

## **ABSTRACT**

FLETCHER, MEGAN ALYSSA *We to Me: An Autoethnographic Discovery of Self: In and Out of Domestic Abuse.* (Under the direction of Dr. Nicholas Taylor)

“We to Me” is a personal and evocative encounter, reflection, and experience of self through the re-telling and analysis of my own experiences in a 6-year abusive relationship. This autoethnography uses previous research on domestic abuse, feminist storytelling, and the theorization of Foucault’s “technologies of the self” in order to produce a rich, unique understanding of what it is to be a victim of domestic violence. This work is my place of inquiry and healing. It is my hope that the embodied experiences I share bring awareness and understanding to the realities of an abusive relationship.

© Copyright 2016 by Megan Alyssa Fletcher

All Rights Reserved

We to Me: An Autoethnographic Discovery of Self – In and Out of Domestic Abuse

by  
Megan Alyssa Fletcher

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
North Carolina State University  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

Communication

Raleigh, North Carolina

2016

APPROVED BY:

---

Dr. Nicholas Taylor  
Committee Chair

---

Dr. Elizabeth Craig

---

Dr. Sarah Stein

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mom – it couldn't have been written without the love, and support she has provided me every step of the way. I also dedicate this work to anyone who has ever experienced, or is currently enduring an abusive relationship – may my story provide solace, understanding, and encouragement.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Megan Alyssa Fletcher is a 26 year-old graduate student and public speaking instructor at North Carolina State University. Originally from Massachusetts, Megan moved to Raleigh to pursue her Masters Degree in Communication Studies. After graduation Megan plans on taking a year off before pursuing her doctorate to travel the world and continue teaching. Megan's scholarly interests include critical/feminist theory, domestic violence, social justice, and education. She hopes to combine all of her passions in order to become a caring and impactful educator.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'd like to thank Dr. Nicholas Taylor for his time, care, and support. I feel honored to have the mentorship of such a truly wonderful person. His intellectual guidance and openness to all of my thoughts and ideas has allowed me to craft something I feel immense pride towards. I'd also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Craig, and Dr. Sarah Stein. Thank you for your input, your time, and your care towards this project and myself. I am beyond grateful to have the support of people I truly admire. I'd also like to acknowledge my good friend and colleague Carly Tanner. Thank you for being there through it all

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Body .....	1
References .....	33

“Sometimes with memories surging up from the depths of our (un)conscious-ness, we find ourselves at a loss as to what to do. We can be frozen in place, or stunned, or even trapped by these memories. On the other hand, sometimes, mercifully, our spirits are protected by the power of forgetting, at least for a time” (Poulos, 2008, p.51).

*“What brought you here Ms. Fletcher?”*

*The nurse asks without glancing up from her clipboard.*

*I don't know what to say. I sit motionless on the bed, hands slightly shaking. An overwhelming sense of nausea takes over and I begin dry heaving.*

*“I think I have a concussion.”*

*There are no mirrors, but I know what I look like.*

*My hair, a complete mess, small chunks of it visibly missing - my face and neck bruised.*

*She looks up from her clipboard and directly at me*

*“You know...” she sighs, “the first time it's his fault, the second time it's yours.”*

*Ashamed, afraid, alone*

*No, not alone*

*Never alone, really*

*He was always there whether I knew it or not*

*Watching, waiting*

*Always watching.*

*Always waiting.*

Much of what we hear about domestic abuse takes the form of gruesome headlines. While these headlines facilitate awareness of domestic violence as a current issue, they do little in generating an understanding of the complexities of leaving an abusive relationship, or what it is to be a victim. According to Stern (2014) “feminist scholars must continue to fill the void left by a popular culture and dominant paradigms of silence” (p. 375). This work represents the

narratization of my experience through the textual interweaving of memory and reflection. This account is part of a broader feminist project of agency and empowerment. Linearity and objectivity are both tools of patriarchal hegemony (Haraway, 1988); this work is based on the recovery and reassembling of moments from my past in ways that promote healing and foster understanding. The account that follows seeks to help fill the void of silence, challenge the concept of victim blaming, and contribute to a sense of urgency towards eliminating domestic violence.

Domestic abuse is a significant problem in North America. According to a 2011 survey conducted by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over 31 percent of women in the United States have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives (Breiding, 2014). The CDC also claims that nearly half of women in the United States have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner (Breiding, 2014). These results only speak to the women who participated in the survey – the statistics likely underestimate the prevalence of domestic abuse in US society.

*I am the 31 percent. I am the “nearly half.”*

While I identify myself as a part of the statistics above there is a level of disconnect when I read them - no face, no voice, no person, just numbers. Statistics and surveys are useful in identifying the issue of domestic abuse – however, they do not speak to the lived experience of a woman who has been physically assaulted by an intimate partner. There is so much to be said, and so much to be learned when it comes to domestic abuse. Questions like “why does she stay?” and “why doesn’t she just leave?” run the risk of becoming rhetorical. Without answers these questions suggest that the victim is to blame for staying. Both women and men who have experienced an abusive relationship have unique justifications, but there is a level of difficulty in

recruiting willing participants to share sensitive information in the face-to-face context of a conventional qualitative interview. My hope is that this autoethnographic research benefits those who have shared my experience with domestic abuse, and extends the small but important collection of research on domestic abuse through first person narrative (e.g. Olson, 2004). Through gaining knowledge of identity construction in abusive relationships – that is, the processes through which the abused partner’s self-concept is altered -- there is the possibility of understanding what it is to be a victim, and ultimately a survivor of domestic abuse.

This project is a feminist endeavor. Focusing on identity transformation and reconstruction – a critical re-enactment of the abusive relationship from the perspective of the abused - as an ongoing process gives researchers a level of agency that is not present in our dominant narratives of domestic abuse. Through performative retelling (Stern, 2014) “We to Me” follows the changes in my identity during, and after a six-year abusive relationship. This retelling is a technique of my engagement with what Foucault (1982) defines as “technology of the self,” a way in which I act upon myself in order to attain greater understanding and emotional wellbeing. This autoethnography seeks to fill the gap in research regarding identity, control, and domestic violence. Through re-assembling personal records (diaries) written over the course of a concluded 6-year abusive relationship, I will explore how my identity was altered by these experiences. The strategy I am using – reassembling certain reflections and memories in a non-linear way meant to draw attention to my deliberate ‘de-ordering’ of my experiences - is a form reclaiming my agency. Rather than developing a linear, chronological, and objective account of my experiences, this text deliberately circles back and jumps forward, forgoing chronological and disciplinary order in favor of evocative comparisons and thematic resonances, in a way that is simultaneously meant to challenge assumptions of formal academic writing while honoring

and building upon the textual experiments put forward by other autoethnographers on traumatic experiences.

My account moves from what Olson (2004) defines as an “enmeshed” identity, that is the self that is dependent on the abuser, to the development of an empowered feminist identity (Stern, 2014) after the relationship’s termination, one part of the process of which is the product of this text. I consult previous research on identity, control, and domestic violence in order to guide the exploration of my own experiences. This project involves a re-assembling of the self that experienced this abusive relationship. Rather than a representation of an abused woman – this work will act as a construction of self, filtered through where I am now. This is, according to Catt (2011) a project that “gives voice to a particular way of construing reality while being aware that it is a voice, a particular discourse within a field of possibilities” (p. 131). I hope to offer new, unique insights on domestic abuse through the re-telling and analysis of my experiences in a unique way.

Much academic research concerned with domestic abuse (Richardson, 2013; Peloquin, Lafontaine & Brassard, 2011; Byers, Shue & Marshall, 2004; Olson, 2004), relies on pre-established theories to provide an analytic and conceptual lens in understanding the conditions of abuse. According to Oliver (2001), “the struggles for recognition and theories that embrace those struggles may indeed presuppose and thereby perpetuate the very hierarchies, domination and injustice that they attempt to overcome” (p. 9). What if all of these theories, in their effort to theorize, to render everyday experience more amenable to abstraction, entail an anesthetization of the trauma to which they purportedly speak? Theory is supposed to grant us a measure of control – control over data, control over textual production, control of our academic and intellectual goals. This work is not concerned with control; rather this work is a piece of survival.

Survival is concerned less with mastery than with finding ways to continue to exist and grow in an often hostile world, using whatever tools are at hand (Haraway, 1988).

### **The Escape**

*“The captain has informed us that we have begun our initial descent into Raleigh”*

*I look outside the window of the plane and see the trees, roads, and houses beneath the thin layer of clouds.*

*“As we prepare for landing please be sure that your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright and stowed positions, your seatbelts are securely fastened...”*

*I take a deep breath, and press repeat, just now realizing I had been listening to the same song over and over the entire flight.*

*I close my eyes and listen as Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zero's (Up from Below, 2009) sing:*

*I think I've been sleeping for 40 days and  
I know I'm sleeping cause this dream's too amazing  
She's got gold doorknobs where her eyes used to be  
One turn and I learned what it really means to see*

*Ahhh – It's the magical mystery kind  
Ah – must be a lie  
Bye bye to the too good to be true kind of love  
Oh – I could die  
Oh now I can die*

*I feel something stirring inside of me I haven't felt in a while.*

*I stop a tear on its' path down my cheek*

*I smile*

*It's freedom.*

According to Williams (1966) communication is born in “the struggle to learn and to describe. To start this process in our minds and to pass on its results to others, we depend on certain communication models, certain rules or conventions through which we can make contact” (p. 19-20). Ethnography of communication focuses primarily on examining systems of meaning –how a particular song can elicit an emotional state, how highly-trained specialists (like pilots) interact with their publics -- that pertains to specific groups (Knapp & Daley, 2011). Ethnography examines cultural and social functions within these groups in order to develop greater understanding. While ethnography is vital to communication research – the role of researcher as observer does not fully serve the issue of domestic abuse. Narrative theory has been used as a way to bridge this researcher/observer gap but still does not generate the same in-depth analysis that first-person narrative can generate.

Narrative theory as a part of interpersonal communication scholarship highlights the ways in which humans make sense of, construct, and socialize others on their identities, relationships, and lives. While there is no single framework that guides narrative communication research, there are numerous theories in this paradigm eg. Narrative Performance Theory (Langellier & Peterson, 2004) and Communicated Narrative Sense-Making (Koenig, Kella, Kranstuber, & Horstman, 2010), all of which involve analyzing the narratives of others, Autoethnography is the construction and analysis of the personal narrative of the researcher; it is an approach to research that seeks to understand cultural experience through the description, and analysis of personal experience (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010). Autoethnographers are the subject of research, and write in the first person.

Autoethnography serves as both the process, and product of research using reflexive writing as method (Bochner, 2012). This writing takes on narrative form – creating a sense of

storyteller, and story listener between the autoethnographer and her audience. Using personal narrative, the author attempts to engage the reader in their personal experiences, often difficult or traumatic ones, *I am overcome with dread*, through a therapeutic desire to both work through particular challenges and to bring greater attention to these challenges (Bochner, 2012).

Carolyn Ellis, and Arthur Bochner are the pioneers of autoethnography as it is used in this study. The method has undergone multiple changes in how it is conceptualized, and how it is identified. David Hayanos' conceptualization of "auto-ethnography" transformed into Reed-Danahays' "auto/ethnography" signifying a more mutually dependent relationship (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2012). Finally, Ellis and Bochner brought the two completely together making the researcher the sole focus. Autoethnography is the most prominent approach to this methodology today (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2012). By merging researcher and research autoethnographic work has slowly shifted from primarily analytic to a more evocative style (eg. Tillmann-Healy, 1996; Olson, 2004; Adams, 2006; Poulos, 2008; Stern, 2014).

Scholars have adopted autoethnography as a means of delving into other sites of personal trauma, including (but not limited to) eating disorders (Tillman, 2009), childhood memories of witnessing domestic abuse (Stern, 2014), addiction (Stern, 2015), stigma (Poulos, 2008), and racial oppression (Griffin, 2012), in ways that enable both the researcher and the scholarly community to better understand how such traumas unfold. Autoethnography is a method well-suited for experimental ways of reporting on personal trauma and broader social challenges relating to trauma. Other scholars have used autoethnography as a way to understand non-traumatic, but personal concepts regarding family relationships (Adams, 2006) and gender performance (Dumitrica & Gaden, 2009).

Tillman (2009) and Poulos (2008) use innovative approaches to storytelling through autoethnography. Both represent the role of autoethnographer as theoretical “bricoleur” – not adhering to any one particular theoretical framework but rather adopting and adapting concepts, where necessary to illuminate particular experiences. Because I’m looking at numerous, multifaceted experiences, I am not beholden to any one theory. Rather, theory will work as a tool to facilitate understanding and uncover vital connections between abuse and identity.

While there is a plethora of research on domestic violence, very few examine it from first person narrative. Olson (2004) has written the only autoethnography covering identity construction within an abusive relationship to date. My use of autoethnography adds to this small, but vital collection of research on domestic abuse through first-person narrative. Establishing a collection of first-person narratives allows for an inductive, case-by-case understanding of domestic abuse, and helps fill the void of silence.

Having survived a six-year abusive relationship, I feel compelled to use my experience as a platform to better understand the complexities and effects of abuse – more specifically, how my identity was shaped through experience during and after the abusive relationship. Richardson (1990) observed, “narrative is the best way to understand the human experience because it is the way humans understand their own lives” (p. 183). For me, domestic abuse isn’t just a phrase I type into a search engine to gather research – it is a lived experience, it is a part of who I am.

The captivity of an abusive relationship can be a lonely place. It is through the sharing of my story that I hope to engage others with my experience. This narrative seeks to bring fellow victims, fellow scholars, and myself to a place of understanding with regards to domestic abuse. According to Ellis, Adams & Bochner (2010) the autoethnographer not only tries to make the engagement in personal experience meaningful but also, “by producing accessible texts, she or

he may be able to reach wider and more diverse mass audiences that traditional research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people” (p. 1). In re-living, re-examining, and re-telling my story it is my hope that my experience will serve as a catalyst for more research, and more conversation.

Identity construction is never complete. Autoethnography informs the construction of my identity, while also continuing and enriching the process. Poulos (2008) states that rather than keeping painful experiences a secret "we might do well to turn to storytelling as a means of overcoming the pain, the shame, the loss, the grief, the anger, the sadness . . ." (p. 64). Assigning language to my experience of abuse requires vulnerability, but also provides an opportunity for understanding and healing. Poulos (2008) explains the struggle with ethics when it comes to telling stories of trauma. However, he ends his paper by acknowledging the power storytelling has and that "to tell the story may very well be the only ethical thing to do" (p. 60).

### **Losing Connections**

*It's 8 o'clock on a Saturday night. A night I used to enjoy with friends*

*(Phone vibrates)*

*Oh no. I think to myself.*

*It's face down so I can't see who is calling me just yet. I always kept my phone face down in an effort to buy myself some time – give myself an opportunity to see who it was and conjure up a good excuse for why they were contacting me.*

*I begin praying it's my best friend Ella.*

*Please, dear God be Ella. I did a lot of praying...*

*He reaches across the table to pick it up.*

*“Who’s Andrew?”* Shit.

*“Oh! Andrew?! An old college friend! Just an old friend”*

*I’m telling the truth, but I’m panicked. Ugh. Why?!? You did nothing wrong!*

*I can feel my stomach drop. I can feel myself start to shake. Even now I can feel it...*

*I know my response will not suffice.*

*I see him move his hand to the answer button.*

*“NO, Please, Don’t!”* I plead. Pleading. If only I knew...

*“Hello????? – yeah Andrew, sorry man she’s busy. No you can’t talk to her, you’re talking to me. Nah, sorry man, I’m taking her calls. How about you lose this number? Don’t call again.”*

*Click.*

Asshole.

In the field of communication, domestic abuse is defined as the perpetuation of verbal/physical harm on an intimate partner (Richardson, 2013; Olson 2004). Because it is primarily conceptualized as an experience that arises between two humans, the discipline of interpersonal communication proved a productive starting point to consider my experiences with domestic abuse. Interpersonal communication scholars have offered vital insight into romantic attachment, dyadic empathy, and psychological partner aggression - *I don’t need to turn around to feel his eyes on me – I can feel the heat of them, they are piercing directly through my back* (Peloquin, Lafontaine & Brassard, 2011). Negative relational maintenance behaviors (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011), and the effects of relationship quality on commitment (Byers, Shue & Marshall, 2004) have also been examined.

There is considerable variety in the study of interpersonal communication. According to Knapp and Daly (2011) the construct of interpersonal communication is dynamic and changing,

however there are many conceptual perspectives and themes that come up repeatedly. These perspectives and themes include: interaction, verbal and nonverbal behavior, context, social cognition, consciousness, intent, and meaning (Knapp & Daly, 2011). Domestic abuse typically occurs in long-term, romantic relationships, which conceptually lends itself to interpersonal communication scholarship. Thus far much of the research into domestic violence from an interpersonal communication perspective analyzes relationship interaction, and behavior. The focus of this research has included compliance-gaining strategies (Rudd, Burant & Beatty, 1994), relationship quality, commitment (Byers, Shue & Marshall, 2004), gendered violence (Reich, 2002), discursively constructed identity (Richardson, 2013; Olson, 2004), and dyadic empathy (Peloquin, Lafontaine & Brassard, 2011).

Interpersonal researchers looking at domestic abuse have found that victims face a variety of negative effects from the abuse. Previous findings suggest that verbal abuse and psychological aggression affect the victim's mental health by creating a sense of anxiety – *I can feel my stomach drop* - fear of abandonment, and emotional distress – *“NO, Please, Don't!” I plead* - (Richardson, 2013; Peloquin, Lafontaine & Brassard, 2010; Rud, Burant & Beatty, 1994). Feelings of responsibility, self-blame, and guilt were also shown to be affects of verbal abuse and psychological aggression (Richardson, 2013). The focus regarding how abuse has affected a victim's self-concept has centralized on verbally aggressive messages, and language. There is acknowledgment that this abuse escalates, and often spirals into physically abusive behavior (Olson, 2004; Byers, Shue, & Marshall, 2004), however this acknowledgement does not center on the experience of physical abuse. I focus on both my experiences of verbal aggression - *“You got a problem? You can leave!” he barks* - and physical abuse - *I feel the whiplash of being pulled back and down, my head hits the ground* - recognizing that these two are intimately

connected – and that verbal aggression can actually lead to negative physiological outcomes - *shaking, panicked, I feel sick* (Gottman, 2000; Jacobson et al., 1996).

## Secrets

*“How does 7 sound?”*

*“GREAT!” Sarah replies excitedly*

*“It’s gonna be SO nice to catch up – I feel like you disappeared for a while there, glad to have you back!”* I wasn’t really back.

*You have no idea – I think to myself.*

Sarah was the first person I called after the motel. She didn’t answer right away so I left her a voicemail, sobbing, telling her everything. I told a few of my friends about the incident (no, not incident the attack, the attempted murder – it wasn’t an “incident”). It would be the first time I ever told anyone about the physical abuse, I was trying to hold myself accountable – building up a network of friends who would keep me from going back.

*Sarah doesn’t know that I am still with him.* Shame – there’s a sense of shame associated with going back to an abuser (Eckstein, 2016). I was afraid of appearing weak or irrational to the people who knew about the abuse.

*No one knows.* My silence led to living my life in secret. Silence, as Poulos (2008) notes, is the strategy of forgetting. In my silence I was hoping others would forget, too.

*I find us two seats at the bar. I scan the restaurant, I don’t recognize anyone. Phew.*

*Before she walks in the door I order us 2 pomegranate Cosmopolitans. Vodka always does the trick.*

*I'm nervous. Why am I nervous? Oh yeah, because I was still with the guy who tried to kill me.*

*Nervous is a state of being at that point.*

*She walks in with a huge smile on her face.*

*I feel myself begin to smile too.*

*"MEGAN!" she squeals as we hug for a solid minute and a half.*

*"I've missed you so much! – Pomegranate cosmos?! Excellent!"*

*"OF COURSE! Sarah, I am so happy to see you!" Really, really, really, happy.*

*"How are you? Tell me everything that's been going on!" she says while adjusting herself on the barstool.*

*"Oh you know, nothing exciting" right.*

*I take a big sip of my drink. Damn, it's good.*

*"Tell me about you! How's New York?!" Someone's trying to change the subject*

*"Oh my gosh – Megan you have to come visit me! It's so much fun, seriously, let's plan your trip tonight. I'm not taking no for an answer!"*

*Shit. He would never let me go visit her in New York. Why?! SCREW HIM.*

*"Hahaha well – We can definitely get the ball rolling – I can't commit to anything just yet though, but that sounds like SO much fun."*

*She takes a sip of her drink and moves a bit closer. Her face looks serious.*

*"Have you seen him...since...you know?" she whispers.*

*I knew that question was coming.*

*"No" Liar.*

*Sarah doesn't look convinced.*

*"I mean, he's like texted me and stuff but I try not to respond" If only that was true.*

*“Megan...” Sarah looks even more concerned now.*

*“Don’t answer him – he’s psychotic, what about the restraining order? Please, promise me you won’t respond” She begs.*

*“I won’t, I promise.” Another lie.*

*I finished my martini without even realizing it.*

*I flag down the bartender.*

*“I’ll have another...please.”*

Social scientists face a number of issues when studying domestic abuse. The most serious include participant confidentiality, and psychological distress or harm in re-telling experiences. While it is of paramount importance for all research to adhere to IRB regulations – these regulations (informed consent, transparency of risks, accessibility of information) can present challenges for researchers seeking to analyze sensitive information. Due to the sensitivity and personal nature of domestic abuse it is difficult to get victims to talk about their experiences. If the abusive relationship is still active it can be even more difficult to facilitate victim disclosure. There is also a lack of disclosure (even to loved ones and family) - *Sarah doesn’t know that I am still with him* - that occurs in an abusive relationship that serves as a function of preserving the relationship. Not all relationship maintenance is pro-social; in abusive relationships antisocial behaviors – *“ I feel like you disappeared for a while there”* - serve as a maintenance function for couples (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011). Byers, Shue and Marshall (2004) found that even though there was a lower perception of relationship quality, women were more likely to have been in the relationship for a longer period of time with their abusive partner than non-abused women (Byers, Shue, & Marshall, 2004). My abusive relationship lasted for 6 years. The length of my

relationship is still something I feel ashamed to admit, the same way I struggled to tell Sarah I was still with him. Understanding why I stayed in this relationship for so long offers unique insight into why and how women stay in abusive relationships, regardless of a low perception of relationship quality and how it affects personal identity. Victims of abuse often have a hard time disclosing information about their relationship quality, and the acts of abuse to others – *No one knows*. Secret abuse can become a lifetime sentence for the victim (Petronio & Flores, 1977).

Another issue that makes it difficult for victims to disclose their abuse is stigma. According to Eckstein (2016) stigma is determined by “dominant societal messages” that create “damaging labels to individuals failing to uphold governing expectations” (p. 217). Even with the identification of domestic abuse as a social issue there is still a stigma associated with being a victim of domestic abuse. In Byers, Shue, and Marshall’s study participants were required to rank below the 75% poverty line, and be actively receiving public aid (Byers, Shue & Marshall, 2004). In Rudd, Burant, and Beatty’s study participants had an average total family income of \$29,999 or less (Rudd, Burant & Beatty, 1994). These distinctions frame abused women as financially unstable (ie. lower-class) who rely on government assistance. Comparisons are continuously made gauging “roles” in society through social and personal identification that revolves around group affiliation (Eckstein, 2016). The assumption that domestic abuse is a lower-class social issue stigmatizes victims. This stigma could dissuade victims of domestic abuse from disclosing the abuse to others, and ignores the prevalence of domestic abuse in every social class. First-person narrative is capable of generating deeper knowledge of these constructs in interpersonal communication. One of the ways it is able to do that is by allowing for the exploration of *intrapersonal* communication (Pederson, 2012) *Shit. He would never let me go visit her in New York.*

## **The Restaurant**

*I see the front door swing open and my stomach drops.*

*It's John, a regular customer and dear friend who I've known since I began working at the restaurant 5 years ago.*

*He's smiling big under his gray mustache. He walks towards me.*

*I can feel myself starting to sweat "oh no" I think to myself,*

*He's watching he was always watching...*

*I don't need to turn around to feel his eyes on me – I can feel the heat of them, they are piercing directly through my back.*

*I turn to face John, "Hi there! SO great to see you! How are you tonight?" I say with a big, fake smile*

*I reach across table six - knocking over the salt and pepper shakers in a desperate search for something to clean. Something to keep me busy. Something to keep John from coming closer.*

*"Good" John replies.*

*It's not working – he comes around the table and extends his arms out to me*

*We embrace for what feels like forever, when in reality it was probably more close to a second*

*I am overcome with dread.*

*He saw. Of course he saw*

*I turn around and look towards the open kitchen.*

*He's standing there – glaring at me (A look I was very familiar with)*

*I'm in trouble.*

I am able to re-enact this moment in the restaurant, and many others like it, through revisiting fragments I had written at the time. These texts, primarily my journals and diaries, act as the physical embodiment of my intrapersonal communication. They do so in two ways: “(1) A report of a person’s thoughts discloses the process by which selective memory defines and redefines personal history. (2) A journal or memoir reveals habitual thoughts which are basic to self-identity” (Jensen, 1984, p.238). My diaries have provided me a means of reading, remembering, and engaging in my past experiences. Diaries not only document intrapersonal communication - “*oh no*” *I think to myself*— they are also an artifact of intrapersonal communication. Researchers have examined intrapersonal communication to understand performance, self-concept (Tovares, 2010; Macke, 2008; Robson & Young, 2007), and personal constructions of meaning (Pederson, 2012; Macke, 2008). Through narrative I am able to perform, and reconstruct my lived experience.

My diaries and journals were the only place I felt safe being honest about the abuse. It was easier to write about the pain, than tell my parents or friends. I realized early on that the only person I could tell the truth to was myself, so I began documenting my experiences as a way to remember. According to Macke (2008) “rather than searching for an illusory truth of our Selves—that is, as an answer to a question someone else has asked—we can experience the possibilities of our selfhood as embodied pragmatics” (p. 138). By exploring my identity reflexively, I am able to experience and cultivate a unique understanding of self through this text. In *The Restaurant* I am able to recall my embodied sensation of anxiety and the spatial layout of that moment. *The Restaurant* is not just a recollection; it is a reconstruction of a minor but significant social situation in which I can clearly “see” myself from multiple perspectives while returning to the emotional space I inhabited in that moment.

Research has explored the relationship between self-reflexivity and self-identity (Jensen, 1984; Sekimoto, 2012). Through a multimodal approach of temporality, embodiment, and spatiality, Sekimoto (2012) emphasizes the importance of self-reflexivity in order to understand her Asian identity. She writes, “If self-reflexivity is crucial for politicizing one’s identity, then theorizing identity needs to pay attention to how we ‘look back’ at ourselves and how that act of looking back is a temporal, retrospective process” (Sekimoto, 2012, p.238). Common to the methodology of autoethnography, as well as ethnographic research more generally (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002), is reliance on previous personal written accounts (ie. Diaries). The process and documentation of “looking back” can take on many different forms.

The present text takes on the form of first-person narrative. The benefits of narrative writing have been well documented (Pennebaker, 1997; Monk, 1997; Koenig, Kellas, et al., 2010; Dunn, 2014). Previous research on self-reflexivity has focused on its role in the construction of narratives (Dunn, 2014; Goltz, 2011), while others focus more specifically on the effects of self-reflexivity (Jorgenson, 2011; Barge, 2004). Koenig, Kellas, et al. (2010) write, “telling the story of a traumatic or stressful experience allows an individual to express emotions and/or cognitively make sense of the trauma, which in turn allows the individual to ‘let go’ of the memory and move on from potentially unhealthy ruminations” (p. 175). By taking the form of a first-person narrative I can experience a heightened sense of agency, lower levels of anxiety (Barge, 2004), and greater sense-making abilities (Koenig, Kellas, et al., 2010); for instance, I can reflect on the nervousness, shame and anxiety I encountered towards friends and see them as effects on my dependency. The personal and therapeutic nature of narrative writing makes it an ideal process to explore my experiences of abuse.

## **Losing Hope**

*I open the front door and begin making my way across the living room, passing his dad who is in his usual spot on the couch – we do our typical “hi, how are you?” thing as I walk by him.*

*I make my way up the stairs into his room.*

*“Hey babe” I say – smiling. Ugh.*

*He doesn’t even look away from the television.*

*Great. He’s in one of his moods.*

*“What’s wrong?” I ask, sheepishly.*

Something was ALWAYS wrong with him and it was ALWAYS my fault. He could have cut his own finger chopping vegetables and find a way to somehow blame it on me. It was his way of always keeping me afraid and submissive. It was control (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011).

*“Nothing” he mumbles, still not making eye contact.*

*“are you sure? You seem...”*

*“I seem?! I seem what? You got a problem? You can leave!” he barks.*

*I notice the empty bottle of cheap rum on the coffee table.*

*“I just got here... I don’t know what’s going on... why are you mad at me?” I ask, defensively.*

Always playing defense...(Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011).

*Silence.*

*“Fine. I’m leaving!” I can feel the pain swelling in my stomach. I don’t deserve this shit. Why do*

*I let him do this to me? ...It’s not your fault.*

*I reach for my purse that I placed on the floor when I first walked in, eyes welling with tears.*

*Suddenly he grabs it before I have a chance.*

*“Oh you’re leaving?!” he laughs.*

*“YES! GIVE ME MY BAG. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!” My voice loud, but shaking.*

*A smile erupts on his face and he starts to laugh.*

*He stands up and begins to walk around his room.*

*Holding my bag upside-down*

*Open.*

*Scattering all of its contents around the room.*

*Wallet...chapstick...hair elastics...pens...Except for one thing.*

*My cell-phone.*

*He slides it into his pocket. Smiling.*

*“Go ahead, pick up your shit, leave!” he laughs.*

*I feel the tears streaming down my face.*

*I can feel the disgust building in my stomach. For him. For me. What am I doing here?!*

*“Fuck this!” I yell. “I’ll buy a new phone, BYE!” I turn around shaking, and begin to make my way down the stairs until...*

***SLAM.***

*I feel the whiplash of being pulled back and down, my head hits the ground.*

*I’m lying on my back halfway down the stairs. His hands gripped around my hair.*

*He drags me, by my hair, back into his room.*

*“You thought you were leaving?” you thought you were leaving...*

The work of Michel Foucault, particularly regarding his later theorization of “technologies of self” (Foucault, 1982), has informed numerous accounts of how we understand and shape our own sense of identity in qualitative research (Markula, 2003; Besley, 2009).

Previous research examining self-knowledge, (Danisch, 2006; Votsis, 2012, Amuchástegui, 2009) experience, (Lemke, 2011) and power (Phillips, 2002) have looked to the work of Michel Foucault in order to better understand how one engages in technologies of the self, and what forms of power these technologies are constrained by and operate in.

“Technologies of the self” illustrates the practices one willingly takes up that condition the self into particular kinds of subjectivity. Part of Foucault’s project was to think through the opportunities (and constraints) afforded by social sciences that enable subjects to reflect on and rework their own subjectivity; to “analyze these so-called sciences as very specific ‘truth games’ related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves” (Foucault, 1982). At a lecture given on the “Technologies of the Self” at Vermont University Foucault (1982) stated:

Self is a reflective pronoun, and it has two meanings, Auto means ‘the same’, but it also conveys the notion of identity. The latter meaning shifts the question from ‘What is the self?’ to ‘What is the plateau on which I shall find my identity?’

Foucault emphasizes that we are not free to re-invent ourselves whichever way we see fit; we are forced, always, to work within the constraints of institutions (law, family, sexuality, gender, race) and their histories. But “technologies of the self” remains a useful and powerful concept for articulating the ways in which I’ve transformed myself through a difficult situation.

In a study examining men’s violence towards women in Mexico, Amuchástegui (2009) found that the identification and deconstruction of a “violent man” identity was necessary in stopping violent behavior. Essentially, the men had to relate to themselves in a ‘game of truth’ that allowed them to experience their own subjectivity; they had to learn to think of their gendered identity in reflexive terms, in order to re-think and re-configure their relationship to

their understandings of masculinity and its deep connections to violence. According to Amuchástegui (2009) this directly involves the Foucauldian exercise of “techniques of self” – “procedures suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to fix, keep or transform their identity according to certain ends, and all that thanks to a relationship of control over oneself, or knowledge over oneself” (p. 162).

Though they focus on the experiences of male abusers, Amuchástegui’s account is nonetheless vital to my own, as it regards gendered identity as a source of contestation and transformation, rather than a static construct. In Amuchástegui’s words, research on gender and subjectivity too often produces “analytic rigidity” by focusing on “types of subjects instead of looking at processes and relationships” (p. 158). Like Amuchástegui, I regard gendered identity as a contingent grounds through which to exercise “technologies of the self” organized around self-care; in my account, the tools of autoethnography offer a way of understanding.

Technologies of the self are specific to each individual, thus mine are different than another persons. As a graduate student who is confronting this troublesome, and problematic issue – none of the traditional academic discourses are open to me. What is available is autoethnography, which becomes a technology of the self for me. According to Oliver (2001):

Attention is turning to the effects of this marginalization and objectification on the subjectivity and agency of its victims. What happens to someone’s sense of herself as a subject and her sense of her subjectivity or agency when she is objectified through the discrimination, domination, oppression, enslavement, or torture? (p. 4)

It is through the combined effort of writing and reflexively examining past experience that I am able to develop and articulate an authentic representation of my identity. According to Markula (2003) through the technologies of the self an individual “begins to recognize her/himself as a

subject and in this sense, s/he can be understood to counter the technologies of power” (p. 88). All of my personal account and analysis are concerned with, and informed by self-knowledge, experience, and power. Therefore, my writing of this work, as a non-linear and deliberately fragmented reconstruction of previous journal entries, can be read as “technologies of the self” aimed at refashioning a painful experience into a site of personal growth.

### **The Motel**

*The clacking of the small glass nips of vodka, rum, and whiskey in my backpack is audible as I walk off the ferry.*

*It’s his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. I’ve got about 2 months until mine but thanks to my alter-ego/identification “Shannon” that won’t be a problem.*

*We see the motel (quaint, beachy, and expensive) immediately upon walking off the ferry, it’s directly behind the police station.*

*“I’ve got a funny feeling I’m going to get arrested tonight” he quips as we walk past the police station. He doesn’t know it then, but he’s right.*

*We reach the motel, check-in, and settle into our room.*

*He unloads the bottle of champagne and without warning pops the cork towards the ceiling – it’s loud and leaves a visible dent in the plaster.*

*“Geeze!” I laugh – cautiously, “wasting no time eh?”*

*Before he gets to the champagne he finishes a nip of Bacardi rum. “Nope!”*

*“Need a glass?” I ask – “Nah, Straight from the bottle today!” Oh, today? Right.*

*“To you, I love you” I say raising my plastic cup.*

*He kisses my forehead. “I love you, too.”*

---

*It's 9 o'clock*

*I struggle to remain seated upright on my barstool.*

*"ONE MORE JAGERBOMB!" He yells. Ugh... I don't feel well...*

*We swig it down and I immediately stumble to the bathroom.*

*Dizzy, ugh, I'm dizzy. I begin projectile vomiting. Bathroom door wide open. Ugh...*

*Stumbling back out to the bar – slightly better now, but well aware my time in public is up.*

*"I feel sick, can we head back now?"*

*He rolls his eyes. "Fine, whatever, someone can't hang!" he says ...loudly...sarcastically*

*We walk back to the motel...A huge sigh of relief is released ...the bed...the bathroom – at least now I can vomit in privacy.*

*Ah, there's my t-shirt and sweatpants, ugh, a little better but not much...I lay on top of the bed and put on the discovery channel – it's an ocean documentary.*

*My eyes slowly close.*

*"HEY!" he yells, shaking me awake. "What?!" I respond, groggy, annoyed.*

*"I'm going back out – I can't find the key – you're gonna have to let me back in, stay awake!"*

*Whatever.*

*An hour passes... I've been sliding in and out of sleep... I feel my phone vibrate.*

*"Babe?" I moan. Damn I'm tired.*

*"WHAT DID YOU DO?!" He screams into the phone.*

*My adrenaline kicks in... "What are you talking about, I'm in bed, I'm laying down, what is going on?!" I ask...shaking.*

*“YOU FUCKING BITCH! YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DID! YOU FUCKING BITCH! YOU’RE GOING TO PAY!” He’s screaming, angrily, completely out of breath...*

*“What are you talking about....I didn’t do anything!!!! I promise!! What are you talking about?!” tears welling, heart pounding.*

*Suddenly I hear his footsteps outside of the door. A loud knock erupts...*

***BANG BANG BANG BANG***

*“MEGAN!” .... **BANG BANG BANG** “LET ME IN!”*

*I get out of bed and slowly walk towards the door... physically shaking... heart pounding...*

*“Please, please, calm down and I’ll let you in... you’re scaring me...please calm down I’m not going to let you in until you’re calm...” I plead.*

*I hear him take a deep breath...*

*“Babe....” He says...in a calm voice...*

*“I’m sorry, I was just a little freaked, I don’t feel well, please let me in...”*

*...I pause with my hand on the deadbolt, my mind racing, I don’t know what to do...*

*“Babe, Please...I’m sorry for freaking out...”*

*I slowly...unlock the door and open it.*

*He’s standing there. Glaring at me. His eyes...something’s off...something’s wrong.*

*He lunges at me and covers my mouth with one hand forcing me in the room while his other closes the door behind him.*

*He turns around and locks the door... laughing...*

*“You shouldn’t have done that....” He turns back around smiling ...*

*Petrified. My whole body vibrating. I begin scanning the room for exits...two windows next to the door...a small one in the bathroom that I’m almost certain I can’t fit thru.*

*“Please, Please, I didn’t do anything, Please...let’s go to sleep, please, you’re not okay... you’re confused I’ve been here the whole time...” The tears are rolling down my face as I slowly take steps back towards the bathroom...*

*Maybe I’ll lock myself in there and he’ll pass out...*

*“No.” He says...angry now...his smile gone...”I have to kill you.”*

*“What?! No! Why?!” I ask sobbing... “Please, no, I love you, you don’t know what you’re saying...”*

*I dart into the bathroom and attempt to slam the door but he kicks it open hard, it hits me.*

*He grabs me by my hair and yanks me back into the room forcing me against the wall.*

*I can see the front door... the windows...How am I going to get out of here? I begin screaming uncontrollably.*

*“SHUT THE FUCK UP!” He yells while slamming my head repeatedly against the wall. I try sliding my body down the wall in an attempt to escape the grip he has on my hair, on my head.*

*Dizzy.*

*I drop to the floor. He released me, for a moment...He looks confused.*

*He turns around and begins walking to the door.... “No....no...it’s all wrong...” he says, manically... “No...you’re not suffering enough....you haven’t suffered enough...”*

*I’m afraid to say anything. Hair...it’s on the carpet....Oh God...*

*“I’m sorry, I love you, please, please, it’s me, please stop,” I plead.*

*He turns around...walking towards me...he looks....crazy....*

*His hands grip my neck, he lifts me up and forces me on the bed.*

*I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe.*

*HELP. Please. Help. Someone, ANYONE. Please.*

*The words can't leave my mouth...Tears falling down my face...*

*I claw at him, his face his neck...*

*He lifts his hand and hits me. Then quickly returns to squeezing my neck and covering my mouth.*

*"Shhhhhhhhhhh, It's going to be over soon," he whispers as he tightens his grip.*

*The ocean documentary is still on the television in the background. It looks blurry... I feel...lightheaded...*

*Suddenly, out of nowhere, he lets go.*

*He stands up...grabs the keys...and walks out of the room, saying nothing.*

*Dry heaving and dizzy, I desperately begin to search for my phone.*

*No. Lock the door first.*

*I run to the door...(Click)*

*I hear a scraping sound on the door. The key.*

*He's gliding it back and forth on the door, taunting me.*

*I hear him whispering "I'm gonna get you, I'm gonna get you."*

*I reach for my phone, body pressed against the door, holding it shut*

*911 (beep beep beep) the low battery warning sounds on my cellphone as the operator answers.*

*"PLEASE HELP ME HE'S GOING TO KILL ME! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE!" I'm screaming.*

*"Ma'am where are you? Where is he? Is he in the room?"*

**SMASH** – *One of the windows breaks, his hand reaching for the lock.*

*"HE'S GETTING IN – I'M RIGHT ACROSS FROM THE STATION HURRY PLEASE!"*

*"Ma'am is that him in the background? Yes – he's screaming, I hear him, He's saying he's going to kill her...she's at the Motel..."*

*Suddenly he's gone, I hear him running down the stairs until...*

*“Ma’am stay on the line with me, just stay on the line with me. You’re going to be okay, help is here, they’ve got him, you’re going to be okay.”*

## **Help**

*“That’s what I’m here for...” she says as she reaches across the table for my hand.*

*“Let me know if you need anything” she walks out of the small room we’ve been sitting in on the first floor of the courthouse.*

*Under the title “Affidavit” I begin writing. According to Smith (2005) this document serves as a form of institutional writing which seeks to segment and compartmentalize human experience.*

*Once I finish, she comes back in, and hands me a couple of tissues...*

*We start walking down the hall towards the courtroom... I see a familiar face...*

*It’s “Pan Salmon” a regular customer at the restaurant (who earned his nickname by ordering the salmon dish almost daily), and defense attorney.*

*I’m overcome with embarrassment...shame...I want to hide.*

*He sees me.*

*“Megan! What’s wrong?” You don’t want to know...*

*I can’t speak. I can’t find the words. I can’t stop crying.*

*He notices my paperwork, and responds to my silence “Let’s go, I’ll represent you.”*

*He puts his hand on my shoulder and guides me into the court. We sit and wait.*

*“Ms. Fletcher?” The judge calls my name...*

*Pan Salmon and I stand as he reads my affidavit.*

*“Ms. Fletcher will you please approach the bench?” Oh no...*

*Nervous. I walk towards the judge; he leans in, his face serious...*

*“Ms. Fletcher, this, this is attempted murder. I strongly encourage that you press charges. I am...sorry...this happened to you. Please, press charges.”*

*I wipe a tear from my face. “Yes your honor...I will, your honor...”*

Many of the tools available to researchers to examine sociological knowledge fragment social life. As a form of institutional writing (Smith, 2005), that is what academic production is intended to do: to translate the experiences of everyday life into more abstract and specialized forms of knowledge. It is through narrative that partially deploys, and partially disrupts these tools, that I am able to re-capture the richness and complexity of my lived experience. The re-telling that I've shared here involves a variety of techniques (re-organizing, analyzing, using first-person perspective, engaging in dialogue with my narrative), which serve as different aspects of this autoethnographic technology of the self. The non-linear reordering and telling of my experience can be read as a technique, as well as the annotation, commentary, and dialogue I engage in (Foucault, 1982).

This dialogue can also be read as what Kristeva (1982) defines as abjection – which is the separation of ones' sense of self. “Abjection” speaks to the marginalization and subjective horror I experienced throughout the relationship. Understanding domestic abuse from this perspective through autoethnography would result in an interesting and informative discourse for future research. I mention the writing of my affidavit and its function as a form of institutional writing (Smith, 2005), however in future research I could analyze all of the written documentation I engaged in throughout the legal and medical processes of reporting the abuse.

What sets this work apart from other academic research on domestic abuse is more than just it's narrative form. At some points my account may feel messy, complicated, confusing, and

upsetting – and it should. Rather than reflecting the traditional flow of academic research, this account reflects the messy, confusing, painful, difficult experience of domestic abuse. At times it was difficult to write; I attempted to create narrative distance through using “I” as a way to cope with recalling painful experiences. I worried about the emotional baggage I would be handing to my readers, and I even felt a little embarrassed re-living some of my past. Those feelings are all important pieces of this work. It was worth every tear, every question, every moment – it was worth feeling insecure, unsure, and intimidated. I am beyond grateful to be able to recover my agency, tell others about my freedom, and write *my* story. So many women and men who are being abused, or have been abused in the past are not afforded that opportunity.

## **Now**

*Dead or Alive plays on the speakers as we sit in a small coffee shop*

*“You spin me right around baby right around  
like a record baby right around round round...”*

*I take a big sip of my green tea...*

*“We really need to go out dancing soon!” I say, nodding my head to the beat.*

*Ally and Katie look up from their laptops and smile at me.*

*“Yeah, except that we have a million huge projects due...” Katie laughs and continues...*

*“You know when you’re a little kid and you’re playing in the ocean and a huge wave comes and knocks you over...then you go to get up and like, 10 more knock you over and you drown and die?”*

*“Yup, sounds about right!” Ally and I laugh in response.*

*It’s true. I am beyond overwhelmed. Drowning, essentially, in work.*

*I can barely visualize the end of the week never mind graduation in May.*

*I continue typing...on a document titled: "FletchThesisNarrative"*

*I scan our table – I notice that both of their cell-phones are facing up, but as I look towards mine, I notice it's facedown. A habit I have yet to break...*

*I start to think of all the things, ticks, I have. Small oddities that others may not notice...*

*But I do – all as a result of my survival strategies throughout the relationship. These survival mechanisms can be identified as mollified techniques of self. A form of coping with a horrible reality, in a similar way that this work serves as a form of growing from that reality (Foucault, 1982).*

Healing is a process. (Stern, 2014) A process I am engaged in, at this very moment.

*I may never be able to rid myself of these things...these memories...*

*Part of me doesn't want to.*

*For the first time in a while I realize that I'm okay.*

*I'm not afraid anymore.*

*What a great feeling...*

*I take another sip of my tea, and smile big...real big.*

*"No you guys, we really need to go out dancing...How about Friday?"*

## References

- Adams, T. E. (2006). Seeking father relationally reframing a troubled love story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(4), 704-723.
- Amuchástegui, A. (2009). Partner violence, technologies of the self, and masculinity in Mexico. *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 1(2), 155.
- Ashcraft, C. (2000). Naming knowledge: A language for reconstructing domestic violence and systemic gender inequity. *Women & Language*, 23(1), 3.
- Barge, J. K. (2004). Reflexivity and managerial practice. *Communication Monographs*, 71(1), 70-96. doi:10.1080/03634520410001691465
- Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor.
- Berry, K. (2006). Implicated audience member seeks understanding: Reexamining the “gift” of autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5:3.
- Besley, T. (2009). Foucault, truth telling and technologies of the self in schools. *The Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 6(1).
- Bochner, A. (2001). Narrative’s virtues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7:2, pp. 131-157
- Bochner, A. P. (2012). On first-person narrative scholarship: Autoethnography as acts of meaning. *Narrative Inquiry*, 22(1), 155-164. doi:10.1075/ni.22.1.10
- Breiding, M. (2014). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, Stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. Retrieved: December 11, 2014, from <http://www.cdc.gov>
- Byers, L. A., Shue, C. K., & Marshall, L. L. (2004). The interplay of violence,

- Relationship quality, Commitment, and communication in abusive relationships. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, 29(1), 43-51.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2012). Migrant ethnic identities, mobile language resources: Identification practices of Sri Lankan Tamil youth. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 3(2), 251-272. doi:10.1515
- Carey, James. (1989). A cultural approach to communication. *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Catt, I. E. (2011). The Signifying World between Ineffability and Intelligibility: Body as Sign in Communicology. *Review Of Communication*, 11(2), 122-144.  
doi:10.1080/15358593.2011.552115
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Norman & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1-20). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Doloriert, Claire; Sambrook, Sally, (2012). Organisational autoethnography, *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 1 Iss: 1, pp.83 – 95
- Dumitrica, D., & Gaden, G. (2009). Knee-high boots and six-pack abs: Autoethnographic reflections on gender and technology in Second Life. *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 1(3), 3–23.
- Dunn, C. D. (2014). 'Then I Learned about Positive Thinking': The Genre Structuring of Narratives of Self-Transformation. *Journal Of Linguistic Anthropology*, 24(2), 133-150.  
doi:10.1111/jola.12045
- Eckstein, J. J. (2016) IPV Stigma and its Social Management: The Roles of Relationship-Type,

- Abuse-Type, and Victims' Sex. *Journal of Family Violence*, 31(2), 215-225. doi: 10.1007/s10896-015-9752-4.
- Ellis, Carolyn; Adams, Tony E. & Bochner, Arthur P. (2010). Autoethnography: An overview [40 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), Art. 10, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108>.
- Floyd, K. (2014). Interpersonal Communication's Peculiar Identity Crisis. *Communication Studies*, 65(4), 429-431. doi:10.1080/10510974.2014.927291
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.
- Foucault, M., Martin, L. H., Gutman, H., & Hutton, P. H. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*. Univ of Massachusetts Press.
- Goltz, D. B. (2011). Frustrating the 'I': Critical dialogic reflexivity with personal voice. *Text & Performance Quarterly*, 31(4), 386-405. doi:10.1080/10462937.2011.602707
- Goodall Jr., H. L. (2004). Narrative ethnography as applied communication research. *Journal Of Applied Communication Research*, 32(3), 185-194.
- Goodboy, A. K., & Bolkan, S. (2011). Attachment and the use of negative relational maintenance behaviors in romantic relationships. *Communication Research Reports*, 28), 327-336. doi:10.1080/08824096.2011.616244
- Gottman, J. M., & Notarius, C. I. (2000). Decade review: Observing marital interaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62(4), 927-947.
- Griffin, R. A. (2012). I AM an angry black woman: Black feminist autoethnography, Voice, and resistance. *Women's Studies In Communication*, 35(2), 138-157.

- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-99.
- Infante, D. A., Chandler, T. A., & Rudd, J. E. (1989). Test of an argumentative skill deficiency model of interspousal violence. *Communication Monographs*, 56(2), 163-177.
- Jacobson, N. S., Gottman, J. M., Gortner, E., Berns, S., & Shortt, J. W. (1996). Psychological factors in the longitudinal course of battering: When do the couples split up? when does the abuse decrease? *Violence and Victims*, 11(4), 371-92.
- Jensen, M. D. (1984). Memoirs and journals as maps of intrapersonal communication. *Communication Education*, 33(3), 237.
- Jorgenson, J. (2011). Reflexivity in feminist research practice: Hearing the unsaid. *Women & Language*, 34(2), 115-119.
- Keating, D. M. (2014). Relationships among goals, Face threats, and communicative behavior in identity implications theory. *Communication Research Reports*, 31(3), 233-243.  
doi:10.1080/08824096.2014.924301
- Knapp, M. L., & Daly, J. A. (2002). *Handbook of interpersonal communication*. Sage.
- Kristeva, J. (1982). Powers of horror (Vol. 98). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Macke, F. (2008). Intrapersonal communicology: Reflection, reflexivity, and relational consciousness in embodied subjectivity. *Atlantic Journal Of Communication*, 16(3/4)

, 122-148. doi:10.1080/15456870802086911

Montalbano-Phelps, L. L. (2003). Discourse of survival: Building families free of unhealthy relationships. *Journal Of Family Communication*, 3(3), 149-177.

Nixon, J. (2010). The politics of need interpretation: discourse and the needs of disabled survivors of abuse. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 7(3), 165-176.  
doi:10.1080/17405904.2010.491220

Oliver, K. (2001). *Witnessing: beyond recognition*. Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota Press.

Olson, L. (2004). The role of voice in the (re) construction of a battered woman's identity: An autoethnography of one woman's experiences of abuse. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 27(1), 1-33.

Pearson, J. C., & VanHorn, S. B. (2004). Communication and gender identity: A retrospective analysis. *Communication Quarterly*, 52(3), 284-299.

Pederson, J. R. (2014). Competing discourses of forgiveness: A dialogic perspective. *Communication Studies*, 65(4), 353-369. doi:10.1080/10510974.2013.833526

Péloquin, K., Lafontaine, M., & Brassard, A. (2011). A dyadic approach to the study of romantic attachment, dyadic empathy, and psychological partner aggression. *Journal Of Social & Personal Relationships*, 28(7), 915-942. doi:10.1177/0265407510397988

Petronio, S., & Flores, L. A. (1997). Locating the voice of logic: Disclosure discourse of sexual abuse. *Western Journal Of Communication*, 61(1), 101-113.

Poulos, C. N. (2008). Narrative conscience and the autoethnographic adventure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(1), 46-66.

Reich, N. M. (2002). Towards a rearticulation of women-as-victims: A thematic

- analysis of the construction of women's identities surrounding gendered violence. *Communication Quarterly*, 50(3/4), 292-311.
- Richardson, E. (2013). Social construction of self: Narratives of verbally abusive relationships. *Florida Communication Journal*, 41(2), 97-105.
- Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516–529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Robson, D. C., & Young, R. (2007). Listening to inner speech: Can students listen to themselves think?. *International Journal Of Listening*, 21(1), 1-13.  
doi:10.1080/10904010709336842
- Rudd, J. E., Burant, P. A., & Beatty, M. J. (1994). Battered women's compliance-gaining strategies as a function of argumentativeness and verbal aggression. *Communication Research Reports*, 11(1), 13-22.
- Russell, L. D., & Babrow, A. S. (2011). Risk in the making: Narrative, Problematic Integration, and the social construction of risk. *Communication Theory* (10503293), 21(3), 239-260. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2011.01386.x
- Sekimoto, S. (2012). A multimodal approach to identity: Theorizing the self through embodiment, Spatiality, and Temporality. *Journal Of International & Intercultural Communication*, 5(3), 226-243. doi:10.1080/17513057.2012.689314
- Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. Rowman Altamira.
- Stern, D. M. (2014). “He won't hurt us anymore”: A feminist performance of healing for children who witness domestic violence. *Women's Studies In Communication*, 37(3), 360-378. doi:10.1080/07491409.2014.955231
- Stern, D. M. (2015). *Engaging autoethnography: Feminist voice and narrative intervention*.

- Women & Language*, 38(1), 83-102.
- Tillmann-Healy (1996). A secret life in a culture of thinness. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner, *Composing Ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.
- Tillmann, L. M. (2009). Body and bulimia revisited: Reflections on “a secret life”. *Journal Of Applied Communication Research*, 37(1), 98-112.
- Tovares, A. V. (2010). Managing the voices: Athlete self-talk as a dialogic process. *Journal Of Language & Social Psychology*, 29(3), 261-277. doi:10.1177/0261927X10368829
- Williams, Raymond & McCallum, Pamela, 1949- (2006). *Modern tragedy*. Broadview, Peterborough, Ont, Plymouth.
- Wood, J. T. (2000). "That wasn't the real him": Women's dissociation of violence from the men who enact it. *Qualitative Research Reports In Communication*, 1(1), 1-7.
- Young, S. (2009). Half and half: An (auto)ethnography of hybrid identities in a Korean American mother-daughter relationship. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 2(2), 139-167.