

Seduction, Resistance, and the value of the 'Anvil': Finding my way into Autoethnography

In this paper I sketch my journey of finding Autoethnography and creative-relational inquiry; orientations to scholarship that are so obviously relevant to my home discipline of Counselling Psychology, yet at the same time, so alien and unwelcome. While I deeply resent Psychology's hostility towards non-positivist, subjectively inflected forms of inquiry (what is conventionally known as 'research'), I have recently wondered whether there is value in the struggle of trying to 'fit in' and 'break through'. The struggle I will speak of is one of trying to reach Autoethnography while not completely relinquishing my professional identity and its associated rituals and signifiers. It is a struggle that involved enough agency and self-sabotage to forbid us from conceptualising mainstream Psychology in singularly unhelpful terms. Moreover, my journey afforded new vistas to examine psychotherapy, blurring the boundaries between research and practice.

I will share a few key moments that capture seduction and resistance alike; turning to and running away from, as they helped me reach the shores of Autoethnography in a sure-footed yet curious and open-hearted way. I conceptualise this process as an anvil being hammered in a forge. Painful, yes. But could it be that the sparks from the anvil's heart ignited something that might have otherwise remained inaccessible and dormant?

Autoethnography; struggle; counselling psychology; depth psychology;

Drawn to performance – terrible actor (good enough director though)

Give myself permission

Importance of Edinburgh crew

Importance of literature – its tone, breadth, scope, inviting in, conscious of critiques

Host institution welcoming – Discipline of Psychology hostile / CoP sleeping on it

Links to practice are not yet clear to me (and I love it)

Cover girls!