 1987) as I inquire into negotiating tensions between what it means to be me,
and also *me, the teacher*, I can attempt to world-travel and wonder, from a student’s perspective, what it is like to negotiate varied constructions of *me* alongside [*me, the student*]. For me, the garden both literally and metaphorically brings outside, inside. While in a literal sense the garden brings nature and its animate, living teachers inside the four walls of my classroom, in a metaphorical sense the garden brings my outside-of-work self, as I had originally described it in chapter one, to an inside-of-work place. I wonder what specific practices – measuring student knowledge with standardized assessments, scheduling school days in rigid, subject specific chunks, dropping everything to measure the growth of seedlings, taking the perspectives of bees and ants – invite or prevent students from bringing their outside-of-school selves to inside-of-school places. Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey theorize what happens when personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) is able to span the two knowledge landscapes:

> We understand teachers’ personal practical knowledge as rooted in and spanning their personal and professional knowledge landscapes. We see personal practical knowledge, embodied narrative knowledge, as emanating from a person’s personal knowledge landscape and finding expression in both the personal and professional knowledge landscapes. (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 202)

Engaging in gardening with my students through the Little Green Thumbs program builds into my pedagogy a conception of teacher knowledge that is “embodied in persons, as context dependent, as weaving life experiences” (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 25). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) showed that practice is an embodiment of teacher’s knowledge, and called this personal practical knowledge: personal knowledge that is expressed in practices. My knowledge of and from nature, shaped on the personal knowledge landscape, is personal practical knowledge. As I garden, consider the
perspectives of bugs and ants, harvest, and cook alongside students, this knowledge has a way of personalizing my professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 202). As students shared stories from their personal knowledge landscapes in response to the May Tree poem during the pilot project, and as students demonstrate the moral and intellectual knowledge embodied in them as we garden in the classroom or protect bees on the playground, they make visible their own personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

I am a person who feels planted in nature, whose early stories take her back to the Qu’Appelle valley, or up high in the branches of a beloved tree, or to the carved wooden birds which now keep watch over a collection of special campsites. I am also a teacher of young learners on a professional landscape where nature is sometimes considered away from home (Newberry, 2012). When gardening alongside students I can negotiate who I am on the personal knowledge landscape with how I teach on the professional knowledge landscape in a way that sustains me (Clandinin et al., 2014).

A pedagogy in which nature, the garden, is my co-teacher, helps me to shape a relational, interconnected, personalized pedagogy, and also helps me to invite students to make visible their unique personal knowledge landscapes, rather than privileging the specific, standardized knowledge that is measured during division-wide value added assessments. As I negotiate my personal knowledge landscape into the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014), my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) are sustained, rather than uprooted. I wonder if shifting toward
pedagogy that is relational, continuous and interactive, and personalized can help to shape a school space in which students’ stories to live by are sustained as well.
CHAPTER SIX: POSSIBILITIES FROM INQUIRY ACROSS TWO KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPES

To our teacher and our friend

From a tiny wish

With sunshine and time and rain

SURPRISE!

You are alive with wonder
You bloom and bring life
To breathe your flowers
Is to fill up almost full
Red, purple, yellow, green
Rainbows that taste better than cake
You shine a light on this school
We love you!

Love, Us

The above poem is one that students and I wrote together in an event to celebrate and say goodbye to the garden. On cookie sheets, the students chose magnetic words to help describe the garden and then together, we edited their choices into phrases and eventually this poem, a letter to the garden. We arrived at the end of a year-long journey beside our teacher and our friend, just as I arrived at the beginning of a journey into narrative inquiry.

Stories of being in relation with nature led me toward and into the Little Green Thumbs program, led me toward narrative conceptions of knowledge, led me toward inquiring into tensions, led me toward negotiating sustenance. Where will nature lead
next? In this chapter, I will revisit how I conceptualized my narrative beginnings, review the research puzzles and methods for this thesis, summarize important findings, and consider forward looking possibilities that come from this research.

6.1. Conceptualizing narrative beginnings as a person planted

In chapter one I described my narrative beginnings (Clandinin, 2013), inquiring autobiographically into stories that make me feel planted. The impetus for telling my narrative beginnings came after the Little Green Thumbs workshop, where I discovered both a sense of inspiration and tension. In the opportunity to bring outside inside through gardening inside with students, I saw the possibility for my outside-of-work self to shape my inside-of-work practices.

Drawing on Connelly and Clandinin (1988), I began to think of my knowledge of and from nature, developed first in outside-of-work places, as personal practical knowledge, embodied knowledge expressed in practices. Dewey’s (1938) conception of experience together with Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) conception of personal practical knowledge helped me to understand the value of experience. I realized that I believe that experience is the root of knowledge and began to conceptualize my early experiences alongside nature as educational, as knowledge-making experiences.

Thinking with Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014), I came to conceptualize outside-of-work and inside-of-work places as the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape. The researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) use a landscape metaphor, which allows them to talk about space, place, and time, to describe the narrative contexts in which teachers live, work, and are knowledge holders. They
conceptualize that the professional knowledge landscape is layered over and within the personal knowledge landscape, and that personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) spans both knowledge landscapes and can personalize the professional (Clandinin et al., 2014).

Re-thinking my two places of knowledge making as landscapes resonated strongly with me. The expansiveness of a landscape metaphor allowed me to draw together what I had been learning about personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), Dewey’s (1938) theory of continuity and interaction in experience, and the narrative nature of knowledge. The researchers (Clandinin et al., 2014) also used a metaphor of rootedness to describe moments of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) between personal and professional knowledge landscapes. A metaphor of rootedness also resonated strongly with me, as I thought about how I had described myself as planted in nature. Clandinin and Connelly (1999) helped me to further conceptualize my experiences of feeling planted in nature as shaping my stories to live by.

6.2. The narrative inquiry puzzle

From conceptualizing my knowledge of and from nature on my personal knowledge landscape as knowledge that profoundly shapes my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), and from noticing tension when attempting to live by those same stories on the professional knowledge landscape, I imagined two research puzzles: First, how have experiences alongside nature shaped my personal knowledge landscape? Second, how is this knowledge negotiated on my professional knowledge landscape, and how does this negotiation shape or shift my pedagogy?
I inquired into these two research puzzles with the methodology of autobiographical narrative inquiry. In narrative inquiry, “a relational and transactional ontology precedes [the] research, because stories are about what happens to and between people” (Caine et. al, 2013, p. 583). Narrative inquirers draw on narrative conceptualizations of knowledge by Dewey (1938), believing that experience is the root of knowledge. Through the processes of telling, retelling, living, and reliving, narrative inquirers hope to understand the knowledge-making experiences of participants in contextual, relational ways (Clandinin, 2013).

This particular narrative inquiry is autobiographical. Autobiographical narrative inquirers stay with their narrative beginnings as they inquire into field texts, using tensions, or bumping points, as key analytic concepts (Cardinal, 2011). While inquiring into field texts, narrative inquirers are attentive to the three dimensional narrative inquiry space shaped by conditions of place, sociality, and temporality (Clandinin, 2013).

To inquire into experiences alongside nature that have shaped my personal knowledge landscape, I used field texts from the places of the May Tree, Tara Mara, and the Mint Julep, as well as from a pilot study, in the form of poetry. Seeing great similarity between how Greene (2001) conceived of art and how I conceived of nature, I used poetic field texts in an attempt to draw upon the unique power of the arts to “release the imagination” (Greene, 1995, p. 27) and open up a space for interpretation and inquiry. I inquired into the field texts with attention to the three dimensional inquiry space and noticed narrative threads which helped me to understand how nature has shaped my personal knowledge landscape and my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).
To inquire into the negotiation of my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape, and the implications of this negotiation for my pedagogy, I used narrative fragments from the professional knowledge landscape as field texts. I first used tensions and bumping places, moments where my personal knowledge landscape was uprooted from the professional knowledge landscape, as key analytic concepts. Inquiry into these bumping places led me to inquire into moments when I felt sustained, when there was a greater sense of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) between my personal and professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014).

6.3. Knowledge from nature across two knowledge landscapes

From inquiring into poetic field texts from a pilot study and from places of the May Tree, Tara Mara, and the Mint Julep, I now have a better understanding of how nature shapes my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) on both the personal knowledge landscape and the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). From inquiring into narrative fragments from the professional knowledge landscape in which I felt bumping or coherence, I now have a better understanding of how the negotiation of my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape shapes and shifts my pedagogy. I now have a better understanding of the stories I live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) in regards to how nature reflects narrative conceptions of knowledge, how I negotiate tensions and sustenance across two knowledge landscapes, and how I can shift toward pedagogy that is wide awake (Greene, 2001). These understandings are briefly summarized in the following three sections.
6.3.1. The nature of knowledge and nature

My inquiry into how nature shapes my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) showed me that nature itself reflects narrative conceptions of knowledge. Dewey (1938) conceptualized that experience is the root of knowledge and that experiences are continuous and interactive. My knowledge of and from nature is relational, positioning nature as an animate teacher, reflecting Dewey’s (1938) conception of interaction in experience. While teachers on my personal knowledge landscape are people, such as parents and siblings, they are also trees, spiders, foxes, and wind. From interacting with diverse teachers on my personal knowledge landscape, including nature as an animate teacher, I live by stories of being attentive to relationships, including relationships between myself and nature.

My knowledge of and from nature is continuous, reflecting Dewey’s (1938) conception of continuity in experience. Experiences of being in relationship with nature lead me toward a desire to sustain nature. From temporal experiences of spending ritual time with nature, I live by stories of being attentive to and at times resistant to changes in nature. My experiences alongside nature are planted within me and inform me continuously.

Nature is part of shaping the “social, cultural, linguistic, familiar and institutional narratives” (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 183) which inform my identity. It is an animate teacher among many teachers on my personal knowledge landscape who teach me the multiplicity of what counts. Nature teaches me to see big (Greene, 1995), and does so in a way that is interconnected, without subject areas or timelines. Describing myself as
planted is a way to describe my sense that home is belonging in nature (Naess, 2008). When I feel planted in nature, as I do on the personal knowledge landscape, I feel sustained. Because knowledge of and from nature, for me, reflects narrative conceptions of knowledge, when knowledge and learning, as well as grand narratives of nature, are conceptualized differently on the professional knowledge landscape, I feel tension.

6.3.2. Negotiating tensions and sustenance

Nature shaping my personal knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014) in the ways above bumps with grand narratives of nature and conceptions of knowledge on the professional knowledge landscape, where knowledge is thought to be acquired through teachers, textbooks, and classrooms, and where nature is considered away from home (Newberry, 2012). Whereas nature taught me to see big (Greene, 1995), I am often asked to see small on the professional knowledge landscape, by chunking knowledge into distinct subject areas and by measuring student knowledge in ways that are standardized, rather than continuous and interactive (Dewey, 1938). When my personal knowledge landscape bumps on my professional knowledge landscape, I feel uprooted rather than sustained (Clandinin et al., 2014).

In moments when there is a greater sense of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) between my personal and professional knowledge landscape, when my personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) can span across both knowledge landscapes, I feel sustained, or rooted, rather than uprooted (Clandinin et al., 2014). Gardening with students is one way that I negotiate my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape. When gardening with students, narrative conceptions of
knowledge as originating in continuous and interactive experiences (Dewey, 1938) are sustained. When gardening with students, I can continue to live by relational stories that position nature as an animate teacher and allow me to teach and think in interconnected ways more consistent with Greene’s (1995) seeing big.

6.3.3. Wide awake in pedagogy

The experience of the pilot study, and students making parts of their personal knowledge landscapes visible as a result of the garden, show me that students live by stories shaped in their own diverse knowledge landscapes. This notion, along with inquiries into my own feelings of tension on the professional knowledge landscape, leads me to wonder how often students experience tension, or feel uprooted, as they navigate around competing and conflicting stories of school (Clandinin et al., 2014).

Shifting toward more relational, continuous and interactive, personalized pedagogy, especially through the classroom garden, helps me to feel sustained on my professional knowledge landscape. Knowing this, I wonder if shifting toward more relational, continuous and interactive, personalized pedagogy might influence whether students feel sustained or uprooted at school (Clandinin et al., 2014). Sensing that there is diversity in the personal knowledge landscapes of students and that diverse teachers show students what counts, perhaps the things that make me feel sustained are not the same things that make students feel sustained. Perhaps the most important pedagogical shift is to become wide awake (Greene, 2001) to the personal knowledge landscapes of students.
6.4. Possibilities from this research

From coming to understand how nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape, and from beginning to understand how I negotiate a feeling of sustenance on the professional knowledge landscape when there are tensions, I see several implications of this research. Personal justifications for this research come from my narrative beginnings. A personal and practical implication of this research is that my own pedagogy is shifting. From becoming more wide awake (Greene, 2001) to the nuances of my own personal knowledge landscape, I desire to become more wide awake to the personal knowledge landscapes of students (Clandinin et al., 2014). This awakening is already shifting my practice, as I share my personal knowledge landscape with students and invite them to share theirs during practices such as shared inquiry into the May Tree poem or gardening.

This research is relevant beyond my own practice as well. Below, I discuss possible implications for curriculum making, for teacher education, and for research. Greene writes, “neither myself nor my narrative can have…a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and, in any case, I am forever on the way” (1995, p. 1). Aware of the spaces between my stories and the complex social, institutional, cultural, and historical influences that may be missing from them, I know that what I have written here are only some of many forward looking possibilities.

6.4.1. Possibilities for curriculum making

This research has shown that nature shapes my personal knowledge landscape, including shaping the way I conceptualize knowledge as narrative, and that my stories to
live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) are interrupted when nature and knowledge are conceptualized differently on the professional knowledge landscape. This interruption, or bumping, creates the sense that I must navigate around competing and conflicting stories of school, and as I undertake this navigation I either feel uprooted or sustained on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). Specific competing and conflicting stories that cause tension for me are mandated curriculum outcomes, and accompanying standardized assessment practices, which are determined outside of relationship with students, teacher and families, and which chunk knowledge and the school day into distinct subject areas. In an attempt to world travel with loving perception (Lugones, 1987), I wonder if my tensions around mandated curriculum outcomes that are created outside of relationship, cause tension for others as well. If I feel tension, it is possible that other teachers, students, or families may experience tension as they navigate around competing and conflicting stories of curriculum.

Aoki (2005) writes that teachers live “in tensionality, a mode of being that knows not only that living school life means living simultaneously with limitations and with openness” (p. 164). By turning back to “an understanding of our own being as teachers,” teachers can contribute to a curriculum of “risks and possibilities, as we quest for a change from the is to the not yet” (Aoki, 2005, p. 164). By coming to better understand my own identity as a teacher, planted in nature across both the personal and professional knowledge landscape, my understanding of curriculum is shifting. Rather than a set of mandated, separately taught outcomes, it seems there is room for a more “thoughtful, uncertain and open orientation to curriculum” (Newberry, 2012, p. 39). Seeing that I need, in order to be sustained, room within the professional knowledge landscape to
allow my personal practical knowledge to shape my pedagogy, there must also be room
for curriculum to be shaped by the personal practical knowledge of students (Connelly &
Clandinin, 1988). If diverse teachers on and off the professional knowledge landscape
teach students the multiplicity of what counts, then perhaps diverse voices, including
those of children and families, should be involved in curriculum making.

In their narrative inquiry into the curriculum making worlds of children, Huber,
Murphy and Clandinin (2012) conceptualize curriculum making in a way that does not, as
is often the case, privilege teachers and school policy makers as the only curriculum
makers. Rather, the researchers (Huber et al., 2012) show that children are engaged in
curriculum making alongside their families in home and community places as well as at
school alongside teachers and other children. In this conception, curriculum is composed
relationally, and there is space for the personal practical knowledge (Connelly &
Clandinin, 1988) of both children and teachers within the space of school.

In the way that narrative inquiry as a research methodology has allowed me to
better understand, and invite into the professional knowledge landscape, my own
personal knowledge landscape, I am beginning to wonder if narrative inquiry as
pedagogy (Huber et al., 2013; Schaefer, 2013) could allow me to better understand, and
invite into the space of school, the personal knowledge landscapes of my students. In the
way that nature invites me to pose my own questions, to teach myself, to go at my own
pace, to name my world (Greene, 1995), I wonder how teachers can invite students to do
the same by telling their stories of experience, by making spaces for their knowledge
from outside of school, in diverse personal knowledge landscapes, within the space of
school. If I recognize that for me to feel sustained on the professional knowledge landscape, I must be able to reach down to my roots for sustenance, then I want students to be able to do the same (Clandinin et al., 2014).

Inviting children to tell, retell, relive, and think deeply with stories from their personal knowledge landscapes outside of school, and giving importance to these stories as both curriculum and assessment are shaped, could be called narrative inquiry as pedagogy (Huber et al., 2013; Schaefer, 2013). As a teacher, engaging in these narrative inquiry processes have helped to clarify who I am on and off the professional knowledge landscape, and how my personal knowledge landscape can shape my pedagogy in ways that feel sustaining. Pinar (2012) describes curriculum as “complicated conversation” (p. 1). Perhaps the structure of curriculum can be metaphorically envisioned as the landscape(s) within which that conversation takes place.

If curriculum is about the knowledge that counts, my inquiries have shown me that what counts may vary for diverse people who come from diverse personal knowledge landscapes and live in varied social, place, and temporal contexts. This very notion suggests that curriculum development must leave room for those spaces in between, for tensions and dissonance, and for the contextual lived experiences of learners and teachers. It is this view of curriculum as open (Newberry, 2012), full of risks and possibilities (Aoki, 2005), and relationally composed not only by teachers but also by children negotiating across knowledge landscapes (Huber et al., 2012), that I am awakening to as a result of this inquiry.
6.4.2. Possibilities for teacher education

My shifting understanding of curriculum has been made possible because of autobiographical narrative inquiry into my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) and into the incoherence and coherence I experience as I attempt to live by these stories on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). Through autobiographical narrative inquiry, I am better able to understand the tensions I experience and negotiate a feeling of sustenance on my professional knowledge landscape. Many teachers do not feel sustained on the professional knowledge landscape, which is evident in the high percentage of teachers, in Canada this is thought to be up to 40%, who leave teaching within the first five years (Clandinin et al., 2014). Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) changed the research conversation around teacher attrition by shifting from talking about retaining teachers, to sustaining teachers:

If a teacher’s roots can reach down to his/her personal knowledge landscape, the teacher, like a tree, can find ways of being sustained, of thriving in the professional knowledge landscape. If a teacher’s roots can cannot root into the professional knowledge landscape and reach in ways that delve into the personal knowledge landscape, it seems that, like the tree, the teacher is not able to find sustenance. Narrative incoherence between the two knowledge landscapes creates an inability for each teacher’s personal practical knowledge to take root in the professional knowledge landscape. (Clandinin et al., 2014, p. 196)

My inquiries resonate with research which focuses on sustaining teachers rather than retaining teachers. It was through autobiographical narrative inquiry that I was able to identify practices that make me feel rooted or uprooted on the professional knowledge landscape. Before this inquiry, while I may have noticed tension, I was not able to identify what the tension was caused by, and did not have an understanding of how I can
negotiate the tension in ways that feel sustaining for me. It is from autobiographical narrative inquiry into tensions that I am able to move toward pedagogy that sustains me as a teacher.

Clandinin (2013) writes that narrative inquirers need to “engage in intensive autobiographical narrative inquiries as part of our narrative beginnings” in order to begin to understand the shape of the inquiry as well as “who we are, and are becoming,” in relation with particular phenomena (p. 43). This research shows that teachers, perhaps especially pre-service teachers, may benefit from engaging in autobiographical narrative inquiries into their narrative beginnings. By doing so, new teachers can better understand their own stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as they prepare to navigate around competing and conflicting stories of school on their professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014).

Through autobiographical narrative inquiry I know that gardening with students is an expression of my personal knowledge landscape, which helps me to feel planted on the professional knowledge landscape and navigate around stories of school that bump with my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). For me, the garden is one way in which I can negotiate the shaping of curriculum which at once sees big, as in the meeting of diverse personal knowledge landscapes and diverse subject areas, and sees small, as in the meeting of particular mandated outcomes (Greene, 1995). For other teachers, negotiating sustenance may be made possible by practices other than gardening. Teachers who inquire autobiographically into their own narrative beginnings, their personal knowledge landscapes, may better understand what their stories to live by
(Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) are and may be able to more successfully negotiate stories of school in a way that feels sustaining for them.

It is also from the process of autobiographical narrative inquiry that I became awake to the diverse personal knowledge landscapes of students. With this awakening, I am shifting toward pedagogy that is more relational, continuous and interactive, and personalized in a dual effort to both feel rooted on my professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014), and to make space for students to feel rooted at school. Because of shifting toward a better understanding of my own stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) and the way my personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) spans both knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014), my understanding of curriculum is shifting. With inquiry into their narrative beginnings, pre-service teachers can discover what they believe about the nature of knowledge and about the nature of curriculum, two factors which deeply shape pedagogy. A practice of narrative inquiry as pedagogy (Huber et al., 2013; Schaefer, 2013) within teacher education programs could benefit both teachers and students as teachers prepare to shape their pedagogies in ways that may be sustaining for themselves and for students.

6.4.3. Possibilities for research

This research builds upon the work of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014), who conceptualized places off the professional knowledge landscape as a moral and intellectual space called the personal knowledge landscape. Their research centred around teacher attrition, inquiring into the experiences of teachers who had left teaching, whose personal knowledge landscapes were uprooted from the professional knowledge
landscape (Clandinin et al., 2014). Participants in their study also experienced moments of rootedness on the professional knowledge landscape as teachers. In leaving teaching, it seems the participants were able to negotiate a greater sense of rootedness, or perhaps a lesser sense of tension, on different professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014).

My inquiries, though relevant to research around teacher attrition, are centred around my staying with teaching, highlighting that while my personal knowledge landscape is at times uprooted from the professional knowledge landscape, I also experience a sense of rootedness when engaging in practices when my personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) can span both knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014). My inquiries show that while I live in tension (Aoki, 2005) as a teacher, I can negotiate my personal knowledge landscape on my professional knowledge landscape in ways that are sustaining. This research also builds upon the work of Clandinin, Schaefer and Downey (2014) by offering a closer look at nature, itself a three dimensional element, shaping personal knowledge landscapes and personal practical knowledge.

This research contributes to the field of narrative inquiry, in part by showing how narrative inquiry is situated in relation to several other research methodologies, as I did in chapter three (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). It specifically adds to the field of autobiographical narrative inquiry, with attention to methodological design considerations for autobiographical narrative inquiry (Cardinal, 2011) and to personal,
practical, and social justifications, which Clandinin (2013) points out can often be questioned around autobiographical narrative inquiry.

Possibilities for further research come from noticing that students live in diverse personal knowledge landscapes (Clandinin et al., 2014), where diverse teachers show them the multiplicity of what counts. While, in my inquiries, I became awake to the diversity in the personal knowledge landscapes of students, I also recognized that I saw only tiny pieces of their personal knowledge landscapes. While I wondered, from inquiring into my own feelings of tension, how often students feel uprooted in the space of school, I could only imagine the tensions or coherence students may experience. Further research, possibly in the form of narrative inquiry that asks how students are uprooted or sustained in the space of school, could illuminate the nuances of children’s personal knowledge landscapes and contribute to fresh implications for curriculum making and teacher education.

These are only some of many possible implications from this research. Stories of being in relation with nature led me toward and into the Little Green Thumbs program, led me toward narrative conceptions of knowledge, led me toward inquiring into tensions, led me toward negotiating sustenance. From the *bigness of the wind*, from *Camel Hill and the changing view*, and from deep friendship with a white flowered tree, stories of being in relation with nature have led me toward shaping pedagogy that is more relational, continuous and interactive, and personalized. Like the choke cherries at Tara Mara and *the bigness of the ripples they make*, autobiographical narrative inquiry into my own personal knowledge landscape, and its negotiation on the professional knowledge
landscape, may lead to new possibilities for curriculum making, teacher education, and further research.
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