

ABSTRACT

I had the honour of being able to attend two Sun Dance ceremonies in Southern Alberta, and found them to be transformative. The purpose of this study is to reflect on my identity as a product of colonisation and how participation in Indigenous ceremony impacted me both as an individual and as an educator. The guiding research questions are: why was the ceremony so impactful; how did participation in the Sun Dance help to increase knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures; how did participation in ceremony impact my third space identity; and how did my experience strengthen me as a critical ontologist. An autoethnographic methodology was chosen in part because personal stories have impact and can change the way the reader understands and navigates the world. It also gives voice to the marginalised, and can be more accessible to readers from various backgrounds. The data presented comes from self-reflection, reviewing relevant literature, and discussions with Elders. Supporting artifacts are included in the appendix. This autoethnography is grounded in three major philosophical schools: Indigenous ways of knowing and being, critical theory, and decolonial/post-colonial theories. Specifically, I connect myself and my work to two philosophies derived from these schools: Homi Bhabha's third space, and Joe Kincheloe's critical ontology. The former focusses on cultural hybridity, which describes my identity, while the latter combines Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewpoints, which describes my praxis. Immersion in ceremony, and self-reflection, provided a deeper understanding of myself and my place in the world, and impacted the ways in which I interpret information and relate to others. I gained a deeper appreciation of Indigenous cultures, and began to see how ceremony is both a powerful healing and teaching tool. I concluded that ethical teaching requires a classroom where everyone's differences, cultures, and ways of being are respected and brought together to inform daily practice. Participation in cultural practices, including but not limited to ceremony, would help provide a multifaceted perspective by which one could more accurately evaluate their own sociocultural and political values, ethics, and practices both as a person and as an educator.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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Peter Bethell

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**LIVING BETWEEN WORLDS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC
EXPLORATION OF INDIVIDUALIZED THIRD SPACE**

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

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