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## **Reflect, Reconsider, Reposition: Finding self in the journey of others**

Angel Mok  
*Macquarie University, Sydney*

### **Abstract**

Autoethnography is adopted as the procedure and orientation for this PhD study which aims to explore the cultural identity of the Chinese families and its influences on their children's mathematics learning. The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, readers are invited to travel with the researcher a journey in which she explores her diasporic identity by engaging in the stories of others. This will be done by examining how her understanding of her own Chinese identity was challenged by those of the participants in the interviews. Second, through her experience and reflections, readers are provided with an insider's lens to understand some of the data collected in the interviews. Data are collected through interviews, journals, observations and fieldwork memos.

As an autoethnographic study, it is not the aim of this thesis to provide a generalization of data. Rather, rich data sets which are partially contrastive and partially congruent to one another challenged the homogeneity of Chineseness.

This paper discusses how the researcher uses her dual positionality to explore blurred boundaries between the observer and the observed, insider and outsider. It highlights how self is an important instrument in both the collection and analysis of data.

### **Introduction**

This paper discusses how the researcher uses her dual identity to explore blurred boundaries between the observer and the observed, insider and outsider. It also examines how her understanding of her own identity is being challenged by the data collected as well as the ongoing reflection during the process of data gathering.

Autoethnography is adopted as the procedure and orientation for this PhD research project. Conducted by a researcher who is a member in the Chinese diaspora in Sydney, this research aims to explore the cultural identity of the Chinese families and its influences on their children's mathematics learning. A case study approach is used as the method for data collection and a case is defined as 'a family' for the purposes of this research. Besides the use of questionnaires, journal entries and observations to collect

data, participants are provided opportunities in interviews to recount personal experiences before and after immigration. The researcher's personal experience and narratives are interrogated and discussed with the data gathered from the families. The researcher's personal experience provides a lens to zoom in and out the personal and cultural to further illuminate the culture under study.

The world of the observed has been made visible through interviews, journals, observations and fieldwork memos to the self in this qualitative research which locates the observer in the world. The researcher's authentic membership of the Chinese diaspora provides her with an insider's insights in understanding the data; on the other hand, it blurs her role of the observer and the observed. The dialogic encounters between the narratives of the researcher and the interviews potentially provide an interpretive space to understand the data.

Data are analysed from an early stage to detect cultural themes, recurring topics as well as omissions. Cases are compared to explore the connection of the present with the past, and the relationship between self and others. Initial analysis of interview data reveals that parents indicate that the home language is of the most significance in maintaining Chinese culture. However, their understanding of and attachment to 'Chineseness' seems to have many manifestations. Regardless of where their homelands are, Chinese parents have expressed their concern of the 'low' standard of mathematics curriculum in Australia, which becomes the reason for the extra work they provide for their children, either in the form of institutional or parental tutoring. This intersection of personal experience and cultural values is a space which needs further investigation.

## **Background of this study**

This PhD study aims to explore diasporic identity and childhood mathematics performance in Australia. Chinese students outperform their Western counterparts in international mathematics tests such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Results from these tests have attracted considerable attention from policy makers in the past decades. Local data also seem to suggest that schools with a high Chinese population perform better in the mathematics test in NAPLAN. An extensive literature search has been conducted to examine possible contributing factors such as the curricula, classroom pedagogies, assessment, motivation, parental expectations and practices as well as the Chinese culture ([Leung, 2002](#); [Li, 2004](#); [Stevenson & Stigler, 1992](#)). However, few studies have investigated the issue from the 'insiders' perspective.

Contrary to common beliefs, despite their outstanding performance, Asian students displayed negative attitudes towards mathematics and attach less importance to mathematics ([Leung, 2002](#)). As well, they

lacked confidence in doing mathematics and their self concept in mathematics was lower than the international average. One commonality which is shared among the Asian countries is that of 'Confucian Heritage Culture' (CHC) (Biggs, 1996; Leung, 2002). However, while Confucian values such as diligence, perseverance, repeated learning may benefit children's learning, explaining children's performance solely from the CHC framework may be a simplistic analysis.

Understanding Chinese families as stakeholders is crucial but often overlooked in current literature. This ethnographic study conducted by a researcher from a Chinese background will provide an opportunity for the voice of Chinese families to be heard. Specifically it will explore how Chinese families perceive their identities in the Australian context. Identities are multiple, fluid and socially constructed (Hall, 1996), which can only be fully understood in the historical, political and social discourses they are operating in. As such, Chinese families' attachment to Chineseness which is 'not fixed and pre-given but constantly renegotiated and rearticulated, both inside and outside China' (Ang, 2001, p. 25) should be investigated in the local context, in order to understand the situatedness of self in the host country.

### **Autoethnography – blurred genres**

As a novice using autoethnography as the procedure and orientation in this PhD study, I feel excited but also confused by this methodology. It is exciting to find a methodology which provides the most appropriate tool to collect the data needed to answer the research questions. Already a member in the Chinese diaspora in Sydney, I am an authentic member of the group which allows me to get information *in* the group. I explore the cultural identity of my "own people" and how that might impact on their children's mathematics learning. Listening to the stories of the participants with my ethnographic being allows me an insider's perspective of the stories. On the other hand, I am confused by the range of possibilities in collecting and analysing data, as well as the magnitude of data I am handling.

This paper attempts to connect the personal to the cultural (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, readers are invited to travel with me a journey in which I explore my diasporic identity by engaging in the stories of others. This will be done by examining how my understanding of my own Chinese identity was challenged by those of the participants in the interviews. Second, through my experience and reflections, readers are provided with an insider's lens to understand some of the data collected in the interviews.

Despite the increased use of the autoethnography as a research method in the past couple of decades, a definition of the term is still not agreed upon as researchers have different interpretation of the focus of the term ([Ellis & Bochner, 2000](#); [Reed-Danahay, 1997](#)). In an early piece of autoethnography, David Hayano refers autoethnography as study of 'own people' (1979, p.99, cited in Reed- Danahay, 1997, p. 5) and it is the insider status which marks the autoethnography. Norman Denzin ([1989](#)) later provides a useful insight by suggesting that the important characteristic of autoethnography is that it incorporates one's own life experience and writing as an insider instead of an outsider. Embracing the unique quality as well as the various interpretation of autoethnography, Chang (2008, p50) has also pointed out that '...autoethnographers enter the research field with a familiar topic (self) whereas ethnographers begin their investigation with an unfamiliar topic (others)'.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) provide a framework to help researchers position their studies in the array of terms. They state that 'autoethnographers vary in their emphasis on the research process (graphy), on culture (ethno), and on self (auto)', and that 'different exemplars of autoethnography fall at different places along the continuum of each of these three axes' (p.740). This framework has provided flexibility and wisdom to embrace 'the complexity of the autoethnography nomenclature' ([Chang, 2008, p. 48](#)). Under this understanding of the term, the coordinates of each autoethnographic writing is determined by what the author focuses on.

The methodology of this research project encompasses all three components in the above framework. As such it is an autoethnographic study in its broad sense. However, I am aware that my experience is not the primary interest of this study. This study does not centre on my *self*. Rather, my story 'opens a door to an investigation but remains outside while others are in the spotlight as main characters or participants' ([Chang, 2008, p. 66](#)). In other words, my experience and stories serve as the starting point of this journey of inquiry, from guiding the selection of the research topic, to the analysis of the data collected from the families. As such I would adopt the term reflexive autoethnography ([Ellis & Bochner, 2000](#)) because the significance of my stories is in their position to 'illuminate the culture under study ([Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740](#)). They explain my connection to the project and how my cultural knowledge helps me in the research process. My stories and those of the participants inform each other; as well, they challenge each other. Their encounter produces a dialogue and an interpretive space which readers are invited to enter. An interpretive space in for readers to understand the 'totality' as well as 'multiplicity' of self and the construction of diasporic identity by applying Stuart's Hall's idea of identity construction.

Autoethnographers are boundary-crossers who problematize the boundaries between the insiders and outsiders ([Reed-Danahay, 1997](#)). In fact this dualistic view is being challenged by the shifting identities which are seen in my reflections. Although this project's primary objective is to study Chinese families, it is also an entry to my world. It opens the door for both myself and others to

understand how I am situated in and between different spaces – the space between the researcher and researched, as well as that of Chinese and ‘the west’. As a border-crosser, I use my dual positionality to challenge the assumptions of discourse of Chineseness. My insider’s insight will help me and the readers to make sense of some misunderstanding or some assumed ambiguity in the data.

Autoethnography, however, is not only interested in the self but the tension and interplay of self and society. It ‘connects the personal to the cultural’ (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740) and seeks to examine how stories of individuals can provide some cultural understanding of author’s behaviours and thoughts (Chang, 2008). Autoethnography distinguishes itself from autobiography in that it doesn’t focus on self (or self alone), but strive to understand the culture under study through self. Self has become a lens for the readers to look through in seeking cultural understanding of thoughts and behaviours. As such, personal stories are not told for the purpose of ‘self-indulgent introspection’ or the search of self, but as tools to understand a bigger story, a story of the culture or society (Chang, 2008). Therefore, while this ethnography may see a transformation of my self, this experience is intrinsically connected with the self of others. This self/other boundary is blurred because I am a member in the Chinese diaspora. I am one of them.

Reed-Danahay (1997) suggests while autoethnography as a text can be done in various ways, it cannot divorce the stories from the social context. It is neither the intention of this research project to adopt autobiography as the genre of writing, nor does it aim to focus on understanding me, though as a piece of autoethnographic work, my voice is apparent throughout the thesis. My voices are blended in the blurred genres of autoethnography (Brettell, 1997). The presence of my diasporic voice with that of researcher’s voice which attempts to analyse ‘self’ from the social and ‘others’ through self, sees the complexity of the blending of my voice in the research.

The purpose of this research project is to understand the space which the Chinese diaspora is living in and how they make sense of the changes in life in a place which is culturally and linguistically different from their homeland. Those changes are often adjustments made to accommodate the conflicting cultural and political discourses experienced in Sydney. In order to understand what their experiences are, parents are encouraged to recount their immigration and educational experience in the interviews. Stories are told and understood within the social constraints but it is not sufficient just to describe the data. Data should be communicated to the readers so that they can ‘think with the stories instead of about it’ (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 735). Data are communicated through stories and narratives. We assign meanings and significance to their experiences by retelling our stories. Revisiting past experience reveals how we become who we are at present, and witness the kinds of selves we find and lose (Neumann, 1992). The experience of the researcher is recorded in the form of narratives and reflections, which become vehicles for the exploration of wider issues of cultural identity. Although the data collected from the participants are not autobiography in its strictest sense,

they contain stories and reflections of their experience as migrants living in Sydney.

### **‘Are you Chinese?’ – Who am I in this cultural context?**

Below is an email I wrote to my friends after I was confronted by the question ‘Zhongguoren?’ (Are you Chinese?) 14 months before I started collecting data. This experience frames the context of this intellectual inquiry of the construction of cultural identity. It is the starting point of an ongoing journey.

Stories cannot capture experience. ‘Narrative is always a story about the past’ ([Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 750](#)). When telling stories, we often rearrange, invent, revise and omit information. But the significance of telling stories is that it reflects the contingencies of the present we narrate them. It is not a neutral attempt to mirror the facts of our life, but it does reflect what the stories mean to us at this space in time.

*Hi (27/2/11)*

*... I was doing grocery shopping in Bankstown at about 1pm this afternoon. I had the shopping list in my mind and the bags in my hands. I haven't had my lunch yet and I was in a hurry (as usual) as I have other commitments waiting for me to meet. You know when you are preoccupied with all the demands in life, the world just disappears... and while I was leaving the shop I felt that 'something' has just jumped out of nowhere and stood right in front of me. When I looked up and realised it's a man who was approaching me with open arms, I was absolutely shocked. And I heard 'Zhongguoren?' ('Chinese' in Mandarin)*

*I was very annoyed because -- he has invaded my space (mental and personal); he was standing too close to me (so close that I felt he was going to touch me); he was in my way (to do my shopping and have my lunch) and he scared me... I moved away from him but he walked closer to me... you can imagine how annoyed I was ...*

*His question is still lingering in my mind and I got very confused or even disturbed by it. Zhongguoren?? (Chinese?) I don't know how to answer this question.*

*By him asking me in Mandarin, I really can't simply say 'yes'. I wanted to ask him 'what do you mean?' I am a Chinese by ethnicity but not much the 'country of origin'... so if he was after someone who came from China (as he spoke Mandarin) , I was not the kind of person he was looking for...but hang on, my parents came from China, so is China or Hong Kong my 'country of origin'? But I don't speak Mandarin. I could only answer 'I came from Hong Kong' because that's not answering the question....*

*I am still immensely confused .*

I have given both an intellectual and an emotional response to this ‘simple’ question – ‘Zhonguoren’? I was frustrated because I was not able to provide an answer which I considered as ‘satisfactory’, because it was a far too complicated question to give just a ‘yes or no’ answer.

## **Understanding identity - Self as method**

‘Are you Chinese?’ This question challenges my understanding of cultural identity which is a construct that identifies everyone but not everyone can tell what it is. Identity is often interpreted as ‘who we are’ but Hall (1996) argues it is about becoming, not being. In other words, identity is not about where we came from nor who we are but what we might become and how we have been represented. It is an ongoing process of exploration of understanding of self in the discursive practices. In this sense there is not ‘an’ identity which is fixed and waiting for us to get and claim.

Identities are constructed within, not outside discourse. Heath (1981, cited in Hall, 1996) suggests that identity is a point of suture, a connection point or an attachment that an individual positions her/himself to the discursive practices which flow continuously and change with time. Chinese diasporic identities in Sydney are therefore constructed within the diasporic discourses in this context. However, individuals are not ‘hailed’ to the discourses ([Hall, 1996](#)). Rather we articulate to the discourses and invest ourselves in the position. As such my diasporic identity is how I articulate to the diasporic discourses in Sydney. My initial response to the question ‘Are you Chinese?’ sees that my understanding of my identity is constituted by the language/dialect as well as my homeland. However I was not satisfied with this answer. ‘How would other Chinese answer this question? How would they invest themselves in the positioning’ ‘How do political and cultural discourses intersect with personal experiences and choices? And how does this intersection manifest itself?’

Identities are multiple because they are constructed across different, often intersecting, sometimes conflicting discourses, positions and practices (Hall, 1996). They are also fluid and unstable as they change not just in different context but over time. They are fragmented and fracture and are never unified.

Within this framework of understanding identity, the cultural identity of the Chinese living in Sydney should be seen as individual’s representation of self in which each individual attaches her/himself differently to the discursive practices they are surrounded with. We articulate to and make sense of the discourses with who we are, which intersect with the historical, political and social discourses in Sydney.

## Entering the lives of the authors

Reading Ronai (1992) in which she tries to separate her researcher self with the dancer self, I started to realise another connection of my self as a Chinese migrant in this research study. Unlike her, I am not frightened but rather excited and inspired. Despite I might try to isolate my researcher self from migrant self in order to maintain an objective stance in the study, they are inseparable nor can they be compartmentalised. I cannot label my narratives by different selves because they live in each other and inform each other. I can, however, display them to both the readers and myself, and look for a more holistic understanding of the multi-faceted self.

It is not the research that gives me a new self of 'a researcher'. Quite contrary, my 'migrant self' gave birth to this research project. My personal experience sparked off the passion to conduct an autoethnographic study on a topic that has attracted a lot of research attention in the past couple of decades. Besides enjoying the privilege of being able to conduct a research with my ethnographic self, I feel I have the obligation to give 'my people' a voice to tell others who they are.

### The Anderson

Mrs Anderson was born in Taiwan until she came to Sydney, according to her, 'for marriage' 15 years ago. She is married to a Sydney man of a Dutch descent. They speak English at home but Mrs Anderson speaks Mandarin to her daughter Ada who is fluent in Mandarin. Mrs Anderson is happy that Ada has no problems in communicating with the locals when they visit her family in Taiwan. She criticises her husband family's choice of not speaking Dutch at home as 'ridiculous', 'because your culture is your root. And (if) you say you can forget your root and you are someone with no soul'.

When asked about her cultural identity, Mrs Anderson responded the following in a confident manner:

*Well I see myself a Chinese, (of a ) Chinese background, but I...um... at the same time I see myself as Australian, because I am someone who participates in the society and I contribute to the society so in that sense I am an Australian, right. Being an Australian doesn't mean you have to give up your cultural identity (your identity from your homeland), (they are) not in conflict...And I don't see any conflicts in maintaining your cultural identity and participating and contributing to the country like a native Australian will do. And in some occasions I actually think I do more than some native Australians. They claim they are native but they do little to contribute to the country ... so I don't like the definition, the narrow definition of Australian. I think as long as you live in this society and you try to involve in the mainstream you contribute to the society then you are Australian.*

Mrs Anderson embraces the importance of language in the construction of her cultural identity. For her, cultural identity is not just about her Chinese identity but her Australian identity which she claims with pride. She is proud of her bicultural identity.

When asked if being Chinese means speaking the language and following the practices, she said,

*No, I think it's the culture you represent, the culture in you... and that's why when you say you are Australian you grew up in that culture and you represent that culture. And (the) same (applied) for Chinese people that you represent the Chinese culture heritage.*

One of the cultural heritage she holds on to is the students' respect to the teacher in the classroom is a cultural heritage to her because,

*You know... because we are all under Confucian influence. A teacher has a very high status in the society. You go to Japan it's the same. They don't do it here because it's not their culture... and if it's not from their culture you can't expect that from them.*

Mrs Anderson's interpretation of 'Chineseness' encompasses the use of language and virtues from Confucius teaching. For her it's not much about the cultural practices but the cultural values such as respect to teachers which distinguish her from people from other cultural backgrounds.

The Bau (interview with Mrs Bau was conducted in Cantonese which is her home language)

Mrs Bau just moved from Melbourne to Sydney in early 2012 because she wants to live closer to the extended family. First settled in a small town a couple of hours from Melbourne, they moved to Melbourne when their children started going to school '*because we think the education in the city would be better*'. They also thought '*kids would have more opportunities to learn Chinese in the city. They didn't have the chance to learn Chinese in the country*'.

When asked why it is so important to learn Chinese, Mrs Bau said,

*Hm, in fact I think it doesn't matter so much if they don't know how to **read or write** Chinese, but it's important that they can **speak** (Chinese), so that they can communicate (in Chinese). Australia is an English speaking country... If they go back to China to get a job one day, and they don't know (speak) Chinese, it will be difficult for them to get a job and survive. As for living in Australia, I think it's important that they can speak Chinese.*

She uses the expression '*we are Chinese*' a few times in the interview. She was sure of her expectation of her children's Chinese language proficiency which is '*they can speak, so that they can communicate*

*with others (in Chinese)'. She doesn't seem to insist on following cultural practices in terms of celebrations and accept that in terms of diet 'our kids have already changed'. She accommodates this change in diet by cooking some 'western dishes' for the children while her husband and she eat 'our Chinese cultural food'.*

Despite this she says living in Australia makes her feel like 'second class citizen', Mrs Bau has positive experiences with Anglo Australians. And she embraces 'Australian identity' as part of her identities.

*'After living here for more than 10 years I see myself as Australian. Like, when I have to sort things out in agencies (such as Centrelink and the bank)... I am very friendly in approaching others. (so it's the way you interact with others) Yes, the ways of interaction. I won't be rude or impolite. I become more friendly and polite after living here... I learn and follow the way of doing things here. After all, we '入鄉隨俗' (follow the local rituals in that place).*

When asked about her experience in Sydney with other Chinese, Mrs Bau makes a comment on how, according to her words, 'Chinese despise Chinese'.

*But I don't like the Chinese here who are arrogant and look down upon others. I find that when I go to the agencies to seek help, those Chinese staff are not friendly to me but they are to people from other cultures. They chat and laugh to each other. It feels like 'Chinese (staff) despise other Chinese (the clients)'. They are really not friendly. (so you have experienced this yourself?) yes I did... It really makes me feel bad. So if I have a choice I always choose an Anglo Australian, not Chinese, to help me with my enquires.*

Mrs Bau explains that language barrier and cultural differences account for her feeling of 'second class citizen', and the difficulties in forming deep friendships with the local Anglo Australian. However, this barrier to engagement with the locals does not seem to produce hard feelings towards the people. Instead she appreciates the friendly and helpful attitudes she has perceived from the local people. Due to her unpleasant experiences with the Chinese here, she has chosen not to embrace their attitudes and practice but to 'learn and follow the ways of doing things here'.

## **Transformation of self**

A couple of weeks after I did the first interview, I wrote the following reflection.

*April, 2012*

*The interviews made me realise how intimate I am with the Chinese diaspora. The people I have interviewed made me very aware of my identity as a Chinese. As much as I don't like to label or be labelled into any social groups, I can't avoid this identity. But the awareness is daunting. It seems that suddenly I have a 'new' identity. I always think I am a transnational subject. I enjoy being a member in different groups and don't like to be labelled as and bounded by any one of them. However it seems that there is one identity I can't 'avoid', and that is the diasporic identity. And it's daunting, because suddenly I am labelled, I am categorised, I belonged to a group, and I will be restricted and controlled.*

*Well I am always a Chinese and I am doing Chinese – speaking the language, eating the food, practising the 'practices'. But I don't like to be labelled as it means I have to do things in the Chinese ways. I don't want to be restricted by the narrow definition of Chinese. I feel that being a Chinese should also mean that I can do what a non-Chinese does. In other words I want my other identities to be acknowledged as well. I want to do things which make sense to me.*

*The interviews have also activated my 'Chineseness', or the sensitivity to it. The Chineseness in me, which has always been hidden, embedded or taken for granted, is suddenly brought to the front and being placed under a spotlight for interrogation; a private interrogation by myself who is trying to reshuffle, reconsider and reposition who I am both in the Chinese diaspora in Sydney, and in my world.*

*I went to Hurstville yesterday and I felt something was not the same. Things started to feel subtly different. Or am I the one who is not the same? I used to take the stance of an outsider – I only went there to get the Chinese groceries! I didn't particularly care what they did nor did I participate in any of the celebrations. But I suddenly feel I am not an outsider anymore. I found my antenna more sensitive yesterday. I observed what others did – the people in the restaurant – the number, the appearance, the language, the topics, their relationship etc. It seems that I am starting to care about who 'they' are now. And sadly, it seems I don't have a choice.*

In some ways migration is a journey. It is a journey in the sense that the 'adventure', the experience, and the interaction with the people and the place help people to go through a discovery and transformation of self. Like travel, migration 'provides situations and contexts where people confront alternative possibilities for belonging in the world' ([Neumann, 1992, p. 183](#)). For some people, migration might be a little detour of a life journey, a conscious decision made by an individual or the family to embark a journey in another place. It differs from our journey in travelling which is more like a short vacation from home, although it is not unlikely that some migrants have this idea when they first left their homeland.

Higgs and Titchen ([2007](#)) argue that 'Deep research experiences are not just about research or knowledge generation through systematic and rigorous inquiry' (p.6). An autoethnographic research, such as this PhD project, does not only aim at the investigation of a social situation, but how the

changes and transformation experienced by the researcher and the researched. In other words, it is not just to study a phenomenon, but to study themselves in this process of 'reflexive knowing' ([Higgs & Titchen, 2007](#)). As with Laurel Richardson experience in writing and sharing a poem based on the interview transcript with a participant ([Richardson, 1992](#)), I have experienced a similar transformative effect on parts of my self. I have been thinking about their responses in the interviews especially on the part on their understanding of Chinese identity and heritage. I cannot disentangle their voices in me. I might have tried to detach myself in the diaspora in the past because I don't want to be labelled and restricted. The interviews have, however, wakened my consciousness to the point where I now realise I am part of 'them'. They have changed me and allowed me to see myself and my word in different ways.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have outlined my emotional journey during the process of data collection. Introspection is not simply an open display of personal stories and reflection, a self-indulgent exercise to make the private public. Rather, it is a sociological process which can generate interpretive materials to understand lived experience (Ellis, 1991). Not only does it require a lot of reflexivity but enormous courage to disclose personal emotions to the readers. It requires individuals to listen and interpret self-dialogue as an ongoing process.

This unique and privileged position I have as an insider in this research, paradoxically, has posed extra challenge in my handling of the data. I have to constantly remind myself that the focus of the research is to understand the Chinese families whose children are studying in primary schools in Sydney. But I cannot stop myself comparing my experience from theirs, my experience as a mother of two kids who have studied in primary schools in Sydney just a few years ago. In fact, this experience has been asked and shared with the participants in the interviews. Connections between the researcher and the researched such as this not only remind me of the inseparable nature between me and the context, but encourage me to collect details of my own experience.

Autoethnography provides an alternate way to understand the culture through the researcher who acts as a vehicle in navigating between the cultural spaces. It also requires the researcher's vigilance in directing the research to understanding not just the self but the culture through self.

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