

Crystal's Crystalization

The greatest epiphany for me came with Richardson and St. Pierre's (2018) description of crystallization instead of triangulation. The triangle is flat and two dimensional. The crystal "combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 822). In our examination of others, ourselves, our culture, and our stories through qualitative research; like the crystal, we grow, change, and are altered. We, like crystals, refract within ourselves. My desire is to reflect the light and beauty of diversity while also growing and changing myself.

My companion art creation is a crystal. It is a reflection of my own personal growth and the realization that all of the parts of myself are present so I might as well be transparent about who I am. Just as crystals grow I have grown and changed as a result of this course and this experience. My crystal started out as a plain pipe cleaner, it was easily bent out of shape and uncertain about what it would become. Like this pipe cleaner (see Appendix A), I too, was unsure about what I would become. I was uncertain about how I would look as a white scholar interested in diversity. As cleaner and water were heated, the ingredients combined to become a transforming agent (see Appendix B). Dr. Kim's nurturing confrontation combined with the texts for this course and became a transforming agent in me. Just as the pipe cleaner soaked in the solution, I soaked in the words of Dr. Kim and the authors listed in the reference page of this paper (see Appendix C). After some time, the crystal and I formed just as Richardson and St. Pierre (2018) described (see Appendix D). We have "an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" (p. 822). I, like that pipe cleaner, will never be the same. I will continue growing, changing, reflecting, and shining as I soak in experience, research, literature, and gain wisdom from professors turned mentors. I am so grateful for this experience.

Richard

Epilogue: Transformation as an Act of My Becoming

Though the end of the course is fast approaching, I believe the journey of my *becoming* has just begun, not just as a qualitative researcher, but as a more empathetic human being, as well. In this epilogue, I focus on the theme of continual change in the development of my *Bildung*. I personally believe that in order to grow and become, there needs to be an intentional inward transformation.

I started this semester with a very narrow view of research in that science or a paradigmatic approach was *the* methodological authority in conducting a study (Polkinghorne, 1995). Indeed, I came to realize that I was a positivist (Kim, 2016), rigid and solely reliant on logic and what I believed constituted as truth. However, as time went on with the semester, my ontological, epistemological, and axiological views of conducting research and knowing *truth* slowly began to transform. I began to learn that there is more to conducting a study of human lives than merely entering in a few numbers into a statistical analysis software or coding lines of transcriptions (Saldaña, 2009). Rather, I found the value of intentionally seeking and discovering the truth in various forms of data (Erickson, 2004), while also questioning my own personal theories and ideologies (Agee, 2009).

In conclusion, I refer back once again to the theme of change as I had mentioned at the beginning of this epilogue. Change can sometimes be viewed in a negative lens because there is a sense of entering the unfamiliarity and the unknown. Yet, in the case of developing my *Bildung*, this change was not only a positive one, but was also necessary for me to grow into a qualitative researcher. Although there is still a substantial amount of learning and growing needed, I feel that I have and continue to develop the hallmarks of a qualitative researcher. Since undergoing this course and reading

through the material, I feel that I have become more vulnerable in terms of challenging my preconceived notions, more reflexive upon my research practices, able to synthesize and analyze qualitative data, and have been able to develop my skills for multiple representations.

Accompanying Art for My Bildung: Original Poem

Included in the appendix is an accompanying original poem, entitled *These Voices Get Me*, that I wrote to represent this change and growth in me. Clandinin (2016) mentions that there are three commonplaces in narrative inquiry—time, place, and sociality. I tried to capture all of these commonplaces in my poem by illuminating voices I have heard through my own personal experiences, relationships, and growth since moving to a new place. The “get” in the first two stanzas refers to the oppression I felt in our new community (This is a memory part, remembering what happened in the past). Then, the “get” in the third and fourth stanzas refers more to encouragement and feeling captivated (Meditation part-Reflecting). Finally, the “get” in the fifth stanza refers to my feelings of being supported and understood (Method part).

These Voices Get Me

These voices get me, they get me.

I moved an ocean away, to a new place. Why do I feel so stressed, depressed, oppressed?
“Oh, you have an accent,” they say. “Where are you from?” “Do they speak English there?”
“Do they have wifi there?” “No, this is how it’s pronounced,” they proclaim.
And all I want to do is exclaim, “What the heck?!” I hate it here!
These voices get me, they get me.

These voices get me, they get me.

I started at my new school, two new schools, in fact. I’m sort of nervous, anxious, cautious.
“It really has nothing to do with you as a teacher.” “Why don’t you teach it like this?”
“I guess your students just won’t comprehend the material,” they suggest.
I really do not have the strength to contest. I’m sick of this!
These voices get me, they get me.

These voices get me, they get me.

I enrolled in a graduate program. I love to learn. I must be crazy, busy, in constant study.
“You can make a difference for your community.” “Reach for your goals.”
“Keep striving for success.” “You have great potential,” they encourage.
And I sense the encouragement for me. I am truly enjoying this.
These voices get me, they get me.

These voices get me, they get me.

I found a different community—a church group. I’m a little insecure, unsure, yet more mature.
“I will give you rest,” He says. “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
“We are all imperfect.” “Let us know if you need anything,” they offer.
I take them up on their offer. I feel supported, uplifted, restored.
These voices get me, they get me.

These voices get me, they get me.

I converse with my family often, my family back home.

“It will all be worth it in the end.” “Don’t worry, we’ll see you again soon.”
“We miss you, too.” “I love and support you wholeheartedly,” she affirms.
Not that I really needed any affirmation. And yet, I feel loved.
These voices get me, they always get me.

Kirk

**From “Finding My Place Through an Unintended Journey”
To “The Old Bur Oak has a New Life Ahead”**

After entering this doctoral program, I reflected on all of my experiences and tried to make my focus environmental education. I was given assignments that did not allow me to work on what I wanted. I worked on projects and assignments to get grades. I was challenged to think out of my own knowledge base. My research focus has not been going where I intended it to go. As I reflect, I can truly say that my journey to this place at this time was never a place where I intended to be. But I am a better, more well-rounded person than I was when I started this unintended journey in education.

I have learned who I am as a qualitative researcher. As a student, I have experienced a professor that has challenged my thinking and pushed my ideas. My educational journey has taken on a new direction and focus. I feel that my path will become more intentional. My journey now will include time to reflect, meditate and sketch in my journals because that is where I do my most productive thinking. The journey back in my memory deepens my thoughts of today. The fact that the oak stands tall and sustains its own existence gives me hope that I will stand tall for my future in the field of qualitative research.

The roots of the oak build the foundation for the tree. The trunk is always growing, passing water from the roots and glucose from the leaves. The massive canopy is where the sunlight brings the systems processes alive: releasing water and oxygen, absorbing carbon, building the food for the oak in the photosynthetic process. My roots are embedded in my experiences of education. **I feel that I am the trunk, processing the experiences from my roots and bringing in more knowledge from the leaves in canopy of the tree.** Fullan (2011) wrote that actual change is more likely to occur when we are closely involved in doing something. I have felt that my mind has been working overtime, meditating and reflecting, tying memories to my experiences of old and the new memories and ideas today. I am changing because I am doing something that I now believe in and love, research, trying to understand the depth of qualitative research. I am practicing and doing real research.