Autoethnography as/in Higher Education

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Abstract

We explore autoethnography as a complex and potentially transformative methodology for understanding and enacting higher education. First, we position higher education in the context of global corporate managerialism and consider the possible effects of this on lived educational experiences and practices. In what follows, we each offer an account of how our individual learning about autoethnography as/in higher education has evolved concerning particular research interests: learning and teaching (Kathleen), academic identities (Daisy), academic leadership (Inbanathan). We argue that creating and teaching autoethnography can open spaces to experience higher education as a social, ethical, and collective endeavor. Autoethnography illuminates the relational, often unseen, complex nature of higher education—portraying participation that calls for care, connectedness, and sensitivity. In thinking and working autoethnographically, we choose to understand the academic self and vocation as personal, social, emotional, embodied, and mindful.

Situating Ourselves in Higher Education

We are based in a school of education at a South African university where we research and teach in teacher development studies (Daisy and Kathleen) and educational leadership and management (Inbanathan). For the past seven years, we have collaborated on scholarly research projects that have emerged from our mutual interest in self-reflexive research methodologies, such as autoethnography, which have a core focus on recognizing, questioning, and reimagining the lived experiences and self of the researcher (Pillay, Naicker, & Pithouse-Morgan, 2016b; Pithouse-Morgan, Pillay, & Naicker, 2017).

Within these joint projects, our diverse research interests in the domain of higher education—which include learning and teaching (Kathleen), academic identities (Daisy), and academic leadership (Inbanathan)—have guided our collective and individual discoveries. As a research team, we are diverse in terms of cultural heritage, gender, and race. This is worth highlighting, given South Africa's past. It is also personally significant for us, having grown up under apartheid in the separate spaces (educational, geographical, social, and so forth) imposed on us as people classified as Indian (Daisy and Inbanathan) and white (Kathleen). Having experienced apartheid, we do not take our research collaboration lightly. We are mindful that during the apartheid era, we would, in all probability, never even have met each other, let alone cooperate on projects that we find fulfilling and enjoyable.

1

We see our collective stance as a research team rooted in the Southern African ethical concepts of *ubuntu* (in the Nguni languages) and *botho* (in the Sotho and Tswana languages). *Ubuntu* and *botho* position self in terms of relational and dialogic processes of becoming, and in terms of care for others (Reddy, Meyer, Shefer, & Meyiwa, 2014). Reciprocal trust and respectful working relationships that have deepened over time have given us inspiration and confidence to venture into less conventional research methodologies such as autoethnography.

We understand autoethnography as a self-reflexive research genre in which the multifaceted and fluid self of the researcher becomes a lens through which to study interrelationships between personal histories, lived experiences, and wider educational and sociocultural matters (Pillay et al., 2016a; Pithouse-Morgan, Pillay, & Naicker, 2017). In this chapter, we explore autoethnography as a challenging, complex, and potentially transformative methodology for facilitating sociocultural understandings of learning and teaching, academic selves, and academic leadership in higher education. To begin, we position higher education in the context of global corporate managerialism and consider the possible effects of this on lived educational experiences and practices.

Working Within and Against a Culture of Corporate Managerialism in Higher Education

As coeditors of collections of autoethnographic writing (Pillay et al., 2015, 2016a), we have learned from our fellow academics' stories of being subjected to and resisting discrimination and marginalization in higher education due to being othered in ways that undermine human dignity, equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. Autoethnography as a lens has heightened our critical awareness of how academic lives and work in and beyond South Africa are unfolding within and in response to intensifying pressures and constraints produced by a global reculturing of higher education in terms of an "audit culture framed by neo-liberalism and scientific imperialism" (Sparkes, 2016, p. 511). This audit culture reframes higher education in terms of "productivity"—a word that connotes the measurement of worker efficiency in business, or the speed at which merchandise is mass-produced (Eagleton, 2015; Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2012). In South Africa, as elsewhere, higher education institutions have become, or are aspiring to become, more businesslike by adopting private sector practices with an increasing emphasis on efficiency and profit (Clare & Sivil, 2014). Coupled with this is a focus on "better" management by adopting managerial practices that aim to improve accountability and performance (Maistry, 2015).

Consistent with corporate language, terminology such as "performance management," "talent management," "research outputs," "productivity units," "key performance areas," "corporate vision and goals," "targets," "competition," and "performance-related pay" have permeated the work and lives of academics (Clare & Sivil, 2014; Maistry, 2015). Julia Clare and Richard Sivil (2014) cautioned that corporate managerial discourse should not be dismissed as a surface phenomenon. Instead, it structures conduct and may define what is considered normal or desirable behavior in terms of academic work. It creates inhibiting conditions such as an overly controlled environment, rigid procedures, excessive monitoring, and reduced resources, which can undermine intellectual motivators such as curiosity, collegiality, self-fulfillment, and recognition by peers and students (Clare & Sivil, 2014; Maistry, 2015). Drawing on Michel Foucault (1975), the surveillance and normalizing behavior characteristic of corporate managerialism becomes a form of disciplinary power exerted over academics. Academics are subjected to various forms of surveillance through instruments such as performance management. Quantitative performance indicators

determine what constitutes a productive academic. These norms become the standard against which academics are judged by others and could also influence how they come to value themselves and their colleagues and students (Foucault, 1975). As Barry Schwartz (2014) argued, the design of institutions within which people live and work can change how they think about themselves and others.

In what follows, we each offer an account of how our individual learning about autoethnography as/in higher education has evolved in relation to particular research interests: learning and teaching (Kathleen), academic identities (Daisy), academic leadership (Inbanathan). We show how we have brought our understanding into dialogue with the international scholarship of autoethnography as/in higher education. Our three individual accounts reflect the different, yet complementary, ways each of us makes sense of how autoethnography as method and phenomenon contributes to a generative resistance to higher education discourses that promote individualistic, product-orientated competition. To conclude, we consider the scholarly and personal-professional contributions and implications of autoethnography as/in higher education in a climate of corporatization.

Autoethnography as Learning and Teaching in Higher Education
Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan

I teach students who are mostly practicing teachers in schools and higher education institutions. My scholarship is in professional learning, with a specific focus on better understanding and supporting teachers as self-directed and self-developing learners. My educational approach has developed through a dialogue between my scholarship of professional learning and my pedagogic practice. Over the past two decades, I have studied my own professional learning, first as a schoolteacher and, more recently, as a teacher educator. I have taken a narrative self-study and autoethnographic stance toward research and pedagogy to explore and enrich my lived experiences of learning and teaching (Pithouse, 2005; Pithouse-Morgan, 2017).

The emphasis I place on understanding my own learning and teaching and the potential impact thereof on my students has been intensified by my awareness of how the growth of a corporatized higher education culture has given rise to a drive to increase numbers of students and hasten student throughput, which usually means less time and attention for each student. Kathryn Owler (2010, p. 294) has pointed out a tension between conflicting understandings of higher education as "a product with measurable outputs" and "a process of personal transformation" for students. In contrast to the current pervasive emphasis on learning and teaching in higher education as *productivity*, I am committed to enacting learning and teaching as *generativity*, "which connotes creativity and a calling to contribute to the well-being of others, particularly younger people" (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2012, p. 417).

With this in mind, I aim to foster transformative learning and teaching using self-reflexive modes such as autoethnography, narrative inquiry, and self-study. In my understanding, self-reflexivity in learning and teaching involves attending to how personal and professional experiences and beliefs interact with educational processes. This understanding guides me in developing learning activities that allow space and time for my students to recognize, deepen, and extend their awareness of how they are moved to act as teachers and as learners, and the possible impact thereof. I have come to appreciate how teachers can gain dynamic insights into their professional lives and practices by way of self-reflexive qualitative research methodologies such as autoethnography. I am fascinated by how, through autoethnography, the self of the teacher can offer a "wide-angle lens" (Mitchell,

2016, p. 175) through which to look both inward and outward by linking individual histories, lived experiences, and public educational and sociocultural concerns—with generative consequences for professional development and educational impact.

In my explorations of self-reflexive approaches, I have realized that, although autoethnography developed primarily as a qualitative research methodology (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011), it is becoming increasingly evident as an approach to learning and teaching in higher education, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. To illustrate, there are published examples of autoethnography as pedagogy across a range of disciplines and subjects, including anthropology (Reed-Danahay, 2017), communication studies (Berry & Hodges, 2015), creative writing (Moriarty, 2018), international relations (Barr, 2018), performance studies (Alexander, 2016), social science (Furman, 2014), sociology (Cook, 2014), teacher education (Pennington, 2007), and graduate research programs (Pinchon, 2013).

Making Connections Between the Personal and Social

While the topics and aims vary, there are some common threads in the scholarship of autoethnography in higher education learning and teaching. One of these is how autoethnography, as a phenomenon, is purposefully used to facilitate understanding, articulation, and critique of complex interconnections between personal histories and individual lived experiences on the one hand, and broader academic, cultural, political, and social happenings, concerns, and contexts on the other (Mitchell, 2016). Central to this is the premise that "neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (Mills, 1959, p. 3). In autoethnography, the self is recognized as interconnected in the world.

As the subject of learning and teaching, autoethnography makes visible entanglements between self and other, inside and outside, individual and the collective, personal and social. For example, in describing her choice of autoethnographic material for teaching anthropology, Deborah Reed-Danahay (2017) explained: "I want [students] to link their own experiences with those of the people whose stories they read, but also to be critical thinkers who ask questions about the social contexts and power relations that inform life trajectories" (p. 150). Similarly, Peta Cook (2014), teaching sociology, expressed that:

> The students' personal experiences are their research topics, and this becomes a mechanism through which they can understand, contextualize and study the social world. It allows them to see their experiences as not purely individual, but connected to and influenced by social structures, forces and issues. (p. 271)

And Michael Barr (2018), in international relations, described how autoethnography "promotes students' own self-awareness of their positionality, of how their beliefs and values are created vis-à-vis relationships to others and to wider of norms and traditions" (p. 6).

As these scholars have highlighted, autoethnography can stimulate critical and creative engagement with diverse personal circumstances and the broader social-historical-political contexts and issues that situate and feed into them. Autoethnography offers students a wide-angle lens through which to look inward while "simultaneously pointing outwards and towards the political and social" (Mitchell & Weber, 2005, p. 4).

Making Space for the Personal and Expressive

Another common thread is how autoethnography, as inherently personal, expressive, and self-revealing, differs from more orthodox, dispassionate approaches to learning and teaching in

higher education that call for an objective distance between students, teachers, and the subject matter (Alexander, 2016; Trahar, 2013). This thread tells a story of higher education learning and teaching that embraces the richness, texture, and depth of insider accounts of human experience. It reveals how autoethnography opens windows for students to access and engage with their own and others' experiences and viewpoints in vivid and evocative ways. It also calls attention to how inviting the personal and expressive into learning and teaching by facilitating the study, composition, and enactment of autoethnographic accounts in various modes and genres can generate both powerful self-discovery and empathy for others.

To illustrate, Barr (2018) emphasized how reading "the narratives contained in autoethnographies" is fundamentally different from reading "traditional social scientific writing" (p. 3). He went on to explain that while "students are used to reading journal articles and book chapters that explicitly state their aims and provide substantive closure," by contrast, autoethnographies tend to be narrated "not through careful, rational argument but through the feelings, gestures, and conversations of characters . . . allowing us to get inside their thoughts and feelings in a way that [promotes] sympathy and understanding" (pp. 3–4). Similarly, Bryant Keith Alexander (2016) described how taking an autoethnographic approach to reading in his performance studies class, "requires students to have an intimate engagement with scholarly texts through an embodied, experiential, and expressive mode" (p. 538). This personal engagement pushes students to

> filter lived experience through scholarly texts (and back) as a form of rehydration, like trying to move a prune back to a plum; knowing how they exist in their own existential space but how they are informed by the other. (p. 540)

Thus, autoethnography allows students to enter into dialogic relationships with prescribed texts and their authors, opening up possibilities for increased motivation and gratification in reading in higher education.

In addition to the reading of autoethnographies, students undertake scholarly inquiry through composing and analyzing their own personally expressive and meaningful autoethnographic accounts. As Keith Berry and Nathan Hodges (2015) explained, "through personal writing, students are challenged to explore how their education personally impacts their lives. This isn't abstract knowledge. This is their life they are writing about" (p. 79). And Cook (2014) explained how "such embodiment and immersion goes beyond the standard academic essay . . . and allows [students] to understand and relate to the topic on a more intimate and deeper level" (p. 276). An autoethnographic orientation to student writing can encourage the growth of "authorial presence" (Ivanič, 1998, p. 26), which brings about a sense of personal discovery and vitality—as well as spaciousness and possibility.

Unquestionably, inviting the personal and expressive into the higher education classroom does also invite emotional and ethical complexities (Alexander, 2016; Moriarty, 2018). For instance, Barr (2018) reflected, "what concerned me . . . was the ethics of requiring students to self-reflect, disclose, and discuss their life experiences for academic assessment" (p. 5). Likewise, Cook (2014) emphasized how autoethnographic methods "can leave students feeling exposed by revealing their personal feelings and experiences" (p. 278). These complexities demand intellectual and emotional commitment and time from those who choose to bring autoethnography into higher education. Taking an autoethnographic stance also requires mindful, self-reflexive attention to the human experiences and relationships that are the essence of such learning and teaching. Alexander (2016) cautioned that autoethnography as pedagogy "does give a lot of permission but also demands a lot of accountability, for a lot is at stake, ranging from the vulnerability of experience and exposure to the potential of personal and political transformation" (p. 553). However, what becomes evident in accounts of autoethnography as/in learning and teaching is that personally and socially significant higher education, whatever form it may take, demands emotional

commitment and mindfulness. As Berry and Hodges (2015) asked: "Shouldn't any educator consider issues of vulnerability, reflexivity, and empathy in their classrooms, even in courses that don't explore deeply personal issues?" (p. 80)

The complexity of taking an autoethnographic stance in learning and teaching offers opportunity and impetus to "reflect forward . . . in ways that spread the seeds of change" (Mitchell, 2016, p. 187) in critiquing and responding to complex social, cultural, and political questions, using the self as subject. In that process, students and teachers in higher education can "learn about [themselves] and society, connect to others, come to terms with and reframe experiences, and create new ways of thinking and living" (Berry & Hodges, 2015, p. 61). Overall, the scholarship of autoethnography in higher education learning and teaching represents a stance that was beautifully expressed by Elliot Eisner (2004):

> It is an educational culture that has a greater focus on becoming than on being, places more value on the imaginative than on the factual, assigns greater priority to valuing than to measuring, and regards the quality of the journey as more educationally significant than the speed at which the destination is reached. (p. 10)

Autoethnography and Academic Identities in Higher Education
Daisy Pillay

I am a teacher educator and researcher working to support teacher learning and teacher change. In my teaching and scholarship, I have engaged in collaborative co-construction to work reflexively with visual and written narratives of self as expressive spaces for autobiographical remembering that involves cognitive, motivational, and affective aspects. As the source material of one's moral conduct, these aspects of the self, left unquestioned and untheorized, may work to maintain the status quo, keep the routine and formulaic. They can also lead to states of self-enclosure and feelings of alienation and dehumanization. The main aim of my teaching, supervision, and scholarship is to create opportunities for teacher researchers to acknowledge how "[their] beliefs, intentions and desires might be specified as objects for transformation" (Allan, 2013, p. 28) to negotiate, resist, and work on themselves to embrace the changes (Hernández, Sancho, Creus, & Montané, 2010).

As a South African woman academic and researcher working in a higher education setting driven by neoliberal systems and practices, learning how to leverage my unique position and experiences meaningfully, for development and progression within the academy, continues to be risky. It is difficult to find spaces where the academic who is grounded in the everyday life of the institution and activities can have her voice heard and acknowledged as scholarly (Carver, 2007, Pelias, 2003). Many studies on academics' everyday lives and teaching experiences in higher education settings are from a macro and structural perspective, and their ideas and views are represented quantitatively through questionnaires (Hernández et al., 2010). Simon Warren (2017) argued that as powerful as the statistics are, they need to be complemented by narratives that highlight the dangers of trying to deal with "the divided self of academic life and the [psychological] and personal impact of the careless academy" (p. 131). However, academics' writing about their experiences of everyday life and work can often be dreary, depersonalized, and homogenized. This can inadvertently mute the academic's sense of self as dynamically shifting and relational to structural and material realities (Badley, 2009; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000).

As an academic, I chose to take up autoethnography to "rupture and fragment," through the researcher positionality (Spry, 2006, p. 340), the subjective self as partial, contingent, and relational to institutional culture. I have come to understand autoethnography as a space for the contained displacement of self—from which to think the academic self

anew by the adoption of "multifocal lenses" (Hernandez, Ngunjiri, & Chang, 2015, p. 533). Autoethnography can provoke one to engage deeply with the self as relational to hegemonic ideological oppressions that shape higher education restructuring. Reading, researching, and writing about autoethnography in and of higher education, has assisted me in understanding differences in personal approaches and work as academics, globally, dialogue with and against the neoliberal ideology of technical rationality as ethical work (Grant & Radcliffe, 2015).

   In my discussion, I consider (through selected exemplars), first, how autoethnographic research as ethical work depicts *individuals* as capable of working on themselves—their intentions, feelings, and emotions—to recognize how they negotiate corporatized higher education rules and practices, and to "achieve new kinds of existence" (Allan, 2013, p. 27). Second, I discuss autoethnographic research done in *collaboration* with others to accomplish scholarly work that is ethical, political, and social. Of importance is the recognition of how the reflexive role of writing, particularly in connection and communication with others, offers a powerful way to "make oneself seen" (Foucault, 1997, p. 243). This becomes a way of rousing the gaze of the other through scholarship that offers a counter-narrative to the neoliberal version of caring for oneself through productivity (Foucault, 1997; Smart, 1998).

   Selected exemplars from academic scholars whose emotions, feelings, and intentions tend to be marginalized, silenced, and made invisible in higher education settings, highlight how autoethnography as a practice done alone or in collaboration with others, can create social dialogue and resistance relational to the broader cultural context of higher education. The exemplars show how autoethnographic writing and reading can create openings for embracing the notion of self as multiple, contingent, and amidst dialogue (Falzon, 1998). Autoethnographic moments of "displacement" of self (de Freitas, 2008, p. 472) create opportunities and facilitate different ways and spaces for thinking in, through, and about the multifaceted self and the nature of dominant ideologies. In provoking and evoking care to question one's positionality and choices as a neoliberal subject, an "infinite slippage of meanings [making]" (de Freitas, 2008, p. 472) of what is constraining, possible, and different, is made available. Autoethnography offers marginalized academics a contained space to confront their unpleasant feelings, including anxiety, to negotiate a reflexive, ethical, and scholarly self. Reconnecting with emotions that have been ignored or marginalized evokes the care to "critically interrogate cultures, from the inside and outside, that often escape scrutiny" (Grant & Radcliffe, 2015, p. 815). Autoethnographic practice opens spaces for academics to "throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way" (Foucault, 1988, p. 328).

Remaking the Individual Self

Discourses of marginalization and exclusion often remain ignored and invisible in a highly corporatized higher education environment (Balfour, 2016). For academics, globally, critically negotiating the realities of corporate culture and the managerial discourses that fortify conformity to a singular version of being "academic," requires ongoing dialogue and resistance (Pillay, Pithouse-Morgan, & Naicker, 2017). As a form of systemic violence, corporatizing higher education continues to create social problems and stress—in its more fatal forms for academics who continue to seek out ways to present a competent, coping and productive self, while, at the same time, "feeling that they are the over-worked servants of the knowledge class and trapped in the labor of teaching" (Mudaly, 2015, p. 52)

   Ronicka Mudaly's (2015) autoethnographic account as a South African black woman academic provides a nuanced understanding of her struggles for professional authenticity and

institutional visibility. In questioning and probing what it means to be a lecturer in the department of science teacher education at a South African university, Mudaly (2015) recalled how she had to negotiate the powerful cultural discourses of productivity measurements and expectations—without any induction or mentorship. Being made to feel invisible was complicated by "feelings of embarrassment and [being] an unworthy investment" (Mudaly, 2015, p. 37). She drew on autoethnography to examine how her feelings of being "a peripheral professional" woman academic provided the material for exploring her choice "to become more than this" (Mudaly, 2015, p. 46). Autoethnographic moments offered glimpses of her entrapment in the discourse of academic normativity as a neoliberal subject (Warren, 2017). They opened up opportunities for recognizing her marginalized, vulnerable self with "deeply held beliefs and values about science education" (Mudaly, 2015, p. 42). Autoethnography as "self-practice or ethical work" (Foucault, 1985, p. 26) offered Mudaly the space to seek ethical alignment and to effect a "new kind of existence" (Allan, 2013, p. 27) as a woman in higher education and to cultivate a "humanistic perspective to science education" (Mudaly, 2015, p. 43).

A second exemplar is by Thandokazi Maseti (2018), who, through her storied account as a young, black, woman academic, interrogated her (em)bodied experiences of (un)belonging and uncertainty at a South African university. Maseti probed and questioned the psychological and personal costs of "[encountering] with her blackness in ways that mirrored [her] days as a university student" (p. 1). Autoethnographic research allowed her to reflect on her experiences of membership in an academic department with few black academics and also to take an inward gaze to think openly about her experiences, which she described as psychologically traumatizing (Durrheim & Mtose, 2006). These movements, inwards and outwards, enabled her to come to the realization that her relentless "needing to prove [her] worth and intellectual capability became an artificial barrier [she] created of [un]belonging in those spaces" (Maseti, 2018, p. 1). Autoethnographic explorations made available her individual life experiences in the dominant white "masculinist performative culture" (Warren, 2017, p. 130). Autoethnographic reading and writing as a space for dialogue with self, relational to the scars of psychological damage resulting from South Africa's apartheid history, points to the power of practices of self for enhancing identity and performance.

Remaking Selves Through Connecting and Collaborating With Others

Interrogating personal experiences of disembodiment, disillusionment, and varied marginalizations and isms—for example, sexism, racism, classism—(Edwards, 2017; Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015; Maseti, 2018) may be engaged by connecting and collaborating with others. These include autoethnographic explorations by women of color and minorities, women and their experiences of tenure, LGBTTIQ people as role models, and early-career academics and their experiences of being invisible-outsiders. Finding a voice through interrogating lived experiences to appropriately represent them offers counter-narratives to linear, fixed, male, white, and heteronormative as a dominant narrative (Hernández et al., 2010; Hernandez, Ngunjiri, & Chang, 2015).

Here, I draw on autoethnographic research by three womxn of color graduate students in the United States, Aeriel Ashlee, Bianca Zamora, and Shamika Karikari (2017). The use of the term "womxn" serves as "a symbol of resistance to a man-centered understanding of "womxnhood" and to symbolize a more encompassing and empowering meaning (Ashlee et al., 2017, p. 102). Through their collaborative efforts, the three womxn reflected on the power of "collective agency and solidarity" in enabling them to negotiate their unquestionably isolating experience as black womxn. Relegated to the margins, they collectively found

strength through their writing and scholarship to "show oneself, make oneself seen, and make one's face appear before the other" (Foucault, 1997, p. 243). Their relationship grew from each other's concern for their survival into a collective yearning to galvanize other womxn of color through writing. Their scholarly efforts are "a movement [to] join our voices with the woke womxn of color sista scholar" (Ashlee et al., 2017, p. 101). Through drawing on each other's "funds" of knowledge (Foucault, 1997, p. 236), they were able to overcome their fears and inhibitions and represent themselves through their scholarly efforts. Their study powerfully illustrates how through autoethnography, they can guide each other and renegotiate the rules of acceptable behavior as responsible graduates, beyond a "monolithic, white-dominant, cisgender, man-centered understanding of 'womxnhood'" (Ashlee et al., 2017, p. 102). Through the writing and sharing of stories of lived experiences to reflect and make sense of the workings of culture as shifting and dynamic these graduate students came to "embody confidence as [they] listen, heal, and learn from one another" (Ashlee et al., 2017, p. 101).

A second collaborative autoethnography that I draw on is by Kelly Guyotte, Brooke Hofsess, Gloria Wilson, and Sara Scott Shields (2018). This inquiry offers an insightful, artful and complex portrayal of critical experiences of women of varying ages and backgrounds transitioning from a doctoral program into different tenure-track assistant professorships in the United States. Coming together in this inquiry space authorized each of the women "with Brown skin and White skin [to consider their] encounters within academic cultures" (Guyotte et al., 2018, p. 104). Autoethnography opened up by a range of artmaking processes generated creative, material spaces for each woman to make meaning of their "knowledge from and about the body" (p. 105) as they lived through their collective experiences on the tenure track. Reflecting and expressing their feelings and emotions through artmaking became a powerful way to enflesh their embodiment. Artful explorations of tenure created opportunities for new forms of relations with the self. They allowed for each to "make of [herself] an object to be known" (Foucault, 1985, p. 30) in all her embodied differences as woman. Autoethnographic explorations, entangled with the material, artful meaning-making of women's "tumbling academic selves . . . becomes more than a living discourse [as they] use it to speak both with and against academic expectations and to sometimes question the very path [they] chose" (Guyotte, et al., 2018, p. 125). Constituted as a relational practice, these complementary processes invite both academic-artist and viewer into a shared, entangled space, rich with potential for intervening in dominant narratives of tenure and women (Guyotte et al., 2018; Savage, 2015), with new awareness and "modes of being" (Foucault, 1985, p. 30).

Working against dominant narratives of self-surveillance and individualism maintained and constituted through the neoliberal subject, collaborative autoethnography foregrounds the power of relationships and care for self and others (Allan, 2013). Voicing stories of self with others offers a way to interrogate taken-for-granted positions and identities as fixed and immovable. Autoethnography becomes a space for cultivating the self as the site for care, healing and agency to rework self with and through others; it is a chance to care for self as an ethical subject in resistance to the systemic violence imposed by neoliberal higher education cultures.

Autoethnography and Academic Leadership in Higher Education
Inbanathan Naicker

I am a teacher educator and researcher in education leadership. From my reading, a worrisome critique of research in the field of education leadership is the repetitive use of

similar methodologies and methodological tools that do not make any substantial contribution towards *knowing differently* (Hallinger & Chen, 2014). However, over the last decade, there have been significant shifts in how knowledge is produced in education leadership. Philip Hallinger and Jun Jun Chen (2014) observed the employment of "more powerful and diverse . . . methodological tools to the study of education leadership" (p. 9). Methodologies such as radical feminism, discourse analysis, critical ethnography, and autoethnography are being deployed in education leadership research. As Rose Richards (2016) reminded us, "autoethnography offers an alternative way of knowing: a different epistemology and ontology that shows the complexity and the challenges of our . . . experiences" (p. 163). Thus, autoethnography as a methodology of *how we come to know* in education leadership is beginning to change "the landscape of qualitative and interpretive methods" used in the field (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013, p. 21).

Being conscious of the critique that research in education leadership has mostly tended to be insular and that "it is rare for ELM [education leadership and management] researchers to engage in multi-disciplinary work" (Foskett, Lumby, & Fidler, 2005, p. 246), over the past eight years, I became part of a multidisciplinary self-reflexive research learning community. This community comprises research supervisors and postgraduate students engaged in doctoral studies using self-reflexive methodologies such as self-study of practice, narrative inquiry, and autoethnography. It is in this research learning community that I came to see the potential of autoethnography to generate "space for a turn, a change, a reconsideration of how we think, [and] how we do research" (Holman Jones et al., 2013, p. 21). I could see the possibilities that autoethnography had as a "*telling* methodology" for education leaders to reflect on their leadership practice and relate that practice to broader sociocultural values and norms (p. 19).

Given my location as a scholar in the field of education leadership and my interest in autoethnography as an emerging methodology in the field, I made the decision to look at autoethnographies in/of higher education as productive resistance in relation to academic leadership. Many higher education institutions have "unobtrusively adopted leadership [models] that seem to be in consonance with neoliberal, [corporate] managerialist approaches" (Waghid & Davids, 2016, p. 124). While academics have not, as yet, acted as a critical mass to overtly condemn the influence of the "corporatizing creep" on higher education (Schoorman & Acker-Hocevar, 2013, p. 266), there are some who have, nonetheless, begun to resist and repel corporate managerialism. In this section, I illustrate how autoethnographies in/of higher education are useful for productive resistance concerning academic leadership. While I have not yet come across autoethnographies that directly address issues of productive resistance concerning corporate managerial leadership models, there are, nonetheless, many autoethnographies that cover this issue as part of broader ethnographic experiences in higher education. From my reading of these, I note two thematic strands that autoethnography as methodology contributes to our understanding of productive resistance concerning academic leadership in neoliberal, corporatized higher education. First, these autoethnographies make the private public constructively by revealing what it is like to lead and to be led in a higher education institution underpinned by corporate managerialism. Second, these autoethnographies give voice to leaders and followers to expose issues of social (in)justice as a result of being subjected to corporate managerial organizational policies and practices.

What It is Like to Lead and to be Led in a Neoliberal Corporatized Higher Education Landscape

Borrowing from the work of Harold Lloyd Goodall (2008), Rose Richards (2016) explained that in addition to "knowing how" and "knowing that," there is a third kind of knowing:

"knowing what it is like" (p. 164). Knowing *what it is like* is about personal stories of experience. Likewise, Heewon Chang (2013) reminded us, "autoethnography is a highly personal process . . . because the personal experiences of researchers themselves are the foundation of autoethnography" (p. 107). There is a paucity of rich, nuanced accounts of personal lived experiences of leaders and followers in education leadership research (Christie, 2010; Spillane, Alverson, & Diamond, 2004). However, through autoethnography, "the experiences of academics [working] in particular contexts" can be made public through the sharing of their stories (Kempster & Stewart, 2010, p. 206). The private anguish of both leaders and followers of corporatization, the audit culture, and neoliberal policies can be made transparent. I draw on two autoethnographic inquiries to illustrate what it is like for both leaders and followers in a corporatized university.

In the first place, I draw on the critical autoethnography of Simon Warren (2017), an academic working in the Republic of Ireland. Warren explored how technologies of research performance management work to produce academics and academic leaders as neoliberal subjects. He structured his narrative around two broad themes. Firstly, he interrogated the "managed self" where he presented an account of himself in relation to "academic normativity" and the undue pressure academic normativity places on him to discharge his work responsibilities in particular ways. Secondly, he probed notions of a "managed CV" where he critically engaged with how technologies of management work on the academic self to mold it to institutional objectives. He recalled how a senior member of his departmental management team directed him to disinvest time spent advising students and teaching (activities that he cherished) and devote more time to research and publishing in journals of high impact value. Warren (2017) contended that, as academics, we are constantly engaged in a struggle for visibility. However, to become visible in corporately governed institutions, only specific ways of being as academic and academic leaders are valued, and these often may be contradictory to one's personal values. For higher education leaders, being visible means packaging oneself as a neoliberal subject, "caught up in a hierarchical, line managing, performance measuring mode of being" (Warren, 2017, p. 138). Warren considered his autoethnographic narrative his "contribution to . . . speaking truth to power" in a higher education milieu where academics suffer in silence "as they struggle to meet the ever-increasing demands of systems of research performance management" (p. 128). In recounting his lived experience of academia through autoethnography, he made public the private anguish of being neoliberal subjects. Thus, writing autoethnography becomes more than an intellectual endeavor and can provide space to make public one's discomforts, emotions, and feelings.

In the second instance, I draw on what it is like for an early career academic at a Canadian university, Kaela Jubas, working in corporatized academy. Early career academics represent a pool of future higher education leaders. Thus, their lived experiences of academia shape the leaders they are to become. Jubas (2012), among other issues, engaged with the organizational culture to "track and count" work outputs (p. 31). She recounted:

> I complete an annual report in which I note every publication that I have authored, every presentation that I have delivered, every course that I have taught and every committee that I have served on for that year . . . the emphasis is on the number of certain products and degree of reputational value that I have added to the Faculty and the institution. (Jubas, 2012, p. 31)

Jubas (2012) lamented this type of micromanagement. She argued that intellectual work "from reading books and articles to engaging in conversations with colleagues to building networks" does not form part of the official reporting of the productivity of academics (p. 32). For Jubas, engaging in autoethnographic writing allows scholars to be mindful and reflective of their lived experiences and the context in which it occurs. It helps to make

visible the pressures of working in institutions that are led and governed by neoliberal managerialism. Through writing about her experiences, she was able to "envision some sort of resistance to a narrow [corporatist] vision of higher education" and strive for "a holistic, critical possibility for academic work" (p. 34). Writing autoethnography thus has transformative potential.

Giving Voice to Leaders and Followers to Expose Issues of Social (In)Justice

Writing autoethnographies can be seen as the "praxis of social justice" (Toyosaki & Pensoneau-Conway, 2013, p. 558). As a humanizing method of inquiry, it is directed towards recognizing the self and others as deserving human beings. From a social justice perspective, autoethnographies make visible "the experiences of exclusion, degradation and injustice, and in so doing create work that not only makes a case for change but also embodies the change it calls into being" (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2013, p. 675). Autoethnography can give voice to both leaders and followers in neoliberal higher education to make transparent incidences of inequity, subjugation, exploitation, and marginalization. It can also provide direction on how present experience might "be differently understood in its temporality, in its coming from the past, and in its look toward the future" (Toyosaki & Pensoneau-Conway, 2013, p. 563).

I draw on two pieces of autoethnographic writing to illustrate how autoethnography can call attention to issues of social justice in the neoliberal corporatized academy. In the first piece, Anne Vicary and Karen Jones (2017), through joint exploration, narrated the work experiences of Vicary, an untenured woman academic in the United Kingdom. They interrogated the casual, nonpermanent forms of higher education employment that have become a common cultural practice in the United Kingdom, owing to corporate managerial reforms. Their work highlighted how protracted temporary conditions of employment for women suppress their academic leadership aspirations by stifling career pathing opportunities. To paraphrase Vicary and Jones (2017), access to leadership opportunities decreases in organizations that fail to provide permanent employment opportunities and trajectories for participation in academic leadership. They, thus, exposed how casualization of labor contributes to discrimination against women academics in gaining entry to leadership positions in academia. For Vicary, adopting an autoethnographic approach proved emancipatory. She explained that the "lifting the lid on this rather frustrating period of my life has been a therapeutic process" (p. 11).

The second autoethnographic article I draw on is that of Robert Balfour, an academic leader who identifies as gay in postapartheid South Africa. Balfour (2016, p. 140) narrated how the "complexities of power and identity within institutional spaces configured as heteronormative" oppress, discriminate, marginalize, and render people identifying as LGBTTIQ invisible as leaders—despite constitutional prescripts in South Africa preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation. He recounted that it is difficult for LGBTTIQ people to be viewed as role models, let alone leaders in academia. Autoethnography was quite empowering for Balfour because it "enable[d] a discourse about LGBTTIQ leadership and (in)visibility in order to interrogate the assumptions made within heteronormative working environments about gender and sexuality" (p. 136). More importantly, his autoethnography highlighted spaces for contestation, interruption, and disruption (Toyosaki & Pensoneau-Conway, 2013) of victimization and discrimination of persons who identify as LGBTTIQ.

Conclusions and Implications for Higher Education

As Andrew C. Sparkes (2016) highlighted, with a global reculturing and restructuring of higher education towards an audit culture, self-reflexive approaches such as autoethnography increasingly at risk of being "[demeaned] as [modes] of scholarship" amid "accusations of self-indulgence and lack of rigor, to name but a couple" (p. 511). In contrast, by extending our knowledge of autoethnography in/as learning and teaching, academic selves, and academic leadership, we have seen autoethnography provide "antidotes" that "not only soothe but also cause [generative] discomfort . . . for both its producers and consumers" (p. 511). Lending credence to our experiences, Damian Ruth et al. (2018) advocated for autoethnography as a useful device to resist "neoliberal regimes of performativity". They proposed that autoethnography can "also be effective as a form of localized resistance, strengthening our ability to cope with the anxiety such regimes routinely provoke" (p. 154).

Creating and teaching autoethnography can open spaces for powerful transitory positions from which to experience higher education as a social, ethical, and collective endeavor. Thinking and working autoethnographically can enable the choice to act from new subjective positionings. As an antidote to corporate managerialism, autoethnography signals an opening to work "between resistance and oppression" (Foust, 2010, p. 215) as a creative act in higher education. Through a process of re-storying the self, autoethnography can offer impetus and means for academics "to resist oppressive . . . discourses and this can lead to a more enhanced sense of self" (Moriarty, 2018, p. 252). Autoethnography has the potential to make one "feel freer, stronger, calmer, less alone [and] better able to place the audit regime in perspective" (Ruth et al., 2018, p. 168). In coming face to face with different bodies, emotions, experiences, and lives through autoethnography, the educational experience becomes more than just an intellectual endeavor. Autoethnography "as a mode of knowing and a way of being" (Sparkes, 2016, p. 516) illuminates the relational, often unseen, nature of higher education—portraying participation that calls for care and sensitivity. The desire to be present and to act with respect and compassion is an act of resistance. This resistance is generative, threatening the audit culture of treating human beings as problems to be fixed or as a means to an end. Instead, in thinking and working autoethnographically, we can choose to understand the academic self and vocation as personal, social, emotional, embodied, and mindful.

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