Lost and Forgotten while Remaining in Place:
The Lived Experience of Other-Imposed Social Isolation in the Work-place

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the lived experiences of workers who are involuntarily socially isolated in their work-places through the actions of one or more colleagues. This hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is called by the question, "What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?" This study also explores the ways these targeted workers are lost and forgotten, by themselves and others, for the periods of time they remain in their socially isolating work-places.

The tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology grounds this inquiry, guided primarily by the works of Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Martin Buber, and to lesser and varying degrees by David Abram, Hans-George Gadamer, Edmond Husserl, David Michael Levin, Emmanual Levinas, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Max van Manen's six methodological guidelines serve as the framework for the research activities that comprise this study.

From conversations with, and written reflections from, eight work-place professionals, this study reveals what it is like to experience other-imposed, work-place social isolation. Through hermeneutic phenomenological exploration, the stories of these eight workers reveal lived experience along three primary themes. First, other-imposed social isolation is abusive power and control that is comprised of shameful, indecent acts. Second, the targets of involuntary social isolation experience relentless, wounding trauma. Third, while remaining in their socially isolating work-places, and sometimes for years after leaving, targeted workers bear the burdened weight of crushing grief.

The study suggests a need to expose antiquated, yet accepted, work-place mores, that serve as unconscious barriers to work-place respect and dignity. Further, the study reveals that conscious, and conscientious, awareness and attention to abusive work-place social isolation are the responsibility of each and every work-place citizen. Finally, the study recommends meaningful citizen choices – such as refusing silence; standing alone, if necessary; and inviting work-place community attention – to engage with others where workers' truths and dignity are at stake.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation study to the all-too-many targets of work-place abuse – past, present, and future. May each of you know your other-imposed social isolation does not render you alone, and may you connect, in caring, with those who choose to answer the calls of conscience.

I also dedicate this work to my eight co-researchers – Angela, Dave, Julie, Larry, Michael, Sandy, Thais, and Wendy, who, with full trust, raise caring voices to reveal the unspeakable.

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PREFACE

This study is grounded in hermeneutic phenomenology. As I invite you to stand with me and see the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place[1] (see Endnotes), allow me first to share what it means to engage in hermeneutic phenomenology. Philosopher and phenomenologist, Martin Heidegger (1927/1962) insists that "philosophy should have the '*a priori*' as its theme, rather than 'empirical facts' as such" (p. 272). Philosophy asks "how is the world" that I may understand my own experience. My hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry invites an existential question of Being – what is it like *to be* socially isolated in the work-place through the actions and behaviors of others. As you, the reader, prepare to embark on this journey with me, an introduction to some key phenomenological terms and concepts is appropriate to serve as pathmarks to guide your way. While several philosophers walk awhile with me on this journey, I will limit this preface to inclusion of Heidegger, who is the seminal philosopher in phenomenological studies.

Heidegger's (1927/1962) classic work, *Being and Time*, addresses the question of Being. He distinguishes between beings, entities which are *present-at-hand* and *within-the-world*, with the Being of those entities, which he names *presence-at-hand* or Reality. Heidegger introduces *Dasein*,[2] with its literal etymological construction of *Being-there*, as the existence persons (Macquarrie & Robinson, 1962) and defines it existentially, in terms of "certain ways in which one may be" (Heidegger, p. 163). Said another way, *Dasein* discloses Being. Entities exist – they *are* – before we disclose, discover, or grasp their Being. *Dasein* points out, uncovers, or reveals a phenomenon that ontologically exists within the whole by bringing it close, through "clearing-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of . . . disguises" (Heidegger, p. 167). In each *state-of-mind*,

we discovery, or uncover, phenomenological truth(s), every remembering that our revelation is limited and that we may never know a thing fully.

Engaging in phenomenological inquiry, I ask the question: **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place**? I desire to understand the Being of that lived experience, its Reality as an entity or phenomenon that is present-at-hand in the work-place. I seek to uncover the states-of-mind that bring forward and make accessible this lived experience. All the while, I am mindful that any truth glimpsed in this process is approximate and requires repeated uncovering.

My quest is documented through the creation of this phenomenological text, which van Manen (1990/1997) declares is the object of the research process. My research evolves through a phenomenological questioning that develops what van Manen calls an "inseparable connection to the world [through] the principle of 'intentionality'" (p. 5). To establish this intentional phenomenological connection, I follow the six methodological research activities outlined by van Manen:

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world, a process initiated in Chapter One;
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and wholes. (pp. 30-31)[3]

I also employ several phenomenological techniques, including use of first and second (rather than third) grammatical person, use of present (rather than past) verb tense, and, where appropriate, inclusion and exploration of the etymological origins of words.

Chapter One is an orienting to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. I thread my own phenomenological experience with

academic research and other literature to open up this lived experience, framing it as emotional abuse and anchoring it to Being-in-place. In Chapter Two, I explore involuntary social isolation in order to open it up in its multi-facetedness, continuing to draw from my own experience; from personal communications with four work colleagues; from literature, poetry, art, and music; and from work-place abuse and social isolation literature. In Chapter Three, I provide a philosophical grounding for my phenomenological orientation and approach through the writings of several hermeneutic philosophers. In Chapters Four and Five, I reflect on the essential themes that unfold through my conversations with eight co-researchers who share with me their lived experiences. In Chapter Six, I offer pedagogical insights and implications to address the phenomenological inquiry: **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?**

CHAPTER ONE:

FORGETTING MY SONG: TURNING TO THE PHENOMENON OF OTHER-IMPOSED SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE WORK-PLACE

There is a traditional East African fable that teaches us to live our lives according to our given purposes, our songs. In the children's book, *What is My Song?* (Linn, Linn, & Linn, 2005), the authors share the story of Deo, a boy who ponders his life purpose to discover what it truly means to live in the fullness of your unique and special song. In telling his story, Deo shares how he first came to be, invited into this world by his parents.

> When did I begin to be me? . . . My name is Deo. I live in East Africa. My people believe that I began to be me before I was born. I began to be me even before I began to grow inside my mama. I began to be me the very first time the idea of me came into my mama's heart. When this happened, my mama went away by herself to sit under a tree. She listened in her heart until she heard the special song of me. Once she heard my song, she went back to the village and taught it to my papa. They sang it together, inviting me to come to them. (n.p.)

After teaching her unborn child's song to his papa, Deo's mama teaches the song to others in their village. At his birth, the women of the village sing Deo's song to him. As he grows, all members of the village learn his song and sing to him. Deo learns that the members of his village are present to nurture and support, and also to heal. They sing his song to him in times of celebration and in times of pain. Deo learns he can count on the nurturing support of his village, not only when he is in tune with his true being but also during inharmonious times – times when he suffers, is damaged, or loses his way.

This tale reveals the intimate beauty of a village that cares for and takes care of each other. Individually and as a whole, the villagers demonstrate a profound sense of responsibility and connection with each member. Cannot our places of work also be considered villages? Our co-workers – whether peers, supervisors, direct reports,

mentors, or any number of other work relations – are our fellow villagers. If we accept this premise, what might it mean to have a song, a call-to-Being, in the work-place? What does it mean to be true to my Being – to be me – in the work-place? Perhaps my work-place song is my sense of professional calling or purpose. During harmonious times, it is work that energizes and fulfills me. When I am true to my work-Being, I feel in sync with myself, with others, with my work, and with my professional purpose.

And what of inharmonious times? Returning to the fable, Deo soon realizes that his own call-to-Being is as a protector of others. However, one day, in anger, he harms another boy, an action that triggers his dissonance-with-Being. Deo discovers that in this moment, and with this action, he has forgotten his song and, in that forgetting, he no longer knows himself.

> I have forgotten that I am a protector. I do not know who I am anymore. I cannot remember my song. Everyone in the village stops what they are doing. All the men stop working in the fields. All the women stop pounding grain. All the children stop playing their games. In the middle of the village everyone makes a big circle around me. All together, they sing my song to me. They know who I am. Slowly, gradually, the song fills my heart and I remember, too. I am a protector. (Linn et al., 2005, n.p.)

Through singing Deo's song, members of the village, like his parents before them, invite Deo to remember his true Being. Deo realizes that even during times when *he* forgets his song, others do not and his song is always with him. During times when his anger or fear silence his song, members of the village gather to sing and remind him of his purpose, his call-to-Being.

How would such an experience translate to the work-place? What would it be like to have my work village know and sing my song to me? Would it mean praise and celebration and recognition when I am being true to my calling? Would it also mean

coming to my aid when I stumble or helping me to correct direction when I veer off-course? What if, unlike Deo's village, the members of our work village turn away from rather than toward us? What is the experience if our work village chooses not to nurture and support but instead to ridicule, blame, abandon, or shun? If in the moments of a fall we are self-isolated by the forgetting-of-song, how does that isolation further manifest when we find ourselves without a caring village? Does not the initial self-isolation manifest as social isolation when the members of our village fail to surround us and to sing our songs? Do we become outsiders, out of favor with those who once embraced us as their own? And what does it take to once more hear our songs, even when others do not surround us to remind us of our Being?

Deo's tale suggests that our songs are always within us.

> Who are you?
> Put your hand on your heart.
> Can you feel your heart beating?
> Take deep breaths, and listen deep inside your heart.
> Can you hear your song? (Linn et al., 2005, n.p.)

But to listen deep inside your heart requires a stillness that connects to the rhythms of your song. It is a stillness that seems difficult to achieve when your sense-of-Being is agitated, perhaps shattered, through social isolation. If a deeply-rooted stillness is required to remember your song, to return you to Being, is it possible to achieve such stillness while socially isolated in place – when your experience becomes one of Being lost and forgotten in place?

In this chapter I turn to the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. This lived experience is involuntary social isolation from others, not by one's own choice but as a result of the actions of another. I hearken to philosopher Hans-Georg

Gadamer's (1975/1989) call to foreground my experience as a means of "examining the legitimacy" of the "fore-meanings" (p. 270) that dwell inside me and speak to the phenomenon. I am also mindful that turning to my experience is fundamental and indispensable to the writing process. Rilke (trans. 2006) observes:

> When writing poetry one is always assisted and even carried away by the rhythm of all things outside, for the lyric cadence is that of nature: of the waters, the wind, the night. But in order to shape prose rhythmically, one has to immerse oneself deeply within oneself and detect the blood's anonymous, multivaried rhythm. Prose is to be built like a cathedral: there one is truly without name, without ambition, without help: up in the scaffolding, alone with one's conscience. (p. 128)

Through my prosaic turning, I still myself and immerse deeply in order to detect the rhythm of my own lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. My turning is an exploration of place, my work village if you will, and how the melodies of place reach a discordant crescendo as other-imposed social isolation envelopes the spirit of Being. I ask what it is like to remain in place while lost and forgotten, not only by self but also by others who are members of the work village. I wonder what it is like to forget one's song, one's call-to-Being, in the work-place. Through this questioning, I seek to illuminate the ***lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place***. I begin with my own lived experience as a way to open up the phenomenon and make it accessible for seeing and questioning.

Foregrounding the Phenomenon: The Story of My Surrender

> At fifteen life had taught me undeniably that surrender, in its place, was as honorable as resistance, especially if one had no choice. (Angelou, 1969, p. 247)

On a warm, humid July day, my professional voice is silenced. I find myself involuntarily socially isolated in my work-place: first marginalized and then ostracized. I cannot hear my song-of-Being. I am off balance and de-centered. I morph from being a

valued, consulted, and indispensable member of my organization's leadership team to being an outsider, a being cut off from key communications and discussions and uninvited to meetings. I become an interloper in once familiar territories and familial work relationships. My lived experience is a sudden and unexpected fall from grace that leaves me to question my professional purpose and to forget my professional call-to-Being. And as this experience unfolds, I surrender, believing that I have no choice.

It is mid-summer, and I am escorting the campus phone technician from room to room in one of the residence halls on the campus that is my professional work-place. The technician is completing standard maintenance checks and service on the phone lines prior to students' fall semester arrival. The maintenance process takes the better part of two work days. Generally, we chat aimlessly about anything and nothing – the weather, hobbies, vacation plans, the students, and campus life. Occasionally, this routine is interrupted to address a problem with a phone line or equipment. Ever curious, I ask questions and observe the processes for troubleshooting, especially with the in-room equipment. As the director of the residence hall, I take a genuine interest in the way things work. My position has me on-duty or on-call for one or more of the campus residence facilities nearly every day of the calendar year. In these roles, I am typically the first or second responder to all inquiries and situations – routine and emergent. I learn early in this career to become a Jane-of-all trades and repair what I can before calling in the experts. Not only does this build for me a valuable set of life skills, but also it earns me a positive reputation among the campus service staff. They know I call or file a service request only after I have done all I am able on my own.

During this particular pre-semester inspection, and following one of the several spontaneous training lessons aimed at building my skills and independence, the phone technician expresses genuine appreciation for my curiosity and willingness to roll up my sleeves. He off-handedly comments that he has shared this same appreciation just a few days earlier with my supervisor. For a few short seconds, I blush with pride at the unexpected praise and recognition. His next comment, however, slices through my thoughts and punctures my ballooning self-satisfaction: "Yeah, I told her, if you want to know anything that goes on in these residence halls – anything at all – Leanne is the person to talk with. She's really the only one who pays attention to the details and is clued in to the inner workings of it all. She is the true face of leadership."

Framing Social Isolation as Emotional Abuse

I no longer remember the campus technician's portrayal of my supervisor's reaction. What is emblazoned indelibly on my psyche are the weeks and months that follow my immediate and, as it proved, irretrievable fall from grace. My golden child status is shattered. No longer am I a privileged protégé who brings recognition and praise to our office through participation in campus committees and events. No longer am I sponsored for presentations and activities at state, regional, and international associations and conferences. Somehow, I become the enemy. My supervisor's behaviors toward me are often subtle and insidious: a noticeable but difficult-to-articulate remoteness, even coldness, in her manner and speech. At times, however, her behaviors are overtly harsh and condemning.

And me? I become a hollowed shell of my former glorious self. Although I continue with standard meetings and responsibilities, I am excluded from strategic activities and decision-making. In an annual goal-setting session, my supervisor openly

and critically berates me for taking notes and asking questions, wondering aloud what is wrong with me that after two years I am still so – what? insecure? stupid? manipulative? – that I needed to take notes on our conversations. I am excluded from our internal program meetings. I am replaced by other colleagues as our office's preferred point-of-contact and as our office's representative on campus-wide committees and activities.

How am I to make sense of what is happening? Vega and Brennan (2000), surveying a number of theorists, recognize four characteristics of work-place social isolation: "It is imposed by others; it is not necessarily related to physical separation; it is closely associated with alienation; and it is linked to formal status" (p. 469). Without question, I have become socially isolated within my work-place. Oddly enough, it feels impossible to describe my experience of social isolation to others. It seems, somehow, bigger and beyond mere social isolation. My inability to describe my experience to others is rooted in my struggle to understand it myself. Authors of the book, *Mobbing: Emotional Abuse in the Workplace*, claim my experience, and my struggle to characterize it, as typical of work-place abuse: "[Targets] cannot believe what is happening to them. It is both difficult to express, and difficult for others to understand" (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 1999, p. 84). Can what I am experiencing really be labeled as abuse? In describing the emotionally abusive relationship, Engel (2002) recognizes physical and social isolation as forms of emotional abuse. In work-place settings, Davenport et al. (1999) describe emotional abuse to include socially isolating behaviors such as "removal or reduction of responsibility or authority" (p. 47), while Hirigoyen (1998) acknowledges the insidious and destructive nature of emotionally abusive conduct – "whether by words, looks, gestures, or in writing" (p. 52).

As I begin to comprehend my experience of other-imposed social isolation in terms of work-place abuse, I wonder about the impact to self and identity and call-to-Being. In her book, *No Visible Wounds*, Miller (1995) sees emotional abuse as "go[ing] to one's basic essence," referencing the Spanish maxim: "He that loseth his spirit loseth all" (p. 32). Others characterize emotional abuse with phrases such as "cuts to the very core of a person" (Engel, 2002, p. 13), "violation of the soul" (Davenport et al., 1999, p. 85), and "a virtual murder of the soul" (Hirigoyen, 1998, p. 3). For my own experience, I describe my professional status as shattered and myself as a hollowed shell. Others portray the experience as "anesthetiz[ing]" (Hirigoyen, p. 53), "devalu[ing]," (p. 56) and leaving individuals "altered," (p. 9), "amputated" (Miller, p. 53), "exposed, naked, [and] extremely vulnerable" (Davenport et al., p. 85). It seems that it is indeed all too easy to forget one's call-to-Being when experiencing a social isolation that stems from the emotionally abusive behaviors of another.

Anchoring Social Isolation to Being-in-Place

Because my experience of involuntary social isolation is framed within the work-place, I wonder how place itself contributes to one's forgetting of song. As the nurturing support of my work village erodes and evaporates, how does my sense of place alter? Does my altered sense of place perhaps amplify my experience of social isolation? Does my experience of other-imposed social isolation accelerate a loss of place? And does my looming loss of place render a similar loss of being?

As my personal experience of work-place abuse spirals, my involuntary social isolation intensifies and my spirit-of-Being disintegrates. For me, other-imposed work-place social isolation becomes an entangled and toxic labyrinth of Being and place. As a means of illuminating the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-

place, I explore the relationships between Being and place. In this first chapter, I turn primarily, although not exclusively, to the works of phenomenologist Edward Casey and to Irish poet and philosopher John O'Donohue.

Implaced Yet Dis-placed

> Where we are – the place we occupy, however briefly – has everything to do with what and who we are (and finally, *that* we are). (Casey, 1993/2009, p. xiii)

Socially isolated from my supervisor and other colleagues, my confident, controlled professional identity erodes. In Miller's (1995) language, my Being is slowly "amputated" (p. 53) from my daily place-of-being. Feeling fragmented and incomplete, I struggle to identify and assert my Being-in-place. Casey (1993/2009) states: "Our lives are so place-oriented and place-saturated that we cannot begin to comprehend, much less face up to, what sheer place-lessness would be like" (p. ix). Entombed by my imposed social isolation, do I still have a place in this work village? If not, has my Being ceased to exist in this work-place? Casey reassures that I retain both place and Being, asserting that "to be is to be in place" (p. 16) and that "there are no *non*placed occasions; . . . [for] to exist at all . . . is to have a place – to be *implaced*, however minimally or imperfectly or temporarily" (p. 13). For nearly twelve months, my implacement echoes Casey's characterization. I am soul-less-ly place-bound, surrounded by a spirit-of-place in which I see no reflection of my Being. My work-place becomes a dispirited place in which I no longer hear my song, in which I question my call-to-Being. My lived experience of other-imposed social isolation proves insular, with no village circling to support my Being-in-place.

As I reflect on my sense of work-place during that period of other-imposed social isolation, I question how it is possible to feel displaced while remaining implaced. More

commonly defined as without place or "lacking a home,"[4] being *displaced* stands in stark contrast to being *implaced,* which Casey (1993/2009) defines as having a place. Taken at face value, it seems irreconcilable to be displaced while implaced. Perhaps I experience displacement in another defined sense. Involuntarily socially isolated while remaining in place, I am removed from my usual or proper place (see Endnote 2) and, therefore, am *out of place*,[5] no longer belonging to my work-place. Casey speaks to this sense of belonging in describing implaced individuals as having feelings of anchoring and orienting, "being concretely placed" so that place "finally becom[es] an integral part of your identity" (p. 23). Losing one's sense of belonging is recognized in the work-place emotional abuse literature as being "stripped of responsibility, identity, personality, and reputation" (Davenport et al., 1999, p. 85). These same losses speak to the emotionally abusive nature of my work-place social isolation. Remaining in my place-of-work during the experience of other-imposed social isolation, I lose my place of belonging and am stripped of work-place responsibility, identity, personality, and reputation.

Dis-placed Being

Casey (1993/2009) speaks of the pervasive power of place. While the actual experience of place is "so pervasive and yet so elusive that most of us simply do not notice it" (p. 22), place also has power, "determin[ing] not only *where* I am . . . but *how* I am together with others . . . and even *who* we shall become together" (p. 23). Prior to my other-imposed social isolation, my sense of work-place is on autopilot. Using Casey's language, I simply do not notice place. However, as my experience of involuntary social isolation unfolds, I become acutely, hypersensitively aware of my work-place. Further, the experience of other-imposed social isolation shatters my identity with place. The *where* of place remains unchanged. The *how* I am with others and the *who* we can

become together is drastically and irreversibly altered. My sense of Being-out-of-place is not a literal reflection on knowing *where* I am, but rather an existential questioning of *who* and *how* I am in my isolating displacement.

What is it like to experience a displacement that threatens the *who* and *how* of Being? Mirroring Casey's (1993/2009) language, I feel un-anchored and dis-oriented. My *who-of-Being* experiences a penetrating, deep-to-the-core-of-Being suffering that Keri Hulme (1983) in her novel, *The Bone People*, describes as "worn, down to the raw nub of my soul" (p. 92). My professional identity with work-place dis-integrates in a way author Roy Ashwell (2011) describes as a journey "to an unmapped region far from the world of the ordinary nature in which we thought we were safe and content" (p. 60). In this unmapped region of involuntary social isolation, stripped of my belonging, I become *other*. *Other*-ness is a lack of belonging that translates to social isolation (Read, Archer, & Leathwood, 2003). *Other* individuals are unable to retain authentic identity in a place that views them as "alien" (Read et al., p. 263) or "outsiders" (p. 262). In work-places, being *other* leads to a degree of marginalization that Kvasny (2006) finds not only to impact the current work-place experience but also to "affect [individuals'] life chances" (p. 14).

In this lived experience, I am at risk: not just my immediate *I*, my temporal *I*, the *I* that is implaced in *this* here and *this* now. My experience of work-displacement risks my spiritual *I*, my existential *I*, the *I* that exists and connects across place and time. My experience of work-displacement threatens my *who-of-Being* and risks Heideggerian *Dasein*: I can no longer "understand [myself] in terms of [my] existence, in terms of [my] possibility to be [myself] or not be [myself]" (1927/1993a, p. 54). Further, my experience

of work-displacement threatens my *how-of-Being,* risking Gadamerian *Bildung*: I cannot achieve the necessary self-awareness to "distanc[e] from the immediacy of desire, of personal need and private interest" (1975/1989, p. 12). Myopic in my other-imposed social isolation, I am unable "to affirm what is different from [my]self and to find universal viewpoints from which [I can] grasp" (p. 12) the experience. I collapse "into a place of spurious wallowing" (Nott, 2011, p. 85). Mine is a work-place I do not recognize or understand, a work-place that does not recognize or understand me. My wallowing paralysis prevents me from distancing myself from the immediacy of my experience and from finding universal viewpoints. The pervasiveness of my displacement forever alters the *who* and *how* of my Being in that University work-place.

Arrhythmic Dis-place-ment

Casey (1993/2009) warns that "displacement threatens implacement at every turn" (p. 34). Being-in-place is fragile. Being-while-displaced is arrhythmic. Irish poet John O'Donohue (1999/2002) cautions that "When you suffer, your sense of rhythm deserts you"; "When you are in harmony, you can take untold pressure" (p. 154). Philosopher David Michael Levin (1985) might describe Being-in-place in terms of *stride* or *balance* or *centeredness*. Drawing on Heideggerian notions of humanism, Levin equates Being-in-stride with Being-in-rhythm with the earth. We are in stride when we are in rhythm with our Being, moreover our bodily Being. In stride, we experience balance, what Levin calls a "relaxed . . . [and] restful equilibrium" (p. 270) necessary for our sanity and our health. It is a centeredness that allows us to touch and understand the true meaning of our Being. We are, as Ulrich Baer (2006) observes of Rilke, "attuned to . . . a cosmic bass line underscoring all creation" (p. xxxiv).

In what ways does the suffering of dis-place-ment alter our accustomed rhythms of *who* and *how* we are in this *where*-of-place? In his Vietnam War saga, *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien (1990) explores arrhythmic dis-place-ment in his description of the platoon's night marches:

> The long night marches turned their minds upside down; all the rhythms were wrong. Always a lost sensation. They'd blunder along through the dark, willy-nilly, no sense of place or direction, probing for an enemy that nobody could see. (p. 211)

My experience of other-imposed social isolation is like that Vietnam dark. I remain implaced. But with my other-imposed social isolation and its resulting dis-place-ment, I lose the comfort and clarity of familiar place. I have no sense of professional place or direction. I blunder through that next year with all my rhythms wrong. I am off-balance, out-of-stride with my professional Being. I struggle to know *who* and *how* to be in a *where*-of-place for which the "center appears to no longer hold and chaos flourishes" (Oriah Mountain Dreamer, 2003, p. 124).

My experience of imbalanced chaos is echoed in Keashly's (2010) observations of work-place abuse and bullying, which evidence a power imbalance between the *actor*, the source of abusive tactics, and the *target*, the recipient of work-place abuse. Keashly asserts that the importance of this imbalance is two-fold: first is "the potential impact on the target's resources and the ability to defend him/herself"; second, is "the actor's ability to continue their [*sic*] actions" (p. 13). My experience aligns with Keashly's assertions. The impact to my available resources is one of loss: loss of professional mentoring from my supervisor; loss of professional support and camaraderie from my peers and distant colleagues; and loss of access to professional work groups and activities. The suddenness of my professional amputation leaves me stunned and numbed, a condition against which

I am unable to defend myself. My surrender, as well as my decision to remain in place, provides my supervisor with ample opportunity to continue her abusive actions. Moreover, I am haunted by my amputated Being, a phantom spirit which no longer exists in this work-place but is the source of my aches and pains.

As I contemplate all that is at risk with my dis-place-ment, I pause to reflect on displacement-as-risk and displacement-as-possibility. Could not dis-place-ment open up possibilities to discover new, more vibrant rhythms? If so, how does the arrhythmia of my work-place social isolation prevent my openness to these possibilities? Out of stride, dis-place-ment isolates us from what Levin (1985) sees as the "measure of our being" (p. 269). Yet, when we are out of rhythm with the earth and our true Being, dis-place-ment may also serve to bring us to new thresholds and allow us to envision new horizons. Dis-place-ment offers the opportunity to return more fully to the rhythms of the earth and the universe. It reawakens us to our own ancient and primordial rhythm-of-Being. It is a disturbance that may bless us with a return to true self. In this sense, dis-place-ment is what O'Donohue (2008b) names the Angel of Wildness:

> May the Angel of Wildness disturb the places
> Where your life is domesticated and safe,
> Take you to the territories of true otherness
>
> Where all that is awkward in you
> Can fall into its own rhythm. (p. 33)

To receive such a blessing, we must recognize and embrace the opportunities presented by dis-place-ment. We must, as essayist Michel de Salzmann (as cited in Shaw, 2011) sees it, awaken to an inner "Attention" of centeredness:

> There are two men in you. There is the one who when he is centered, when he is in relation to something, is totally different, can do anything, is intense, alive, generous. And then, at another moment, back in my usual state, with my

> resistance, thoughts, reactions. The one who thinks he is in charge, controlling everything, fears this, wishes that, all my problems. Let him go for a moment. Relax him, too. Leave him at the door. (p. 95)

The arrhythmia of my other-imposed social isolation favors the second self: the self who wants to be in charge and in control; the one whose fears and wishes leave me helpless to see dis-place-ment as possibility; the one unable to fall into my own rhythm; the one self-barricaded from entering territories of true otherness. It will be years before I relax and let go of that self and awaken to the awareness that the arrhythmia of my dis-place-ment is not one of disruption and discord but one that returns me to a place of harmony-with-Being.

Implaced Without Belonging

> The whole origin of belonging is rooted in the faithfulness of place. (O'Donohue, 1999/2002, p. 6)

As translator and editor of Rainer Maria Rilke's letters, Ulrich Baer (2006) observes that the richness and difficulty of life stem from an awareness, indeed a "profound sense" that life and the world "surpass and exceed" us as "we make choices and form intentions that are wiped out simply by what happens" (p. xxxix). How does my dis-place-ment avalanche such a collapse of self? Characteristic of an avalanche is its rapid and destructive descent. Triggered by a specific stressor, avalanches are neither random nor spontaneous events.[6] As I move about my daily work-life, as I strive to achieve success and, yes, recognition in my professional career, my supervisor's isolating tactics create for me a hostile work-place, a stressor that triggers a rapid and destructive descent to an unknown place.

Home-less Place

I contemplate what is lost in this avalanche of involuntary social isolation. Place itself does not disappear. Nor do I. What *is* wiped out is my spirit of Being-in-place, a place where my professional choices and intentions can be realized. What disappears is a stable, nurturing place that O'Donohue (2008a) attributes to home:

> When it is a place of shelter and love, there is no place like home. It is then one of the sweetest words in any language. It suggests a nest where intimacy and belonging foster identity and individuality. In a sense, the notion of home is a continuation of the human body, which is, after all, our original and primary home on earth; it houses the mind, heart, and spirit. To be, we need to be home. When a place to belong is assured, the adventure of growth can begin with great promise. (p. 79)

In my lived experience, I remain implaced while "not-being-at-home" (Casey, 1993/2009, p. 34). What happens to Being when your place-of-Being is not a home-place? What happens to Being when your place-of-being is no longer an intimate, belonging nest? What happens to Being when your place-of-Being no longer fosters your identity and individuality?

At the University, my place-of-Being is both my work-place and my home-place. As a young student services professional, my work role requires me to live on campus and to be present or on-call nearly 24/7 most days of the year. My experience of work-place isolation triggers, in Casey's (1993/2009) language, an "[in]stability of place" (p. 109) – both work-place and home-place. And in this unstable home-place, a place that O'Donohue (2008a) sees as never "un-neutral" (p. 81), I lose my nest of intimacy and belonging. Such a loss – an embodied, identity-defining homelessness – is one that Mary Susan Miller acknowledges as an invisible wound of abuse. The disappearance of work-place belonging avalanches my identity and Being. As Miller (1995) relates, my forced social isolation collapses my sense of belonging, which in turn triggers a subsequent

"retreat not only from the significant individuals in [my] life but also from the broader human community to which [I] once belonged" (p. 64). Biordi and Nicholson (2009) contrast belonging with social isolation to examine the impact of social isolation:

> If belonging is connectedness, then social isolation is the distancing of an individual, psychologically or physically, or both, from his or her network of desired or needed relationships with other persons. Therefore, social isolation is a loss of place within one's group(s). (p. 89)

Further, they assert that "Regardless of how social isolation occurs, the result is that basic needs for authentic intimacy remain unmet" (p. 89).

I am alone: without home, without recognizable Being. I have lost my network. I have lost my place within my work-place and within my work groups. It is a degree of aloneness that novelist Keri Hulme (1983) describes as: "To be unknown, uncared for. Cut off from the roots, sick and adrift" (p. 167). Yes, unrooted and adrift, I am in an unrecognizable place that is not home. In his novel, *Brooklyn*, Colm Toibin (2009) describes what it is like to lose your sense of home. The character Eilis feels the true weight of this loss as she realizes what it means to miss her Irish home:

> She had not really thought of home. . . . All this came to her like a terrible weight. . . . She was nobody here. It was not just that she had no friends and family; it was rather that she was a ghost in this room, in the streets on the way to work, on the shop floor. Nothing meant anything. . . . Nothing here was part of her. It was false, empty, she thought. She closed her eyes and tried to think, as she had done so many times in her life, of something she was looking forward to, but there was nothing. Not the slightest thing. (pp. 69-70)

What is triggered in the avalanche of my forced social isolation is this: my descent to an unknown place becomes a descent to an unknown self. I become a grieving, suffering, ghostly self where nothing meant anything. In this home-less place, I struggle beneath the terrible weight of being nobody. I feel false and empty and look forward to nothing.

Faith-less Place

Curiously, neither my supervisor nor I ever address the situation with each other – not immediately; not in the weeks and months that follow. While my colleagues and peers are mostly sympathetic, our conversations about my involuntary social isolation are superficial at best. They tend to shrug off understanding and shy away from an engaged questioning of my lived experience. In the moments of my other-imposed social isolation, I turn inward for answers. What instinct or imprinting causes me to turn inward rather than reaching out? Is it merely the reticence of my colleagues, or is it something else, something more? Displaced in a place I cannot name home, I no longer belong. My supervisor's isolating tactics and the disengaged complicity of my peers destroy my faith in my work-place.

On the surface, my turning to self seems a turning *away* from those who have broken my faith and trust. On a deeper, more instinctual level of Being, my turning to self is a turning *toward* inner strength. Casey (1993/2009) talks about this as: "Turning and staying within – an in-version – central to human in-habitation – [that] ends by being a source of strength, capable of engendering a potent presence without" (p. 302). My inversion is a natural, ontic reaction to broken trust and faith-lessness. My inversion is a means of gathering strength, a way of reestablishing my sense of belonging, even if only, at first, to self. My turning to self is necessary to rebuild strength and repair my wounded belonging with others. Capturing this sentiment in a blessing for those who have experienced broken trust, O'Donohue (2008c) calls such a place "torn ground [that] is ideal for seed / That can root disappointment deep enough / To yield a harvest that cannot wither" (p. 164).

In turning to self, I am also in between: restless between broken trust and renewed strength. I ask what it means that my work-place is no longer a faith-ful place? To be faith-ful is to be trusted and believed;[7] it is also to demonstrate steadfast allegiance or loyalty.[8] Without faith-fulness of work-place, I question what and who I can trust and believe; I question what and who will demonstrate allegiance or loyalty. Is it the work-place itself? Is it my supervisor or peers? Is it myself? Alone and seemingly trapped in faith-less place, I embody O'Donohue's (2008d) notion of interim time, "where everything seems withheld" and "the path…to get here…washed out/the way forward…still concealed" (p. 119, lines 14-16). Remaining in faith-less place, my immediate professional past is disfigured and my future faceless.

Indeed, my faith-less place jettisons me into a weightless limbo in which I connect to no one and nothing. In contrast, I am heavy and inert with the weight of my forced social isolation. I am unable to lift neither head nor eyes to see forward and beyond my wounded pain. Bound to a place where I and "everyone else has lost sight of [my] heart" (O'Donohue, 2008d, p. 119), I exist in shadow, my true self un-reflected in this place or by others. In my day-to-day implacement, I catch mere glimpses of myself. Mostly, my Being remains elusive and unrecognizable. Typical of the work-place abuse experience, I isolate myself, "rejecting others before they reject [me]" (Davenport et al., 1999, p. 84). In faith-less place, I become faith-less me.

Faith-less Dwelling

At its deepest etymology, faith stems from the Proto-Indo-European root **bheidh*,[9] and from this root means to dwell[10] and indicates the place where one resides.[11] One's faith – one's belief and trust, allegiance and loyalty – are firmly and intricately

connected to place and dwelling. What does it mean to remain in a faith-less place? What quality of dwelling is sustained in such a place?

Heidegger (1927/1993b) explores what it means to dwell in his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking." Examining the etymological roots of the verb *to dwell*, Heidegger connects dwelling to Being: "The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling. . . . Man *is* insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen*, [which] also means . . . to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for" (p. 349). Heidegger continues his etymological examination through a discussion of what it means to remain or stay in place:

> The Gothic *wunian* says more distinctly how this remaining is experienced. *Wunian* means to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace. The word for peace, *Friede* . . . means preserved from harm and…safeguarded. . . . To dwell, to be set at peace . . . safeguards each thing in its essence. (pp. 350-351)

Faith and dwelling are inextricable from Being. Faith-less place *is* faith-less dwelling. In faith-less place, I am un-cherished and un-protected. I am no longer at peace. My being is neither preserved from harm nor safeguarded. Remaining in place, I risk the essence of my peace-ful Being.

Dwelling in the place between broken trust and renewed strength, I struggle between weightless limbo and the weighted burden of my involuntary social isolation. It is a corporeal experience of dwelling that Casey (1993/2009) names as knowing place. Casey identifies two characteristics of what he terms "full-fledged" (p. 115) dwelling places: they must be re-accessible, meaning one must be able to return to them, and they must have a "felt familiarity" (p. 116). Each characteristic suggests a somatic knowing and experiencing of place. Moreover, Casey stakes our identity on the relationship between body and place:

> For we tend to identify ourselves by – and with – the places in which we reside. Since a significant part of our personal identity depends on our exact bodily configuration, it is only to be expected that dwelling places, themselves physical in structure, will resemble our own material bodies in certain quite basic respects. . . . *How we are*, our bodily being, reflects how we reside in built places. (p. 120)

Once an expansive mirroring of the open and endless possibilities of work-place and my professional identity, the built place of my University work-place narrows and constricts with my lived experience of other-imposed social isolation, as does my image of my bounded and restrictive abode. No longer can I return to this work-place, which has lost all felt familiarity.

Existing in weightless limbo, I am lost and unanchored, unable to connect with place or others. I do not see boundless space as endless possibility. I experience what Russell Meares (2000), in his exploration of intimacy and alienation, deems a traumatic "failure of 'personal synthesis'" (p. 44). It is a dissociative, disconnectedness in which "the world around one may seem a little unreal . . . one's body may feel different [and] the sense of time passing is changed" (p. 44). Meares sees this type of traumatic alienation as an "estrangement" (p. 56) from place and person. Seagriff (2010) describes a similar disorientation and disconnectedness, in which work-place abuse targets "are unable to meet their professional goals and [have] less effective working relationships" (p. 581).

Disconnected and disoriented, I ache to be anchored in familiar place, a place where I can return to my Being. It is a desperate, soulful ache that Stephanie Kallos (2004) describes in her novel, *Broken for You*. Following an accident that leaves her in a wheelchair, the character Wanda returns home and is astonished to realize that her

landlord has renovated her bathroom to be handicapped-accessible. It is a realization that shakes her sense of identity and familiarity of Being-in-place:

> The enormity of Margaret's kindness engulfed her, not as a comfort, but as a shroud. . . . She stared at her face in the medicine cabinet glass. . . . She reached into her backpack and pulled out one of her black markers. Slowly, she drew a heavy black circle around her reflection and spoke to the face in the mirror: "You. Are. Here." (p. 229)

In my lived experience, I remain shrouded in place. I. Am. Here.

During times of weighted burden, other-imposed social isolation sears my senses. It is a raw, throbbing pain that Nathanial Hawthorne (1850/2005) describes in the *Scarlet Letter*:

> From first to last, in short, Hester Prynne had always this dreadful agony in feeling a human eye upon the token; the spot never grew callous; it seemed, on the contrary, to grow more sensitive with daily torture. (p. 60)

Other-imposed social isolation proves an agonizing mark of shame that never grows callous. Under the scrutiny of my coworkers, my blemished existence only grows more sensitive with each passing day. In either state – weightless limbo or weighted burden, how I am, my bodily being, reflected faith-less place and faith-less dwelling.

For me, faith-less place triggers a transition from what Casey (1993/2009) recognizes as dwelling-as-residing to dwelling-as-wandering. Stemming from the "Old Norse *dvelja*, [meaning to] linger, delay, tarry" (Casey, p. 114), dwelling-as-residing does not infer permanence. Nor do I consider my work-place dwelling at this University to be one of permanence or longevity. In fact, I plan from the onset to depart after three years, an average tenure for my entry-level professional role. Prior to my other-imposed social isolation, I am dwelling-as-residing in the sense that I linger or tarry for a period of time for the purpose of launching and establishing my career as a student services

professional. To use Casey's descriptors, I am settled in a known place, a place where I am oriented, where I recognize the landmarks, and where my body is attuned.

With forced social isolation comes a transition to dwelling-as-wandering. Viewed positively, wandering is a leisurely and pleasure-filled[12] activity that invites curiosity and discovery. For me, however, the landslide of work-place isolation causes my experience of dwelling-as-wandering to be one more closely associated with the Old English root *dwellan*, meaning to mislead, deceive, or make a fool of.[13] In my unsettled state, I am unable to recognize or navigate once familiar landmarks. In this now faith-less dwelling, a place without trust or loyalty, I am not believed; I cannot believe others; and, eventually, I make the decision to sever all allegiances with those who are intent on deceit and misdirection. I know that if I have any hope of recovering my essence, I will need to leave this faith-less place.

The Landscape Beyond Place

For the next year, I stay. Certainly, my decision to remain in faith-less place influences my identity of *who* and *how* I am in this University place. As my forced social isolation escalates over the course of the year, my lived experience of isolating dis-place-ment also calls into question my *who* and *how* within the larger landscapes of my profession and career. I wonder about the relationship of work-place within these broader landscapes. Would my Being-in-place become my Being-in-landscape? Would this single experience of work-place abuse and involuntary social isolation forever alter the landscapes of my profession and career?

Distorted Landscapes

In their encyclopedia of *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (2011) note Tim Cresswell's naming of place and landscape as two of the three

"geographical facts of life" (p. 78) – the third being territory. Cresswell (1996) speaks of territory and place as divisions or segments of landscape, while landscape provides an order to territory and place. Cresswell's view complements both Casey's (1993/2009) notion that landscape encompasses place – "exceed[ing] the usual parameters of place by continuing without apparent end" (p. 25) – and O'Donohue's (1999/2002) belief that "landscape provides location; mak[ing] it possible to know and approach things and persons" (p. 40). In Cresswell's (2004) language, we view the landscape from our "one spot" (p. 10) of place. Landscape provides context for place, and, from place, we view and know the larger landscape.

My work and place-of-work are subsumed within the larger scapes of my profession and career. They co-exist in a natural, ordered, and unseverable relationship. My profession and career provide context for my work-place. From my work-place, I view and know the larger landscapes of profession and career. My other-imposed social isolation is only one of many discreet career experiences. Will this abusive work-place experience prove to reflect my profession and career, as Bachelard (1958/1994) describes a pond's reflection of the larger universe? None of my previous work-places have reflected such a tortured and cataclysmic view of these larger landscapes. But if not a reflection, what relationship does this work-place have with the larger landscapes? What if rather than *reflecting* these scapes this work-place is *distorting* my view of profession and career? In his study of Andre Pieyre de Mandiargues' prose-poem, *The egg in the landscape* [*sic*], Bachelard recounts that the poet, while gazing out a window, discovers a deformation in the glass that, although slight, "spreads deformation throughout the universe" (p. 156). Viewed through this mere "cyst," the landscape beyond morphs into a

doppelgangered reality in which the "Walls, rocks, tree-trunks, metal constructions, lost all rigidity" (p. 157). I *want* to believe that this work-place is anomalous with my scapes of profession and career. I *need* to believe that viewing these scapes through the lens of this abusive work-place is myopic and distorted.

However, I struggle to remain unconditioned by my experience of other-imposed social isolation. Casey (1993/2009) would, perhaps, name this struggle place-alienation.

> When places change aspect or fade in significance, I change or fade with them: *their* alteration is *my* alteration. . . . I feel myself to be other than myself and not just somewhere other than where I am in world-space. . . . Even though I am literally here in a particular place, my place is not *this* place. By the same token, this place is no longer *my* place. . . . The entire situation, and not just my psyche, is schizoid. (pp. 307-308)

I find myself in an altered place: a place where I am plucked from dwelling-as residing and thrust into dwelling-as-wandering. It is a place from which the viewed landscape is dark and desolate. I do not recognize this place or my place within it. And this place no longer recognizes me. A schizoid place is one characterized by loss of connectedness, deterioration of function, and disintegration of personality.[14] In this abusive work-place, I lose long-established professional connections and relationships that are meaningful and valued. In this abusive work-place, involuntary social isolation imposes restricted function-of-work, and my function-of-Being deteriorates. In this abusive work-place, my sense of who I am and how to *be* decompose. Place-alienation becomes alienation from Being.

I often wonder if I am taking it all too personally. At times, I even convince myself that it is not me or my actions but something else that has forced a change in my supervisor's behavior. I am merely incidental carnage. But it only takes a few weeks for my professional peers to share with me that they, too, notice a difference in how I am

treated in meetings, or that they observe a petty meanness in my supervisor's tone when she speaks to or of me. Some half-jokingly wonder what I have done to deserve such ill favor. My ostracism culminates as I search for new employment near the end of the academic year. A trusted colleague from another university shares with me that my supervisor is openly undermining my job search, giving me poor reviews during the reference check process. This sympathetic colleague encourages me to remove my supervisor's name from my reference list and to seek a position outside of our geographic region. Although I have begun to suspect this might be happening, the brazenness of the act and unabashed loathing it represents leaves me stunned and further silenced. I remember with more clarity than I desire, the look of pity and helplessness in my colleague's eyes before he hangs his head in a shared sense of shame and wishes me well.

Desolate Landscapes

Other-imposed work-place social isolation shatters my career confidence and fissures connections within my professional community. Staying in place, I continue to identify with place. I am unable to differentiate self from place. And work-place becomes the *only* lens through which I view the landscapes of my profession and career. To recondition to an unblemished view of profession and career, I will need to leave this work-place. But how am I to navigate from this place to the next? My isolation-in-place has altered and destroyed the landmarks and pathmarks, which Casey (1993/2009) acknowledges as primary agents for navigating the landscape. Indeed, from my place-of-view, my landscapes are desolate. From the Latin *desolatus* and *desolare*, to be desolate is to be empty, forsaken, abandoned, and deserted.[15] From my place-of-being, my landscapes indeed appear barren and devastated; they are empty of professional promise and pockmarked with the still smoldering ruins of an acclaimed, albeit new, career.

Implaced while socially isolated, I am forlorn and lonely. My suffering-in-place proves a hope-less, devastating journey that is mine alone. Roy Ashwell's (2011) essay on suffering describes this feeling:

> At the heart of this emptiness is the fear of something unseen, beyond the desolation that follows the sacrifice of all this egotistical impedimenta. . . . There is said to be nothing, not even hope, "for hope would be hope of the wrong thing," the shadow of the ego cast forward from this now upon a future non-existent, and where I am not. (p. 59)

During these twelve months, my being-in-place is much like Casey's (1993/2009) rendering of being lost at sea: I swirl; I am directionless; and even in moments when I am in motion, I am unable to "leave a lasting trail" (p. 26). I remain a ghost self. I am lost and invisible in the way that novelist Stephanie Kallos (2004) describes:

> It was as if they were made of watercolor, as if the molecules -- or whatever it is that gives us a graspable substance -- had come disjoined, and were floating in a fragile connectedness that was easy to sever. (p. 59)

Without recognizable landmarks and pathmarks, without an untarnished view of my landscapes, without a clear hope for my future, I exist in fragile disconnectedness, ever fearful of becoming irrecoverably lost.

Other-imposed social isolation blurs the vision I need to see place more clearly within my landscapes. Involuntary social isolation scrambles the navigational signals I need to guide me from this work-place to the next. Not only is my landscape desolate, I am empty inside. Like Colb Toibin's (2009) character Eilis who finds herself lost in *Brooklyn*: "[I] tried to seem busy, but [I] found that [I] could, if [I] did not stop [myself], move easily into a sort of trance, thinking over and over of the same things, about everything [I] had lost" (p. 71). Like Tim O'Brien's (1990) young and innocent soldier Fossie struggling with his own loss in the Viet Nam jungles, I recognize and understand

my situation; on a level I expect and accept it. But it does not help my pain: "[I] couldn't function. The grief took [me] by the throat and squeezed and would not let go. 'Lost,' [I] kept whispering" (p. 105).

I suspect I fear the nowhere-ness of not-Being-in-place, a nowhere-ness that Casey (1993/2009) maintains is "not to exist" (p. 37). I also fear Being no one. Remaining in the place of my forced isolation, I am no one as O'Donohue (1999/2002) describes it: "Stand[ing] in the place of pain . . . visited and claimed by nothingness . . . my signature as an individual [vanished] and [I am] reduce[d] . . . to faceless clay" (p. 157). I am no one and with no one. It is a soul-wrenching isolation that author Mary Susan Miller (1995) portrays in *No Visible Wounds*: "No one to take care of you, no one to attend to you – lost. . . . Losing identity, losing self in the morass of many feelings" (p. 66). My experience of abusive social isolation echoes Meares' (2000) characterization of alienation: "The individual may feel so insubstantial that he or she could be blown away by the wind" (p. 57). Each day I remain-in-place proves a raw reminder that I remain in a faith-less and home-less place from which I can view nothing more than desolate landscape.

Dis-placed Nowhere-ness

Place influences not only our overt actions but also what Casey (1993/2009), quoting author Bronislaw Malinowski, refers to as the "imponderabilia of actual life" (p. 341). Place influences our thoughts, our emotions, and our Being. Place influences our perspectives, our decisions, and our interactions with others. Simply put, we are sensitive to place. Some of this sensitivity we recognize. Also, in ways we cannot even begin to weigh or evaluate with exactness,[16] place defines us. During the year of remaining-in-place, my other-imposed social isolation deepens and widens with each passing month, at

times with each passing week or day or hour. Knowing that I will remain in place for a while longer and that in a few months I will navigate from this work-place to the next, how does my displaced implacement translate to my sense of Being? What keeps me in place? Why do I not leave immediately? At the beginning of this chapter, I share my belief that I am without choice in my decision to surrender rather than to resist other-imposed social isolation. How does place influenced such a decision? What about my work-place convinces me that I have no choice? Even today, as I craft the story of my work-place abuse and other-imposed social isolation, my senses of that work-place and experience are ones of overwhelming loss and of Being lost. What is the loss I sense so deeply? What does it mean to be lost-in-place?

In reflecting on our symptoms of displacement, Casey (1993/2009) ponders nostalgia as a "pining for *lost places*, for places we have once been in yet can no longer reenter" (p. 37). Etymologically, nostalgia is the experience of pain and grief in a longing for home.[17] Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) recognizes such a longing in her description of home-place:

> This is what home is: not only the place you remember, but the place that remembers you, even if you have never been there before, the place that holds some essential piece of you in trust, waiting for you to return when you go out into other places in the world, as you must. (p. 121)

In my displaced nowhere-ness, I long for a return to the comfort of remembered status, a Being-at-home in my professional landscape and in my place-of-work. I long for the strength of confidence in *who* and *how* I am in my professional place. I want returned to me that essential piece of self that social isolation has thieved. My supervisor's final act of betrayal – the overt sabotaging of my job search – sparks a sensorial awakening within me. I begin to see my situation more clearly, less from a place of denial and pain and

more from a place of acceptance, if not quite yet possibility. The kindness and candor of my distant colleague reestablishes for me an essential connection. I begin to unfold. Unsteady at first, I soon develop a familiar rhythm and cadence as I navigate more confidently to search for a new place, a place of trust and remembering: a place that can prove to be home.

Preparing to Leave Place

> She hears the static noise again, this time in her own head: a radio tuned to a place between stations.
> Neither here nor there.
> Not present. Not past. (McMahon, 2009, pp. 335-336)

As I reflect on remaining-in-place, I realize I am at a threshold, what Casey (1993/2009) deems a "concrete inter-place of an important transition," a "critical juncture" (p. 342). I am caught in what novelist Kelly Corrigan (2008) names the middle place: a place "hallmarked by endless, irresistible, often exasperating comparisons" (p. 29). For me this middle place is like the pauses iconic American dancer and choreographer Martha Graham (1991) describes in her autobiography, *Blood Memory*: "The pauses between rehearsals in a theatre are the most agonizing. All you can think of is where you failed" (p. 274). This period of remaining-in-place proves to be a time of preparing to leave place: a time of transition and comparisons between what has been and what now is. Haunted by real and perceived failures, it is difficult to imagine what lies beyond this place.

Lingering at the Threshold

At this threshold, I pause – for twelve soul-wrenching, soul-searching months. In this middle place, I experience the kind of crippling grief that Rilke (trans. 2000) relays to 19-year-old student and struggling poet, Franz Kappus:

> I believe that nearly all our griefs are moments of tension. We perceive them as crippling because we no longer hear signs of life from our estranged emotions. We are alone with this strange thing that has stepped into our presence. For a moment everything intimate and familiar has been taken from us. We stand in the midst of a transition, where we cannot remain standing. (pp. 74-75)

Isolated, without intimate and familiar connections, I am not myself: a state-of-being that Meares (2000) defines as "an unpleasant disruption of the feeling of existence [and] in our sense of self" (p. 1). I am estranged from place, others, and myself. I exist in the midst of transition, where I know I cannot remain standing.

Lingering at this threshold, I grieve. I grieve for my aloneness. I grieve for the loss of what was once intimate and familiar in my work-place. I anguish in the tension between glorious past, tumultuous present, and unimaginable future. At times, I am catatonic, engulfed by isolation's strange presence. During other moments, I stir only to wrestle with endless and exasperating comparisons of what has been and what now is. And throughout this agonizing pause, seemingly trapped in this middle place, I can only think of my failure. I am oblivious to the blessing of thresholds that O'Donohue (2008a) offers:

> At any time you can ask yourself: At which threshold am I now standing? At this time in my life, what am I leaving? Where am I about to enter? What is preventing me from crossing my next threshold? What gift would enable me to do it? (p. 48)

Standing on this threshold, I view no promising horizon. I am haunted by loss and all that I will leave behind. The abusive nature of my forced social isolation leaves me blinded to the gifts that will enable me to cross into a new land, a new work-place. I cannot remember my song: a song that will strengthen me to move forward; a song that will remember me to my Being. I cannot hear the voices of others who might be calling me back to purpose. Lingering at this threshold, I see not a land of promise but one that is

unknown, uncultivated perhaps, and as desolate as my own Being. I stand before what appears to be untamed wilderness.

Threshold as Wilderness or Frontier?

Casey (1993/2009) richly describes the displacement and desolation of wilderness or wild place:

> Wilderness [is] that kind of place or region . . . in which one readily loses one's way, goes astray, and becomes literally bewildered. In this aberrant action, one loses contact with one's home-place . . . and begins to find the situation increasingly desolate. . . . In Husserl's language, "home-world" (*Heimwelt*) gives way to "alien world" (*Fremdwelt*). (p. 229)

Indeed, as I linger on the threshold preparing to leave this work-place, I continue to view the landscape from my current place-of-being. I fear that to step forward and beyond this work-place will be to step willingly into a wilderness, a place where my bewilderment and sense of loss will only intensify. I fear I will enter an alien place where I will continue to be unrecognized, lost, and forgotten; where I will continue to be out-of-place. There's an idiomatic phrase that advises "better the devil you know than the devil you don't." As I linger on this threshold, I consider it better to stay and face the devil before me than to depart unplanned and face a devil unknown. In my bewildered decision to remain-in-place, what I temporarily lose sight of is this: My current work-place is no longer a home-place and, as such, is not a cultivating place – it is not a place where I will be cared for; it was not a place that will foster my growth.

I long to dwell in a cultivated place. From the Latin *cultus*, to dwell in a cultivated place is to experience "care [and] devotion"; from an earlier Late Latin root, *colere*, it is a place of "honor [and] cherish."[18] Conversely, wilderness stems from the Old English *wildern*, meaning wild and savage.[19] To dwell in the wilderness, a wild and savage place, could prove to be more than just uncivilized; it could prove to be cruel or barbarous. As I

stand on this precipice, the future appears a wilderness for which I am uncertain and unprepared. Longing for cultivated place but projecting the desolation of my other-imposed social isolation, I linger on this threshold because I cannot envision or believe in a future place that is other than wilderness.

With my colleague's confession of my supervisor's final betrayal, I stir and awaken, re-interpreting the landscape beyond my threshold as wilderness to frontier. Initially, I regard this frontier with ambivalence. The notion of frontier represents a friction that Martha Graham (1991) recalls from a conversation with a young German audience member following the European premier of the dance *Frontier*:

> The hold the frontier had always had on me as an American [was] as a symbol of a journey into the unknown. . . . I remember the first time I did *Frontier* in Europe. A young woman came up to me after the performance and said, "Why do you call that dance *Frontier*? Frontier is the barrier of my own country. It's not anything big or expansive. When you reach the frontier, you've reached a barrier." I had the idea of *Frontier* in my mind as a frontier of exploration, a frontier of discovery, and not one of limitation. (p. 219)

In the first stage of transitioning my perspective-of-place from wilderness to frontier, I share the sentiments of the pre-unification, young German: I see the threshold as a barrier. I distrust, perhaps fear, what is beyond. I remain immobilized, trapped in an O'Donohue-an (1999/2002) inner prison:

> It is the lonely struggle of the prisoner to continue to remember that he belongs to life and not to limitation. Limitation is, of course, real and factual, but it is meant to be temporary. A limit is meant to call you beyond itself towards the next new field of experience. We usually view limitation not as a calling to growth, but as confinement and impossibility. . . . Your complicity with other people's images and expectations of you allows them to box you in completely. (pp. 127-128)

I am focused on limits and limitations. I am complicit in my own social isolation. I am not ready to hear the call as inviting promise and growth. Seemingly content to remain

within the confines of my involuntary social isolation, I continue to linger at the threshold, boxed in completely.

Threshold as Mourning and Healing

Spiritualist Jeanne de Salzmann (2011) labels thresholds as places of opposing force and friction that must be "live[d] without taking sides in order for a finer energy to be produced" (p. 31). Before I can believe in my frontier as a place of opportunity, exploration and discovery, I need to be at peace with this friction. I need to accept rather than fight the opposing forces that immobilized me. I need to allow myself a period of mourning that Casey (1993/2009) names "decathexis." To decathect is to "withdraw one's feelings of attachment . . . in anticipation of a future loss."[20] The process of decathexis is a Rilke-ian "retreat into the self to follow paths [you] did not know existed" (trans. 2006, p. xliv). Casey claims:

> *We mourn places as well as people*, and as part of the process we must decathect from both. . . . In the end (and mourning always concerns endings), the effect of grieving over lost places can be beneficial and constructive. Instead of being devastated by a rapid and forced departure – as we might well be if we have no recourse to such a mourning process – we may manage to achieve ultimate reconciliation with our ill-starred fate, learning to live with displacement and desolation even if not to triumph over them. In this subterranean way, displacement can give way to re-implacement in a new landscape. At the same time, the desolation occasioned by displacement may be superseded by an authentic consolation that no longer leaves us isolated from others, from place, or from our own divided selves. (pp. 198-199)

I come to understand that I pause at the threshold to mourn. I mourn my loss of supervisor mentoring and peer camaraderie. I mourn my loss of cultivating work-place. I mourn my loss of an integrated and confident self in that work-place. I pause so that I do not rush the essential and life-sustaining work of this mourning process. I retreat into self that I might discover unknown paths forward to new place. I retreat that I might embrace my emptiness and command the attention needed to heal my broken self. In her

recollected talks of Michel de Salzmann at Chandolin, Fran Shaw (2011) speaks of this type of attentive retreat as freedom:

> Freedom in a moment, freedom from fear and being anxious, freedom to be just as I am, giving all to what is number one in me. To be able to close the shutters to everything else and go deeply, instantaneously, into this central attention. . . . A kind of whole-hearted emptiness. A trusting emptiness. So that a finer influence can act on me, in the silence. And even despite myself, I begin to receive it, yield to it, a channel for it. And perhaps a threshold is reached when I belong to That. (p. 95)

I come to understand that my surrender is in fact one of choice. In choosing to remain-in-place, I surrender to my suffering. I attend to my wounds. I close myself off from all that is limiting that I may once more open to all that is possible. I let go. Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) calls this process "softening to [my] ache, just trying to hold myself in my own heart without judging myself for still feeling the hurt, for not having forgiven completely" (p. 103). Author Rebecca Wells (2010) names it "touch[ing] [your] own brokenness as if it were a pearl of great value, then us[ing] it as the key to that which most needs to be unlocked" (p. 390). In my place of retreat, I no longer judge my pain. I surrender to the gentle touch that begins to heal my brokenness. My retreat silences the cacophony of other-imposed social isolation; it calms my unrest. In that stillness, I hear my song rise above the dissonance and beckon me forward. With new-found courage, I step into the new frontier and trust I will find my way home to a place that honors and cherishes my spirit-of-Being.

It has been over two decades since I first experienced other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. I do not find it easy to share the story of my surrender. Spiritual author Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) acknowledges my choice to do something that is not easy as an opportunity to surrender to true self:

> How we do what we do reflects the song we hear inside -- what we believe to be true about our essential selves -- and this is the song we teach our children. . . . I surrender to the story that wants to be told, and in telling the story I listen for the song it sings, the dance it teaches me. (pp. 140-141)

And so, I too surrender to the story that wants to be told. In some respects, my exploration of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is a true and absolute crossing over threshold. I am surprised to realize that after so much time the sharing of my story causes my voice to tighten and catch, my heart to beat a bit faster, and tears to slip gently down my cheeks. Emotions I believe to be long spent, arise anew and overflow my Being. O'Donohue (2008a) aptly describes such an emotion-laden threshold as a vital crossing. He advises:

> Take your time . . . to feel all the varieties of presence that accrue there; to listen inward with complete attention until you hear the inner voice calling you forward. The time has come to cross. (pp. 48-49)

And so, I prepare to cross. But first, I pause once more. This time I pause to invite the stories of those who also have experienced other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Certainly there are times when we choose, even embrace, isolation. There are times, perhaps, when isolation chooses us. There are other times still when isolation is forced upon us. Recognizing that social isolation is at times healing, rejuvenating, and centering, I seek to understand in what circumstances social isolation-in-place is harmful, destructive, and fragmenting. In exploring the experience of other-imposed social isolation as Being lost and forgotten in place, I call upon a strength that Rilke (trans. 2006) describes:

> Our instinct should not be to desire consolation over a loss but rather to develop a deep and painful curiosity to explore this loss completely, to experience the peculiarity, the singularity, and the effects of *this* loss in our life. . . . The more profoundly we are affected by such a loss and the more painfully it concerns us,

> the more it becomes our *task* to claim as a new, different, and definitive possession that which has been so hopelessly emphasized by this loss. (p. 109)

And so, I cross this threshold – the one that is not easy; the one that invites me to surrender once more. This is a place that I recognize. It is a place that recognizes me. As I don the ritual cloth of this academic process, may I take the time to respectfully honor the presence of those who journey with me to share their ***lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place***. May I accept the task with a deep and painful curiosity. Most importantly, may I remain ever mindful of my song and of the songs and voices of those who call me forward.

Naming the Phenomenon

> There is a voice inside of you
> That whispers all day long,
> "I feel this is right for me,
> I know that *this* is wrong."
> No teacher, preacher, parent, friend
> Or wise man can decide
> What's right for you – just listen to
> The voice that speaks inside.
> (Silverstein, 1996, p. 38)

The experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place calls me forward. In truth, this experience claims me. I listen to the whispering voice inside me that knows such isolation is wrong; it is a wrong-ness that stirs something deep inside my core-of-being. Early in this dissertation process, I name my phenomenon of interest as work-place isolation. When I share my dissertation topic with friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, they most often respond to ask what exactly I mean. It is not easy to explain. There is a colloquial expression you've likely heard: "I know it when I see it." Made infamous by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart to describe "the threshold test for pornography," this expression acknowledges the struggle to name something that,

while “observable . . . lacks clearly defined parameters” (*Wikipedia*, “I know it when I see it,” 2013). The popularized phrase is used in attempts to qualify any number of abstruse concepts. Use of the phrase spans attempts to describe the commonplace as well as the remarkable. Author John Guaspari (1985/2004) writes about it in his book, *I Know It When I See It: A Modern Fable about Quality*. In the television series, *Harry’s Law*, character Harriet Korn makes it the lynchpin of an impassioned closing argument as she pleads for justice in an asylum case for African albinos (Kelley, 2011).

In writing about the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I must move beyond the colloquialism. Max van Manen (1990/1997) describes the importance of revealing lived experience through phenomenological writing:

> A good description that constitutes the essence of something is construed so that the structure of a lived experience is revealed to us in such a fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of this experience in a hitherto unseen way. (p. 39)

Heidegger (1927/1993a) calls this “laying bare” (p. 49) the phenomenon and warns: “What is sought in the question . . . is not something completely unfamiliar, although it is at first totally ungraspable” (p. 46). Author Simon Critchley (2005) examines the philosophy in Wallace Stevens’ poetry and, drawing on the work of Mearleau-Ponty, concludes that:

> Phenomenological descriptions, if felicitous, foreground things as they are experienced in the everyday world we inhabit, the real world in which we move and have our being, the world which fascinates and benumbs of us. (p. 28)

I feel the tension of adequately describing the essence of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. I want to honor fully the stories of so many who have lived – and surrendered to – this experience. I want to lay bare the everyday familiarity and real-

worldliness to expose this phenomenon's devastation. I want to discover ways of seeing that transcend my own benumbing experience. I want to unleash the voices of those who have lived the experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

In the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1927/1993a) asserts that before an answer can be reached, one must first ask the question. Further, if "the question itself is obscure and without direction, . . . we must first work out an adequate way of *formulating* it" (p. 24). For me, the touchstone of Heidegger's description, what he names *seeking*, is his language transition from "What *is* Being?" to "What is the *meaning* of Being?" Turning to my own questioning, I first ask: What *is* work-place isolation? Is it physical or social isolation? Is it emotional or psychological isolation? As it reveals itself, it is all four. I suspect that what makes naming the phenomenon so difficult is the laying bare of its essential meaning. Is the experience of other-imposed social isolation one of *feeling* isolated or one of *Being* isolated? What is the fundamental difference between *feeling* and *Being*? The voice inside me whispers what I know to be true: the experience of involuntary social isolation moves beyond sensorial or intuitional feeling. It chips away at my Heideggerian Being-in-the world. It jams my sense-making abilities so that how I "'dwell alongside' the world" (1927/1962, p. 80) loses its familiar custom. I seek to understand the ***lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place*** when one remains implaced yet becomes lost and forgotten in place. The essence of this phenomenon is not necessarily one of physical separation and, therefore, is isolation not of person but of *Being*.

The Importance and Difficulty of Naming

Rilke (trans. 2000) advises a young poet to consider naming in this way:

> Reflect on the world that you carry within yourself. And name this thinking what you wish. . . . Just be sure that you observe carefully what wells up within you and place that above everything that you notice around you. (pp. 52-53)

We name in order to know. We name to establish a relationship: to understand how we fit with that which we name. We name to connect more deeply with what wells up within us. We also name as a means of sense-making, for nameless, things are less real, less meaningful. Nameless, things are more frightening, more unbearable. The soldiers in Tim O'Brien's (1990) novel, *The Things They Carried*, respond to rumors of a pending attack by re-naming the situation:

> As a precaution the platoon moved only at night. . . . For almost two weeks, Sanders said, they lived the nightlife. That was the phrase everyone used: the nightlife. A language trick. It made things seem tolerable. (p. 219)

Renaming is a way to reduce fear: to transform, if only as a linguistic slight-of-hand, that which is impossible to bear, namely the pending attacks, to something more familiar, more tolerable. We name to feel safe, to be more in control, and to be less threatened by that which we name.

But naming can be complicated. Naming may seem impractical as it will not change the essence of what is named. Remember Juliet's lament after discovering her beloved Romeo was a Montague?

> What's in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any other word would smell as sweet;
> So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd. (Shakespeare, 1597/1980, II:43-45)

Juliet's struggle is not with who Romeo is – "Thou art thyself, though not a Montague" (II:39) – but what he is named, which she sees as no part of his true self. Novelist Keri Hulme (1983) also explores this sentiment as the young mute character, Simon, is

bewildered by his friend Kerewin's attempts to help him learn the English and Maori pronunciations of a certain tree:

> He'd thought, knowing names is nice, but it don't mean much. Knowing this is a whatever she said is neat, but it don't change it. Names aren't much. The things are. (p. 126)

Naming may also seem formidable, as some experiences defy definition. In exploring the nature of emotional abuse, Miller (1995) notes this type of abuse is "so complex and bewildering it is difficult to name" (p. 18). Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2003) recognizes the struggle to write or talk about an experience, noting that her words and stories "are only a way of pointing to what can be experienced but cannot be named" (p. 41). Drawing from a line from Rilke, she names these words and stories the smoke but not the fire of the experience itself.

When all is said and done, I wonder how much naming really matters. Rilke's (trans. 2000) advice is to name the thing whatever you wish because of foremost importance is its essence that wells within you. O'Brien's (1990) platoon's re-naming of the thing proves a futile trick that fails to mask the thing's true essence. The characters of Juliet and Simon wisely recognize that naming does not change the thing itself. And, of course, some things are so complex and bewildering to elude naming in any meaningful way. Certainly, it seems, naming matters less than the stories themselves.

Yet despite its difficulty, naming remains an important way of pointing to an experience. Naming is a way to bring forward and to give voice to experience. Max van Manen (1990/1997) recognizes that language is the only way we "sustain a conversational relation" (p. 112). He further notes the phenomenological method as "the art of being sensitive . . . to the subtle undertones of language, to the way language

speaks when it allows the things themselves to speak" (p. 112). In his introduction to *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, David Krell (1993) asserts poetry as a way "to let things be what they are and show their many-sidedness" (p. 345). Rumi (1999/2001), in his poem, *Playing and Being Played*, deftly acknowledges the experience of connecting with a story that springs from your Being-in-the-world:

> There are no words to explain,
> No tongue,
> How when that player touches
> The strings, it is me playing
> And being played (p. 14)

As I seek to understand ***the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place***, I humbly accept the challenges of naming this phenomenon. I strive to remain sensitive to its language and to what is touched, even when words remain elusive. Through the art of phenomenology, I trust what wells up within me and within others who share their stories and to allow the stories themselves to bring forward the essence of what is true. Turning to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I seek to touch the strings of this phenomenon, to sound the many-sidedness of its Being-in-the-world.

The Naming of Work-Place Aggression and Abuse

In turning to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I confess that I have resisted returning to the academic literature that first caught my attention and sparked my interest in this and related phenomena. At the root of my resistance is a friction between naming and story-telling. In the academic literature, work-place social isolation is embedded and nested within a number of constructs. In my early academic explorations, I follow the path of the research before me and find myself writing a dissertation proposal that reads very differently than the one before you today.

For that earlier effort, I complete a comprehensive literature review of the work-place aggression construct and discover that, due to its comprehensive and complex nature, it has been examined under a multitude of names.

Counterproductive work-place behavior (Fox & Spector, 2005; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; Mikulay, Neuman, & Finkelstein, 2001) are "deviances that represent violations of the implicit or explicit standards of acceptable behavior" (Mikulay et al., p. 279). Work-place aggression (Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Hepworth & Towler, 2004; LeBlanc & Barling, 2004; Magnuson & Norem, 2009; Merecz, Drabek, & Mościcka, 2009; Neuman & Baron, 2005; Rai, 2002; Sangganjanavanich, 2010; St-Pierre & Holmes, 2010) is "any act of aggression…that causes physical or emotional harm in a work setting" (Rai, p. 15). Each of these terms encompasses physical and non-physical behaviors and actions.

Constructs that, by definition, are restricted to non-physical behaviors and actions include work-place abuse and harassment (Bray, 1995; Richman et al., 1999; Richman, Rospenda, Flaherty, Freels, & Zlatoper, 2004; Richman, Shinsako, Rospenda, Flaherty, & Freels, 2002); work-place emotional abuse (Keashly, 1997, 2001; Keashly, Hunter, & Harvey, 1997; Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994; Koonin & Green, 2005); work-place bullying (Coyne, Craig, & Chong, 2004; Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2005; Dobson, 2009; Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Gates, 2004; Jennifer, Cowie, & Ananiadou, 2003; Keashly, 2010; Korkmaz & Cemaloğlu, 2010; Magnuson & Norem, 2009; Privitera & Campbell, 2009; Rayner, 1997, 2000; Rayner & Hoel, 1997; Sheehan, Barker, & Rayner, 1999; Seagriff, 2010; Stebbing et al., 2004); work-place mobbing (Gates, 2004; Leymann, 1990, 1996; Tengilimoğlu, Mansur, & Dziegielewski,

2010; Zapf & Einarsen, 2005); work-place devaluation (Klunk, 1999); work-place incivility (Blau & Andersson, 2005; Cortina, 2008; Cortina & Magley, 2009; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Hornstein, 2003; Lewis, & Malecha, 2011; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Scott, 2006; Zauderer, 2002); work-place mistreatment (Cortina & Magley, 2003; Harlos & Axelrod, 2005); and work-place invalidation (Goldsmith, 2003).

The Naming of Work-place Isolation

I search the work-place aggression literature for common threads. Across all naming and constructs is one phenomenon whose voice I hear above the rest: researchers universally testify that targets experience some degree of isolation as a result of aggressive work-place behaviors. I answer the call to ask: What does it mean to be isolated in the work-place? Once more, I temporarily swirl in the answering of "what *is* work-place isolation?" Studies that focus on work-place isolation discuss the phenomenon simply as work-place isolation (Challenger, 1991; Marshall, Michaels, & Mulki, 2007; Mulki, Locander, Marshall, Harris, & Hensel, 2008; Pollert, 2010; Yildirim & Yildirim, 2008), as well as emotional isolation (Stobbs, 2004); institutional isolation (Smith & Calasanti, 2005); physical isolation (Mulki et al., 2008; Mauldin, 2008; Richardson, 2008; Stobbs, 2004); psychological isolation (Mulki et al., 2008); professional isolation (Cooper & Kurland, 2002); social isolation (Crawford, Gutierrez, & Harber, 2005; Kalev, Kelly, & Dobbin, 2006; Linzer et al., 2002; Silver, 2003; Smith & Calasanti, 2005); and work-place ostracism (Hitlan, Cliffton, & DeSota, 2006).

In addition, the academic literature names three categorical precursors to work-place isolation. First, work-place isolation may target vulnerable workers. Purposeful exclusion may be a "harbinger of getting fired" (Challenger, 1991, p. 10) or a tactic to

deal with "workers facing workplace grievances" (Pollert, 2010, p. 62). Second, work-place isolation may be an unintended effect of organizational design. Workers whose jobs physically isolate them from colleagues may become "out of sight, out of mind." This includes but may not be limited to teleworkers (Cooper & Kurland, 2002); workers, like salespeople, whose occupations keep them in the field (Mulki et al., 2008; Mulki, Bardhi, Lassk, & Nanavaty-Dahl, 2009) or like freelance writers, whose work is completed from home (Silver, 2003); and workers who are increasingly isolated from physical proximity to co-workers due to new technologies and reorganization of work (Richardson, 2008). Third, workers may find themselves targets of "in group, out group" mentality under a variety of circumstances. Being in the out group may be due to identity factors, such as gender, race, ethnicity, or cultural differences (Kalev et al., 2006; Linzer et al., 2002; Smith & Calasanti, 2005; Hitlan et al., 2006). Out group isolation may also occur with workers, like dental hygienists, whose work requires them to rotate among multiple office locations (Crawford et al., 2005).

As I move from naming to a deeper understanding of the experience of work-place isolation, I ask: If these are the names of work-place isolation, what are the ways it is evidenced in work-place behavior? Work-place isolation manifests as exclusion from inner circles and decision-making (Smith & Calasanti, 2005); physical separation from and lack of interaction with others in the work-place (Mauldin, 2008; Stobbs, 2004); lack of communication with others in the work-place (Mauldin, 2008); absence of support and mentoring (Hitlan et al., 2006; Marshall et al., 2007; Mauldin, 2008; Mulki et al., 2008; Smith & Calasanti, 2005; Stobbs, 2004); severing of meaningful work relationships (Hitlan et al., 2006; Mulki et al., 2008; Smith & Calasanti, 2005); discounting the target's

opinions (Smith & Calasanti, 2005); lack of professional recognition (Marshall et al., 2007; Mulki et al., 2008); and damage to professional reputation and limits to professional success (Hitlan et al., 2006).

The Naming of Work-place Social Isolation

I reflect on my personal experience, the experiences that colleagues have shared with me over time, and the behaviors evidenced in the academic literature. My final turning is toward social isolation in the work-place. Social isolation is defined as "hav[ing] very few or no social contacts" or "limited social ties" (Donoghue & Taylor, 2010, p. 127). It may be considered in terms of social inclusion or exclusion (Donoghue & Taylor, 2010; Jackson et al., 2010), where inclusion means having opportunities to "play a full role" (Donoghue & Taylor, p. 127) and being empowered "to demonstrate control over resources, information, relationships, and, most importantly, control over decision making" (p. 128). Social exclusion indicates a lack of belonging and marginalization (Kvasny, 2006), where isolated individuals become "outsiders," "other," and "alien" (Read et al., 2003, pp. 262-263).

Academic research characterizes work-place social isolation as feeling "cut off" (Stobbs, 2004) or not feeling "an integral part of [an] office" (Crawford et al., 2005). Work-place social isolation manifests as lacking social support (Linzer et al., 2002; Silver, 2003), exclusion from professional networks and mentoring opportunities (Kalev et al., 2006), and an absence of belonging to work groups or relatedness with colleagues (Smith & Calasanti, 2005). This research is focused almost exclusively on professional isolation resulting from away-from-the-office field work (Cooper & Kurland, 2002), homeworkers (Lal & Dwivedi, 2009), and teleworking (Johanson, 2007; Mulki et al., 2008; Mulki et al., 2009; Reed, 2007; Whittle & Mueller, 2009)

The Tension between Naming and Storytelling

Reaching the juncture to claim my own research path, I sputter and misfire and, finally, stall. I am passionate about the experience of work-place aggression. I am eager to contribute to what remains a burgeoning research strand. So why am I so stymied? While there are some clear distinctions among the studied constructs, they portray a tangled typology that more often represents subtle, sometimes imperceptible, distinctions among behaviors. To me, the work-place aggression and work-place isolation research seems stuck in an endless loop of naming. My reaction is shared by the participants at the 2001 American Academy of Management conference. Suzy Fox and Paul Spector (2005), editors of the book, *Counterproductive Workplace Behavior*, note that conference participants "found that they were studying overlapping sets of behaviors from somewhat different theoretical perspectives, and tended to focus on distinctions and what is unique in each contribution rather than on connections" (p. 4).

I find myself resisting yet another research contribution that will promote divisiveness rather than connectivity. Additionally, while I fully appreciate the importance of naming, as well as the phenomenological nuances that naming reveals, I feel that in all that naming something vital is missing. But what? I find myself making harsh comparisons between the work-place aggression literature and the partner abuse research. In the dozens of work-place aggression studies I review, I discover only two studies that share the rich stories, the voices, of those targeted by work-place aggression and none that focus specifically on the experience of work-place social isolation. In comparison, the partner abuse literature, which is several decades older, seems overflowing with victim testimony. The tension I feel is one Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) perfectly summarizes as "analyz[ing] and dissect[ing] with the rational mind

[while] leav[ing] behind what the heart knows because the mind cannot find a niche for this knowledge in some neat, well-developed schema" (p. 157). I realize that what I find wanting in the existing research is a genuine connection with the *lived experience* of work-place aggression and, more specifically, other-imposed work-place social isolation. I want to toss neat, well-developed schema to the wind, so that my heart may hear the voices and stories of those targeted by these abusive behaviors.

Sitting Within the Gap of the Phenomenon

> This in-between time is not a trial to be endured. . . . This emptiness at the center is not a bewildering loss to be outrun. (Oriah Mountain Dreamer, 2003, p. 169)

For several years, not by design but perhaps of necessity, I find myself attempting what Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2003) calls "sit[ting] within the gap" (p. 170). She defines this as sitting in emptiness until we are willing "to let go of what we think . . . so we can open ourselves to hearing that which calls us back" (p. 170). During this time, I ponder how best to complete the marathon of my dissertation journey. I reflect on the work-place aggression and work-place isolation research and try to let go of my original conceptions. Too often I find myself struggling against what Stephanie Kallos (2004) calls "The Land of No Words": a trust that requires an "abandonment of ego . . . an evacuation of the self, and . . . a letting go of the need to be constantly in control" (p. 258). In truth, I recognize this period as a gap but find it difficult to achieve the emptiness, abandonment, and evacuation required to sit within it. I fear that in the stillness of that gap my words will remain fallow and that in the quietness my words will remain silent. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1850/2005) observes this same uncertainty and hesitation:

> It is singular, however, how long the time often passes before words embody things; and with what security to persons, who choose to avoid a certain subject, may approach its very verge, and retire without disturbing it. (p. 143)

In the years of sitting within the gap, I often approach the very verge of dissertation work only to retire without disturbing it. Discovering the phenomenological method proves to be what calls me back to my dissertation purpose. I manage what Mark Twain (1894/2005) identifies as courage: "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear" (p. 48). I face my fears and channeled my passion to summon the courage to approach the verge and, rather than retire, to disturb the subject of work-place aggression.

I appreciate the necessary foundation and construct clarity that naming the phenomenon provides. However, in study after study is a notable absence of the voices and stories of those who experience other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Longing to discover a deeper, perhaps more meaningful, truth in these experiences, I trudge through the research process in a manner that recalls O'Brien's (1990) description of the soldiers' hump:

> They moved like mules. By daylight they took sniper fire, at night they were mortared, but it was not battle, it was just the endless march, village to village, without purpose, nothing won or lost. They marched for the sake of the march . . . just humping, one step and then the next and then another, but no volition, no will, because it was automatic. (p. 15)

I do not characterize the various research approaches as wins or losses. I do, however, ache to halt the automatic hump and discover greater purpose. I wonder what it is like to breathe life into the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. How would such breath alter perspective from "what is" to "what is the meaning of" such involuntary social isolation? David Krell (1993), editor of *Martin Heidegger: Basic*

Writings, asserts: "In poetry we are less disposed to manipulate things or reduce them to our own technical-scientific, quantitative frames of reference" (p. 345). And so, I turn toward the phenomenological research that van Manen (1990/1997) claims as a "poetizing activity" (p. 13) that is "not concerned primarily with the nomological or factual aspects of some state of affairs; rather it always asks, what is the nature of the phenomenon as meaningfully experienced?" (p. 40). I turn away from what Heidegger (1971) sees as "unpoetic dwelling . . . [that] derives from a curious excess of frantic measuring and calculating" (pp. 225- 226). I seek to dwell poetically and, in doing so, invite the stories of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Learning to Dwell Poetically

What does it mean to dwell poetically? Heidegger (1971) phenomenologically explores the phrase "poetically man dwells" (p. 211) from a poem by Freidrich Hölderlin. In addressing the question "how is man . . . supposed to dwell poetically"? (p. 211), Heidegger recognizes the role of language in "beckon[ing] us . . . toward a thing's nature" (p. 214) and, more specifically, poetic language as "what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling" (p. 216). Heidegger concludes that poetry is an "authentic measure-taking" (p. 224) and that "taking of measure is what is poetic in dwelling" (p. 219). If dwelling poetically means to take the measure of a thing's nature, what then does it mean to take measure? The *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms* (Heacock, 2003) specifies that to take the measure of something is to "to make a judgment or form an opinion" (p. 266) of that thing. It is a way of assigning value to the essence or nature of that thing. Heidegger sees poetic measuring as a way of calling forth or revealing what is alien or unknown about a thing: poetry "speaks in 'images'" that imagine "the alien in the sight of the familiar" (p.

223). Through poetic dwelling one glimpses the familiar and, if only for a moment, shares a sense of belonging with the essence of that Being.

Phenomenological research is one way of dwelling poetically. Patton (1980/1990) notes that "a phenomenological study . . . is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (p. 71). Van Manen (1990/1997) sees phenomenological researching as "the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to *become* the world" (p. 5). Phenomenology is a reflective process brimming with introspective pondering; rooted in the Latin *reflectere*, it is a "bending back"[21] to the experience. In choosing a heuristic phenomenological inquiry process, I am rooted in the traditions of discovery that honor the etymological Greek roots of *heuristic* (*heuriskein*).[22] It is a discovery that Gadamer (1975/1989) calls the "essence of the question," an "open[ing] up possibilities and keep[ing] them open" (p. 298) that leads us, in van Manen's words, "to interrogate something from the heart of our existence" (p. 43).

Inviting Voice through Phenomenological Structure

I seek to invite the voices of those who have experienced other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. My research evolves through a phenomenological questioning that develops what van Manen (1990/1997) calls an "inseparable connection to the world [through] the principle of 'intentionality'" (p. 5). To establish this phenomenological connection through intentionality, I follow the six methodological research activities outlined by van Manen:

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world, a process initiated in Chapter One;
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;

5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and wholes. (pp. 30-31)

Rather than a sequential pursuit, van Manen sees these research activities unfolding through a "dynamic interplay" designed to "animate inventiveness and stimulate insight" (p. 30).

In turning to the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I follow van Manen's (1990/1997) method of "identifying what it is that deeply interests . . . me and of identifying this interest as a true phenomenon" (p. 40). This first chapter is an orienting to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. What is the experience of remaining implaced when one becomes out-of-place? What is the experience of abusive social isolation when one is lost and forgotten in work-place? This chapter is the genesis of my learning to dwell poetically. Donning the robes of phenomenology, I begin the process of bending back to the lived experience of being socially isolated in the work-place through the abusive actions of others. Following first the threads of my own experience of work-place abuse and other-imposed social isolation, I continue my questioning to open and keep open additional possibilities of this phenomenon. I seek to illuminate the lived experience through poetic rendering as Critchley (2005) describes it:

> Poetry intensifies experience by suddenly suspending it, withdrawing one from it, and lighting up not some otherworldly obscurities, but what Emerson in "The American Scholar" calls "the near, below, the common." (p. 41)

In subsequent chapters, I continue to explore the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. I investigate involuntary social isolation in its multi-facetedness, drawing from my own experience and from personal communications with four of my colleagues; from literature, poetry, art, and music; and from the work-

place abuse and social isolation literature (Chapter Two). I provide a philosophical grounding for my phenomenological orientation and approach through the writings of several hermeneutic philosophers, including David Abram, Martin Buber, Hans-George Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, Edmond Husserl, David Michael Levin, Emmanual Levinas, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Max van Manen (Chapter Three). I reflect on the essential themes that unfold through my conversations with eight co-researchers who share their experiences (Chapters Four and Five). Finally, I offer pedagogical insights to address the question: **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?** (Chapter Six)

Throughout, I hope to honor the "spirit of this kind of inquiry" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 34) and to "arrive at the clearings that give the text its revealing power" (p. 33). Welcome! I invite you, the reader, to offer your own voice and, perhaps lived experience, as we illuminate the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

CHAPTER TWO:

FRACTURED BEING: AN EXISTENTIAL INVESTIGATION OF OTHER-IMPOSED SOCIAL ISOLATION

> When you look at the world through shattered lenses, the world looks shattered. (Roth, 2010, p. 200)

Figure 2.1. Post-Impressionist painting, oil on canvas. Adapted from *Irises*, by V. van Gogh, 1889. Retrieved from The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA. [public domain]

In the film *Little Man Tate* (Raiski & Foster, 1991), seven-year-old prodigy Fred Tate realizes at an early age that he is unique, like no other person he has ever known: "By the time I was in first grade, it was pretty obvious that I wasn't like everybody else." Yet he longs to belong and to connect with others. When his teacher tells his mother that he will probably skip second grade, maybe all of elementary school, Fred muses that all he wants is to have a friend with whom to eat lunch. A few days later, during an interview at the prestigious Grierson Institute, Fred confesses to Dr. Grierson that he sometimes wakes up in van Gogh's paintings. As he views the painting, *Irises* (see Figure 2.1), Dr. Grierson asks Fred why he thinks van Gogh has painted only one white iris in a field of purple irises. Fred replies, "Because he was lonely" (n.p.).

Fred Tate's is an existential loneliness, a genuine isolation of Being. While Fred identifies with post-Impressionist van Gogh, I wonder if such an existential isolation is more cubist in nature. In cubism, while all of the essential elements of self are represented, these elements are jumbled and confused, at times beyond recognition. Developed by Spanish painter Pablo Picasso (see Figure 2.2) and French painter Georges Braque (see Figure 2.3) in the early twentieth century, cubism depicts:

> Objects [as] broken up, analyzed and re-assembled in an abstracted form…Often the surfaces intersect at seemingly random angles, removing a coherent sense of depth. The background and object planes interpenetrate one another. (*Wikipedia*, "cubism," 2009)

Figure 2.2. Cubist painting, oil on canvas (left). Adapted from *Girl with a mandolin (Fanny Tellier)*, by P. Picasso, 1910. Retrieved from The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. [public domain]

Figure 2.3. Cubist painting, oil and charcoal on canvas (right). Adapted from *Woman with a guitar*, by G. Braque, 1913. Retrieved from Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne, Paris, France. [public domain]

This description of cubism speaks to the broken and oddly-assembled sense of self when one lives the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. A former colleague, Zach,[23] shares with me how unrecognizable he feels during his lived experience:

> I'm pretty much an extrovert and I enjoy being around people. But I'd go into the office and shut my door. I would bypass people. I didn't interact with anyone or as very little as possible…. I hated me being this person. It was just terrible. This scared, alone, introverted person. This was totally not me.

Zach's experience of other-imposed social isolation leaves him at cubist odds with his known sense-of-Being. He is without a coherent sense of depth. His daily behaviors are at random angles with who he knows himself to be. Such social isolation fractures in a way that author Keri Hulme (1983) sees as "gone beyond recalling" because "all meaningful links are broken" (p. 167). Author Stephanie Kallos (2004) also describes such brokenness:

> A kind of unnatural loosening commenced. A breakdown of engineering and design, a failure of inner centrifugal force, with Ferris wheel parts hurtling into space the atmosphere of her skin unable to contain them… (p. 239)

Like cubism, other-imposed social isolation scrambles one's sense-of-Being. It loosens essential parts, rendering the worker unrecognizable to self and to others.

Like the character Fred Tate, does the socially isolated worker feel trapped – awakening this time perhaps in a Picasso or Braque? A cubist existence is one in which the colors and hues are subdued, without energy and vitality, almost lifeless. Zach describes a depression that penetrates deeper and deeper over time and becomes a life-halting inertia.

> I was depressed and I didn't want to be around people that weren't depressed. And I would even have conversations with my mom, and I think that at some point I started to scare her, because I was just like 'I'm always depressed'… I

> remember sweating, just remember sitting there sweating, just not knowing what to do next. And I would have days where I would do nothing because I wouldn't know what to do first.

Abusive, other-imposed social isolation proves to be a fun-house mirror that lengthens and contracts the target's work-place sense-of-Being with each concave and convex curve. Imposed social isolation distorts the worker's self-image rendering it unrecognizable, as reflected by self and others. The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation brings a questioning of the very basics of what you know to be true about yourself. For Zach, it brings confused disillusionment: "[The social isolation] made me question my career . . . [I] felt I wasn't qualified for the job." A second colleague, Zoe,[24] paints a similar picture, when she shares with me her lived experience of other-imposed work-place isolation. Her experience is one of dumbfounded disbelief in having arrived at an unfathomable place in an otherwise successful career:

> It's easy to say self-confidence. But when you get down to that, and I've worked my whole career, and this is where I am. That goes beyond self-confidence. And that's just such a huge disappointment. . . . I came here to be a senior member of the leadership team. That's why I was brought on board, and I'm not. And I won't, as long as I'm here, I have to go somewhere else to do that.

I am struck by the powerful, and powerless, nature of these distorted images and wonder in what other ways abusive, other-imposed social isolation fractures workers, causing them to become ill-fitted and at odds with others, their surroundings, and themselves. In the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation, how does a worker's broken and fragmented sense-of-Being manifest while remaining in place?

"Through the Looking Glass" of Other-Imposed Social Isolation

> 'Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little

> different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I?' (Carroll, 1865/2011, pp. 7-8)

In the worlds of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass, Lewis Carroll's (1865/2011) Alice finds herself repeatedly bewildered by the ways common objects and behaviors are twisted into unfamiliar, unrecognizable, and, at times, nearly unmanageable and unnavigatable experiences. Alice's new worlds are surreal, beyond a reality she readily understands. Marked by the irrational and fantastic, the new worlds confuse and frustrate dear Alice, leaving her to question not only *where* she is but *who* she is. This is surely what it is like to exist in a place where the familiar is turned upside down and inside out. In what ways does an abused worker who becomes socially isolated in the work-place feel a little different? Does that worker question why things are no longer just as usual? And, in the end, is that worker left to ponder bewilderedly: Who in the world am I?

"I Am Not Myself"

Lewis Carroll (1865/2011) might have easily incorporated the idiom "I am not myself" into Alice's puzzled musings about her otherworldly experience. According to the *Thesaurus of English Idioms* (Nagy, 2006), to *be* one's self is "to act naturally [and] normally [without] pretenses"; to *be* one's self is "not to be artificial [or] fake" (p. 71). Conversely, what is it like to be in a work-place where one is not one's self? My colleague Zach recalls his own otherworldly experience of work-place social isolation as a time when he was not himself. When his naturally friendly, outgoing self is shattered by other-imposed social isolation, he becomes insecure and introverted in a work-place where no one knows the real him. Abusive, other-imposed social isolation creates a tension between authentic and inauthentic Being. Remaining in a work-place that imposes social isolation propagates this tension, leaving the isolated worker to question

true self. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne (1850/2005) observes such a tension between the Reverend Dimmesdale's private and public personas:

> No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true. (p. 136)

Socially isolated from others, the worker may, in time, also become isolated from true self. The worker's once authentic being is alchemized by the toxicity of work-place abuse, risking the sense of true self.

As I ponder this risk, I ask what it means to be authentic and how other-imposed social isolation contributes to inauthenticity. To be authentic is to be original and genuine. A more obsolete meaning is to be authoritative.[25] How does authenticity demonstrate authority? Tracing etymological origins, the Greek *authentes* means "one acting on one's own authority," which stems from the compound *autos* "self" and *hentes* "doer, being."[26] Authenticity, then, is a state of being one's true or genuine self based on one's own authority. It is also acting, doing, and *Being* on one's own authority. It follows that one can truly be authentic *only* when following one's own authority. By following the authority of others, by living in an other-imposed state of being, one is, by degree, inauthentic.

In the narratives of other-imposed social isolation, authority shifts to others, and the target's sense of authentic self becomes distorted. French author Albert Camus (1942/1988) describes such a devastating loss of personal authority in his novel, *The Stranger*. The character Meursault muses about his court experience as a defendant on trial for murder:

> One thing bothered me a little, though. Despite everything that was on my mind, I felt like intervening every now and then, but my lawyer kept telling me, "Just

> keep quiet - it won't do your case any good." In a way, they seemed to be arguing the case as if it had nothing to do with me. Everything was happening without my participation. My fate was being decided without anyone so much as asking my opinion. (p. 98)

Living in other-imposed social isolation, the target's fate is decided by others. Faced with a devastating loss of authority and authenticity, in what ways are these workers altered – who do they become? I question: What is it like to live in an inauthentic state-of-being? How does inauthenticity manifest? Also, is there a difference in *feeling* inauthentic and *Being* inauthentic?

Secret and Shadow Selves

At first glance, the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation contributes to inauthenticity. First, the socially isolated worker loses trust in the authenticity of others. Zach describes a false positive feeling during the moments when his work life goes well and things do not turn out as badly as he anticipates.

> To be honest, the meetings actually weren't that bad. Everything wasn't as bad as I would anticipate. And then maybe for like five minutes I would be like, 'Okay, I could do this.' And then I would eventually get . . . the headache and the depression, and just be like, 'I don't want to do this.'

Zoe's experience of inauthenticity is always anticipating when the other shoe will drop, even when things are good and she receive praise or positive feedback.

> And it's become when things are good, and I get a pat on the back, I don't believe it. You know: 'Oh yeah that's fine now, but 30 minutes from now, what's going to happen?' I really do feel that way.

For the worker forced into social isolation, the work-place becomes the type of shadow-world that George Orwell (1949/1977) describes in the novel, *1984*. It is a world in which there is "no connection with anything real . . . not even the kind of connection that is contained in a direct lie" (p. 40). Following the Revolution and the advent of the Party rule, character Winston Smith opines: "Everything faded into mist. The past was

erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became the truth" (p. 75). Living other-imposed social isolation, the target experiences an inability to draw clear distinctions between truth and lie. It is an existence that fosters mistrust. As mistrust builds, the socially isolated worker begins to keep secrets and contribute to the blurring of truth and lie. Zoe shares that she began to create documents on a client's private system so that her supervisor cannot access them.

> It's gotten to where, I write things on the classified system, so that I don't have to go through this. It's not that I don't want people to review my work and submit things, but, one, it's not improved, and, two, all I do is get criticized for it. I don't really get help. So it's making me hide my work and, you know, I don't want to do that.

Zach talks about withholding the real reason for deciding to leave his organization. His reason for leaving becomes a lie over which he struggles to maintain control.

> So the stress [for me was that] I was very relieved that I quit. And people kept asking me about it, and I had to keep this lie up and it was crazy. Like the lie got so big that I got nervous that I was going to tell people the wrong stuff.

The secrets of these socially isolated workers seem to be the type that philosopher Peter Steeves (2006), harkening back to Kant, distinguishes as "reserve" or "personal secrets" (p. 56). In reserving personal secrets, the socially isolated worker protects vulnerabilities. In their experiences of other-imposed social isolation, workers' vulnerabilities are not, as Steeves defines them, "personal faults" or "shortcomings" (p. 56), but closer to the Latin origin *vulnus*, meaning "wound."[27] Reflecting a fractured sense-of-self, the socially isolated worker uses secrets to keep back or withhold the vulnerable self, protecting it from further emotional wounding.

Living with secrets, the individual becomes inauthentic, not necessarily due to the secrets themselves, but as evidenced by the discomfort of having to resort to secrets in

order to protect the self. Living with secrets, the socially isolated worker assumes a sort of shadow self that moves about the business of daily tasks – just not as a true, authentic self. Author Michael Cunningham (1998) illustrates such a shadow self in describing Virginia Wolf's attempt to keep secret the return of her depressive illness. As she returns home from a long walk, Virginia pauses on the threshold to step into character:

> She has learned over the years that sanity involves a certain measure of impersonation, not simply for the benefit of husband and servants but for the sake, first and foremost, of one's own convictions. . . . Virginia walks through the door. She feels fully in command of the character who is Virginia Woolf, and as that character she removes her cloak, hangs it up, and goes downstairs to the kitchen to speak to Nelly about lunch (pp. 83, 84).

Isolation-of-Being manifests as the type of impersonation described by socially isolated workers – workers who are no longer themselves and, as such, assume shadow selves. They step into character in order to go through the motions of their everyday work lives, all the while shielding and protecting their authentic selves through the secrets that they keep and the stories that they weave.

Inauthentic and Authentic Selves

Moran (2000) summarizes Heidegger's notion of authentic moments as "those in which we are most at home with ourselves, at one with ourselves" (p. 240). Workers describe their experiences of other-imposed social isolation as inauthentic moments during which you do not even recognize your day-to-day self. Zach compares his true, happy, easy-going self with his isolated, depressed, scared self. Zoe observes:

> You know a big chunk of [my experience] has been having…to have discussions with myself saying, 'Hey, wait a minute. You came here as a Chief Learning Officer from a major government organization. You are not the flake off that you are being made out to be.'

A third colleague Chris[28] characterizes her loss of authentic self as becoming more cynical. no longer trusting her gut response to guide work situations. Each of these

comparisons illustrates uncomfortable, painful awareness of inauthentic self. Each account bears witness to a burgeoning consciousness of how other-imposed social isolation begets inauthentic self. These workers begin to view themselves through a cubist lens in which true, authentic self, while perhaps present in whole, is reflected to self and others in distorted and fragmented parts.

Yet, in each of these work-place experiences, the worker remains aware of authentic self. True self does not disappear, nor does the worker's connection with true self. So what is happening? Prior to experiencing other-imposed social isolation, workers seem to go about their day-to-day work lives in what Heidegger would term an *inauthentic* mode. It is the way most of us live our daily lives most of the time – it is a state of "everydayness" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 223) in which we are aware of others and events "but don't necessarily absorb [them] into our own selves or experience [them] personally" (Moran, 2000, p. 240). In fact, Heidegger sees it as impossible for us to maintain a perpetual authenticity. Being inauthentic simply means we are experiencing the world as others do. We are "proximally and for the most part alongside the 'world'" (Heidegger, p. 220). We are without a sense of "ownness" or "ownership" (Moran, p. 239) because we succumb to a "'fallenness' into the 'world' [which] means an absorption in Being-with-one-another'" (Heidegger, p. 220).

Other-imposed social isolation forces a revitalized awareness of self. Moran (2000) describes this as "moments…which bring our personal concerns into sharp relief; so a proper account of our relation to Being must be able to identify and exhibit the essential structures of both our inauthentic and our authentic modes of being" (p. 239). What these workers experience is an awakening that returns them to authentic self: a

switch from autopilot to attention. This awakening catalyzes what Heidegger (1927/1962) describes as a "kind of potential-to-be whole" (p. 348) in which humans demonstrate an "urge to get their lives together, to collect themselves, to gather themselves into wholeness" (Moran, 2000, p. 240). In these moments of awareness, the individual reestablishes "ownership" of self based on personal authority and begins to reject the authorities of others who are forcing disingenuous self. In this way, the experience of other-imposed social isolation leads workers through a journey of *feeling inauthentic* only to reach a state where they discover themselves *Being* more *authentic*. It is a journey to becoming more real.

A Yearning to Be Real

To be socially isolated in the work-place through the actions of others is to question reality. What is real? What is imagined? What is actually happening? What is only in my head? This questioning of one's reality, one's very "Being-in-the-world," (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 33) is Heideggerian *Dasein*, which has a fundamental structure of "care" (p. 237) that seems at odds with acts and experiences of other-imposed social isolation. In questioning his reality-of-Being, Zach admits that much of his experience could be in his head and then immediately reflects: "It doesn't matter. Whatever is in your head is your reality." Zoe recalls struggling with her authenticity and using self-talk to get the right view of reality. I suspect their questioning also stems from a fear that their real selves will forever disappear, as was the experience of Albert Camus's (1942/1988) stranger: "When I was first imprisoned, the hardest thing was that my thoughts were still those of a free man….But that lasted only a few months. Afterwards my only thoughts were those of a prisoner" (pp. 76-77). Less voiced by these targeted workers is the fear

that they will begin to accept the versions of self that forced social isolation depicts – an acceptance that subsumes real selves through an other-imposed reality.

In the voices and spirits, and, yes, in the fears, of those living in other-imposed social isolation, I hear not only a grappling with reality, but also a yearning for something more real. Perhaps it is a yearning for the type of realness described in Margery Williams' (1985) tale of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. The Rabbit, involuntarily socially isolated from the other toys, struggles to understand who he is and how he fits into the world of the nursery. Contemplating what it means to be real, he seeks the sage counsel of the Skin Horse who has lived in the nursery many years. The Rabbit questions whether being real means "having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle" (n.p.), to which the Skin Horse replies that being real is not how you are made but something that happens over time as you are well loved. The two engage in the following exchange, initiated by the Rabbit:

> "Does it hurt?"
>
> "Sometimes." For he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."
>
> "Does it happen all at once, like being wound up, or bit by bit?"
>
> "It doesn't happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or who have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. (n.p.)

As the Skin Horse describes it, being Real is a magical *becoming* but one that comes admittedly at a cost. It is a cost that saddens the Rabbit who wishes the magic of becoming is not so uncomfortable and that it does not require such an aged shabbiness.

What does the experience of other-imposed social isolation cost its targets? In this chapter, I suggest the costs include confused self-understanding, development of secret and shadow selves, and loss of authentic self. Heidegger's lens of inauthentic Being suggests that the experience of forced social isolation creates a fissure in daily life and that such a fissure is necessary to remembering and reconnecting to true, authentic self. Critchley (2005) proposes that "the real world in which we move and have our being" is one that both "fascinates and benumbs us" (p. 28). Further, through a phenomenological approach, we are able to "elicit the sense or significance of our practical involvement with the world" in order to gain "a more *phenomenological* sense of the real" (p. 28). In our natural struggles to balance authentic and inauthentic Being, we may indeed experience fissures that come at certain costs and serve to bring our struggles into sharp relief. The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation represents such a fissure. While coming at a cost, this experience may also prove a path to becoming more real, a state-of-being where inauthentic and authentic selves are reconciled. As Critchley notes, we *become* through phenomenological sense-making. Our paths to becoming do not venture into other worlds but remain steadfastly in place within this same world that is always real, albeit one that may alternately fascinate and benumb us.

The Betrayal of Other-Imposed Social Isolation

> It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul; if you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy. (Oriah Mountain Dreamer, 1999, p. 1)

Oriah Mountain Dreamer (1999) penned "The Invitation" following an evening of banal social conversation with fellow party-goers. The poem is an expression of an ache-filled longing to connect fully and meaningfully with others. It is an invitation to the

reader to live an intimate life – with the world, with oneself, and with others. It is an intimacy for which the only true evaluation will be: "Did I love well?" (p. 12). She cautions that feeling stirred by the invitation is not at all the same as "actually making the journey" (p. 5). The journey is not easy; nor is it easier than other, less intimate journeys. It is, however, a journey of difference, as made familiar by Robert Frost's (1920/1979b) poem, "The Road Not Taken."

> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> Somewhere ages and ages hence:
> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
> I took the one less traveled by,
> And that has made all the difference. (p. 105, lines 16-20)

Central to Oriah Mountain Dreamer's invitation is the tension of betrayal. In her expanded work that explores the poem stanza by stanza, she invites us to ask ourselves if we can make the hard choices: those that may require us to break agreements with others in order to be true to ourselves. What does it mean to betray? What is the experience of betraying others in order to remain true to self?

The English and French roots of betrayal suggest deceit and deception.[29] To deceive is to conceal or mislead intentionally. However, the original Latin root of betrayal is *tradere*, meaning to "hand over" or "to give across" (see Endnote 27). This earliest meaning yields a less common use of betrayal: "to reveal unintentionally" or "to show something [below] the surface."[30] This seeming contradiction between concealing and revealing is at the heart of the tension that Oriah Mountain Dreamer (1999) invites us to explore. Living in the tension of betrayal requires us to be both faith-less and trust-worthy. When we betray another in order to remain true to self, the tension rests in our ability to distinguish between the two. Are we being faith-less, failing to keep a promise

or an allegiance? Or are we being trust-worthy, deserving of our own confidence? Unquestionably, it is an uncomfortable choice, one we may experience as a "wounding [of] ourselves even as we wound another" (Oriah Mountain Dreamer, 1999, p. 60).

This difficult and uncomfortable choice is an omnipresent tension that saturates the daily sense-making of the socially isolated worker. Living in other-imposed social isolation, what is the path to faith-less-ness? What promises will I need to break? How do I demonstrate trust-worthi-ness while breaking allegiances to others? What additional wounds will I incur in order to be true to self? Betrayal is a tension between reneged promises and truthfulness-of-Being. It is also a journey of reconciled tension between beginnings and endings.

Broken Covenants

Beginnings are often filled with joy and awe, hope and promise. Consider the birth of a child, the first day of school, a first kiss, and a commitment ceremony. Beginnings mark important and celebrated milestones in our lives. Novelist Stephanie Kallos (2004) describes beginnings as having a "calm, weightless feeling" (p. 71) without encumbrance, impediment, or burden. What is betrayed and broken when lived experience fails to realize such promising expectations? My colleagues who discuss their experiences of involuntary work-place social isolation share that their brightly anticipated beginnings are soon overshadowed by behaviors that surprise and confuse them.

The work-place literature acknowledges a psychological contract between the employee and the organization. This contract is a set of beliefs, shaped by [the worker's] experience in the organization" (Ho, Rousseau, & Levesque, 2006, p. 460) and representing mutual obligations between the employee and the organization. Rousseau (1998) maintains the psychological contract is foundational to the employee-organization

relationship and distinct from legal contracts. Morrison and Robinson (1997) indicate that a breach or violation of the psychological contract contributes to an employee's distrust and influences the employee's intent to remain in the organization. The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place violates an employee's psychological contract. It breaks the promise of hope-filled beginning. Etymologically, beginnings are meant to open up.[31] The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation is, however, a *closing off* from others and a *shutting down* of opportunities. In what ways is the broken covenant of involuntary social isolation experienced by its targets? In what ways does it manifest, disappoint, and betray?

When social isolation is imposed by a trusted colleague, broken beyond repair is the covenant of a mentoring relationship. Rooted in the character who served as the trusted advisor of Telemachus in Homer's (trans. 1996) *Odyssey*, a mentor is a wise advisor,[32] a trusted counselor. Zach and Zoe talk candidly about their broken covenants. Socially isolated by their supervisors' actions, they lose the promise of mentoring relationships. As other-imposed social isolation escalates, they experience fear that permeates their work days.

> I think that it was the fear of getting yelled at by my boss….She would ream you out. She would just get mean, and she was mean, she was mean….She was awful; she really was an awful person….She would just . . . you know, just be terrible. (Zach)

> Fear, also. I never know, I hate to keep using the word 'yelled at,' but I never know when I'm going to get yelled at. . . . Her voice is raised at me, and she is really angry, and I'm trying to sort through the anger to find out what in the world is she talking about, and trying to think, "Okay, well how did we get here?" (Zoe)

The fear these colleagues describe is one Engel (2002) attributes to social isolation grounded in emotional abuse. Salakpi (2010) recognizes the dishonor and shame of other-

imposed social isolation and the loss of power that allows such "fear and anxiety [to] set in" (p. 169). A daily existence of dishonor, shame, and fear make it impossible to repair the covenant of trusted mentorship.

Living with fear numbs. It prevents us from Being-in-the-present. Novelist Mary Alice Monroe (2008) notes fear as a dark place that prevents us from "get[ting] from pain to well" (p. 232). Faced with broken covenants of trust and numbed by fear, socially isolated workers consider breaking their own covenants and leaving the organization. For many, the decision to leave proves another betrayal; it is a tension between being faith-less to the organization and being trust-worthy to self. Leaving under these circumstances is an uneasy ending that Sylvia Plath (1971/1998) puzzles in her novel, *The Bell Jar*:

> I had hoped, at my departure, I would feel sure and knowledgeable about everything that lay ahead. . . . Instead, all I could see were question marks. (p. 243)

This tension and uncertainty, and the unanswered questions they represent, may be the reason many abused workers prolong the decision to leave. Zach lingers for ten months during which he reveals every aspect of his personality he dislikes. As describe in Chapter One, I remain in my abusive work-place for twelve soul-wrenching, soul-searching months. Zoe stays for 18 months in an environment she deems a waste and crazy-making. Chris endures for seven years, living with continual lack of respect and her colleagues' unwillingness to acknowledge the value of any contribution she makes. The devastation of broken trust coupled with numbing fear prevents the socially isolated worker from anchoring in the present and, in turn, fuels the worker's decision to stay. The decision to remain-in-place, however necessary, is a cost to the targeted worker's spirit-of-Being.

Disempowered Spirit

In Lewis Carroll's (1865/2011) tale of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice contemplates joining the live chess game: "I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join – though of course I should LIKE to be Queen, best" (p. 80). Even young Alice recognizes the advantages of power. The queen is the most powerful piece in the game, able to move any number of squares vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.[33] Alternatively, the pawn is the weakest piece. To be a pawn is to be without power or control and at the mercy of others. In describing emotional abuse, Miller (1995) identifies the purpose of forced social isolation as control. Other-imposed social isolation is a means of creating dependency:

> [The individual] is forced into compliance, forbidden outside resources from which to gain support, and drained of inner resources from which to build strength. . . . Depriving them of social contact . . . deprives them of the power to resist. (p. 54)

Sylvia Plath (1971/1998) describes the complete absence of power as a profound emptiness and disengagement:

> Only I wasn't steering anything, not even myself.
>
> I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo. (pp. 2-3)

Forbidden outside resources and drained of inner resources, socially isolated workers are unable to steer or look beyond their current situations. They are disempowered.

What is the lived experience of the disempowered, targeted worker? Chris describes her other-imposed social isolation as playing a game where everyone knew the rules but her. She sees herself as a team of one, hopelessly in opposition to the other players, her colleagues, whose leader held all the power in their work game. She is rendered increasingly ineffectual as colleagues refuse to speak directly to her in meetings

and to provide her with essential reports. Her personal authority is obliterated when she is not allowed to send communications or attend meetings with key stakeholders.

As involuntary social isolation escalates, targeted removal of power becomes quite common. Zach talks about being singled out and feeling helpless to control anything. Zoe calls her situation hopeless and out of control. In the novel, *1984*, Orwell (1949/1977) observes the catastrophic relationship between power and suffering as an annihilation of Being. Characters O'Brian and Winston Smith engage in the following exchange, initiated by O'Brian:

> 'How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?'
>
> Winston thought. 'By making him suffer,' he said.
>
> 'Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them back together again in new shapes of your own choosing.' (p. 266)

Without control or autonomy in a work-place where everything seems out of control and where you live with daily pain and humiliation that tears you to pieces, the involuntarily socially isolated worker hits a wall that Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) claims is a "place where you find yourself in a puddle of tears in the middle of your kitchen floor, and the only words that come are 'I can't'" (p. 81). In isolating work-places, the disempowered are expendable. They do not contribute or grow. They are impotent and invisible. In their work-places, the disempowered become arrested beings.

Arrested Being

Other-imposed social isolation in the work-place halts the forward progress of one's work and, perhaps, one's career. It is an experience that immobilizes the socially isolated worker and that worker's spirit-of-Being. I ponder: What is the experience of

arrested Being? What is it like to be suspended in place? In this suspended state-of-Being, in what ways does the involuntarily socially isolated worker become a present absence, as well as an absent presence?

Duffy and Sperry (2007) describe work-place abuse targets as experiencing an invisibility that leaves them "in many ways, feeling dead, wanting to be dead" (p. 401). Theirs is a poignant portrayal of the socially isolated worker's absence-of-Being, a portrayal echoed by my colleagues. Romero[34] recognizes he is in the middle of things at work but still feels invisible and inferior: "I wasn't steeped in the history and dogma. When I look at it from the big picture, what was I?" Zoe sees herself as a non-person:

> I was not even being acknowledged as being a person, as being an entity. My co-worker noticed that my supervisor wouldn't even look at me [during our project meetings]. It was as if I wasn't in the room. All of her visual cues were with my co-worker. Afterwards, my co-worker commented: 'It's like you weren't even there. She totally ignored the fact that you were there.'

Romero and Zoe are present in their work-places. They are surrounded by others and the bustle of their offices. But it is as if they are present for a conversation for which theirs is the only muted voice. It is as if they are erased or scribbled from the snapshots of the work-place. Their experiences of other-imposed social isolation leave them arrested and invisible in a way author Ralph Ellison (1947/1995) describes in the prologue to his *Invisible Man*:

> I am an invisible man. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. (p. 3)

Involuntarily socially isolated workers are invisible simply because people refuse to see them. Invisible, they are arrested beings, suspended in place. Remaining-in-place, the targeted worker becomes a present absence.

Present Absence and Absent Presence

What does it mean to become a present absence? Cooper (2003) conceptualizes present absence as a "felt absence [that] conveys a demand to be present" (p. 159) and as something that is "present through [its] absence" (p. 160). Meyer (2003) uses metaphors of shadows, mirrors, and masks to conceptualize present absence: shadows are "sign[s] of presence in absence . . . represent[ing] that which is left behind or perpetually absent" (p. 522); mirrors "reflect that which [is present but] an individual cannot directly see" (p. 523); and masks are means of being present while "disguising our true identity" (p. 524). For the targeted worker choosing to remain in place, the absence that demands to be present is the authority and power expunged by other-imposed social isolation. As I note earlier in this chapter, socially isolated workers often become shadow selves. They are present not as full selves; rather they have, as novelist Rebecca Wells (2010) calls it, "grow[n] thin and disappeared" (p. 390). One cannot help but interpret these workers as masked reflections of their true selves.

Forced social isolation jettisons workers from positions of focus and prominence to the marginalized negative space. As seen in the images that follow (see Figure 2.4), the airplane is the positive space or subject of focus. The negative space is the "empty space around the subject" (Cass, 2009, n.p.).

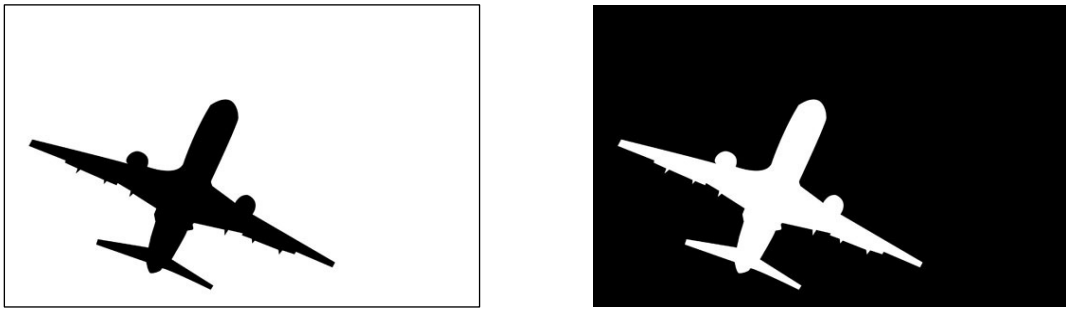

Figure 2.4. Negative space images. Adapted from "Negative Space," by J. Cass, 2009, *Layers*, n.p. [public domain]

Choosing to remain in place, the socially isolated worker becomes a present absence, existing in the negative, inconsequential space. The socially isolated worker remains in view but no longer the focus. The socially isolated worker becomes a neglected and depreciated part of the visible whole.

If other-imposed social isolation forces workers to become present absences, what, if anything, in these lived experiences becomes an absent presence? Hinds (2005) defines the absent presence as something that is "nominally present, but so vague and underdeveloped as almost to render [it] . . . [an] absence" (p. 15). In a collegiate commencement address, Nathaniel Chase Vinton (2001) encourages his fellow graduates to look beyond the obvious moment, beyond what is directly in front of them, to discover the latent and subtle meanings of the present experience. To illustrate, Vinton references the artistic principle of absent presence:

> The absent presence is the idea that hides just beyond the margins of the canvas, of the tale, or of the symphony. The absent presence is invisible, but it is nonetheless the very thing which organizes a chaos of words and images into something meaningful—into a story or a painting. (n.p.)

Vinton provides several examples of absent presences: the American slave trade in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*; the Cold War in the television series *Star Trek*; and napalm in the "crashing and searing rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" that Jimi Hendrix plays at Woodstock" (n.p.). While not all absent presences are as catastrophic as those Vinton references, his examples are powerfully illustrative of the principle.

In the abusive environment of other-impose social isolation, what exists out of sight and below the surface as an absent presence? To examine the possibilities of absent presence, I turn first to a study that examines the role of silence in criminal activity. Hallsworth and Young (2008) characterize an absent presence as one that is

"marginalized and silenced" in comparison to a "superior presence" (p. 133). An absent presence is the negative to a photograph: "There can be no photograph without the negative" (p. 132). Using a phenomenological method, the researchers "turn away from the sounds and the fury of criminal deeds and action, away from the adrenaline and excitement of the deviant act, to study instead the silence that surrounds such acts" (p. 132). I suspect it is silence that also is the specter of absent presence in the abusive work-place and in the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation.

In Chapter One, I note the disengaged complicity of my colleagues. Their silence contributes to my involuntary social isolation. My colleague Chris describes a meeting where her abusive colleague screams at her in front of everyone – "You are *not* going to question me; you are not my wife" – while those around them sit in stunned silence. Romero admits it is his own silence that keeps him socially isolated. Zach shares his overwhelming sense of silent solitude: "There was nobody; I had nobody; it was just me." Zoe can only speculate that her lived experience is difficult for her co-workers because it is not something that is ever discussed while she remains in her abusive work-place.

In literature and academic research, the specter of silence is commonly observed as an absent presence. Nowhere is it more latent, yet palpable, than in instances of abusive isolation. In her novel, *The Bone People*, Keri Hulme (1983) relays the role of acquiescent silence. As the character Kerewin undresses the boy Simon, who is tearful, sweating, and faint, and whom she initially suspects of having the flu, their collective silence is complicit in the physical abuse evidenced by the welts and gashes on the boy's back.

> And Kerewin didn't say a word.
>
> Except when he was naked, she took one of his hands, and turned him round carefully, supporting him so as not to make his head spin more, and then she tipped his face up towards her, and stared into his brown eyes, as though she were seeking a meaning to it there.
>
> "Why didn't you say anything?" There was pain in her voice, "Why did you keep quiet?" But he shook his head.
>
> And that was all she said. (p. 146)

Even co-workers inclined to speak out often find themselves silenced into submission, as did the four young pigs in Orwell's (1946/1977) *Animal Farm*: "[They attempted to timidly protest [when] Napoleon abolished the Meetings . . . but were promptly silenced by a tremendous growling from the dogs" (p. 63).

In the work-place abuse literature, the specter of silence is revealed in two ways. First, the silent treatment is noted as a type of work-place aggression intended to socially isolate workers (Keashly, 1997; Keashly, 2010; LeBlanc & Barling, 2004; Seagriff, 2010). Second, remaining silent about the abusive treatment is cited as an enabler to continued abuse (Koonin & Green, 2005) and as an indicator of unspoken tolerance for abusive behavior (Richman et al., 2004). As author J. M. Coetzee (2005) notes, "Silence can be full of meaning" (p. 225). As an absent presence silence can be deafening and full of meaning. I pause to ponder the revealed significance when targets of work-place abuse and other-imposed social isolation remain silent.

Folkman and Lazarus (1991) indicate avoidance as a common coping reaction to stressful situations. Djurkovic et al. (2005) find that avoidance reactions are more common among targets of work-place abuse than either seeking formal help or assertive reactions such as talking with or confronting the abusive actor. In their study, targets

avoid – or remain silent – about the abuse in order to mitigate risks to their professional status (e.g., undermining work, public humiliation, intimidation), as well as risks of isolation (e.g., withholding information, exclusion), of verbal taunts (e.g., undermining personal integrity, teasing), of destabilization (e.g., secretly shifting goals, removal of responsibility), and of violence (e.g., physically, to property). Duffy and Sperry (2007) acknowledge that targets "may not know how to name what has happened" (p. 398) and remain further silenced because they "have constructed the meaning of the experience as that of shameful personal failure" (p. 399). Keashly (2001) highlights that the often subtle and ambiguous nature of abusive actions leaves the target without a language to describe the experience: "unless you live it, you don't understand it" (p. 240).

When living the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, attending to the present moment can be an unimaginable choice. The targeted worker may experience the type of suffocation that Sylvia Plath (1971/1998) describes: "I would be sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my own sour air. . . . The air of the bell jar wadded round me and I couldn't stir" (pp. 185-186). The targeted worker may use silence to buffer the present situation, avoiding, at least temporarily, "aspects of reality we do not want to accept, that we cannot avoid being with if we are present" (Oriah Mountain Dreamer, 2003, p. 94). The worker may also fear becoming engulfed by the experience. Roth (2010) claims that both "awareness (the ability to know what you are feeling) and presence (the ability to inhabit a feeling while sensing that which is bigger than the feeling)" are necessary "to be with what you believe will destroy you without being destroyed" (p. 92). Living in other-imposed social isolation, targeted workers, having become invisible and marginalized present absences in the work-place, may rely

on the absent presence of silence as a means of coping and surviving what they fear and believe may well destroy them.

The Embodiment of Other-Imposed Social Isolation

Skin is a map. Tess is thinking, *bodies remember*. (McMahon, 2009, p. 350)

Returning briefly to my own experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I hear the University technician's comments and experience an immediate and exhaustive corporeal unnerving. The technician's innocent comment and intended praise unwittingly questions and usurps my supervisor's leadership and, I am certain, foretells my professional demise. In hearing the technician's comment, my mind races but my body ceases its normal functioning. I am immobilized, forcing breath to mutter a response when only seconds earlier I am nimbly moving about the room and easily chatting.

Such corporeal unnerving seems nonsensical. Yet it is one that is shared by others who experience other-imposed work-place social isolation. Feeling physically deflated, Chris describes her inability to control her voice when describing interactions with her abusive colleagues. In one instance, she abruptly leaves her colleague's office and walks around in circles for a while, sobbing, sobbing, and sobbing. Romero interprets his embodied experience as misdirected energy:

> It was a body full of stress that manifested itself in exhaustion. I was not anywhere near in flow. If I was really in my flow, I would create energy. Whereas, not being in my zone, it was energy that was an energy consumption hog.

Zach recalls always looking like death and feeling the exhausting impact of a never-ending headache. What happened to my colleagues and me? How is it that our somatic reactions seem so merciless?

Somatic Suffering and Attunement

Rosemary Nott (2011) discusses unnerved deprivation as suffering: "plung[ing] into that ever truly sensitive part of myself, in the very heart of the body, [where] there then seems to be nowhere to go except to collapse" (p. 85). Nott's description captures my moment of unnerving: an unexpected yet unmistakable plunge, a collapse of movement. Stilled and silenced, I unwittingly activate a corporeal, protective shield. From what am I protecting myself? What danger or threat do I sense? How is it that my mind is in *fight* mode, continuing without interruption, even accelerating, as it moves on the offensive, while my body is in *flight*, defensively shutting down and collapsing?

Nott (2011) suggests that my cerebral reaction is nothing more than a "string of panicky chatter" (p. 85) that proves useless in alleviating my suffering. My body attends the situation much differently, perhaps more devotedly. O'Donohue (2008e) might suggest that my body attunes below the surface of these seemingly innocuous comments: "To the deeper silence / Where sound is honed / To bring distance home" (p. 40). Or perhaps it is an inner eye that "See[s] through the surfaces / And glean[s] the real presence / Of everything that meets you" (p. 40). Whatever I might name it, I intuitively recognize that I am under attack, and my somatic reaction is one of self-preservation, a response that O'Donohue (2008a) claims to be heart:

> Facing outward, the senses are in ever new conversation with whatever surrounds us. Facing possibility, the mind is in relentless thought-flow. Concealed within the dark, the heart is concerned with who we are. It is ever attentive to how we feel; it senses and feels where the care, the joy, the fear, and the tenderness reside. (p. 101)

Anchored within my mind's relentless thought-flow is a heart concerned with and sensitive to my Being, a heart that sounds an alarm that something is shifting, perhaps irrevocably altering, in my work-place.

Embodied Place

How can I react so deeply to the possibility of a shifting, altering work-place? Casey (1993/2009) affirms that the body is "the continuing source of . . . orientated implacement in the life-world" (p. 105). Place holds such a priority in our life-world that it is felt first and foremost in the body: "For we feel the presence of places by and in our bodies even more than we see or think or recollect them" (p. 313). Levin (1985) names this the "bodily felt sense" (p. 53). In his breaking-with-the-metaphysical view of thinking, there is no need to draw a line between my cognitive chatter and somatic stillness. My reaction is holistic, a thinking *through* and *with* my body.

> We must let go, finally, of our metaphysical conception of 'thinking.' We must simply *give* our thought *to* the body. We must take our thinking 'down' into the body. We must learn to think *through* the body. We must learn to think *with* the body. Thinking is not a question of 'bracketing' the body (Husserl's *epoche*), but a question of integrating awareness, living well-focused 'in the body.' For once, we should *listen in silence* to our bodily felt experience. Thinking needs to learn by feeling, by just *being with* our bodily being. (Levin, p. 61)

My body-place connection is the primordial human experience:

> The hero of the day has been the lived body as the principal locatory agent of implacement. While Kant situated the a priori of human experience squarely in the mind, I have attempted to locate it resolutely in the body, especially when place is on the agenda – and place is always on the agenda at the first level of human experience. (Casey, p. 110)

But why is threat to place so important, so personal? What does it truly represent? Perhaps it is a sensed shift in what Casey (1993/2009) deems the "spirit of place" (p. 314). Place-spirit reflects not only the place itself but those who inhabit the place. Threat to place is also a threat to self and Being. Being-in-place is inextricably enmeshed with place-of-Being. As Casey asserts, "Where we are has a great deal to do with who and what we are" (p. 307). Not only are we a reflection of place, but place indelibly defines us: "Our innermost sense of personal identity (and not only our overt, public character)

deeply reflects our implacement" (p. 307). With place and self so intertwined, it is perhaps less surprising that "Threats to . . .implacement are also threats to our entire sense of well-being" (p. 307). The campus technician's well-intentioned praise triggers a sensed danger that threatens my spirit-of-place and, in turn, my identity, my sense of self, and my existential *potential*-for-Being, if not Being itself.

Timeless Siege

Targeted workers' sensual reactions to other-imposed social isolation concede the experience as a relentless siege on spirit-of-Being. Their lived experiences represent persistent attacks and systematic assaults. In her earliest research, Keashly (2001) identifies similar characteristics for emotionally abusive behavior in the work-place:

1. They are of a repeated nature or part of a pattern of behaviors;
2. They are unwelcome and unsolicited by the target;
3. They violate a standard of appropriate conduct toward others;
4. They result in harm or injury to the target;
5. The actor intended to harm the target or . . . the actor could have controlled the behavior itself; and
6. The actor is in a more powerful position relative to the target. (p. 236)

Across time and study, researchers recognize these same siege-like characteristics (Coyne et al., 2004; Djurkovic et al., 2005; Gates, 2004; Jennifer et al., 2003; Keashly, 1997; Keashly, 2010; Koonin & Green, 2005; Magnuson & Norem, 2009; Sangganjanavanich, 2010; Seagriff, 2010). Lived experience represents "repeated and persistent attempts . . . to torment [and] wear down" (Davenport et al., 1999, p. 22) its targets. Interviewed workers acknowledge the systematic, ongoing nature of an abusive siege. Marnie, the target of work-place abuse and social isolation, relays the "constant putdown" she endures while knowing her manager is ever "coming at [her] again" (in Keashly, 2001, p. 246). Don shares that his supervisor is "constantly there watching" (in Keashly, p. 246), and Greta describes being subjected to "continual undermining" by a coworker (p. 247).

If a siege-like existence is typical of work-place abuse, I wonder if the experience of other-imposed social isolation, only one type of emotional abuse, can also be characterized as a state-of-siege. If so, in what ways does existing in such a state erode the target's spirit-of-Being?

Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (n.d.) portrays the state of siege as a solitary, timeless waiting period:

> The siege is a waiting period
> Waiting on the tilted ladder in the middle of the storm.
>
> Alone, we are alone as far down as the sediment
>
> In the state of siege, time becomes space
> Transfixed in its eternity
> In the state of siege, space becomes time
> That has missed its yesterday and its tomorrow. (n.p., lines 42-44, 91-94)

My colleague Zoe acknowledges her experience of other-imposed social isolation as a period of simply waiting until she can leave the organization – "Really, it does sort of come down to . . . fight or flight, and I've taken the flight approach on this one" – all the while barraged by a storm of never-ending put-downs and last-minute requests that fuel her self-doubt. Chris recognizes her own deep alone-ness: "[I] knew that even people who supported me would not or were not able to speak out and align themselves with me because the person who was leading the isolating behavior was too powerful." She explains this existential solitude as one that erodes her self-confidence and seemingly erases her work-place existence.

Zach echoes Darwish's (n.d.) "space becomes time" (n.p., line 93) characterization, sharing that he is unable to focus beyond the moments of his personal state of siege. For him, during this period, there are no yesterdays or tomorrows, only the

eternal state of other-imposed social isolation, which leaves him with a distinctly warped view of time:

> Everything was based on when I would have to go had to back to work. By 7:15 [Friday night] I'd be thinking, 'Oh, I have to back Monday and be back in that situation.' That's how my whole existence was. I hated it. [During the week] I would stay up as late as possible because I knew as soon as I fell asleep I would wake up and have to go back to work.

The sense of besieged entrapment and space-time confusion prove difficult to communicate to others. It is a struggle captured quite poignantly in the film, *Girl, Interrupted* (Wick, Ryder, & Mangold, 1999). Upon arriving at the Claymoore Hospital, where she has voluntarily admitted herself following an aspirin overdose, character Susanna Kaysen, played by actress Winona Ryder, engages in the following conversation with the intake counselor, who is attempting to understand the circumstances that prompted Kaysen's suicide attempt:

> (Counselor) I see.
>
> No you don't.
>
> Well, indulge me then. Explain it to me.
>
> Explain what? Explain to the doctor that the laws of physics can be suspended. That what goes up may not come down. Explain that time can move backwards and forwards and now to then and back again and you can't control it. (n.p.)

Kaysen, while keenly aware of her experience, is unable to find the language to describe the illogical, physics-defying nature of that experience to someone she is certain has not shared the experience. Initially, expecting a short, courtesy stay at the hospital, Kaysen's *interruption* lasts for well over a year. While her hospital term begins as a tumultuous, battle-ridden state of siege, she eventually learns to sit with the stillness of her circumstances in order to truly understand, interpret, and heal.

Sitting with Stillness

What does sitting with stillness look like? Does the experience differ when one *sits with* rather than *succumbs to* stillness? What allows one to journey and locate a healing stillness and then use it to reframe personal circumstance? In the novel, *1984*, Orwell's (1949/1977) protagonist Winston Smith recalls his mother's catatonic reaction to his father's disappearance at the hands of the Oceania State Party:

> When his father disappeared, his mother did not show any surprise or any violent grief, but a sudden change came over her. She seemed to have become completely spiritless. It was evident even to Winston that she was waiting for something that she knew must happen. She did everything that was needed - cooked, washed, mended, made the bed, swept the floor, dusted the mantelpiece - always very slowly and with a curious lack of superfluous motion, like an artist's lay-figure moving of its own accord. Her large shapely body seemed to relapse naturally into stillness. (p. 161)

Winston's mother succumbs to a besieged stillness in which she waits for the inevitable – her own disappearance and, perhaps before that, the disappearances of other loved ones. Hers is a trancelike existence, without hope or promise, displaying only a robotic, reticent abdication of will. Elsewhere in the novel, Orwell describes this state as "the treachery of the human body which always freezes into inertia at exactly the moment when a special effort is needed" (p. 102).

Author J. M. Coetzee (2005) contemplates this same grief-stricken near-inertia in his novel, *Slow Man*. Following a bicycle accident which results in the amputation of a leg, character Paul Rayment gloomily ruminates: "May a life become so circumscribed that it is no longer worth living" (p. 25)? He immediately recognizes that he is unable to answer such a Socratic question, as he is engulfed in gloominess "at a level far below the play and flicker of the intellect" and is "all too ready to embrace darkness, stillness, extinction" (p. 26). Grief-stricken near-inertia is a "quiet and extinguished" existence that

Sylvia Plath (1971/1998) observes in the patients who receive shock treatment while others "breakfast in [their] rooms" (p. 205). Interestingly, sitting with stillness may *appear* to others very differently than it *feels* to the one who suffers. A visible stillness may belie the emotions that swirl just beneath the surface, as described by Jillian Becker (2002) in her personal account of learning of the suicide of her friend, Sylvia Plath: "I felt many emotions – so many chased each other that oddly enough it was very like feeling none at all" (p. 51).

Perhaps, when one endures a besieged state, the stillness that originates in aggrieved suffering quietly metamorphoses into what Roy Ashwell (2011) terms an "emptying out" that is akin to "vastation" (p. 59), a state of spiritual renewal or purification.[35] Ashwell avers that in this state one is able to "make room for what may enter now" (p. 59). Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) claims that what enters is the "experience of the sacred" (p. 160), invited and made possible only when we achieve "real intimacy [that] depends on our ability to find those silences that are shared openings" (p. 163). Rilke (trans. 2000) speaks of this intimacy as an evolvement achieved only through "your innermost feelings in your quietest hour" (p. 13). Beset by an incessant siege upon one's sense of self, how does the involuntarily socially isolated worker achieve the intimacy and evolvement necessary to heal? How does the abused target learn to *sit with* rather than *resist* or *surrender to* stillness?

Geneen Roth (2010) portrays the tension between the two types of stillness as "want[ing] to come home to ourselves . . . to know wonder and delight and passion . . . [when] instead we've given up on ourselves, we've vacated our longings, we've left possibility behind" and are left only with "an emptiness we can't name" (pp. 174-175).

Rilke (trans. 2000) provides further insights into the necessary process that transforms suffering from an inert stillness to an attentive hush.

> The quieter and more patient, the more open we are when we are sad, the more resolutely does that something new enter into us, the deeper it is absorbed in us, the more certain we are to secure it, and the more certain it is to become our personal identity. (p. 75)

Stabilizing, healing stillness is possible when one opens to replacing the state of siege with a state of refuge. Its roots in the Latin *refugium*, refuge is a "place to flee back to."[36] Achieving a healing stillness requires an inner refuge; it requires fleeing back to self. Targeted workers who live the experience of other-imposed social isolation describe this as letting go (Chris) and the redirection of energy (Romero). Zach remembers his turning point as an epiphany he experiences at a 98-year-old relative's funeral: "I'm thinking to myself that it's not that life is too short to be miserable. It's that life can be too long to be miserable. And I can't do this anymore." Seeking inner refuge allows the targeted worker to unbind from the abusive experience and open to a return to true and trusted self.

The Language of Other-Imposed Social Isolation

> Writing or talking about an experience that is beyond thought and so beyond words can be problematic. . . . So I content myself with using phrases that pointed toward the taste and touch and feel of the direct experience . . . , pointing toward that which can be experienced but can never be captured with concepts or words. (Oriah Mountain Dreamer, 2003, p. 40)

In Chapter One, I explore the importance and difficulty of naming my phenomenon of interest. I also share the tension I feel between naming and storytelling. I assert naming as a means of bringing forward and giving voice to an experience. I suggest storytelling as a path toward genuine connection with the experience. As I draw near to closing Chapter Two, I return to language as a rubric that points toward the taste, touch, and feel of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-

place. I bring forward literary voices and invite the voices of colleagues who have shared their experiences. I wonder if these combined voices, their language, will be enough to give life to this experience. The words of Martha Graham (1991) comfort me. Before departing on a State Department tour, she is asked if she is concerned that her international audiences might fail to understand her dances. She replies: "I am not interested whether they understand or not. I am only interested if they feel it" (p. 200). Graham further comments that her dance is intended to reveal the subject in such a way as to affect "the quickening of people's sensitivity, the opening of doors that have not been open before" (p. 201). Hers are lofty but worthy aspirations. May the language of invited voices quicken sensitivities and open new doors for those who gather to listen to the stories of the lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Disoriented Suffering

Alexander G. K. Salakpi (2010) explores other-imposed social isolation through an examination of the biblical passage Job 19:13-22. Salakpi characterizes Job's suffering as a "progressive alienation from his social network, his friends, and even his closest family leading to [Job's] total social breakdown despite his struggle for reintegration into society (p. 1). Salakpi translates and dissects the ten verses to reveal the depth of Job's suffering brought about by other-imposed social isolation. Job's experience includes being *alienated* from his brothers, *estranged* from his friends, *forsaken* by his kinsmen, and *scorned* by his own children. Salakpi's language richly portrays the experience of other-imposed social isolation. Alienation and estrangement highlight the existential separation Job experiences from family and friends. They represents home-less-ness and lack of belonging and portrays being an outsider and out-of-place, themes I explore in greater depth in Chapter One.

More devastating than this, I suspect, is Job's experience of being forsaken and scorned, for this represents contemptuous, disdainful abandonment. My colleague Chris acknowledges being forsaken in her metaphorical description of playing a game where she is unable to identify who among her co-workers is the opposing team, much less those who ally with the opposing players. Zoe describes the scornful tone of her supervisor's voice when she rejects a document that Zoe prepares, states she will complete it herself, and scoffs, "That's all we need from *you.*" Zach remarks on his invalidating lack of a support system to counter his forced isolation.

The result of such absolute rejection is, in Salakpi's (2010) words, a "social disorientation" (n.p), a derivative phenomenon that involuntarily socially isolated workers recall all too well. Zach laments the loss of his fun personality and his inability to develop relationships with co-workers. Chris talks of doubting herself and losing perspective as her experience causes her to question her professional purpose in life. She also marvels that her disorientation continues into her new work-place, where she reacts emotionally to her new supervisor in ways reminiscent of past abuse, in ways that keep her up at night. Zoe tries to put her abusive work-place experience behind her but admits that her socially isolating experiences leaves her ever looking over her shoulder. For each of my socially isolated colleagues, the initial rejection by an abusive colleague compounds, magnifies, and exponentiates as other-imposed social isolation spreads at the hands of other colleagues and spills into subsequent work-places.

Power Plays

Judgments of value and worth pepper George Orwell's (1946/1977) cautionary political tale, *Animal Farm*, but none so forcefully as the declaration, "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others" (p. 134). Orwell deftly pokes and prods at

the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation, exposing callous beliefs about societal stature and merit – from Mr. Jones' *expulsion* from Manor Farm to Snowball's harrowingly narrow *escape* from the attacking dogs; from Boxer's tragic *blackballing* that follows his open questioning of the pigs' propaganda to the *exclusion* of all animals, save the pigs, in attending and participating in the closed and private special committee meetings. Orwell's language aptly portrays the pigs' abusive, power-centric behaviors, while equally forcing the reader's attention on the involuntary social isolation that renders the other animals less than equal.

While the work-place literature is divided about the actor's intention of abuse, and thus the intent to demonstrate power and control (Magnuson & Norem, 2009), it is wholly united in recognizing the target's perception of the actor's power and control. Seagriff (2010) defines work-place bullying as "repeated mistreatment . . . that is motivated by the desire to control the Target [*sic*]" (p. 577). Coyne et al. (2004) see work-place bullying as a "repeated and enduring act which involves an imbalance of power between the victim and the perpetrator" (p. 302). Lutgen-Sandvik (2006) concedes that targets of work-place bullying "perceive [these behaviors] as efforts to harm, control or drive them from the workplace" (p. 408). Coloroso (2006) concludes that regardless of intent, work-place bullying "will always include . . . [an] imbalance of power" (p. 14).

Abusive work-place power and control is experienced as denial of information, resources or opportunities; flaunting status or authority; and subjection to extreme workloads (Djurkovic et al., 2005; Jennifer et al., 2003; Keashly, 1997; Keashly, 2010; Koonin & Green, 2005; Korkmaz & Cemaloğlu, 2010; Rayner, 1997; Stebbing et al., 2004). Researchers' characterizations include game-playing, pulling rank (Keashly,

2001), and setting up the target to fail (Keashly, 2001; Rayner, 1997). Power and control language and imagery permeate targeted workers' stories of their lived experiences. Max describes how his supervisor manipulates another co-worker by "getting on her case" just to "see what she was made of" (in Keashly, 2001, p. 244). Marnie remembers a supervisor who threatens: "It's a done deal. Don't question me. I made the decision. I'm the boss" (in Keashly, p. 244). Constantly reminded that her colleagues are the experts, my colleague Chris reports who co-workers will not speak to her in meetings or provide her with needed reports. She describes her experience of other-imposed social isolation as "the most damaging thing you can do" to another person. Her experience erodes her self-confidence and leaves her feeling hardened and betrayed. Zach remembers checking emails "a thousand times" to make sure there are no errors that will make his supervisor look bad. He confesses he realizes from the first day of work that he has been hired as his supervisor's "person," a role that disempowers him and alienates him from all others in the organization. Zoe captures her lived experience with the phrases "what a waste" and "crazy making." She admits she is an undervalued employee who cannot access or leverage corporate resources to do her job; she is trapped in a hopeless situation in which nothing is as it should be and without the resources to change it in any meaningful way. The cruel and relentless assault of abusive colleagues' power plays leaves involuntarily socially isolated workers to bear the public humiliation of their diminished roles and desecrated worth.

Devastating Similes and Metaphors

To enrich the taste, touch, and feel of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I turn to the language of similes and metaphors. These figures of speech help to bridge the chasm between lived experience and other's sensibilities.

Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, and Alberts (2006) use simile and metaphor to provide "verbal images" that "engage emotions" and "better explicate the [associated] costs and feelings" (p. 150) of work-place aggression. These researchers turn to metaphor analysis as "a promising avenue for understanding the ways abused employees frame and make sense of the complex, confusing feelings associated with abuse at work" (p. 157). Targets of work-place abuse, who are in turn involuntarily socially isolated within the work-place, reveal their lived experiences as metaphorical games and battles in which abusive colleagues "make their own rules" and "play dirty" (p. 159). Targets report battle wounds of "character assassinat[ion]" (p. 160) and being ripped, broken, scarred, and eviscerated by their abusive experiences. My colleague Chris claims this same game-playing experience, where she is always on the opposing team and is simply clueless about how to neutralize her opponents' plays.

Research participants (Tracy et al., 2006) also deem the experience of abusive social isolation as a "waking nightmare" (p. 163) filled with "instability" and "crazy making" (p. 162). They explain their experiences as something real happening, such as restriction or removal of resources and exclusion from activities or communication, only to have it outrightly denied or downplayed as oversight or misunderstanding. Zoe uses the same phrase "crazy making" to describe how everything is out of control and hopeless in her socially isolating work-place. Romero shares he is terrified of engaging with others. Chris confesses a recurring nightmare she experiences during her stress-filled experience: she is running down a staircase that suddenly or abruptly ends leaving her stranded. Her living nightmare suggests the same lack of control or recourse for moving

forward, the same forced social isolation that leaves her without resources for support or direction.

Zach and others use lethal metaphors to describe their experiences of other-imposed social isolation. Some workers suggest the experience is an "incurable malignancy"; others discuss a "noxious substance" (Tracy et al., 2006, p. 165) they must expunge or ignore. Zach divulges his abusive lived experience as being caught in a perfect storm of slow-motion drowning: "[I was] becoming weaker and weaker; as the ten months went along, I was just losing oxygen and the will to live." Zach also shares his experience as one where everyone else moves forward with their lives while he stands inertly still.

Equally powerful are targets' descriptions of themselves as they endure other-imposed social isolation. They use dehumanizing descriptors – "piece of property," "slaves," and "chattel" (Tracy et al., 2006, pp. 167-168), as well as labels that describe their powerlessness and entrapment – "prisoner," "caged animal," "empty," and "suffocated" (p. 168). Zoe recognizes her experience as imprisonment within a gilded cage. Romero talks about feeling inferior, a worker who is not in the club others enjoy. Zach leads a zombie-like existence, taking Ambien to force sleep and then being so tired in the morning he sleeps aboard his commuter train until he arrives at work.

Targets' selected similes and metaphors expose the existential devastation of abusive, other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Their socially isolated existence is what poet Eleanor Ross Taylor (2009) labels a bare place:

> The self refuses to appear
> in this bare place.
>
> This room's so empty

> I doubt I'm standing here;
> there can't be room for me
> and total emptiness. (p. 83, lines 1-2, 16-19)

Taylor's poem, "Where Somebody Died," mirrors the experience of other-imposed social isolation. It is a near-death experience, an ontic threat that transforms work-place into bare place and engulfs the targeted worker in total emptiness until there is simply no room for true Being *and* that emptiness. This lived experience is an emotional and painful *becoming* that May Sarton (1993) describes in her poem, "Now I Become Myself":

> Now I become myself. It's taken
> Time, many years and places;
> I have been dissolved and shaken,
> Worn other people's faces (n.p., lines 1-4)

Sarton's journey of *becoming* is strikingly familiar to the involuntarily socially isolated worker who identifies with being dissolved and shaken and whose confused and masked identity becomes a wearing of another's face.

What is necessary to invite the voices of these targeted workers? What is necessary to listen to their stories and to hear their voices? ***What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?*** Across these first two chapters, in my turning to the phenomenon and in my existential investigation, I explore stillness as a means of connecting to lived experience. Rumi (1995) cautions that it is stillness rather than "repeating the question" that allows us to "cross over from confusion":

> The mystery does not get clearer by repeating the question,
> nor is bought with going to amazing places.
> Until you have kept your eyes
> and your wanting still for fifty years,
> you don't begin to cross over from confusion.

In Chapter Three, I explore hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology for making clearer the mystery of this phenomenon. In keeping still our eyes and wanting, we open

our ears and hearts to permit a deeper re-membering of those workers targeted and ravaged by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. You, too, are invited. Come with us, as, attentively, we cross over from confusion.

CHAPTER THREE:

GOING TO THE WINDOW AND SEEING OTHER-IMPOSED SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE WORK-PLACE: PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL GROUNDING

> I am no prophet, philosopher, or theologian.
> I am simply a man who has seen something and
> who goes to the window and points to what he sees. (Buber, in Kramer, 2003, p. iii)[37]

In my own experience of being socially isolated in the work-place, I see something. My colleagues who share experiences of being socially isolated in their work-places invite me to the window to see more. As together we point toward this phenomenon, I ask myself what it means to engage in phenomenological research. What does it mean to point phenomenologically to an experience and invite others to see? What is the experience of phenomenological engagement – whether person to person or person to text – that allows one to go to the window and point so that others may truly *see* and, by degree, *know* a phenomenon?

These questions flow as a stream of consciousness as I prepare to pen Chapter Three, a philosophical and methodological grounding to the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. I am struck by my gravitational affinity for using *engagement* to describe the phenomenology – both as a research process and as a process for experiencing a phenomenon. The earliest etymological root of engage is from the Old French *en gage* meaning to "make" (*en*) a "pledge" (*gage*)[38] to another. Two obsolete meanings speak to the phenomenological endeavor as an engagement. First, engagement is a risk taken to back a cause or purpose; second, it is a formal promise that commits and binds you to another.[39]

Such engagement, one that involves commitment, binding, and risk-taking, is what Max van Manen (1990/1997) describes as being oriented and true to the phenomenon in such a way that the "researcher becomes in a sense a guardian and a defender of the true nature of the phenomenon" (p. 20). Phenomenological engagement, thus, is the researcher's promise and commitment to be answerable to the phenomenon's true nature. Going to the window and pointing toward the phenomenon may risk exposure, as the researcher opens to the true nature of the phenomenon. Inviting others to the window requires even greater engagement and deeper answerability to the phenomenon. Going to the window, whether alone or together, and pointing to what one sees proves a transformative engagement of the phenomenon's lived experience.

Phenomenological Engagement

> The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 36)

Essential to the transformation of "lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" is the writer's engagement. Textual expression is genuine engagement and one way by which the writer becomes answerable to the phenomenon. The writer demonstrates phenomenological engagement as a pledged commitment to the text and the reader, and, through text, animates lived experience. However, as I note in this chapter's introduction, the transformative expression of phenomenological engagement is not without risk.

Exposure to Risk

What makes phenomenological engagement risky? Van Manen (1990/1997) claims "reflexive re-living" and "reflective appropriation" are necessary for

phenomenological textual expression. Reflexive re-living is "bending back"[40] to create a relationship between the phenomenon and the writer, as well as between the phenomenon and reader. In writing phenomenological text, the researcher returns to lived experience. The reader experiences a similar re-living of lived experience. Through committed engagement, the writer and reader lay claim to the phenomenon and its relationship to self. How does re-living lived experience expose the writer and reader to risk? Furthermore, what is the nature of this risk and to what end?

For me, the risk and the end may prove the same. Defining phenomenology as "the study of essences" (p. vii), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) asserts that phenomenology is a "transcendental philosophy which places in abeyance the assertions arising out of the natural attitude, the better to understand them" (p. vii). Building on this premise, van Manen (1990/1997) understands essence as the phenomenon's description, and a good description as one "construed so that the structure of a lived experience is revealed to us in such a fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of this experience in a hitherto unseen way" (p. 39). What I see risked in phenomenological engagement are the ends themselves, as conveyed by the following questions. Are the writer and, afterward, the reader, able to bracket, place in abeyance, any assertions they hold about the phenomenon? Is the writer, through reflexive engagement with lived experience, able not only to engage the text as a means to structure lived experience, but also, and subsequently, to engage and animate the reader's own lived experience? Is the writer able to engage in such a way as to reveal the phenomenon textually and invite the reader "to grasp the nature and significance [of the phenomenon] in a hitherto unseen way"?

Phenomenology requires the deep commitment and binding I describe. It requires genuine claim to the phenomenon. But in what ways does the writer, through text, engage and animate the lived experience of self and others? Further, how does the writer engage both text and reader to reveal the true, and sometimes hidden, nature of the phenomenon? I begin to address these questions by returning to the earliest and deepest roots of the phenomenological process – engaging the life-world.[41]

Engaging the Life-world

In his *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Dermot Moran (2000) acknowledges Edmund Husserl as the inaugural philosopher within the phenomenological movement. Husserl, who first posited "life-world (*Lebenswelt*)" (Abram, 1996, p. 40), claimed it as "the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable (Husserl, 1970/1999, p. 353). David Abram (1996) calls life-world the "world of our immediately lived experience, *as* we live it, prior to all thoughts about it" and "prior to conceptually freezing it into a static space of 'facts'" (p. 40). Life-world, therefore, is our real-time, in-the-moment, and everyday world and experiences. As I consider the life-world, I ponder how one bends back to engage the life-world. In what ways does the writer or reader experience this type of engagement? Also, what is revealed through the reflexive experience of life-world engagement?

Van Manen (1990/1997) addresses the questions I pose. Defining phenomenology as "the study of the lifeworld – the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it" (p. 9), he claims:

> A person cannot reflect on lived experiences while living through the experience. . . . Thus, phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective. Reflection on lived experience is always recollective; it is reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through. (p. 10)

If life-world itself is the immediate experience, phenomenology is the means of engaging the life-world through recollection and retrospection. It is through phenomenological engagement of the life-world that we begin to consider our previous, rather than immediate, the life-world experience. Through retrospective reflection, one engages the life-world to experience the *essence* of a phenomenon. Through the lens of rooted meaning, the essence of a phenomenon is its true, innate Being.[42] Husserl (1969/1999) names this phenomenological essence, or true being, "the thing itself":

> The life-world is a realm of original self-evidences. That which is self-evidently given is, in perception, experienced as "the thing itself," in immediate presence, or, in memory, remembered as the thing itself; and in every other manner of intuition is a presentification of the thing itself. (p. 267)

The thing itself is not only that which is self-evident in a phenomenon, it is also that which is original to the phenomenon. In other words, the thing itself *is* the phenomenon's essence or true being.

Engaging the life-world reveals the thing itself. Husserl (1970/1999) observes this revelation as something that "is always taken for granted . . . , always familiar in its topology" (p. 364). It is familiar topology because, as Abram (1996) suggests, the life-world is "the living landscape in which we are corporeally embedded" (p. 65). While an individual may well be what Abram characterizes as an "attentive human animal who is entirely a part of the world that he, or she, experiences" (p. 65), corporeal embeddedness, in and of itself, does not make transparent all that is the life-world. Some truths of the experience, some aspects of the thing itself, remain hidden. As Husserl (1970/1999) recognizes, some horizons remain hidden in as much as these "horizons of the unknown [are] simply horizons of what is incompletely known" (p. 364).

Phenomenological engagement of the life-world, in van Manen's (1990/1997) words, is "aim[ed] at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (p. 9). Phenomenological engagement makes everyday experience, the familiar landscape and topology in which we are corporeally embedded, *more known*. Phenomenological engagement reflects on experience that, while familiar, remains incompletely known. It is through phenomenological engagement that one reveals more of the thing's essence.

Engaging through Language

Van Manen (1990/1997) asserts language is the way "human beings express their experience of the world" (p. 14). Steeves (2006), also viewing language as an expression of experience, explores Augustine's musings on the origin of language and concludes: "Words exist as an attempt to mimic sound, to mimic the world, to mimic the way things appear to consciousness. To come to language is thus to sound out the being of the world" (p. 6). Language is how humans "discover a world already meaningfully constituted" (van Manen, p. 14). But it is not only the world that we discover. Moran (2000) claims it is also "our mode of being in the world [that] comes to realisation" (p. 270) through language. Whether an expression of experience or a discovery of what already exists within the world, whether sounding out of the world itself or one's own Being in the world, language, as Steeves observes, makes "things present" (p. 7).

Making things present. How is it that language makes things present? Heidegger (1959/1971d) addresses this question by pronouncing the "essential being of language is Saying as Showing" (p. 123). He reaches this conclusion by exploring what it truly means to use language to say something:

> To say and to speak are not identical. A man may speak, speak endlessly, and all the time say nothing. Another man may remain silent, not speak at all and yet, without speaking, say a great deal.
>
> But what does "say" mean? In order to find out, we must stay close to what our very language tells us to think when we use the word. "Say" means to show, to let appear, to let be seen and heard.
>
> . . . In keeping with the most ancient usage of the word we understand saying in terms of showing, pointing out, signaling. (pp. 122-123)

Heidegger reminds us that saying is not mere speaking; the former does not inevitably follow the latter. At times, in fact, silence says more than speaking. When saying remains true to its essence, language brings a thing forward. Language shows or makes present that thing, so that we may know it as it appears to us and is seen and heard by us. Through the use of language, one *says* in order to *show*.

But what is shown in the saying? It is in answering this question that Heidegger (1959/1971d) specifically addresses how language makes a thing present: "Language speaks in that it, as showing, reaching into all regions of presences, summons from them whatever is present to appear and to fade" (p. 124). Heidegger calls this summoning of presence "owning" or "appropriation":

> *The moving force in Showing of Saying is Owning*. It is what brings all present and absent beings each into their own, from where they show themselves in what they are, and where they abide according to their kind. This owning . . . we call Appropriation. It yields the opening of the clearing in which present beings can persist and from which absent beings can depart while keeping their persistence in the withdrawal. (p. 127)

We now understand that through saying, language opens up lived experience. Within this clearing, all beings, whether present or absent, may come forward to reveal themselves and their essences – essences that remain even after the beings themselves no longer are present.

Language remains, therefore, a means of understanding our experiences and the world in which those experiences reside. Van Manen (1990/1997) reminds us that phenomenology is "human science aim[ed] at acquiring understandings about concrete lived experiences by means of language" (p. 23). It is an understanding achieved through what van Manen sees as a conversational relation.

Creating a conversational relation. Van Manen (1990/1997) describes the role of language within the phenomenological method:

> Language is the only way by which we can bring . . . experience into a symbolic form that creates by its very discursive nature a conversational relation. Writing and reading are the ways in which we sustain a conversational relation. (p. 111)

Van Manen's words represent a continued emphasis on language as a way to make space for the presencing of the things themselves. Further, van Manen posits language as establishing a "conversational relation" between writing and reading and, ergo, between writer and reader. What is the nature of these relationships that are created and sustained through text?

Engaging through text creates conversational relations between writer and text, reader and text, and writer and reader. Abram (1996) contemplates the emergence of written language:

> The scribe, or author, could now begin to dialogue with his own visible inscriptions, viewing and responding to his own words even as he wrote them down. *A new power of reflexivity was thus coming into existence, borne by the relation between the scribe and his scripted text*. (p. 107)

Through writing, a reflective relationship develops between the writer and the text. Through this textual relationship, the writer opens up a phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) sees this opening up as communication with the phenomenon. Although

strictly discussing the spoken word, I believe his insights are applicable also to the written word:

> The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world. . . . The gesture does not make me think of [the thing itself], it is [the thing] itself. . . . The gesture presents itself to me as a question, bringing certain perceptible bits of the world to my notice, and inviting my concurrence in them. Communication is achieved when my conduct identifies this path with its own. (pp. 213-214)

Through words, the writer questions, and, through text, communicates with "certain perceptible bits of the world" (p. 215). Critchley (2005) claims language and communication result in a reordering of the world:

> We find an order in things. This is not an order that is given, but one that we give it. Poetry reorders the order that we find in things. It gives us back things exactly as they are, but beyond us. (p. 57)

Not only are the things themselves reordered through a textual relation, but also reordered are the writer's and the reader's understandings of the things themselves. Abram (1996) claims, "For to read is to enter into a profound participation, or chiasm, with the inked marks upon the page" (p. 131). What Abram calls profound participation, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) discusses as an awakening:

> Each word of a difficult text awakens in us thoughts which were ours beforehand, but these meanings sometimes combine to form new thought which recasts them all, and we are transported to the heart of the matter, we find the source. . . . we discover an unknown quantity through its relationship with known ones. (pp. 207-208)

The conversational relation between reader and text allows us to glimpse the source or essence of the phenomenon, making it more known. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) cautions that this awakening does not occur, necessarily, while first engaging the text but afterward. During the reading of or listening to a text, one is mesmerized by the text itself:

> . . . when a text is read to us, provided that it is read with expression, we have no thought marginal to the text itself, for the words fully occupy our mind and exactly fulfill our expectations, and we feel the necessity of the speech. Although we are unable to predict its course, we are possessed by it. The end of the speech or text will be the lifting of a spell. It is at this stage that thoughts on the speech or text will be able to rise. (p. 208)

Thus, reflexivity begins once reading ends and the spell of the text is lifted. As Critchley (2005) asserts, conversational relation requires of the reader "patience and allowing the time for communication to become understanding" (p. 3).

Emerging from this understanding is a conversational relation between writer and reader. Steeves (2006) asks, "Why do we write?"; he answers, quite simply, "To communicate; to speak to others" (p. 8). What is achieved through writing, Steeves sees as truth:

> Objective truth is a matter of making the rounds in the community, coming to see the public world as clearly as possible from the perspective of each Other, and doing one's best to forge a perspective that does justice to the whole. . . . And the world is one that is shared by many creatures, each with a point of view that needs to be considered when making the rounds. (p. 7)

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) sees this truth as "not based on the common meaning of [our] respective experiences" (p. 216); rather, it is opening up experience through the expression of words:

> The process of expression, when it is successful, does not merely leave for the reader and the writer himself a kind of reminder, it brings the meaning into existence as a thing at the very heart of the text, it brings it to life in an organism of words, establishing it in the writer or the reader as a new sense organ, opening a new field or a new dimension to our experience. (p. 212)

Once more, we understand conversational relation as language illuminating phenomenological essence.

Included in his discourse on conversational relation, van Manen (1990/1997) also comments:

> Much depends, therefore, on the quality of our language and writing. . . . The phenomenological method consists of the ability, or rather the art of being sensitive – sensitive to the subtle undertones of language, to the way language speaks when it allows the things themselves to speak. (p. 111)

How does one, whether as the writer or reader of phenomenological language, develop the art of being sensitive? More specifically, what does it mean to be sensitive to language's "subtle undertones" as they emerge?

Engaging through Sensitivity

Van Manen (1990/1997) identifies an authentic speaker as a true listener:

> An authentic speaker must be a true listener, able to attune to the deep tonalities of language that normally fall out of our accustomed range of hearing, able to listen to the way the things of the world speak to us. (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 111)

A true listener is sensitive to language, able to hear the "deep tonalities" normally missed, perhaps ignored as out of range. Sensitivity to language requires a presence-of-Being with "language spoken by the things in their lifeworlds" (p. 112). One Latin root of sensitive is *sentire*, which is to have a sense of or to know something.[43] Knowing in a sensitive way is quite literally to find one's way (see Endnote 41). As such, it may be said, the true listener, first, discovers the way to the life-world of the thing itself. The true listener's presence-of-Being in that life-world demonstrates active attune-ment to the language of the thing itself. Remaining open to what is typically out of range, the true listener perceives or feels "tonalities of language" that deepen phenomenological knowing. In so doing, the true listener is further sensitized – this time, uncovering the essence of the thing itself. With this understanding of what it means to be sensitive, I now turn to ask what it is like to *experience* sensitivity.

Experiencing sensitivity. Abram (1996) suggests the experience of sensitivity is one of "making sense" of the thing itself:

> And "making sense" must here be understood in its most direct meaning: to make sense is to enliven the senses. A story that makes sense is one that stirs the senses from their slumber, one that opens the eyes and the ears to their real surroundings, tuning the tongue to the actual tastes in the air and sending chills of recognition along the surface of the skin. To make sense is to release the body from the constraints imposed by outworn ways of speaking, and hence to renew and rejuvenate one's felt awareness of the world. It is to make the senses wake up to where they are. (p. 265)

Abram further implores: "Only if words are felt, bodily presences, like echoes or waterfalls, can we understand the power of spoken language to influence, alter, and transform the perceptual world" (p. 89).

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) explores the experience of being sensitive through notions of sensation and significance. He describes "pure sensations" as "the experience of an undifferentiated, instantaneous, punctual impact" (p. 3). It is the experience of a thing's qualities as "pure impression" (p. 7), beyond what is merely seen or heard. Merleau-Ponty refers to these pure sensations as "sense experience," a "vital communication with the world which makes [a thing] present" (p. 61) and familiar. In being "sensible," (p. 246) one recognizes a thing's significance and meaning. Levinas (1972/2003) defines such significance as "the intelligible": "being showing itself in its nonhistorical simplicity, its absolutely irreducible unqualifiable nakedness" (p. 38). The experience of being sensitive proves a raw, pure, and vital communication with the phenomenon to reveal the thing itself as it is – simple and naked, allowing the one who looks to glimpse qualities and significance to form an unencumbered impression.

Developing sensitivity. Before one can experience sensitivity, before one can enter into vital communication with the thing itself, one must first *develop* sensitivity. How is this accomplished? Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) proposes engaging the thing itself through intentional communion. He sees sensitivity as "nothing other than a certain way

of being in the world . . . , and seized and acted upon by our body, . . . so that sensation is literally a form of communion" (p. 246). Such communion occurs when one is "brought into relation with an external being" through attunement or sensibility to the "rhythm of existence [that] is put forward" (p. 248). The thing itself, the "sensible," is "nothing but a vague beckoning" (p. 248). It is the responsibility of the "sensor" to respond intentionally to this invitation:

> I must find the attitude which will provide it with the means of becoming determinate, of showing up . . . ; I must find the reply to a question which is obscurely expressed. . . . I do not possess it in thought, or spread out towards it some idea . . . as might reveal the secret of it, I abandon myself to it and plunge into this mystery, it "thinks itself within me." (p. 249)

Communion evidences a reciprocal invitation. The thing itself beckons to the sensor, who approaches with an attitude that invites forward the thing itself and gives it means to reveal itself. However, communion is not achieved through force or possession. On the contrary, communion requires absolute abandon in order that one may know the thing itself, so that the thing itself may, in truth, become one with the sensor.

What Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) calls attitude, Levinas (1972/2003) characterizes as "opening" (p. 62). What Merleau-Ponty names abandon, Levinas claims as "vulnerability" (p. 63). Levinas describes opening in three senses. First, opening is "the essence of being that opens to show itself" (p. 63) to others. Second, opening is the "intentionality of consciousness" (p. 62) to "the essence of being that opens to show itself" (p. 63). Third, opening is the "stripping of skin exposed to wound and outrage" (p. 63). It is in this third sense that one becomes vulnerable to the thing itself; further, "in vulnerability, *lies a relation to the other*" (p. 64). To be in relationship with the thing

itself is "to discover oneself totally defenseless, to be surrendered" (p. 64). It is in this state of abandon and vulnerability that one begins to *know* the thing itself.

Engaging through Knowing

Van Manen (1990/1997) avers:

> To do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world. . . . to *know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way. (p. 5)

Van Manen prompts me to question, In our thirst to know the world, how is it that we should *be* in the world? From Husserl forward, phenomenological philosophers, asserting the body as central to how we *are* in the world, ponder corporeal being as a conduit for knowing. Abram (1996) comments, "The body is that mysterious and multifaceted phenomenon that seems always to accompany one's awareness, and indeed to be the very location of one's awareness within the field of appearances" (p. 37). Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) firmly entrenches the body as a knowing agent that "will carry with it the intentional threads linking it to its surrounding [*sic*] and finally reveal to us the perceiving subject as the perceived world" (p. 83). Van Manen (1990/1997) identifies "*lived body*" (corporeality) as one of four "lifeworld existentials," the other three being "*lived space* (spatiality), . . . *lived time* (temporality), and *lived human relation* (relationality or communality)" (p. 101). He asserts:

> *Lived body (corporeality)* refers to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world. When we meet another person in his or her landscape or world we meet that person first of all through his or her body. In our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time – not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather in spite of ourselves. (p. 103)

So it is the body that houses one's awareness of, and one's Being in, the world. It is with the body that one establishes "intentional threads" to the outer world. It is also with the

body that we first meet another, a corporeal meeting that both reveals and conceals – with or without conscious intention.

Bodily Being is unquestionably a primordial way of knowing. Yet Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) acknowledges the limitation of corporeal knowing:

> The experience of our own body . . . reveals to us an ambiguous mode of existing. . . . I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which means taking up on my own account the drama which is being played out in it, and losing myself in it. . . . Thus experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other. (pp. 230-231)

One may assuredly begin the process of knowing through corporeal awareness, meeting, revealing, and concealing. Bodily knowing is genuine knowing, but it is a kind of knowing in which I may lose myself and fail to detach in order to see the thing itself in its own essence.

In his phenomenological study, *The Absent Body*, Drew Leder (1990) examines corporeal presence and absence in lived experience. He questions "why the body, as a ground of experience, . . . tends to recede from direct experience" (p. 1). Leder summarizes one of Merleau-Ponty's central tenets: "The body as he describes it is never just an object in the world but that very medium whereby our world comes into being" (p. 5). Leder leverages this position to challenge traditional Cartesian ontology: "If the body as lived structure is a locus of experience, then one need not ascribe this capability to a decorporealized mind. The self is viewed as an integrated being" (p. 5).

I now assume this same integrated posture to examine three ways of knowing: perception-as-knowing, naming-as-knowing, and experiencing-as-knowing. To truly come to know the thing itself, one must engage multiple ways of knowing and, therefore, multiple ways of Being. And so I ask: How is one to *be* in the world in order to *know* it?

Perception-as-knowing. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) proclaims:

> Perception opens a window on to things. This means that it is directed, quasi-teleologically, towards a truth in itself in which the reason underlying all appearances is to be found. The tacit thesis of perception is that at every instant experience can be co-ordinated with that of the previous instant and that of the following, and my perspective with that of other consciousnesses – . . . that what is now indeterminate for me could become determinate for a more complete knowledge, which is as it were realized in advance in the thing, or rather which is the thing itself. (p. 62)

In this passage, Merleau-Ponty asserts fundamental canons for perception-as-knowing. First, perception is oriented toward phenomenological truth; it "opens a window" to peek beneath appearances. Second, perception necessitates a continuum of personal experience and webbed experience with others; one can know a thing neither within a single, isolated instance nor without connecting with "other consciousnesses." Finally, perception aims at "more complete knowledge" through an opening up of the thing itself. Implicit in this canon is that one can never know a thing absolutely; only by degree will the indeterminate become determinate.

While I accept these canons, I feel the tension in existentially describing perceiving-as-knowing. How *am* I when I am a perceiving Being? To address this question, I turn first to etymology. The earliest Latin root is *percipere*, meaning to grasp thoroughly, with both a literal meaning, "to take entirely," and a metaphorical one, "to grasp with the mind.[44] Perception is conscious awareness through one's senses. This somewhat duplicitous, yet integrated, meaning reminds me of Leder's (1990) challenge to Cartesian ontology, mentioned earlier in this chapter, and his assertion of unified body and mind when one perceives-as-knowing.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002), propelling away from "the traditional analysis of perception [that] distinguishes within it sense-givens and the meaning which they receive

from an act of understanding" (p. 150), avers the innate and inalienable pairing of "sensitivity" and "significance" (p. 151). Inasmuch, he discusses the sensible quality:

> The sensible quality . . . is the peculiar product of an attitude of curiosity or observation. It appears when, instead of yielding up the whole of my gaze to the world, I turn towards this gaze itself, and when I ask myself *what precisely it is that I see*; it does not occur in the natural transactions between my sight and the world; it is the reply to a certain kind of questioning on the part of my gaze, the outcome of a second order or critical vision which tries to know itself in its own particularity, of an "attention to the pure visual." . . . The quality, the separate sensory impact occurs when I break this total structuralization of my vision, when I cease to adhere to my own gaze, and when, instead of living the vision, I question myself about it, I want to try out my possibilities, I break the link between my vision and the world, between myself and my vision, it order to catch and describe it. (pp. 263-264)

Here, Merleau-Ponty illuminates how one exists – how I *am* – as a perceiving-being. I begin with the sensorial and then break from it to reflect precisely with what I see. As a perceiving-being, I question intentionally, which is a necessary break that makes reflection possible. It is through reflection that I come to know a thing.

Reflecting on Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2002) arguments, Levin (1985) concludes, "When I 'think,' I reduce the field of my being, whereas, 'when I perceive, I belong, through my point of view, to the world as a whole'" (p. 143). Perceiving-as-knowing roots me within a world without end. As Merleau-Ponty signifies, "The world is an open and indefinite unity in which I have my place" (p. 354).

Naming-as-knowing. In his essay "The Nature of Language," Heidegger (1959/1971c) credits naming with bringing forward a thing into being:

> Only where the word for the thing has been found is the thing a thing. Only thus *is* it. Accordingly we must stress as follows: no thing is where the word, that is the name is lacking. The word alone gives being to the thing. (p. 62)

What is Heidegger claiming? That a thing does not exist unless it is named? No, for he goes on to assert: "Only the word makes a thing appear as the thing it is, and thus lets it

be present" (p. 65). Heidegger's claim, then, is that naming calls a thing – that which already *is* – to appear and be present. In another work, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Heidegger (1971) provides further clarification:

> What is naming? Does it merely deck out the imaginable familiar objects and events . . . with words of language? No. This naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word. The naming calls. Calling brings closer what it calls. . . . Thus it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness. . . . It calls things, bids them to come. . . . Bidding is inviting. It invites things in, so that they may bear upon men as things. (pp. 196-197)

With this additional insight, it becomes clearer that naming calls, bids, and invites a thing forward. By "presencing" things into "nearness," naming is a way of knowing.

What makes this true? Steeves (2006) observes:

> Isn't naming and calling out and anticipating seeing and greeting one who is cherished a form of address? And is this not then a recognition of the Other's language, of *logos*, of the possibility of a tongue sharpened for good, for the chance to cut through the loneliness and the despair? (p. 57)

Levinas (1988) champions Steeves' argument by attesting that "language is above all the fact of being addressed" (p. 170). Through naming, as a form of address, one knows a thing or another by seeing, greeting, and recognizing the other. Naming-as-knowing establishes a relationship that reduces our loneliness and despair.

While naming brings a thing to nearness, it also compels distance. For Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) distancing is necessary "to tear oneself away from [a thing's] individual and unique characteristics [in order] to see it as representative of an essence or a category" (p. 204). Said another way, distancing allows one to orient a thing within a larger landscape. To come too close risks astigmatic knowing. As Critchley (2005) cautions, "When I name a thing, I both master it and kill it" (p. 86). How am I to interpret this? Naming may allow me to see a thing in its nearness, but, in bringing it too close,

knowing is restricted and deficient. I, then, fail to see those aspects transparently revealed, as well as those that are, by nature, concealed.

As I ponder naming-as-knowing, I consider naming as necessary not only to make present a thing but also to invite its familiarity. I am equally mindful that naming bears the risk of narrowed knowing. If true, how does one move beyond naming to open up knowing to reveal more of the thing itself? To address this, I return to the fundamental nature of phenomenology and lived experience.

Experience-as-knowing. Moran (2000) declares phenomenology as "a steady directing of attention to the things themselves" (p. 5). He further characterizes phenomenology "as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises [*sic*] the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer" (p. 4). With these observations, Moran recognizes the intentional, interwoven, and indestructible relationship between knowing and experience. Accepting this truth, I seek to understand how experience-as-knowing manifests.

Earlier in this chapter, I addressed concepts which bear on experience-as-knowing. I briefly reference them here to serve as a foundation for additional manifestations. First, the life-world, which is the real-time, in-the-moment world and experiences, is the setting for incipient experience-as-knowing. Next, language, as van Manen (1990/1997) reminds us, is the "express[ion] of experience" (p. 14). One augments fundamental experience-as-knowing through language, as a means of presencing the phenomenon and sustaining a conversational relation through writing and

reading. Third, sensitivity advances experience-as-knowing by opening the way to a phenomenon's essence. It is through sensitivity that one establishes vital communication with the essence of a thing and, in turn, becomes willingly vulnerable to that essence.

With this foundation, I now ask: What does it mean to experience a thing? Heidegger (1959/1971c) proposes:

> To experience something means to attain it along the way, by going on a way. To undergo an experience with something means that this something, which we reach along the way in order to attain it, itself pertains to us, meets and makes its appeal to us, in that it transforms us into itself. (pp. 73-74)

Embedded within this proposition are intentionality and transformation. One experiences the thing itself through deliberately "going on a way" through purposeful choice. The experience transforms, as the thing itself recognizes, meets, and appeals to the one who seeks it. Elsewhere, Heidegger vividly describes this experience as "something [that] befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us" (p. 57). To experience, then, is to share some of the thing's essence, "in that it transforms us into itself."

Aligned with Heidegger's assessment, Levinas (1972/2003) also emphasizes the meditated nature of experience and the relationship between the seeker and the phenomenon. He claims experience "no longer seems to be made of isolated elements . . . signifying from themselves," but rather ones that "signify from the 'world' and from the position of the one who is looking" (p. 12). Here, I understand experience to be a symbiotic interchange between the phenomenon, the larger landscape or world, and, once more, "the one who is looking." Said another way, to experience a phenomenon requires context.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) contributes to my understanding, discussing a "system of experience in which [the] body is inescapably linked with phenomena" (p. 354).

> But the system of experience is not arrayed before me as if I were God, it is lived by me from a certain point of view; I am not the spectator, I am involved, and it is my involvement in a point of view which makes possible both the finiteness of my perception and its opening out upon the complete world as a horizon of every perception. (p. 354)

Merleau-Ponty describes *lived* experience as an intimate relationship between experiencer and the phenomenon. Once more, phenomenon, world, and experiencer are linked, this time as a "system of experience." It is the experiencer's involvement with, rather than mere observation of, the phenomenon that nurtures perception and opens it to a wider, contextualized experience-as-knowing.

Heidegger, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty each contribute key insights into lived experience. First, to experience is to deliberately seek a phenomenon. Next, engaging the phenomenon is a symbiotic involvement that occurs within the context of the phenomenon itself, the larger world, and one's own experience. Further, through this symbiosis, we glimpse and share the phenomenon's essence, which, in turn, transforms us. To extend my current understanding, I turn to the work of David Michael Levin to illuminate experienc*ing*-as-knowing, ways in which we, as seekers and lookers and experiencers, effectuate our transformation.

Experiencing-as-knowing. Levin (1985) explicates experiencing-as-knowing as a process of ontological self-examination, or recollection of Being. He describes self-examination as "our commitment to taking stock, our process of contacting and articulating the character of our deepest experience-of-existing, so that we might more

fully realize where we are, and how we stand, in relation to Being" (p. 21). Ontological self-examination signifies "our capacity for deepening our openness-to-Being, and to the processes through which we develop or unfold this capacity" (p. 28). Levin cautions that this is

> A task which can never be finished, and in which we are committed only to calling attention, wherever and whenever possible, to possibilities for a deeper, more aware, and more self-fulfilling dimensionality of our historical existence as gesturing and self-moving beings. Ontological thinking is really nothing more than rigorously sustained attending to openings. (p. 28)

Ontological self-examination, then, is our commitment to rigorous and sustained attention to possibilities, which may deepen experience, self-fulfillment, and realization of our "relation to Being."

Levin (1985) submits the measure our ontological self-development to be the "depth of our self-questioning and the character of our daring" (p. 9). But neither ontological self-examination nor self-development is predisposed: "At birth, we are given a gift of nature and sent on our way. What we do with that gift, how we experience the potential-for-being inherent in that skill, is the question which defines our individual being (*Jemeinigkeit*)" (p. 52). This gift, says Levin, is that of "being *visionary*," and it calls us to ask "of what are we really capable, by virtue of this gift" (p. 52).

Levin's (1985) answer is the recollection of Being, a two-phased process whereby an individual goes "down 'into' oneself, into the 'innermost,' or most individual depths of oneself (*Er-innerung*)" and "re-claim[s], or bring[s] forth, the potential to be developed (*Wiederholung*)" (p. 77). Levin describes this as less "a process of contacting and retrieving" and more "a process of *developing* our bodily awareness and *cultivating*

its capacities" (p. 53). It is a process that requires deep and trusting attention and inquiry, with an aim toward truth. Further, it requires that

> We contact our need, and the great depth of our need, . . . and that we respond, appropriately to the "felt sense" of what claims our attention, what we are needing, what [we are] lacking, what [we are] looking for. (p. 53)

What the individual retrieves is "an experience of Being in its more hospitable, more wholesome dimensionality" (p. 53).

As Levin (1985) prescribes it, recollection of Being is a commitment to daily and repetitive ontological living:

> If ontology is the articulation of our understanding of the ontological character of our ownmost being, i.e., our relatedness-to-Being, then the *living* of ontology – that is to say the *integration* of ontology into our daily lives – is the very *consummation* of our ontological *potential*, i.e., our potential for a relatedness-to-Being ('what is') as a whole. (p. 9)

Through repetition, this process "in its own appropriate way, and in keen awareness of its own time, . . . prepares us to undergo an *original* experience of Being – an experience whose disclosiveness is somehow emancipatory" (p. 77). How so? Levin responds, "The truth in the work of recollection is therefore to be judged . . . in terms of the character of the *transformation* by which a deeper understanding of the past significantly *alters* the course of the future" (p. 89). Recollection of Being is experiencing-as-knowing in that we leverage our gift as visionary Beings to cultivate our openness-to-Being, so that we respond with a "felt sense" to that which claims our attention, and, in so doing, realize our "ontological potential" to understand the past and alter future course.

Over the course of this phenomenological study, I go to the window many times. First, I point to my own lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Next, I stand at the window with colleagues, whose informal sharing points to their

lived experiences of this phenomenon. I now prepare to go to the window once more. This time, as I seek to see the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I invite several philosophers to join me at the window so that our collective pointing may serve, in Buber's (1957/1999e) words, to further the "embrace" and lessen the "incomprehensibility" (p. 27) of this experience. As I extend this invitation, I recall Levinas' (1972/2003) excogitations regarding "*truth* and *method*":

> How should one read or appropriate the works of other philosophers or cultural artifacts more generally? . . . How does one encounter the other? How does one preserve ineradicable differences while at the same time make genuine contact? It is a question as old as philosophy, a mystery as ancient as religion: the problem of identify and difference, the one and the many. (p. xi)

I invite you, the reader, to continue your own textual engagement so that you may open to this phenomenon and make genuine contract, with the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Seeing Other-Imposed Social Isolation in the Work-Place

> 'Seeing' does not mean just perceiving with the bodily eyes, but neither does it mean pure non-sensory awareness of something present-at-hand in its presence-at-hand. In giving an existential signification to "sight", [*sic*] we have merely drawn upon the peculiar feature of seeing, that it lets entities which are accessible to it be encountered unconcealedly in themselves. Of course, every 'sense' does this within that domain of discovery which is genuinely its own. But from the beginning onwards the tradition of philosophy has been oriented primarily towards 'seeing' as a way of access to entities *and to Being*. (p. 187)

What does it mean to see a phenomenon? Heidegger (1927/1962) asserts that sight [*Sicht*] belongs to *Dasein* and "corresponds to the 'clearedness' [Gelichtetheit] which we took as characterizing the disclosedness of the 'there'" (p. 187). For Heidegger, seeing is existential, rather than merely sensorial, understanding. To see a phenomenon is to invite unconcealed presence and to encounter the phenomenon in its genuineness and

purity of Being. Further, a phenomenon, already present, is able to disclose itself fully only when the seeker opens the way for discovery.

As I consider what it means to see a phenomenon, I turn also to language itself. Orland Bishop, founder and director of Shade Tree Multicultural Foundation in Los Angeles, California, discusses the meaning of the Zulu greeting, *sawubona* "('We see you')[,] as an invitation to a deep witnessing and presence" (Global Oneness Project, 2009). Bishop describes *sawubona* as a primal word used when "people could still really see each other." He explains that *sawubona* means "we," plural, because in greeting another it is not merely "I" that sees but "my seeing includes my ancestors" and also "the divinities that are part of the celestial spheres of reality." The response, "*yebo sawubona*," – "yes, we see you, too" – establishes seeing as a dialogue that "establishes you as a witness to some phenomenon that can also be a witness to your own presence." In seeing each other, the two establish "an agreement," an "obligat[ion] . . . to affirm the reality that seeing has empowered us to investigate our mutual potential for life." Seeing, then, becomes "an invitation to participate in each other's life."

Earlier in this chapter, I engage the voices of several philosophers to uncover the nature of phenomenological engagement. Most notably these include David Abram, Martin Heidegger, Edmond Husserl, David Michael Levin, Emmanual Levinas, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Max van Manen. Later in this chapter, I invite the voice of Hans-George Gadamer, among others, as I explore the art of hermeneutic phenomenology. More immediately, as I prepare to open myself further and see more clearly the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, and in the spirit of "clearedness" and "*sawubona*," I invite three philosophers to join me at the window and

point to this phenomenon. First, I invite Martin Heidegger, German philosopher and seminal phenomenologist, who Moran (2000) credits with "chang[ing] the shape of twentieth-century philosophy" (p. 193). Next, I invite Jean-Paul Sartre, a French writer and philosopher, whom Moran notes as "enlarg[ing] the scope of phenomenological reflection . . . through his finely observed description of human action and interaction, where one's sense of oneself is at stake" (p. 355). Finally, I invite Martin Buber, a German Jewish religious and philosophical scholar, who brings a "revolutionary simplicity" (Smith, 1958, p. v) to the philosophy of being.

To engage each of these philosophers, I employ dialogue, a literary technique used by many, including Heidegger (1959/1966; 1959/1971a), to convey an imagined, although meaningful, conversation, characterized by conversing or reasoning. Dialogue is deeply rooted in languages of origin, stemming from the Latin *dialogus* and the Greek *dialogos*.[45] In addition, conversation bears powerful, obsolete meanings: living, dwelling and conducting oneself with others and in the world.[46] Each root and meaning implies, indeed is a tribute to, the engaged commitment and trust-of-Being required to invite a phenomenon in its unconcealedness.

Standing with these philosophers and seeing this phenomenon together, I open more fully to this lived experience, and, in doing so, invite this phenomenon to disclose itself more fully. Together, we greet this phenomenon and say, "*Sawubona*," that we may invite "deep witnessing and presence" (Global Oneness Project, 2009). With these philosophers, I stand ready with others who have seen this phenomenon – my colleagues, who have shared with me their experiences; academic and other professional researchers who have studied this phenomenon; and classic and contemporary authors,

phenomenologists, and artists. In seeing, may we establish a spirit of dialogue and conversation that bears witness to one another. May we extend the invitation and affirm the reality that addresses the question, **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?** *Sawubona*!

Going to the Window with Martin Heidegger

Engaging in a hermeneutical phenomenological study, it seems quite impossible not to invite Martin Heidegger to the window. Moran (2000) confirms Heidegger's seminal role in the phenomenological movement:

> Heidegger was an original phenomenologist of the highest rank, who attempted, in his own way, to carry out Husserl's project of getting back to the 'things themselves'. . . . [Heidegger's] Being and Time . . . at once claimed phenomenology to be much older than Husserl, as an essentially Greek way of thinking, and also, at the same time, pushed phenomenology beyond Husserl, in that it replaced the study of the intentional structures of consciousness with the more fundamental study of the relation between Dasein and Being itself. (p. 194)

I invite Heidegger in hopes that he may share what Moran identifies as "the real appeal of phenomenology for Heidegger" – "the essential *possibilities* of situation" (p. 195).

The everydayness of Being-in-the-world. I humbly engage in the following dialogue with Martin Heidegger, as together we see the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Wells: *Willkommen*, Herr Heidegger. *Sawubona*!

Heidegger: *Yebo sawubona*!

Wells: I invite you here today that, together, we may point to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. As you gaze upon that phenomenon, please share with me what you see.

Heidegger: To see better this particular lived experience, we begin with the world in its "everydayness" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 164). "Being-in-the-world [is] that basic

state of Dasein by which every mode of its Being gets co-determined" (p. 153). Further, "so far as Dasein *is* at all, it has Being-with-one-another as its kind of Being (p. 163).

Wells: Yes, it is the work-place Being-in-the-world that holds my current attention. I want to understand how Being-with-one-another suffers when one experiences other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Heidegger: To do that, you must first understand the "they" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 164) and the "they-self" (p. 225). Let us begin with the "'they,' which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum"; it "prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness" (p. 164). The "they" exist "in the environment which lies closest to us, the public 'environment' [that] already is ready-to-hand and is also a matter of concern [mitbesorgt]" (p. 164).

Wells: This fits. The work-place is an everyday, public environment in which we, as workers, are the "they" in our work-mode and work-state-of-mind. My intention to see this phenomenon lies within this public, ready-to-hand environment.

Heidegger: Precisely. The "they" is everydayness in its characteristics of "distantiality," "averageness," and "levelling down." Distantiality "[*Abständigkeit*]":

> . . . belongs to Being-with . . . [and] stands in *subjection* [*Botmässigkeit*] to Others. It itself *is* not; its Being has been taken away by the Others. Dasein's everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please. These Others, moreover, are not *definite* Others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them. . . . One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances their power. (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 164)

Averageness requires little explanation, perhaps, although it is important to recognize:

> . . . it prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore. Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed. Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known. . . . Every secret loses its force. (p. 165)

Averageness leads to "what we call the 'levelling down' of all possibilities of Being" (p. 165).

Wells: It sounds as though the "they" in everydayness is the mundane, the routine, in which nothing – and no one – stands out. Each is subsumed as Others. It is, with the landscape of my phenomenon of interest, the worker masses slogging through the work-world.

Heidegger: Yes! "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself. The 'they', [*sic*] which supplies the answer to the question of the 'who' of everyday *Dasein*, is the 'nobody' to whom every *Dasein* has already surrendered itself in Being-among-one-other [Uuntereinandersein]" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, pp. 165-166).

Wells: It seems a dismal and disingenuous mode of Being. How can this be when it represents our everydayness?

Heidegger: Your question brings me back to the they-self.

> In these modes one's way of Being is that of inauthenticity and failure to stand by one's Self. . . . The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the *authentic* Self – that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way [eigens ergriffenen]. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the "they", [*sic*] and must first find itself. (Heidegger, 1927/1962, pp. 166-167)

Wells: This explanation seems at odds with what I see. I appreciate the routine nature of everydayness, as well as the surrendering and dispersion of self in Being-among-Others. I'm struggling, however, with the notion of authenticity. In seeing other-imposed social isolation, one seems to *become* inauthentic during this lived experience, rather than *being* inauthentic prior to that experience.

Heidegger: I can help you clarify. First, "Dasein's Selfhood [is] a way of existing, and therefore not . . . an entity present-at-hand" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 312). It is the

they-self, rather than the "*I myself*" that is "the 'who' of Dasein" (p. 312). As such, "authentic Being-one's Self takes the definite form of an existentiall [*sic*] modification of the 'they'" (p. 312).

Wells: So, am I to understand that I am authentic only when I rise above, or distance myself from, the "they"?

Heidegger: It is more accurate to think of this as finding oneself within the "they." Consider it this way:

> The "they" has always kept Dasein from taking hold of these possibilities of Being. . . . So Dasein makes no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity. This process can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the "they." . . . When Dasein thus brings itself back [Das Sichzurückholen] from the "they", [*sic*] the they-self is modified in an existentiell manner so that it becomes *authentic* Being-one's-Self. (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 313)

Wells: How is this accomplished? How does one bring oneself back from the lostness of the "they" and bring oneself toward authenticity?

Heidegger: Essentially, it is "deciding for a potentiality-for-Being, and making this decision from one's own Self. In choosing to make this choice, Dasein *makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-for-Being" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 313)

Falling, anxiety, and fear. *Wells*: In general, this makes sense. However, as I consider the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, what I see is that one experiences Being lost when isolated from the masses, not when one is embedded within the "they."

Heidegger: Let me say more. Falling is "used to signify that Dasein is proximally and for the most part *alongside* the 'world' of its concern" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 220). It has

> . . . the character of Being-lost in the publicness of the "they". [*sic*] Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away [abgefallen] from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the 'world'. [*sic*] "Fallenness" into the 'world' means an absorption in Being-with-one-another. (p. 220)

Falling "does not express any negative evaluation" (p. 220); it does, however, represent "the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness" (p. 223). It is a "'*downward plunge'* [*Absturz*] . . . [that] remains hidden from Dasein by the way things have been publicly interpreted, so much so, indeed, that it gets interpreted as a way of 'ascending' and 'living concretely'" (p. 223).

Furthermore, in falling "the authenticity of Being-one's-Self has of course been closed off and thrust aside" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 229). In everydayness, *Dasein* "flee[s] *in the face of* itself" (p. 229) towards the "they." In this way, fleeing is "to *turn thither* towards entities within-the-world" (p. 230). Specifically, "*the turning-away of falling is grounded . . . in anxiety, which in turn is what first makes fear possible*" (p. 230).

Wells: So how should I interpret these notions of falling, anxiety, and fear as it helps me see other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

Heidegger: I will begin with fear, which is the last to emerge. "Shrinking back . . . in the face of something threatening is founded upon fear"; fear is fear of "an entity within-the-world" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 231). With anxiety, on the other hand, *Dasein* flees from itself not from an Other. Anxiety is

> . . . characterized by the fact that what threatens is *nowhere*. Anxiety 'does not know' what that in the face of which it is anxious is. . . . Therefore that which threatens cannot bring itself close from a definite direction within what is close by; it is already 'there', [*sic*] and yet nowhere; it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one's breath, and yet it is nowhere. (p. 231)

Anxiety is "anxiety about something" (p. 232). Specifically, "that which anxiety is anxious about is Being-in-the-world itself" (p. 232). Here, we may begin to provide insight into your specific concern.

Wells: Please, go on.

Heidegger: "In anxiety one feels 'uncanny'" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 233). By uncanniness I mean "'not-being-at-home' [das Nicht-zuhause-sein]" (p. 233). You may recall that "Being-in was defined as 'residing alongside'" and "Being-familiar with" (p. 233). One is "Being-at-home" in the "everyday publicness of the 'they'" (p. 233). What happens, you may ask, when one becomes anxious? "As Dasein falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the 'world.' Everyday familiarity collapses. Dasein has been individualized, but individualized *as* Being-in-the-world. Being-in enters into the existential 'mode' of the '*not-at-home*'" (p. 233). You must understand that "when in falling we flee *into* the 'at home' of publicness, we flee *in the face of* the 'not-at-home'; that is, we flee in the face of the uncanniness which lies in Dasein" (p. 234).

Wells: With this explanation, I believe we may indeed have uncovered more of this specific lived experience. Allow me to test my understanding. In my everydayness, I am Being-at-home. The world around me is familiar. With anxiety comes a sense that something unknown and unidentified, but near, threatens. Anxiety, as a state-of-mind, "collapses" my everyday familiarity, and I begin to feel not-at-home. What else am I to understand? What more are you able to see?

Authenticity and the call of conscience. *Heidegger*: I have mentioned that everydayness is inauthentic. "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself. The 'they', [*sic*] which supplies the answer to the question of the 'who' of everyday Dasein, is the 'nobody' to whom Dasein has already surrendered itself in Being-among-one-other [Untereinandersein]" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 166). Further, "publicness . . . is insensitive to every difference of level and of genuineness and thus never gets to the 'heart of the matter' ['auf die Sachen']" (p. 165). It must also be said that the "'not-at-home' must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon" (p. 234). As such, *Dasein* yearns to return to Self and to authenticity. "This process [of inauthenticity] can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the 'they'" (p. 312).

Wells: Understanding this is true, how is this process reversed? What triggers a return to authenticity?

Heidegger: Quite simply, conscience:

> But because Dasein is *lost* in the "they", [*sic*] it must first *find* itself. In order to find *itself* at all, it must be 'shown' to itself in its possible authenticity. In terms of its *possibility*, Dasein is already a potentiality-for-Being-its-Self, but it needs to have this potentiality attested. . . . This potentiality is attested by that which . . . is familiar to us as the "voice of conscience." (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 313)

I will also say one more thing about publicness to help illustrate its intertwining with conscience. "By publicness everything gets obscured, and what has thus been covered up gets passed off as something familiar and accessible to everyone" (p. 165). But we will continue to remember that everyday publicness is inauthentic. In seeking authenticity, "conscience gives us 'something' to understand; it discloses" (p. 314).

Wells: Yes. I am with you, but I need to see more. *How* does conscience serve as a trigger to return to authenticity?

Heidegger: Conscience "is revealed as a *call* [Ruf]. Calling is a mode of *discourse*. The call of conscience has the character of an *appeal* to Dasein by calling it to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self; and this is done by way of *summoning*" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 314). But this call alone is not sufficient to return to authenticity:

> To the call of conscience there corresponds a possible hearing. Our understanding of the appeal unveils itself as our *wanting to have a conscience* [*Gewissenhabenwollen*]. But in this phenomenon lies that existentiell choosing which we seek – the choosing to choose a kind of Being-one's-Self which . . . we call "*resoluteness*." (p. 314)

Wells: So, we make a choice to hear this call to conscience.

Heidegger: Indeed.

Wells: Speaking ontologically, I suspect that one would always make this choice to hear the voice of conscience. Is this not true?

Heidegger: Perhaps. However, "losing itself in the publicness and the idle talk of the 'they', [*sic*] [Dasein] *fails to hear* [*überhört*] its own Self in listening to the they-self" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 315). And to hear itself, "it must first be able to find itself" (p. 315). These choices manifest in "calling as a mode of discourse" (p. 316).

Wells: A discourse between whom?

Heidegger: The discourse is between *Dasein's* 'voice' of conscience and *Dasein* itself, where "the 'voice' is taken rather as a giving-to-understanding" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 316). Further, and this may be of particular interest to your phenomenon-of-concern, "in the tendency to disclosure which belongs to the call, lies the momentum

of a push – an abrupt arousal. The call is from afar unto afar. It reaches him who wants to be brought back" (p. 316).

Wells: I can see, quite clearly and poignantly, that the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation is an abrupt arousal from work-place everydayness. What more should I understand about this call to conscience?

Heidegger: You must also understand this:

> The call reaches the they-self of concernful Being with Others. . . And because only the *Self* of the they-self gets appealed to and brought to hear, the "*they*" collapses. . . . Precisely *in passing over* the "they" (keen as it is for public repute) the call pushes it into insignificance [Bedeutungslosigkeit]. (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 317)

I will also say, "The call whose mood has been attuned by anxiety, . . . [in its] uncanniness pursues Dasein and is a threat to the lostness in which it has forgotten itself" (p. 322). Further,

> The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being-in-the-world as the "not-at-home" – the bare 'that-it-is' in the "nothing" of the world. The caller is unfamiliar to the everyday they-self; it is something like an *alien* voice. (p. 321)

Wells: Ah, yes. I am beginning to see more and more. With the call, the everydayness of my Being-in-the-world collapses and is "push[ed] into insignificance." Being "not-at-home" is unfamiliar and alien. But answering this question leads to another: *Where* is my Being when the "they" collapses?

Heidegger: To that question I answer, "*Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent*. In this way it not only loses none of its perceptibility, but forces the Dasein which has been appealed to and summoned, into the reticence of itself" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 318).

Wells: When I consider what you are saying, I interpret this silence as stillness. And if, as you say, "the call comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me and over me*" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 320), where am I to go but inside myself for this discourse?

Heidegger: Quite true.

Caring about others and about self. *Wells*: I feel we have uncovered much. One question lingers still. It concerns the relations with others. I feel there is more to these relations than the "disburdening" (p. 165) "they"? What more should I see as I seek to reveal this lived experience and its relations with others?

Heidegger: I will discuss relations in terms of care. Yes, *Dasein's* "Being-in-the-world . . . implies ontologically a relation to entities within-the-world" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 238).

> Care is always concern and solicitude, even if only privately. In willing, an entity which is understood – that is one which has been projected upon its possibility – gets seized upon, either as something with which one may concern oneself, or as something which is to be brought into its Being through solicitude. (pp. 238-239)

Care, "*cura*" (p. 227), is one of "Dasein's primordial state[s] of Being" (p. 273). As such, let me say more about concern and solicitude:

> Dasein's projection of itself understandably is in each case already alongside a world that has been discovered. From this world it takes its possibilities, and it does so first in accordance with the way things have been interpreted by the "they." This interpretation has already restricted the possible options of choice to what lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable, the respectable – that which is fitting and proper. This levelling off of Dasein's possibilities to what is proximally at its everyday disposal also results in a dimming down of the possible as such. The average everydayness of concerns becomes blind to its possibilities, and tranquillizes itself with that which is merely 'actual'. [*sic*] (p. 239)

But be aware, concern as caring is "mere wishing" (p. 239); it is "hankering [that] *closes off* the possibilities" and in which "Dasein becomes blind" (p. 240).

Wells: If I understand correctly, concern is an everyday caring about what is present-at-hand in the "they" world. In its everydayness, however, resides a blindness that prevents the "ownmost possibilities" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 243) of Being-in-the-world.

Heidegger: Yes, this is true. Solicitude, however, is characterized a bit differently. First, it should be said that there are "deficient and Indifferent modes [of solicitude] that characterize everyday, average Being-with-one-another" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 158). These include "being for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, [and] not 'mattering' to one another" (p. 158).

In contrast to the indifferent modes of solicitude, is a positive mode, which "has two extreme possibilities" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 158). Both of these possibilities translate to care:

> [Solicitude] can, as it were, take away 'care' from the Other and put itself in his position in concern: it can *leap in* for him. This kind of solicitude takes over for the Other that with which he is to concern himself. . . . In such solicitude, the Other can become one who is dominated and dependent . . . . This kind of solicitude, which leaps in and takes away 'care,' is to a large extent determinative for Being with one another, and pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand. (p. 158)
>
> In contrast to this, there is also the possibility of a kind of solicitude which does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him [ihm *vorausspringt*] in his existentiall potentiality for Being, not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a "*what*" with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for* it. (pp. 158-159)

Wells: As I consider these modes and the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I sense that what you call the "deficient and indifferent" mode exacerbates and escalates the phenomenon. Alternately, the positive mode of

solicitude as caring could manifest in this lived experience as allies who attend either to ready-to-hand concerns or to the existential Being of the one who is socially isolated.

Heidegger: All true. You posed your earlier question as one about relation with others. To that end, I have discussed care. As we end our time together, I will ask you to look once more to see care in terms of *Dasein's* relation with Self. Here, I mean something we have already discussed – conscience:

> *Conscience manifests itself as the call of care*: the caller is Dasein, which, in its thrownness (in its Being-already-in), is anxious about its potentiality-for-Being. The one to whom the appeal is made is the very same Dasein, summoned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being (ahead of itself . . .). Dasein is falling into the "they" (in Being-already-alongside the world of its concern), and it is summoned out of this falling by the appeal. The call of conscience – that is, conscience itself – has its ontological possibility in the fact that Dasein, in the very basis of its Being, is care. (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 322)

Wells: So I am to understand that care not only is care for others, but also it is care for self as it manifests through conscience.

Heidegger: Exactly! I believe our time together well spent. As such, I now take my leave.

Wells: *Danke*, Herr Heidegger, for sharing your wisdom so that, together, each of us may better see, and by seeing, know, this lived experience. *Auf Wiedersehen*!

Going to the Window with Jean-Paul Sartre

Preparing to go to the window with Jean-Paul Sartre, I stand ready to question further the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Sartre (1943/1984) avers:

> In posing a question I stand facing being in a certain way and this relation to being is a relation of being; the judgment is only one optional expression of it. What I expect . . . is a disclosure of being on the basis of which we can make a judgment. (pp. 38-39)

For Sartre, to be open to "disclosure of being" requires the questioner to return to a state of nothingness:

> For man to be able to question, he must be capable of being his own nothingness; that is, he can be at the origin of non-being in being only if his being – in himself and by himself – is paralyzed with nothingness. (p. 85)

Why is nothingness required in order to stand ready to question and invite the disclosure of Being? What is the nature of one's Being when it exists as nothingness? Moreover, existing in a state of nothingness, what more will I see as I gaze upon this phenomenon?

Being-in-itself and being-for-itself. I humbly engage in the following dialogue with Jean-Paul Sartre, as together we see the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Wells: *Bienvenue*, Monsieur Sartre. *Sawubona*!

Sartre: *Yebo sawubona*!

Wells: I invite you here today that, together, we may point to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. As you gaze upon that phenomenon, please share with me what you see.

Sartre: You have positioned this phenomenon as other-imposed. As such, I will begin with a brief introduction of the two regions of being. I ask your patience, knowing that this introduction quickly leads us to our Being with others.

Wells: Of course. When you speak of the two regions of being you speak of being-in-itself and being-for-itself, yes?

Sartre: Quite right! First, let me say this: "Being is not a connection with itself. It is itself" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 27). As such, being-in-itself, the first region of being or "*l'être-en-soi*," is "*solid* (*massif*)"; it has "no within"; it has "nothing secret" (p. 28). "In a

sense we can designate it as a synthesis. But it is the most indissoluble of all: the synthesis of itself with itself" (p. 28).

Wells: It is itself and nothing else?

Sartre: Yes,

> The result is evidently that being is isolated in its being and that it does not enter into any connection with what is not itself. . . . It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as *other-than-another-being*. It can support no connection with the other. (Sartre, 1943/1984, pp. 28-29)

Said quite simply, "Being-in-itself *is*." But what does this truly mean?

> This means that being can neither be derived from the possible nor reduced to the necessary. . . . But neither can being-in-itself be derived from a *possibility*. The possible is a structure of the *for-itself*; that is, it belongs to the other region of being. Being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It *is*. (p. 29)

Wells: In being what it *is*, I also understand being-in-itself described as "non-conscious Being" (Barnes, 1984, p. 800).

Sartre: This is well said and brings us to the second region of being, being-for-itself or "*l'être-pour-soi*" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 28). The for-itself "is a being which is not what it is and which is what it is not" (p. 127).

Wells: This seems quite paradoxical. I'm not sure I follow.

Sartre: I will clarify. "The for-itself – in so far as it *is* – is not its own being (*i.e.*, is not the foundation of it)" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 128). What then, you may ask, is the for-itself? It is "the in-itself losing itself as in-itself in order to found itself as consciousness" (p. 130).

Wells: Let me see if I understand. Being-in-itself is non-conscious Being, while being-for-itself is conscious being.

Sartre: Exactly. Moreover:

> The appearance of the for-itself . . . refers indeed to the effort of an in-itself to found itself; it corresponds to an attempt on the part of being to remove contingency from its being. . . . The for-itself corresponds then to an expanding de-structuring of the in-itself, and the in-itself is nihilated and absorbed in its attempt to found itself. . . . The for-itself[, therefore,] is the foundation of its *consciousness-of-being*. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 133)

Wells: I believe I understand. You mentioned earlier this would lead us to being with others? How so?

Sartre: You surely recall that I said that being-in-itself is isolated and "can support no connection with the other" (Sartre, 1943/1984, pp. 28-29). The for-itself is different:

> The for-itself is not only a being which arises as the nihilation of the in-itself which it is and the internal negation of the in-itself which it is not. . . . The Other by rising up confers on the for-itself a being-in-itself-in-the-midst-of-the-world as a thing among things. (p. 555)

Wells: So, it is the for-itself that engages with others, yes?

Sartre: In a sense. It is the for-itself as it is a being-for-others, that is, "the relation of [one's] *being* to the being of the Other" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 303). This is no easy relation:

> By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other. . . . I recognize that I am as the Other sees me. (p. 302)

Moreover, "I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being" (p. 303). I believe this sets a foundation for looking at your phenomenon of interest, yes?

Relation with the Other. *Wells*: It does! I am eager to know more about the relation with the Other. Your description makes it seem as though the Other is in control by judging and defining me. Is this what you intend?

Sartre: In a certain respect, yes. Let me explain it this way. The relation with the Other begins with a look:

> First – the Other *looks* at me and as such he holds the secret of my being, he knows what I *am*. Thus the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence. The Other has the advantage over me. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 473)

It is here that the relation begins. And:

> If we start with the first revelation of the Other as a look, we must recognize that we experience our inapprehensible being-for-others in the form of a possession. I am possessed by the Other; . . . The Other holds a secret – the secret of what I am. (p. 475)

Wells: You use the word "possession." Do you intend this to mean *control*?

Sartre: Not quite. For, you see, the Other's look "will motivate two opposed attitudes":

> I can attempt to deny that being which is conferred on me from outside; that is, I can turn back upon the Other so as to make an object out of him in turn . . . . But on the other hand, . . . I can seek to recover that freedom and to possess it without removing from it its character of freedom. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 473)

Wells: And by freedom you mean the nature of the for-itself to "choose itself" (Barnes, 1984, p. 803).

Sartre: Quite so.

Wells: Please let me test my understanding. The relation of being with the Other begins with a look from the Other. And while the look is a "form of possession" by the Other, my being responds with an attitude.

Sartre: Exactly! "The for-itself is the foundation . . . of all relation. *The for-itself is relation*" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 472). Concrete relations "represent the various attitudes of the for-itself in a world where there are Others" (p. 471). Furthermore, every

attitude is "aroused" by an "occasion" (p. 533). It is here we can begin to see more clearly this phenomenon that interests you.

Wells: I am eager to see more! As we continue, I want to understand better what you mean by attitude and occasion.

Sartre: Very well. An attitude is a "fundamental reaction to being-for-others as an original situation" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 494), which is, to say, an occasion. Once the relation begins with a look, the for-itself may assume either of the attitudes I mentioned earlier. But assuming *either* is not the same as assuming one *instead of* the other. The for-itself may assume each attitude in turn, and not only once but many times over. "There is no dialectic for my relations toward the Other but rather a circle – although each attempt is enriched by the failure of the other" (p. 474).

Wells: This I understand quite well. As we turn to the *occasion* of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, what attitude do you see?

Sartre: In answering this question, I will begin with the occasion. This particular occasion is

> . . . an act by the Other which puts me in a state of *being subject* to his freedom. This act is in itself humiliating; it is humiliating as the concrete revelation of my instrumental object-ness in the face of the Other's freedom. This revelation is immediately obscured, is buried in the past and becomes opaque. But it leaves in me the feeling that there is "something" to be destroyed if I am to free myself. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 533)

Wells: Your description seems quite negative. Must being-for-itself always stand in opposition to the Other?

Sartre: In answering, I will say this: "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 475). As our conversation unfolds, we will, perhaps, examine alternatives. For now, I will note that "in view of this recognition" – and by this

I mean the revelation that something must be destroyed if I am to be free myself – "the for-itself can project love or hate as it chooses; it can no longer ignore the Other" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 533). Let us gaze upon this phenomenon more purposefully and see what we see.

Wells: Please.

Attitudes toward the Other. *Sartre*: Each of the two fundamental attitudes manifests in multiple ways. From the attitude in which the for-itself "tries to assimilate the Other's freedom" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 474), emerges, love, language, and masochism. From the attitude in which the for-itself seeks to make "an object of the Other" (p. 474) stems indifference, desire, hate, and sadism. While I do not see each of these manifestations in your phenomenon of interest, I do see some. Let us begin with hate, as

> It implies a fundamental resignation; the for-itself abandons its claim to realize any union with the Other; it gives up using the Other as an instrument to recover its own being-in-itself. It wishes simply to rediscover a freedom without factual limits; that is, to get rid of its own inapprehensible being-as-object-for-the-Other and to abolish its dimension of alienation. This is equivalent to projecting the realization of a world in which the Other does not exist. (p. 532)

Wells: Yet, in this lived experience, the Other does exist. As such, how does one reconcile the wish with the reality?

Sartre: It is not reconciled: "In hate there is a given understanding of the fact that my dimension of being-alienated is a *real* enslavement which comes to me through others" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 533). Hate is a failure. "Its initial project is to suppress other consciousnesses. But even if it succeeded in this – *i.e.*, if it could at this moment abolish the Other – it could not bring it about that the Other had not been" (p. 534). As such, it is "the attempt of despair. After the failure of this attempt nothing remains for the

for-itself except to re-enter the circle and allow itself to be indefinitely tossed from one to the other of the two fundamental attitudes" (p. 534).

Wells: I'm not certain I would have named this attitude "hate," but I do appreciate the sentiment and recognize it in the lived experience that I and others share. More specifically, I see the sense of despair evidence in actions, which I characterize as betrayal, and in the decision to leave place.

Sartre: Quite true. In beginning, with hate, I identify where one might, in fact, end, especially if one considers the decision to leave place. In leaving, one abolishes the Other from the everyday present and from one's everyday presence.

Let us see which other attitudes may help us to see better this phenomenon. Indifference may emerge in a surprising way:

> *Indifference towards others* [is] a kind of *blindness* with respect to others. . . . I do not suffer from blindness as a *state*. I *am* my own blindness with regard to others. . . . I scarcely notice them; I act as if I were alone in the world. I brush up against "people" as I brush against a wall; I avoid them as I avoid obstacles. . . I do not even imagine that they can *look* at me. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 495)

As I gaze upon this phenomenon, I sense that indifference may manifest as an attitude when the for-itself is confronted by the look of the Other, not the one who imposed the social isolation, but the Other who could prove an ally in this lived experience.

Wells: I had not considered this, but I can see this to be true. However, I understand that with indifference "I do not feel myself alienated" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 496). Yet, the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation is one of innate alienation.

Sartre: True. But note, I do not say that one *is* not alienated. Only that one does not *feel* so. This may be especially true when you allow your notion of the Other to extend to one who is a potential ally:

> The Other as freedom and my objectivity as my alienated-self are there, unperceived, not thematized, but given in my very comprehension of the world and of my being in the world. . . . Hence [I have] a perpetual feeling of lack and of uneasiness. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 496)

Wells: Am I to understand that the attitude of indifference leads to a kind of missed opportunity?

Sartre: Quite possibly. If we think of it this way, it is the opportunity of "us," an experience of "solidarity with the Other" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 541).

Wells: I appreciate this fully and am glad that our discussion moved me beyond thinking of the Other only as the one who imposed the social isolation.

Sartre: Excellent! Let us briefly discuss the attitudes of desire and sadism as they appear in this phenomenon.

Wells: The mere mention of both surprises me, as I would not have considered them applicable.

Sartre: Then, allow me to share what I see. I suspect that what remains hidden for you, although becoming more palpable as our conversation continues, is the presence of multiple Others. You have been quite focused on the Other as the one who imposed social isolation. In truth, there are many Others that appear in this phenomenon.

Wells: I am humbled by your astute observation. Please continue.

Sartre: Certainly. Of desire, "we say that it *takes hold of you*, that it *overwhelms you*, that it *paralyzes you*" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 504). As "desire is an attitude aiming at

enchantment. . . . . It is necessary that [the Other] be "caught" (p. 511). But which Other? Before I address that question, allow me to say:

> The Other cannot be caught. In the end:
>
> What I take in my hands is something else than what I wanted to take. I feel this and I suffer from it but without being capable of saying what I wanted to take; for along with my troubled disturbance the very comprehension of desire escapes me. I am like a sleepwalker who wakens to find himself in the process of gripping the edge of the bed while he can not [*sic*] recall the nightmare which provoked his gesture. It is this situation which is at the origin of sadism. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 517)

Wells: I am confounded to consider how it could be true that desire begets sadism.

Sartre: It is likely because you do not understand the true nature of sadism, particularly as it applies to this lived experience. Consider that

> Sadism is passion, barrenness, and tenacity. It is tenacity because it is the state of a For-itself which apprehends itself as engaged without understanding *in what* it is engaged and which persists in its engagement without having a clear consciousness of the goal which it has set for itself or a precise recollection of the value which it has attached to this engagement. It is barrenness because it appears when desire is emptied of its trouble. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 517)

As you consider this, remove any thoughts of sexual sadism, as these will only limit your openness to understanding. Having said this, "sadism is an effort to incarnate the Other through violence" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 518). In this way,

> Sadism like desire seeks to strip the Other of the acts which hide him. It seeks to reveal the flesh beneath the action. But whereas the For-itself in desire loses itself in its own flesh in order to reveal to the Other that he too is flesh, the sadist refuses his own flesh at the same time that he uses instruments to reveal by force the Other's flesh to him. . . . It *wants* the non-reciprocity of . . . relations. (p. 518)

By now, have you guessed which Other the for-itself so desires and in failing that consummation turns to sadistic force to reveal the flesh of the Other it once desired?

Wells: Perhaps, although it seems the specter of an Other, rather than an actual Other. Your description, although a bit graphic, seems to point to the Other that exists

before the occasion of other-imposed social isolation. As I recall my own experience and others' descriptions of this phenomenon, it is the Other that I am before other-imposed social isolation that the for-itself desires. Still, I am not certain I see how sadism follows.

Sartre: Try to see what I see. Sadism emerges in what you name "the looking glass" experience. The instruments one uses are those of secret, shadow, and inauthentic selves – all in an attempt to carve out the authentic "before" Other. Sadism is, as you characterized it, a yearning to be real.

Wells: Once more, I am humbled by your observations, while I am also delighted, for we are revealing more of this phenomenon than I dreamed possible.

We seem to have exhausted the fundamental attitude in which the for-itself seeks to make "an object of the Other" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 474). Do you see any of the manifestations of the second attitude, in which the for-itself "tries to assimilate the Other's freedom" (p. 474), evidenced in this phenomenon?

Sartre: Perhaps just one – masochism. Assuming a "masochistic attitude,"

> I attempt therefore to engage myself wholly in my being-as-object. I refuse to be anything more than an object. I rest upon the Other. . . . I wish to be desired, I make myself in shame an object of desire.
>
> Masochism, like sadism, is the assumption of guilt. I am guilty due to the very fact that I am an object, I am guilty toward myself since I consent to my absolute alienation. . . . Masochism is an attempt not to fascinate the Other by means of my objectivity but to cause myself to be fascinated by my objectivity-for-others; . . . Masochism is characterized as a species of vertigo, vertigo not before a precipice of rock and earth but before the abyss of the Other's subjectivity. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 492)

Does this ring true based on what you already see of this phenomenon?

Wells: It does, particularly as I consider the decision to remain in place. Remaining in place seems an acceptance of my being-as-object to the Other, especially

when you consider the notions of guilt and consent to alienation. I am also struck by your description of masochism as vertigo. While I explore the mournful, as well as the healing, nature of the decision to remain in place, I also represent the sensation of what you aptly termed vertigo. Remaining in place is a dizzying and confusing condition. Remaining in place is to exist without equilibration and balance.

We have discussed much, have we not? What more do you see as we stand together and look at this lived experience?

An occasion for anguish, bad faith, and sincerity. *Sartre*: I ask that you consider the occasion that this lived experience presents and one's reaction to it. It is fair to agree that this occasion may be considered dangerous or threatening, yes?

Wells: Quite so!

Sartre: With this agreement, I share that

> Most of the time dangerous or threatening situations present themselves in facets; they will be apprehended through a feeling of fear or of anguish, according to whether we envisage the situation as acting on the man or the man as acting on the situation. (Sartre, 1943/1984, pp. 65-66)
>
> A situation provokes fear if there is a possibility of my life being changed from without; my being provokes anguish to the extent that I distrust myself and my own reactions in that situation. (p. 65)

I can well imagine that fear is possible, probable even, as one considers the potential loss of employment or professional reputation as a condition of this lived experience. Do you agree?

Wells: I do.

Sartre: Yet, in standing before this phenomenon, it is not so much fear as anguish that I truly see. "Anguish is distinguished from fear in that fear is fear of beings in the

world whereas anguish is anguish before myself" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 66). In this situation, which we have agreed is dangerous and threatening,

> I project before myself a certain number of future conducts destined to keep the threats of the world at a distance from me. These conducts are *my* possibilities. I escape fear by the very fact that I am placing myself on a plane where *my own* possibilities are substituted for the transcendent probabilities where human action had no place. (p. 67)
>
> But I am in anguish precisely because any conduct on my part is only *possible*, and this means that while constituting a totality of motives *for* pushing away that situation, I at the same moment apprehend these motives as not sufficiently effective. (p. 68)

Wells: You well describe the turmoil that I experience and others describe. I give this state of turmoil many names: arrhythmic dis-place-ment, residing in home-less place, and faith-less dwelling.

Sartre: You also share that you are not yourself. This is true because

> . . . a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I *am* not the self which I will be. First I am not that self because time separates me from it. Secondly, I am not that self because what I am is not the foundation of what I will be. Finally I am not that self because no actual existent can determine strictly what I am going to be. . . . Anguish is precisely my consciousness of being my own future, in the mode of not-being. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 68)
>
> The decisive conduct will emanate from a self which I am not yet. Thus the self which I am depends on the self which I am not yet to the exact extent that the self which I am not yet does not depend on the self which I am. (p. 69)

Wells: How is one to resolve this duplicity?

Sartre: What I see with this phenomenon is also true of many others. One attempts to flee anguish through distraction by one's possibility. You will note my use of the singular. For distraction exists "in relation to the possibles opposed to *my* possible" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 79). What happens is this:

> I force myself . . . to *be distracted* from the constitution of other possibilities which contradict my possibility. In truth I can not [*sic*] avoid positing their

> existence by the same movement which generates the chosen possibility as mine. I can not [*sic*] help constituting them as *living* possibilities; that is, *as having the possibility of becoming my possibilities*. (p. 80)

Wells: In this lived experience, before making the decision to leave, what you call "my possibility" is the decision to remain in place. But I'm not sure why it is necessary – or even so – that one chooses to remain so myopic about other possibilities.

Sartre: Ah. "Such then is the totality of processes by which we try to hide anguish from ourselves; we apprehend our particular possible by avoiding considering all other possibles, which we make the possibles of an undifferentiated Other" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 82). Thus is the nature of distraction. In doing so, the other possibles

> . . . would be disarmed of their threatening character. They would not *interest* me; the chosen possible would appear – due to its selection – as my only concrete possible, and consequently the nothingness which separates me from it and which actually confers on it its possibility would collapse. (pp. 80-81)

Wells: Before we continue, please allow me to check my understanding. I remain in anguish when I stand before all that is possible. In this state of considering my present self and my future self and the possibilities that belong to each, "nothingness slip[s] into the heart of this relation." In order to "flee anguish," my present self distracts itself by selecting "my possibility." In this lived experience, remaining in place is my possibility, which I, as my present self, select, at least temporarily, to the exclusion of all other possibilities. The decision to remain in place collapses nothingness because I have excluded all else. But without nothingness, I am, in a sense, trapped by my singular possibility. It is only when I open and consider other possibilities that nothingness and anguish return.

Sartre: You understand well. The question you should now ask of me is, "Do these various constructions succeed in stifling or hiding our anguish?" (Sartre,

1943/1984, p. 82). My answer to such a question is this: It is certain that we can not [*sic*] overcome anguish, for we *are* anguish. As for veiling it, . . . we must note the particular type of behavior which it indicates" (p. 82).

Wells: In the case of this particular phenomenon, is it possible to veil anguish?

Sartre: I would say veiling one's anguish is not possible. We should consider:

> But if I *am* what I wish to veil, the question takes on quite another aspect. I can in fact wish "not to see" a certain aspect of my being only if I am acquainted with the aspect which I do not wish to see. This means that in my being I must indicate this aspect in order to be able to turn myself away from it; better yet, I must think of it constantly in order to take care not to think of it. In this connection it must be understood not only that I must of necessity perpetually carry within me what I wish to flee but also that I must aim at the object of my flight in order to see it. . . . in a word, I flee in order not to know, but I can not [*sic*] avoid knowing that I am fleeing; and the flight from anguish is only a mode of becoming conscious of anguish. Thus anguish, properly speaking, can be neither hidden nor avoided. (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 83)

What I see with this phenomenon, albeit also in others, is that the inability to extinguish anguish leads one to bad faith. I say bad faith because in this journey of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, one enters "the possibility of denying himself" (p. 87).

Wells: My experience suggests this is true. In what ways do you also see this? Moreover, in whom, or what, does one have bad faith?

Sartre: We acknowledge secret, shadow, and inauthentic selves as part of this lived experience. "In bad faith human reality is constituted as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 107). "Frequently [bad faith] is identified with falsehood" (p. 87). The fact is "that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth" (p. 89).

I can see you are anxious to react. Before you do so, allow me to say a little more.

There are "patterns of bad faith" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 96). One pattern is "to postpone the moment of decision as long as possible" (p. 97). Another represents a certain duplicity of being. "There is between these two aspects of my being, no difference between appearance and being – as if I were to myself the truth of myself and as if the Other possessed only a deformed image of me" (p. 100).

Wells: I suggest that what we are, in moments of bad faith, secret, shadow, and inauthentic selves.

Sartre: Quite true. Also, one must beware, for

> The true problem of bad faith stems evidently from the fact that bad faith is *faith*. . . . Bad faith is belief. . . . Bad faith is a type of being in the world, like waking or dreaming, which by itself tends to perpetuate itself. (Sartre, 1943/1984, pp. 112, 113)

Wells: All this talk of anguish and bad faith leaves me feeling hopeless. As you see it, are anguish and bad faith all that this lived experience offers?

Sartre: I suggest you already know the answer to your question. In seeing this lived experience, you recognize what is needed to move beyond bad faith and name it in two ways: sitting with a healing stillness and crossing the threshold. My name for it is good faith. "Good faith seeks to flee the inner disintegration of my being in the direction of the in-itself which it should be and is not" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 116). Perhaps, in your earlier words, it is a return to true self, to the authentic being that *is*.

Wells: Yes, I know that this lived experience also brings with it strength – a certain return to true self.

Sartre: This strength you identify is sincerity. "Sincerity [is] the antithesis of bad faith. . . . It is necessary that a man be *for himself* only what he *is*" (Sartre, 1943/1984, pp. 100-101). Further,

> If a man is what he is, bad faith is forever impossible and candor ceases to be his ideal and becomes instead his being. . . . I express what I am. It posits not merely an ideal of knowing but an ideal of *being*. . . . In this sense it is necessary that we *make ourselves* what we are. But what *are we* then if we have the constant obligation to make ourselves what we are, if our mode of being is having the obligation to be what we are? (p. 101)

"To be sincere, we said, is to be what one is" (pp. 105-106). And with this thought, I leave you the hope you know to exist, and take my leave.

Wells: *Merci*, Monsieur Sartre, for sharing your wisdom so that, together, each of us may better see, and by seeing, know, this lived experience. *Au revoir*!

Going to the Window with Martin Buber

In going to the window with Martin Buber, I stand ready to face the question that Buber (1947/2006) claims will awaken me to my current standing in life. Buber exposes this question in the opening chapter of *The Way of Man*. He tells of an exchange between an imprisoned Rabbi Shneur Zalman and the chief of the gendarmes, who asks the Rabbi what is meant when "God, the all-knowing, said to Adam: 'Where art thou?'" (p. 5). The Rabbi replies that the question – "Where are you in your world?" (p. 6) – is a universal one to every man. Buber explains:

> In so asking, God does not expect to learn something he does not know; what he wants is to produce an effect in man which can only be produced by just such a question, provided that it reaches man's heart – that man allows it to reach his heart. . . . This question is designed to awaken man and destroy his system of hideouts; it is to show man to what pass he has come and to awake in him the great will to get out of it. Everything depends on whether man faces the question. (pp. 7-8)

Facing "the Voice," Buber claims, is "decisive heart-searching" that marks "the beginning of the way in man's life" (p. 9). As I stand at the window with Buber, may my own heart-searching be not "a sterile kind . . . which leads to nothing but self-torture,

despair and still deeper enmeshment," rather the kind that is decisive and "the beginning of [one's] way" (p. 9).

Seeing the two-fold nature of things. I humbly engage in the following dialogue with Martin Buber, as together we see the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Wells: *Willkommen*, Herr Buber. *Sawubona*!

Buber: *Yebo sawubona*!

Wells: I invite you here today that, together, we may point to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. As you gaze upon that phenomenon, please share with me what you see.

Buber: Allow me to begin with an observation that speaks to the nature of a phenomenon, indeed, any phenomenon. Throughout my observation, we will weave your specific phenomenon of interest. It is in this way that I may share what I see.

Wells: Of course. I am eager for our dialogue.

Buber: In pointing to this phenomenon, you seek to see it. You ask me to share what I see. In return, I ask, What does it mean to *see* a thing? I suspect one might answer to see is to comprehend and to know. But one must appreciate the constitution, dare I say the temperament, of that seeing, that comprehending, and that knowing: "'This is the glorious paradox of our existence that all comprehensibility of the world is only a footstool of its incomprehensibility" (Buber, 1957/1999e, p. 27).

Wells: You are saying one may never know a thing fully. There is always more that remains incomprehensible and unknown.

Buber: Quite true. "But this incomprehensibility has a new, a wonderful secret to bestow; . . . The world is not comprehensible, but it is embraceable: through the embracing of one of its beings" (Buber, 1957/1999e, p. 27).

Wells: As you see it, how are comprehending and embracing different? Both seem to intimate knowing, yes?

Buber: Ah, quite true again. But they are different ways of knowing:

> Each thing and being has a twofold nature: the passive, absorbable, usable, dissectible, comparable, combinable, rationalizable, and the other, the active, non-absorbable, unusable, un-dissectable, incomparable, noncombinable, nonrationalizable. This is the confronting, the shaping, the bestowing in things. (Buber, 1957/1999e, p. 27)

Wells: So, if I am to understand correctly, it is this first nature, the passive nature, that I can comprehend, while it is this second nature, the active nature, that I must embrace.

Buber: Exactly! Moreover:

> He who truly experiences a thing so that it springs up to meet him and embrace him of itself has in that thing known the world. (Buber, 1957/1999e, p. 27)

Wells: What you share is in many ways familiar to me. Yet, I wonder how I am to recognize the difference between the two natures of a thing.

Buber: For many, this is not always easy. Let me say more about the twofold nature. I begin first with man's two-fold attitude, which I signify with two primary word combinations – *I-It* and *I-Thou*. First know:

> Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations.
>
> Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.
>
> Primary words are spoken from the being. . . .

> The primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being.
>
> The primary word *I-It* can never be spoken with the whole being. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 3)

This will become clearer as we converse further.

Wells: I trust this to be true. Please continue with your observations.

Experience and relation. *Buber*: I see the distinction in the two-fold nature as one between experience and relation:

> As experience, the world belongs to the primary word *I-It*.
>
> The primary word *I-Thou* establishes the world of relation. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 6)

I will clarify.

> It is said that man experiences his world. What does that mean?
>
> Man travels over the surface of things and experiences them. He extracts knowledge about their constitution from them: he wins an experience from them. He experiences what belongs to the things. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 5)

Wells: And this is the first of the twofold nature, the *I-It*?

Buber: Yes. For this first nature, know:

> The man who experiences has not [*sic*] part in the world. For it is "in him" and not between him and the world that the experience arises.
>
> The world has no part in the experience. It permits itself to be experienced, but has no concern in the matter. For it does nothing to the experience, and the experience does nothing to it. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 5)

Wells: As you explain it, experience is something that happens within me.

Experience is the first of the twofold natures, the one that, with my *I-It* attitude, I absorb, dissect, compare, and rationalize. To embrace a thing, however, is to know its second nature, and, for that, I must assume an *I-Thou* attitude.

Buber: You come closer to understanding. However, *I-Thou* is not an attitude you can assume. Rather, "the world of relation arises" (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 6).

Wells: You share an unexpected distinction. Help me understand how the "world of relation" arises.

Buber: "The spheres in which the world of relation arises are three" – "our life with nature," "our life with men," and "our life with spiritual beings" (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 6). In our life with men, which interests us here today, "the relation is open and in the form of speech. We can give and accept the *Thou*" (p. 6).

Wells: Are you saying that to embrace a thing, I engage in an *I-Thou* attitude through speech?

Buber: You simplify it too much. "The *Thou* meets me through grace – it is not found by seeking" (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 11). One must "body it forth" (p. 10). To explain what it is to body forth, I offer you comparisons. "To produce is to draw forth, to invent is to find, to shape is to discover. In bodying forth I disclose. I lead the [thing] across – in to the world of *It*" (p. 10).

Wells: Disclosing the phenomenon feels familiar and right. But two of your comments remain confusing to me. How am I to embrace without first seeking? Also, what happens to the *I-Thou* relation if, as you say, bodying forth the thing leads across "to the world of *It*"?

Buber: Before I answer this directly, I will first say more about meeting the *Thou*:

> The *Thou* meets me. But I step into direct relation with it. Hence the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one; just as any action of the whole being . . . .
>
> The primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being. Concentration and fusion into the whole being can never take place through my

> agency, nor can it ever take place without me. I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I*, I say *Thou*.
>
> All real living is meeting. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 11)

But this meeting, while desired, is not without risk, because "the primary word can only be spoken with the whole being":

> He who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself. The work does not suffer me . . . to turn aside and relax in the world of *It*; but it commands. If I do not serve it aright it is broken, or it breaks me. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 10)

Wells: You indicate this as a direct, while also gross, relation. If this is true, how am I to reconcile my earlier question of leading the *Thou* into the world of *It*?

Buber: I will answer in this way: "In the face of the directness of the relation everything indirect becomes irrelevant. It is also irrelevant if my *Thou* is already the *It* for other *I*'s ('an object of general experience')" (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 12). Moreover, "the *Thou* appears . . . where everything else can be only the background out of which it emerges, not its boundary and measured limit" (p. 30).

I can see you still are struggling with the coexistence of the twofold nature. I offer you this insight:

> The world of *It* is set in the context of space and time.
>
> The world of *Thou* is not set in the context of either of these.
>
> The particular *Thou*, after the relational event has run its course, is bound to become an *It*.
>
> The particular *It*, by entering the relational event, may become a *Thou*. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 33)

Wells: Do I understand correctly that the *It* and the *Thou* coexist naturally, and I, or any other, moves between them regularly and fluidly?

Buber: In essence. But know this also:

> [Space and time] are the two basic privileges of the world of *It*. They move man to look on the world of *It* as the world in which he has to live, and in which it is comfortable to live, as the world indeed, which offers him all manner of incitements and excitements, activity and knowledge. In this chronicle of solid benefits the moments of the *Thou* appear as strange lyric and dramatic episodes, seductive and magical, but tearing us away to dangerous extremes, loosening the well-tried context, leaving more questions than satisfaction behind them, shattering security – in short, uncanny moments we can well dispense with. For since we are bound to leave them and go back into the "world," why not remain in it? (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 34)

Wells: This description reminds me of the lived experience for which I invite you here today. The phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is one that proves, as you say, strange, dramatic, and uncanny, tearing one away from and loosening the context of what one may call typical work-place experience. As I and others describe it, this lived experience, like your characterization, leaves more questions than satisfaction and, undoubtedly, shatters security. In all these ways, and, if indeed, this experience represents an *I-Thou* relation, it seems the type that one could easily dispense with, yes?

Buber: I must point out that you seem to speak of one's response to the experience rather than to the relation with the phenomenon. Consider this:

> Spirit in its human manifestation is a response of man to his *Thou*. . . . [The spirit is] the response to the *Thou* which appears and addresses him out of the mystery. . . . Spirit is not in the *I*, but between the *I* and the *Thou*. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe. Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his *Thou*. He is able to, if he enters into relation with his whole being. Only in virtue of his power to enter into relation is he able to live in the spirit. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 39)

I speak of spirit as a response to the *Thou* but only as one is able to enter into the relation with his whole being. Recall, I mention earlier that "the *Thou* appears . . . where everything else can be only the background out of which it emerges" (p. 30).

Wells: This two-fold nature is complex. In identifying spirit, you also seem to speak of response. Yet you question my earlier observations as ones of response rather than relation. I am not sure I appreciate these distinctions.

Buber: I suspect spirit is best understood as the *character* of the response:

> But the destiny of the relational event is here set forth in the most powerful way. The stronger the response the more strongly does it bind up the *Thou* and banish it to be an object. Only silence before the *Thou* – silence of all tongues, silent patience in the undivided word that precedes the formed and vocal response – leaves the *Thou* free, and permits man to take his stand with it in the reserve where the spirit is not manifest, but *is*. Every response binds up the *Thou* in a world of *It*. That is the melancholy of man, and his greatness. (Buber, 1923/1958, pp. 39-40)

Wells: It becomes quite clear it is inevitable, then, for the *Thou* to become an *It*. While remaining true, one is able to stand in the presence of *Thou*. To invite disclosure of the *Thou* requires silence. I now understand better that my earlier observations of this phenomenon were those of an *I-It* nature.

Buber: Indeed. To assist with your distinctions, consider:

> The man who has become conscious of *I*, that is the man who says *I-It*, stands before things . . . . Now with the magnifying glass of peering observation he bends over particulars and objectifies them, or with the field-glass of remote inspection he objectifies them and arranges them as scenery, he isolates them in observation without any feeling of their exclusiveness, or he knits them into a scheme of observation without any feeling of universality. (Buber, 1923/1958, pp. 29-30)
>
> This is the part of the basic truth of the human world, that only *It* can be arranged in order. Only when things, from being our *Thou*, become our *It*, can they be co-ordinated. The *Thou* knows no system of co-ordination. (pp. 30-31)

Wells: Then, all that we are discussing as it relates to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place – the experience itself, as well as this process of phenomenological exploration – it is all *I-It*?

Buber: To that question I offer two thoughts. First:

> . . . a world that is ordered is not the world-order. There are moments of silent depth in which you look on the world-order fully present. . . . These moments are immortal, and most transitory of all; . . . Their power invades creation and the knowledge of man, beams of their power stream into the ordered world and dissolve it again and again. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 31)

Wells: What you are saying, in essence, is the transitory power of the *I-Thou* relation re-orders our world.

Buber: Quite so. It is an elusive concept – the difference between the *I-It* knowing and the *I-Thou knowing*. It may help to consider the relation as it bears on one's Being:

> Every real relation in the world is consummated in the interchange of actual and potential being; every isolated *Thou* is bound to enter the chrysalis state of the *It* in order to take wings anew. But in pure relation potential being is simply actual being as it draws breath, and in it the *Thou* remains present. (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 34)

Wells: Your descriptors of transitory and elusive speak powerfully to this phenomenon of interest, which is often difficult to relay. Whether *as* lived or *through* reflection, knowing and telling are not easily bridged.

Knowing and telling. *Buber*: This is quite true. Let us spend a few moments exploring this knowing and telling and the effort required, as you say, to bridge the two. The type of knowing you describe with this phenomenon, perhaps with any phenomenon, can be named intuition:

> . . . intuition [is]where our whole being becomes one in the act of knowing. The intellect, which divides the self, holds us apart from the world that it assists us in utilizing. Instinct joins us to the world, but not as persons. Intuition, through vision, binds us as persons with the world which is over against us, binds us to it without being able to make us one with it, through a vision that cannot be absolute. This vision is a limited one. . . . Yet it affords us a glimpse in unspeakable intimacy into hidden depths. (Buber, 1957/1999a, p. 86)

Wells: Our conversation continues to accentuate the limitations of knowing, while acknowledging intimate knowing as mere glimpses. Do you find this to be true?

Buber: Completely. I should also like to accede that this knowing is a journey of importance, for

> . . . in order to arrive somewhere it is not enough to *go towards* something; one must also *proceed from* something. . . . The place which one can actually proceed from – not persuade oneself that one does so, but really take one's start form – must be something other than a standpoint or an individual station. It must be a real and primal ground: a primal reality that does not abandon me on the way to my goal. . . . It must be one that has produced me and one that is ready, if I entrust myself to it, to bear me, to guard me, to educate me. (Buber, 1957/1999b, p. 98)

Wells: This rings true on many levels of my own journey with this phenomenon. To consider it "a real and primal ground" is a somber honoring of this experience.

Buber: I can see this would be true. You also asked about "telling." Deep knowing allows one to tell. As I consider telling, I reflect on interpretation, specifically interpreting a text, which applies to our current discussion since your current journey includes interpreting an experience and documenting that interpretation through text. For these reasons, consider this:

> I know that my interpreting, like everyone else's, is conditioned through my being. But if I attend as faithfully as I can to what it contains of word and texture, of sound and rhythmic structure, of open and hidden connections, my interpretation will not have been made in vain – I find something, I have found something. And if I show what I have found, I guide him who lets himself be guided to the reality of the text. To him whom I teach I make visible the working forces of the text that I have experienced. (Buber, 1957/1999b, pp. 100-101)

Wells: I resonate with your portrayal of what it means to interpret. In particular, I am struck by the notions of finding and guiding others. You speak of the reality and working forces of the text. By these, do you suggest the text's revelation of the phenomenon's true essence?

Buber: In part, perhaps. However, "it is not granted us to possess the truth; but he who believes in it and serves it has a share in building its kingdom" (Buber, 1957/1999b,

p. 101). To tell what one knows, what one finds, may be thought of as this: standing firm where one stands.

Wells: I am not certain what you mean by this.

Buber:

> This standing firm where one stands must not be understood as a renunciation of the approach to truth, but as the opening out moment by moment of the one approach that exists; for it exists at every moment when a person really stands there where he stands. . . . There is no other means of obtaining truth than the lived hour. (Buber, 1957/1999c, p. 92)

Wells: Allow me to check my understanding by synthesizing across this part of our conversation. One begins from a primal ground that not only produces me, but also bears, guards, and educates me. This represents my knowing. To bridge to telling, I must stand firm where I stand. This allows me to reveal, what you call, the lived hour, which is my means of obtaining truth. Also, through telling, I offer faithfully my interpretation, which, of itself, is a truth, and requires me to invite the phenomenon's disclosure.

Buber: You understand truly. I remind you that this work is not simple and without effort. I mention earlier that the *I-Thou* relation, meeting the *Thou*, involves risk. It is also, however, not without reward:

> True philosophy is a loving philosophy. To him who pursues such philosophy a secret meaning opens, when he experiences a thing of the world – the law of that thing that opened itself to none before him. This meaning comes not as an object but as something that shatters him and discloses to him his own meaning – the meaning of all the years of his life and all its destiny, the meaning of his sorrowful and exalted thinking. (Buber, 1957/1999e, p. 29)

Wells: Once more, your words echo what I and others share about our lived experience with this phenomenon. Perhaps it is the shattering that prompts us to bridge knowing and telling, especially through text.

Buber: If this rings so truly for you, there is one final thing you must know about telling, which is your present work with this text: "All we can do is to work from the place and moment where we are, and to hope that our work, if it succeeds in being true to our intention, will not remain unblessed by the spirit" (Buber, 1957/1999d, p. 71). For to "reveal [a thing] in its essence, bestows on each the possibility of also discovering and animating [it] in himself" (p. 43). And with this, I take my leave.

Wells: *Danke*, Herr Buber, for sharing your wisdom so that, together, each of us may better see, and by seeing, know, this lived experience. *Auf Wiedersehen*!

Remaining at the Window

As Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber exit, each in turn, I remain at the window. I continue to gaze at the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. In going to the window with these philosophers, I invite further this phenomenon's disclosure. What now do I see and reveal? In what ways does this lived experience remain one of being lost and forgotten while remaining in place?

Seeing a journey that points the way. Before turning specifically to the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I first acknowledge the gift of Martin Buber. Buber (1923/1958) draws an essential distinction between the duality of the two-fold nature of Being. His distinction speaks to the journey of pointing the way and revealing a phenomenon. Experience, first and foremost, has a passive nature and belongs to the *I-It* world that is comprehensible only in part. Relation, on the other hand, has an active nature and establishes the *I-Thou* world that is embraceable.

In the journey to know a phenomenon, one "says *I-It* [to] stand before things" with "peering observation" (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 29). To say *I-It* is to arrange and co-ordinate in order to effect "a world that is ordered" (p. 31). One does not, in truth, say *I-*

Thou, for "it is not found by seeking"; rather, "the *Thou* meets me through grace" (p. 11). In *I-Thou* moments, which Buber claims are immortal and transitory, one glimpses the "silent depth" (p. 31) of the phenomenon.

Both *I-It* and *I-Thou* moments lead to an act of knowing Buber (1923/1958) calls intuition. Intuition is a "vision [that] binds us as persons with the world" (p. 86). While intuition's vision is limited and cannot be absolute, it "affords us a glimpse in unspeakable intimacy into [the] hidden depths" (p. 86) of the phenomenon. Buber cautions that the journey to knowing is not only one of *going towards* something, but also one of *proceeding from* a "real and primal ground" to which "I entrust myself" (p. 98).

The journey to revealing a phenomenon is one of knowing and also of telling. In telling, I share what I find with one "who lets himself be guided to the reality" (Buber, 1923/1958, p. 101) of the phenomenon. This reality can be understood as obtaining truth in the lived hour by "standing firm where one stands" and "opening out [the phenomenon] moment by moment" (p. 92). It is a journey of "loving philosophy" in which the "secret meaning [of the phenomenon] opens" as it has "opened itself to none before" (p. 29). To disclose this meaning is to shatter the one who seeks and disclose the seeker's own meaning.

Seeing a lived experience that collapses everydayness. The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is what Sartre (1943/1984) calls an occasion, an original situation that triggers an attitude that he defines as a "fundamental reaction to being-for-others" (p. 494). Heidegger (1927/1962) describes such a situation as an "abrupt arousal" that serves as a call or a push (p. 316). It is the kind of lived experience that disrupts the routine everydayness of one's life. In routine everydayness, I

am in place. I am implaced. I am, as Heidegger notes, "Being-among-one-other" (p. 166). I am part of the "they," where "everyone is the other, and no one is himself" (p. 165). I am a "nobody" (p. 166).

Implaced, I enjoy a public Being that passes as familiar while, in truth, "everything gets obscured" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 165) in the generalness of the "they." In considering everydayness and the occasions that disrupt it, Heidegger challenges my accepted notions of authenticity and inauthenticity. My work-place existence prior to the occasion of other-imposed social isolation is obscured in the "they." I am inauthentic, for everydayness is an average state-of-Being, for which I am not exceptional and all is customary. In my inauthenticity, I am, in Sartre's (1943/1984) terms, "being-for-itself" (p. 28), a conscious Being that is in relation to the Other.

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place dis-places me. The everyday familiarity of the they-world collapses (Heidegger, 1927/1962). My "they-self" (p. 312) disappears. The occasion of other-imposed social isolation forces the "I *myself*" (p. 312) of my Being to go in search of itself. It is a search for true existence, rather than the "they-self" that remains merely "an entity present-at-hand" (p. 312). In as much, the disappearance of the "they-self" is a move toward authenticity. The push of other-imposed social isolation proves to be a "voice of conscience" (p. 313) that is, in essence, the "call of care" of self (p. 322).

Seeing a lived experience that triggers anxiety and anguish. I characterize the dis-place-ment of this lived experience as arrhythmic. Heidegger (1927/1962) names it anxiety. Sartre (1943/1984) labels it anguish. Heidegger's notion of anxiety supports the feeling of home-less place or "not-being-at-home" (p. 233). I lose my faith-ful connection

to everydayness and Others. I enter "into the existential 'mode' of the '*not-at-home*'" (p. 233). I enter faith-less place where I am without the Others who have defined me and "hold the secret of my being" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 473).

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation might, in truth, be an occasion for fear – fear of loss of employment and fear of damaged professional reputation. For Heidegger (1927/1962), fear is a "shrinking back" from "an entity within-the-world" that "threaten[s]" (p. 231). For Sartre (1943/1984), fear stems from the "possibility of my life being changed from without," where the situation acts on the individual. In my own experience, and in the experiences others share with me, the initial reaction to this lived experience is not one of fear but one of Heideggerian anxiety – a fleeing from something that is so close as to be oppressive and stifling, while remaining unknown and "nowhere" (p. 231) and everywhere at once. I and others describe an early reaction in which we carefully construct an alternate world that suggests Sartre-ian anguish – a distrust of any ability to "push away [the] situation" (p. 68). We acknowledge a distrust that is so strong as to render us incapable of considering and acting, at least initially, on the possibility of leaving place.

To escape anguish and the nothingness that exists between "the self which I will be" and the "not-being" (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 68) I am at present, each shrinks the world-of-Being, at least for a while, to the single possibility of remaining in place. Remaining in place, however, leaves me lost and forgotten to true being. It leads to what Sartre calls "bad faith" (p. 87), which represents hiding from and denying self. Those who live the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place recognize bad

faith as not being ourselves, and as assuming secret and shadow selves that are at odds with former everyday selves.

Seeing a lived experience that returns authenticity. In making the decision to remain in place, it seems I lose myself. Sartre (1943/1984) suggests this loss as an "inner disintegration of my being" (p. 116). Restoring Being requires good faith. What Sartre identifies as good faith, Heidegger (1927/1962) recognizes as the "voice of conscience" (p. 313). Heidegger reminds us that the voice of conscience, alone, is not enough to bring us to conscience: "To the call of conscience there corresponds a possible hearing" (p. 314). Hearing requires "resoluteness" (p. 314) of discourse between the voice of conscience and Dasein itself.

Heidegger (1927/1962) claims discourse is possible only "*in the mode of keeping silent*" and when *Dasein* "has been appealed to and summoned, [*sic*] into the reticence of itself" (p. 318). Considering the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I recognize keeping silent as sitting with stillness, a time for healing and renewal, a kind of homecoming to self. It is a time to surrender to suffering so that one can attend to wounds and heal brokenness. It is a time to linger long enough at the threshold to open to possibilities other than remaining in place. For Heidegger, opening to these possibilities of Being modifies "the they-self in an existentiell manner so that it becomes *authentic* Being-one's-Self" (p. 313). In returning to authenticity, one chooses "to stand by one's Self" (p. 166), no longer lost and forgotten in the everydayness of remaining in place.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

> To *do* hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal. (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 18)

As I stand at the window, I point to the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, a single aspect of the life-world of work and work-place. I choose the hermeneutic phenomenological process as a means of seeing this phenomenon more clearly and for revealing it more fully to myself and others through descriptive interpretation. As van Manen (1990/1997) cautions, I remain aware that this phenomenon has greater complexity than can be revealed through any single description or meaningful explication. In van Manen's words: "A phenomenological description is always *one* interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even potentially *richer* or *deeper* description" (p. 31).

Throughout this text, from our individual and collective views at the window, I, a few of my colleagues, and, in later chapters, my co-researchers offer our experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. This phenomenological text is an interpretive description of such experience. How is such an offering achieved through the art of hermeneutic phenomenology? In what ways do hermeneutic understanding, interpretation, and questioning bring forward a phenomenon in an attempt to accomplish the impossible and reveal the meaning of that phenomenon?

The Art of Hermeneutic Understanding

From the Greek *hermeneuein*, meaning "to interpret,"[47] hermeneutics is the traditional name for the art of interpretation. In his essay, "A Dialogue on Language,"

Heidegger (1959/1971b) describes hermeneutics as "the art of understanding rightly another man's language, particularly his written language (p. 11) and links phenomenology with hermeneutics. In *Being and Time* (1927/1962), Heidegger examines the art of understanding as "*the existential Being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of*" [*sic*] (p. 184). Hermeneutic understanding, therefore, is to see a thing as existentially projected and "in terms of [its] possibilities" (p. 185).

Heidegger (1927/1962) further characterizes hermeneutic understanding as "Dasein's 'sight' [*Sicht*]," which because it is "related primarily and on the whole to existence" is also called "transparency [*Durchisichtigkeit*]" (p. 186). Heidegger cautions that hermeneutic seeing means neither "just perceiving with the bodily eyes" nor "pure non-sensory awareness of something present-at-hand" (p. 187). Rather, hermeneutic understanding is an existential seeing that allows, perhaps even invites, "entities which are accessible to . . . be encountered unconcealedly in themselves"; seeing is "a way of access to entities *and to Being*" (p. 187). Hermeneutic understanding, then, is seeing the phenomenon as it truly is, unconcealed in its fullness of Being, and as it is projected in all its possibilities. The written text is a means of conveying such understanding so that others may also see.

The Art of Hermeneutic Interpretation

It is the process or development of understanding that Heidegger (1927/1962) names hermeneutic interpretation:

> In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself. Such interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding; the latter does not arise from the former. Nor is interpretation the acquiring of information about what is understood; it is rather the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding. (pp. 188-189)

Heidegger further explains this process as one in which "we take apart . . . that which is circumspectively ready-to-hand, and we concern ourselves with it in accordance with what becomes visible through this process" so that it is "*explicitly* understood" (p. 189).

Taking apart requires phenomenological engagement or a "totality of involvements" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 191). Heidegger characterizes this involvement as an unveiling of something that is ready-to-hand. Unveiling or interpreting the phenomenon requires a grounded point of view comprised of fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. Fore-having is "*something we have in advance*" or "what we have before us" to interpret; fore-sight is "*something we see in advance*" or a "first cut" at the interpretation; and fore-conception is "*something we grasp in advance*" or how we "anticipate" (p. 191) the interpretation. Rather than judging these interpretive foundations negatively, Heidegger accepts them as essential: "An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (pp. 191-192). As accepted foundations of the hermeneutic interpretive engagement, these "fore-structures" (p. 195) invite forth the phenomenon's "meaning" or the "intelligibility [Verständlichkeit] of something" (p. 193).

Gadamer (1975/1989) alerts the inquirer to the complications of these fore-meanings when they are untrue to the phenomenon:

> A person who is trying to understand is exposed to distraction from fore-meanings that are not borne out by the things themselves. Working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed "by the things" themselves, is the constant task of understanding. (p. 270)

He urges the inquirer to closely examine these fore-meanings as they pertain to the phenomenon of interest:

> But understanding realizes its full potential only when the fore-meanings that it begins with are not arbitrary. Thus it is quite right for the interpreter not to approach the text directly, relying solely on the fore-meaning already available to him, but rather explicitly to examine the legitimacy – i.e., the origin and validity – of the fore-meanings dwelling within him. (p. 270)

Gadamer (1975/1989) provides this advice for those wrestling with fore-meanings as they approach a text:

> A person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither "neutrality" with respect to content nor the extinction of one's self, but the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings. (pp. 271-272)

To be certain, phenomenological interpretation begins with the fore-structures or fore-meanings of understanding. The phenomenon becomes visible as the inquirer – or, indeed, the reader of phenomenological text – disassembles or unveils the ready-to-hand in order to work out the possibilities of its meaning. True phenomenological interpretation is possible only when the inquirer can achieve a hermeneutic consciousness or sensitivity, which foregrounds, or brackets, personal bias and prejudice. This foregrounding does not remove bias and prejudice, but eliminates them as distractions. As Gadamer (1975/1989) recognizes: "Methodological conscious understanding will be concerned not merely to form anticipatory ideas, but to make them conscious, so as to check them and thus acquire right understanding from the things themselves" (p. 272).

The Art of Hermeneutic Questioning

In his rationale for questioning the meaning of Being, Heidegger (1927/1962) explains "what belongs to any question whatsoever":

> Every inquiry is a seeking [Suchen]. Every seeking gets guided beforehand by what is sought. Inquiry is a cognizant seeking for an entity both with regard to the fact that it is and with regard to its Being as it is. (p. 24)

As Heidegger describes it, seeking is purposeful. The inquirer is guided beforehand by some understanding of that which is sought. At the onset of the inquiry, Heidegger claims this understanding to be vague and average, and, while "not something entirely unfamiliar," the inquirer may, at first, be unable to "grasp it at all" (p. 25). Further, while formulating the question, the inquirer, beginning with a vague and average understanding, will in all likelihood discover that "in what is asked about there lies also *that which is to be found out by the asking* [das *Erfragte*]" (p. 24). This hidden understanding Heidegger claims to be the true intention and goal of the inquiry.

Heidegger (1927/1962) acknowledges that hermeneutic questioning is, by nature, circular: "In working out our question, have we not 'presupposed' something which only the answer can bring?" (p. 27). He addresses this concern by asserting:

> There is no 'circular reasoning' but rather a remarkable 'relatedness backward or forward' . . . [where] what is asked about has an essential pertinence to the inquiry itself, and this belongs to the ownmost meaning [eigensten Sinn] of the question. (p. 28)

Heidegger advises against seeing this hermeneutic circle as "vicious" and exhorts the inquirer to enter the circle "in the right way":

> This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; . . . It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing. (p. 195)

Gadamer (1975/1989) supports Heidegger's argument to "show that this circle possesses an ontologically positive significance," stating that the resulting phenomenological description "will be obvious to every interpreter who knows what he is about" (p. 269).

Thus, the inquirer enters the hermeneutic circle of questioning with full awareness and disclosure of the fore-structures mentioned earlier – fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-

conception – and through the relatedness backward or forward invites the phenomenon into what Moran (2000) sees as "a kind of light which casts a certain pattern on the phenomenon, while also filling in our expectation in a way that allows us to formulate further questions, and thus to advance our understanding" (p. 237). The hermeneutic circle of inquiry reveals the hidden, positive possibility recognized by a knowing interpreter.

The Phenomenological Research Difference

In what ways does hermeneutic phenomenology offer a different mode of research and a unique way of revealing lived experience? Ecologist and philosopher David Abram (1996) observes:

> In a society that accords priority to that which is predictable and places a premium on certainty, our spontaneous, preconceptual experience, when acknowledged at all, is referred to as "merely subjective." The fluid realm of direct experience has come to be seen as a secondary, derivative dimension, a mere consequence of events unfolding in the "realer" world of quantifiable and measurable scientific "facts." It is a curious inversion of the actual, demonstrable state of affairs. (p. 34)

Abram goes on to explain the curious inversion exists because "The living pulse of subjective experience cannot finally be stripped from the things that we study . . . without the things themselves losing all existence for us" (p. 34). It is turning to "the things themselves" that phenomenological pioneer Edmund Husserl urges. As such, "phenomenology would not seek to explain the world, but to describe as closely as possible the way the world makes itself evident to awareness . . . [in all] its diverse modes of appearance" (Abram, p. 35). Abram characterizes Husserl's hope for phenomenology "as a rigorous 'science of experience'" (p. 35) that studies a true "real world" that represents "the interweaving of our individual phenomenal fields into a single, ever-shifting fabric, a single phenomenal world or 'reality'" (p. 39).

Abram (1996) comments:

> Husserl's work was in no sense a rejection of science. It was a plea that science, for its own integrity and meaningfulness, must acknowledge that it is rooted in the same world that we all engage in our everyday lives and with our unaided senses – that, for all its technological refinements, quantitative science remains an expression of, and hence must be guided by, the qualitative world of our common experience. (p. 42)

Phenomenology differs from quantitative research in that it is not intended to explain or control or predict or generalize. Rather, "it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 9). Phenomenology also differs from other disciplines in that its study is of the life-world, as *any* person's lived experience in everyday existence; "it does not aim to explicate meanings specific to particular cultures (ethnography), to certain social groups (sociology), to historical periods (history), to mental types (psychology), or to an individual's personal life history (biography)" (p. 11).

Phenomenological Methodology

> Phenomenology, not unlike poetry, is a poetizing project; it tries an incantative, evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein we aim to involve the voice in an original singing of the world. (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 13)

Van Manen's (1990/1997) characterization of phenomenology as a "poetizing project" stems from his reflections on Merleau-Ponty's, *The Prose of the World*. To pursue such "primal telling," van Manen describes six methodological activities:

1. turning to a phenomenon;
2. investigating experience as we live it;
3. reflecting on essential themes;
4. the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented relation; and
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and wholes. (pp. 30-31)

This methodology represents "phenomenological scholarship [and] can be considered as a set of guidelines and recommendations for a principled form of inquiry that neither simply rejects or ignores tradition, nor slavishly follows or kneels in front of it" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 30). This phenomenological methodology is not a sequential presentation of these elements. Rather, they represent a "dynamic interplay" (p. 30) that is interwoven and recursive. In describing each of these elements, I illustrate how they (continue to) inform my research, which, as van Manen notes, "cannot be separated from the textual practice of writing" (p. ix).

Turning to a Phenomenon

Van Manen (1990/1997) maintains that "Phenomenology asks the simple question, what is it like to have a certain experience?" (p. 44). In my phenomenological turning, I commit to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place as an "abiding concern" (p. 31), one in which I am deeply interested and willing to "stand in the midst of" (p. 43). I not only ask my research question – **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?** – but also I am "addressed by the question" (p. 42), ever evolving and revealing my understanding as I engage the text.

I recall my own experience "in such a way that the essential aspects, the meaning structures of this experience as lived through, are brought back" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 41). With this re-collection, I discover the indispensable role of place within this phenomenon – what it means to be dis-placed and not to belong, and how a sense of place informs the thresholds and the larger landscapes that lead beyond place. Careful to explicate my "'common sense' pre-understandings, suppositions, [and] assumptions" (p. 47), I frame my lived experience of social isolation as emotional abuse and anchor it

existentially to Being-in-place. Throughout my turning, I weave my lived experience with academic, classic, and contemporary literature that I may open up understanding and "re-achieve a direct contact with the world" (p. 50) of this lived experience. Through a phenomenological voice, I invite "the reader to wonder" and to join me as together we "question very deeply the very thing that is being questioned by the question" (p. 44).

Investigating Experience as We Live It

For van Manen (1990/1997), investigating lived experience "requires of the researcher that he or she stand in the fullness of life" (p. 32). "Meaning," advises van Manen, "needs to be *found* in the experience" (p. 53). Beginning with my "personal experience as a starting point" (p. 54), I practice deliberate awareness of the structure of this experience and to the experiential meanings as I write my way to an understanding of "the extent that *my* experiences could be *our* experiences" (p. 57). In my existential investigation of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I uncover warped and disingenuous senses of self and multifarious modes of betrayal. I also illuminate embodiment and language as rubrics of this lived experience.

Throughout my investigation, I employ several phenomenological techniques. Earlier in this chapter, I mention weaving "practical insights" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 70) sourced from literature and art. I practice use of first and second grammatical person – I, we, you – "to enhance the evocative value of a truth experience" (p. 57), to address the "phenomenon as a *possible human experience* . . . [with] universal character" (p. 58), and to "increase the sense of involvement for [you,] the reader" (van Manen, 2002, p. 50). I also honor two principle phenomenological traditions. First, I render the account in the present rather than in the past tense to suggest the phenomenon as "happening right here and now" (p. 50). Second, I am "attentive to the etymological origins of words" so

that we together, as writer and reader, may remain "in touch with an original form of life where the terms still [have] living ties to the lived experiences from which they originally sprang" (1990/1997, p. 59).

In Chapter Two, I introduce "reflections" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 62) from colleagues who, over time, share their experiences with me. These voices enable "an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance [of the phenomenon], . . . in the context of the whole of human experience" (p. 62). Following van Manen's suggestions, these descriptions are the "living sense" of others' experiences "from the inside, as [they] were" (p. 64). You, the reader, will find descriptions of "states of mind" (p. 64) and corporeal reactions that "focus on particular example[s] or incident[s]" (p. 65). If I have been true to the craft, you will not find "causal explanations, generalizations, or abstract interpretations" (p. 64); instead, you will explore "concrete portrayals . . . [that] offer insightful reflections on the meanings of those experiences" (van Manen, 2002, p. 49).

Reflecting on Essential Themes

Van Manen (1990/1997) challenges the writer to reflect on essential themes that emerge through the research process. What emerges with "special significance" (p. 32)? What "essential quality" (p. 107) is revealed? In what ways am I to distinguish between the phenomenon's "appearance and essence" (p. 32)? Thematic rendering exposes the "multi-dimensional" and "multi-layered" (p. 78) nature of the phenomenon. While it provides control and order, thematic rendering "is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning" (p. 79). Excavating a meaningful theme allows the writer and reader to make sense of, open up, and give shape to the phenomenon. Meaningful themes are "like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes" (p. 90). The tension of thematic

rendering is that, done well, it "touch[es] the core" of the phenomenon but can never "completely unlock the deep meaning, the full mystery, the enigmatic aspects" (p. 88) of its lived experience.

Within my phenomenological dissertation process, most thematic reflection emanates from conversations with my co-researchers. I represent these themes largely in Chapters Four and Five, as they inform the sixth and final chapter. To a degree, however, I begin this process in Chapters One and Two, reflecting on essential themes that emerge from my personal lived experience, the lived experience of colleagues who share with me their stories, and the existential investigation of literature, art, and etymological origins. Guiding my reflections are van Manen's (1990/1997) four life-world themes or "existentials" (p. 101). I ground Chapter One in the first existential, "*lived space* (spatiality)" (p. 101). Van Manen avers, "*Lived space* . . . is felt space"; further, "the space in which we find ourselves affects the way we feel" (p. 102). More specifically, I address certain spatial senses, such as home, "where we can *be* what *we are*" and to the "landscape in which [we] move and find [ourselves] at home" (p. 102). Marginally in Chapter One, then more fully in Chapter Two, I explore the second existential, "*lived body* (corporeality)" (p. 101), which "refers to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world" (p. 103) and, as such, engage the life-world as an embodied Being. "*Lived time* (*temporaility*)," the third existential, is subjective time, which may accelerate or decelerate; lived time also represents "temporal dimensions of past, present, and future" (p. 104). I examine these characteristics of lived time in each of the first two chapters, and again in Chapter Five, as a sub-theme of this lived experience. The fourth and final existential is *lived human relation* (relationality or communality) (p. 101).

Throughout my textual engagement with this phenomenon, I address our abilities, and our inabilities, to "develop a conversational relation [with others] which allows us to transcend our *selves*" (p. 105).

In isolating essential themes, I follow each of van Manen's (1990/1997) recommended approaches:

- the wholistic [*sic*] or sententious approach;
- the selective or highlighting approach; [and]
- the detailed or line-by-line approach." (pp. 92-93)[48]

With the wholistic approach, I "attend to the text as a whole [to] ask, *What sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole*" (p. 93)? Using the selective approach, I read, aloud, the text and ask, "*What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or [lived] experience*" (p. 93)? Holding with the detailed approach, I review the text line-by-line and ask, "*What does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or [lived] experience*" (p. 93)?

Van Manen (1990/1997) notes:

> [The] four existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relation to the other can be differentiated but not separated. They all form an intricate unity which we call the lifeworld – our lived world. (p. 105)

In a similar, intricate fashion, the three approaches to isolating themes are interwoven to yield deeper, more meaningful interpretations of a phenomenon. As thematic rendering serves an essential purpose in turning to a phenomenon and in investigating its lived experience, it is also inextricable from the art of writing and rewriting.

The Art of Writing and Rewriting

Van Manen (1990/1997) declares that "Creating a phenomenological text is the object of the research process" (p. 111). He characterizes the art of phenomenological

writing as a two-fold research method. First, "to *do* research in a phenomenological sense is already and immediately and always a *bringing to speech* of something" (p. 32). At a deeper level, "phenomenology is the application of *logos* (language and thoughtfulness) to a phenomenon (an aspect of lived experience), to what shows itself precisely as it shows itself" (p. 33).

What is the art of writing? Van Manen (1990/1997) answers: "Writing fixes thought on paper. It externalizes what in some sense is internal; it distances us from our immediate lived involvements with the things of our world" (p. 125). Through a textual dance of nearness and distance, phenomenological writing and, more specifically, "exemplary descriptions," (p. 122) make transparent the phenomenon. To address phenomenological complexity, the researcher also engages in the art of rewriting – "a complex process of . . . re-thinking, re-flecting, re-cognizing" that "aims at creating depth" (p. 131). More than mere revising and editing, writing and rewriting

> . . . is more reminiscent of the artistic activity of creating an art object that has to be approached again and again, now here and then there, going back and forth between the parts and the whole in order to arrive at a finely crafted piece that often reflects the personal "signature" of the author. (pp. 131-132)

This art co-mingles van Manen's six research activities. The dance repeats with each activity. I come near to write. I distance to reflect. I come near to investigate. I distance to inter-weave. I come near to re-write. I distance to themetize. I commit to the dance – paragraph after paragraph, section after section, chapter after chapter. There is no line I do not hold tenderly, if only for a moment, until the music stops, the pen rests, and the keyboard falls silent.

Maintaining a Strong and Oriented Relation

"To be oriented to [a phenomenon] means we are animated by [it]" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 33). We do not "settle for superficialities and falsities" (p. 33). Instead, we are "thoughtful," "attentive," and "engaged" (p. 154). Through textual engagement, we aim for "thoughtful learning" that leads to deepened understanding of lived experience. I seek to see the lived experience of other-imposed isolation in the work-place.

How do I maintain a strong and oriented relation through this research process? I sculpt a textual expression of this lived experience. My gaze is constant, unwavering. I resist distraction but I am not myopic. I attend to new understanding that molds to its predecessors; I heed that which chisels them. I caress books and words and voices, passionately and tenderly searching for those that will assemble and fit with the whole. I pause to scrutinize and critique. What is working? What is missing? What must be redone? This artistic endeavor elevates and engulfs me.

Balancing the Research Context by Considering Parts and Wholes

The phenomenological research methodology is above all else a balancing of parts and wholes. Van Manen (1990/1997) cautions that "one can get so involved in chasing the *ti estin* [What is it?] that one gets stuck in the underbrush and fails to arrive at the clearings that give the text its revealing power" (p. 33). The fundamental question in considering parts and wholes is how to present the research? How do I organize my textual expression? Van Manen advises "that the textual approach one takes . . . should largely be decided in terms of the nature of the phenomenon being addressed, and the investigative method that appears appropriate to it" (p. 173).

Van Manen (1990/1997) suggests five approaches, acknowledging they "are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive" (p. 173) and that a combination of approaches

or an invented one may also serve the purpose. Which approach, or what combination of approaches, do I choose? Organizing thematically honors emerging themes but presents "the challenge [of] how to treat each of the themes systematically, even though one theme always implicates the meaning dimensions of other themes" (p. 168). An analytic approach examines existing research information, whether preexisting or information derived from one's own study – "conversational interviews" followed by systematic "examin[ation of] the various themes" (p. 170); phenomenological "descriptions" followed by "several investigative queries which the concrete life situation makes problematic" (p. 170); and "ill-understood" social science research followed by reflectivity and use of phenomenological techniques "that reveal a more thoughtful understanding of the nature" (p. 171). An exemplificative approach "render[s] visible the essential nature of the phenomenon and then fill[s] out the initial description by systematically varying the examples," so that "each variation may enlighten some essential aspect" (p. 171) of the phenomenon. Organizing exegetically arranges phenomenological descriptions according to the "thinking of some other phenomenological author(s)" (p. 171). Earlier in this chapter, I discuss the fifth approach, existential representation, which leverages the four existentials – lived space, lived time, lived body, and lived relationships to others – outlined by van Manen.

In this study, I do not pre-determine an organizing path. I allow the phenomenon and my investigation of its lived experience to inform my approach. My work represents a combination of all but the exemplificative approach. Each chapter is ordered thematically. In all chapters, save the third, I use analytic and existential approaches to uncover and reveal more deeply the phenomenon. First in Chapter Three, as I stand at the

window with several philosophers to see and point to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, and then in all chapters that follow, I represent an exegetic approach.

As I prepare to complete this third chapter, I pause to consider the phenomenological method and my journey. I am not surprised by my reaction, although others unfamiliar or less intimate with this labor may be. I experience tenderness for the process that I am finishing and a curiosity about the process that lays before me still. I am humbled, although not discouraged, by van Manen's (2002) words:

> The main heuristic challenge of phenomenological inquiry is the writing – entering and traversing the space of the text, of darkness, where one dwells alone. These writings do not yield absolute truths, or objective observation. The writer at best gains an occasional glimpse of the meaning of human existence. (p. 7)

I am comforted and encouraged by Buber (1957/1999d), who writes: "All we can do is to work from the place and moment where we are, and to hope that our work, if it succeeds in being true to our intention, will not remain unblessed by the spirit" (p. 71).

Although surrounded by those who support and encourage my journey, the labor itself is primarily one of solitude. I leave my home and my family to engage this inquiry through writing retreats that last over extended weekends two and three, sometimes four, times a month. I neglect and delay professional and personal interests and hobbies. Some lay dormant; others have given up the ghost. I beg off invitations from family, friends, and colleagues in favor of one more nondescript hotel room, where I tap at this keyboard from wakening to slumber, breaking, but not often enough, for short bursts of energizing activity. I sacrifice. I am weary. As are those closest to me.

One might well ask "why"; I myself ask many times over. Despite knowing, as van Manen cautions (2002), I will yield no absolute truths, despite academic and

corporate colleagues who shake puzzled heads that I will yield no objective observation, within the research darkness I glimpse occasional truth and meaning as pin-points of light that open up this phenomenon. In these moments, I and those who share this lived experience are indeed blessed. I now prepare to cross another threshold and greet my co-researchers – *Sawubona*! I continue to invite each reader to join us at the window as we point to what we see when we ask, **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?**

My Process of Phenomenological Engagement

> Phenomenological research/writing requires a high level of reflectivity, an attunement to lived experience, and a certain patience or time commitment. (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 114)

In concert with van Manen's observation, I begin this chapter by teasing out the meaning of phenomenological engagement. I summarize it as a process of pledging, promising, committing, and binding to the phenomenon in order to be answerable to its true nature. As part of my phenomenological exploration of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I engage eight co-researchers to share their reflections of this lived experience. Together, we pledge, promise, commit, and bind ourselves to this phenomenon. Together, we raise our voices to beckon forward this phenomenon and to open it more fully.

Inviting Conversational Relation

In Chapter One I share that my dissertation journey endures for over a decade. During most of this time, I maintain a general sense of my dissertation topic and freely share it with friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Following the initial bantering about what exactly I mean by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, the most common response is, "Let me know when you're ready to interview people. I know

someone you can talk with." At times, individuals even indicate themselves. It seems the phenomenon is all too commonly recognized and, therefore, experienced by those who dwell in work-places.

When the time comes to extend this invitation (see Appendix A), I rely on existing professional and social networks. I invite the voices of professional colleagues in my current organization to extend the invitation to their own professional and personal networks. I also invite the voices of members of eight organizations and listserv groups (see Appendix B). I engage the voices of twenty-two individuals who respond to the co-researcher invitation. Four voices quickly fade, as these individuals withdraw from the opportunity. Five additional voices speak of experiences that are not a match for a study of this phenomenon. Thirteen voices share experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. From these thirteen, I call forward (see Appendix C) eight voices to continue further with me on this journey.

These eight co-researchers represent a heterogeneous collective that enriches the representation of this phenomenon. Together, they are a brilliant tapestry of gender, age, race and ethnicity, and work-place profession and industry. Five women and three men contribute their voices and experience to the rendering of this phenomenon. During the time we meet together, they range in age from 31 to 65. They first experience other-imposed social isolation in the work-place as early as the novice age of 17 and as late as the tenured age of 55. Five are white, one is African-American, one is Latina, and one is Asian-American. The fabric of their experiences is woven from three government work-places, three for-profit work-places, and two not-for-profit work-places. They share stories of remaining in place for as long as five years and as little as nine months. They

reflect on experiences that happen as recently as one year before we meet to converse and as long ago as 25 years. Two individuals share with me not only one but two lived experiences. Each remains in place less time the second time around. While their stories are in many ways rich and varied, all experience other-imposed social isolation through the actions of supervisors.

Structuring the Conversational Relation

Van Manen (1990/1997) discusses hermeneutic reflection as a conversation "structured as a triad" (p. 98), which includes the researcher, the co-researchers, and the phenomenon. From our first contact during the screening conversations, the co-researchers and I engage in truly "collaborative hermeneutic conversations" (p. 99). We and the phenomenon are clearly present during these conversations. Some voices sound timidly at first, gaining nervous energy as the conversations unfold. Other voices overflow from start to finish with enraged passion. Still other voices stumble and halt, searching for the "right" words to convey and honor their experiences. Some voices are lilting and lyrical. Others stammer and stutter. All voices are true in beckoning and revealing the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

As we journeyed forward, I meet and speak with each of my co-researchers twice. We meet in Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. We meet primarily in restaurants and cafes. I meet with one co-researcher in her home and with another in her work-place. I meet with yet another in both her work-place and home. Each of these individual conversations lasts at least one hour; some last closer to one-and-a-half hours. With their permission, I audio record our conversations using two digital recorders. I host a group conversation, which six of the eight co-researchers join. Two are unable to attend at the last minute – one due to a work commitment and another

due to illness. During this group conversation, three join me in person at my current work-place; three join remotely via web-conference and teleconference. Due to technical malfunctions, and despite arranging multiple means of recording, I am unsuccessful in audio recording this group conversation. To compensate for this technical failure, I take extensive notes during our time together; distribute these notes to all eight co-researchers, including the two who are unable to attend; and request their feedback to supplement my notes.

The first individual meetings with my co-researchers span a two-week period. From first to last, these co-researchers demonstrate the truest etymological meanings of engagement. As is the case during our screening conversations, they pledge and promise their involvement in this research study. As a further demonstration of engagement, each binds themselves contractually by signing the consent form (see Appendix D). With full commitment, they are never hesitant, ever willing, as we welcome one another, share expectations, and set up the digital recorders in preparation of the conversation that brings us together.

Past the introductions, I begin each of these first conversations with an invitation to the third of our triad, the phenomenon and the phenomenological method. While I assure the participants of the confidentiality of our conversation, I also emphasize the essential nature of their co-researcher role in bringing forward and revealing the phenomenon. I share with them the real and important distinctions between an interview, perhaps a more familiar research method, and a conversation, how we will engage phenomenologically together. I invite their lingering questions and then extend a renewed

invitation for the co-researcher to share his or her story – to give voice to the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

The world around us melts away as each co-researcher easily transports to times past and brings me along. The noises that moments ago envelope us – whether the chatter of nearby restaurant patrons, the intercom of the bookstore café, the bustle of office mates, or the sizzle of baking chicken as one co-researcher prepares an evening meal – fade beyond our attention. Each is a powerful storyteller. I invite them to journey with me and find that it was I who share their journeys. Their voices carry the conversation. I say little in comparison.

The emotions of their experiences are palpable throughout. Each punctuates painful memories with nervous laughter. I listen sympathetically, responding on occasion with questions to clarify, to reassure, and to reveal further the phenomenon that is omnipresent with us. As we move beyond what has happened to the meaning of their experiences, a few questions and curiosities (see Appendix E) guide the latter half of our conversations: How did this experience show up for you? I wonder how else you might describe this to me so I can understand what it was like for you. What did that feel like? I am curious about what emotions were (or are) associated with what you just described. What do you want others who are experiencing or who have experienced something similar to know? I encourage them to voice more: Say more about that. What else would you tell me about what that was like for you? The easily and comfortably comply. I gently ask them to remain connected with the tough parts: Let's stay with that for a bit longer if you can. Let's try to parse that out just a bit. So let's go into that space, together. They unfalteringly and heroically continue to engage.

I end the first conversations by asking the co-researchers to "sustain [the] conversational relation" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 111) through reading and writing. I ask that they read the conversation transcript that I will email to them and to allow these to "become objects of reflection" (p. 99) for their voiced experience. I ask that they write and send to me these reflections in advance of our second individual conversations. I honor the independence of their experiences and their reflective process by suggesting they consider reacting in broad ways – What was it like to read your documented experience? – or to some specific element of voice – Your reflection may be triggered by a specific incident or a single word.

Following each of these individual meetings, I transcribe the audio-recorded conversations. The transcription process proves an unexpectedly rewarding engagement. As I listen to the voices of these eight co-researchers, I find myself once more laughing and tearing as their experiences unfold. I hear and am deeply touched, yet again, by their pain, their confusion, and their disbelief. I physically engage the text of these reflections by circling words and phrases that speak to the phenomenology of their experiences. I identify what van Manen (1990/1997) calls "transcript themes" (p. 99), using these to inform my own reflections for each co-researcher's experience and to guide my subsequent engagement during the second conversations.

I hoped the reflection process proves a means of "externaliz[ing] what in some sense is internal" and to foster "distance [from the] immediate lived involvements with" (van Manen, 1990/1997, p. 125) the phenomenon. The co-researchers do not disappoint. Some bring forward observations subtly nuanced beyond the transcripted cognitions. Others express revelations heretofore untended or neglected. Most decry the experience

and the lingering impact it continues to have on their professional, even personal, lives. A few declare their pride in their resiliency during and following their experiences. One even proclaims the reflection as an anchoring point to look forward, rather than backward, and move beyond the shackles of the experience. Some divulge guilty emotions of regret, shame, anxiety, and bitterness. A few admit to prodigious, even staggering, emotions at reading their transcripted experiences.

Our second conversations prove a reunion of comrades. We become willing co-conspirators, sworn to reveal this phenomenon in its essence. Using the metaphor of an archeological dig, I challenge us to return to their experiences and to the phenomenological glimpses they reveal in the first conversations and with their reflections. Together, we gently brush at these earlier revelations until we agree that we have said all we want to say. We move on to other phenomenological geographies. We continue to surprise ourselves as we expose more and more of this phenomenon. Without exception, the eight co-researchers admit to new understandings of their experiences. Several acknowledge the cathartic and therapeutic nature of the conversations.

Following the second conversations, I repeat the transcription process, emailing these to the co-researchers and asking that they bring their reflections – documented or otherwise – to the third, group conversation. Because I know that some will attend in person and others via web- and teleconference, I continue to honor van Manen's (1990/1997) notion of conversational relation of writing and reading. I prepare snapshots of the first two conversations – sound bites that honor the co-researchers' voices. Following introductions, I invite the six, who are able to attend this group meeting, to join me in asking ourselves questions, such as: What have we yet to name? What

language will help others understand this lived experience? What language will trigger caring from others about this experience? In the words of one co-researcher's reflection, I ask them to join me in asking what else we should voice in order to do justice to this lived experience. The co-researchers engage with each other and with me. Their honesty and vulnerability are remarkable demonstrations of their unwavering engagement. I share my notations from this group meeting with the two co-researchers unable to attend. Both provide some additional insights so that, in the end, all voices are present and heard. Across this experience, I am confident that we honor the spirit of intent that Buber (1957/1999d) shares: For to "reveal [a thing] in its essence, bestows on each the possibility of also discovering and animating [it] in himself" (p. 43).

Analyzing the Conversational Relation

Van Manen (1990/1997) asserts, "The purpose of phenomenological reflection is to try to grasp the essential meaning of something" (p. 77). Following the conversations with co-researchers, it is my research task to "make explicit the structure of meaning" (p. 77) called forth by these individuals and this group. Van Manen cautions that while thematizing "gives control and order to our research and writing," it "is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning" (p. 79). I continue the work of previous chapters by inviting forward this phenomenon. Through continued reflection and writing, followed by further reflection and rewriting, I seek to make more known the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

I use each of the three approaches van Manen (1990/1997) outlines in "isolating thematic aspects of [the] phenomenon" (p. 92). Through the "wholistic [*sic*] reading approach," I attend to "sententious phrases" (p. 93). I listen to and read the transcripts many times during this six-month period, to select co-researchers words that "seem

particularly essential or revealing" (p. 93). As appropriate, I also focus on "single sentences or sentence cluster[s]" (p. 93) to uncover how they inform this phenomenon. In Chapters Four and Five, I offer thematic analyses. In the sixth and final chapter I reveal pedagogical insights that inform understanding of the phenomenological question: **What is the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?**

CHAPTER FOUR:

GIVING VOICE TO THE TARGETS OF OTHER-IMPOSED SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE WORK-PLACE

> ... a meditative voice, a voice that is not shrill, but soft yet tenacious. This voice speaks of things, of things both in their unexceptional plainness and their peculiar gaudiness. It also speaks of itself, of the activity of mind and imagination that make up a self, a self that comes to find itself in relation to things. (Critchley, 2005, p. 5)

In this chapter, I once more call forward the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. This time, my call is an invitation to the voices of lived experience and the stories of eight co-researchers. I invite all voices that Critchley (2005) hears as shrill, soft, and tenacious. I invite voices that speak of self and its relation to this lived experience. With this invitation, I find myself remembering to honor what it means to be targeted by this experience. I find myself pondering, once more, the complexity of giving voice to this experience. One of my co-researcher's painful statements speaks to the confluence of targeted abuse and the complexity of giving voice: "This was the worst treatment I've ever had. It just seemed to be personal, and I couldn't explain what the heck was going on."[49]

The work-place abuse literature commonly uses the term *target* to identify the individual in receipt of abusive actions (Keashly, 1998; Koonin & Green, 2005; Merecz et al., 2009; Richman et al., 1999; Zauderer, 2002). I continue that tradition here in this study. Etymologically, target stems from the Old English and Old French *targe*, meaning "light shield,"[50] a protection against assault. Its meaning as something at which one purposefully aims is rooted in the sport of archery (see Endnote 49). A later meaning stems from Cold War psychological warfare and indicates a person who is the target of derogatory remarks or critical comment.[51] As the lived experiences of these eight co-

researchers unfold, all rooted meanings become transparent and magnified through their stories of relentless negative attention and their resulting woundedness.

In Chapter One, I explore the importance of naming as ways of knowing, establishing relationships, and connecting with what Rilke (trans. 2000) claims wells up within us. I contemplate the complexities of naming, cognizant that some experiences defy definition. Giving voice is *one* way of naming. It provides a necessary outlet to the experience. It is, as van Manen (1990/1997) indicates, the only way we "sustain a conversational relation" (p. 112). As I converse with my eight co-researchers over a three-month period, they each, in turn, share what it means to give voice to this lived experience. One co-researcher claims giving voice is standing up for your rights. For some, it is an opportunity to confirm what is already known, while also inviting new realizations. For others, it is a dis-placed view into their experiences that reinforces existing emotions and, in some cases, evokes new emotions.

In introducing each of these individuals, whom I have come to experience as both amazing and resilient, I strive to honor and respect their targeted experiences. I am ever mindful that these experiences are uninvited and imposed at the will of one or more others in trusted positions within their work-places. I feel, and hope to convey, the power of their voices. Theirs are voices that speak of confounded query. Theirs are voices that sound in frustration and fury. Theirs are voices that lay claim to unwelcomed, life-altering experiences. Above all else, theirs are voices raised in bold and sincere hope – a hope that to share these experiences will not only prove personally cathartic but also make a difference to those who continue to experience other-imposed social isolation in

the work-place. Theirs are voices that dare to hope such raised awareness may eliminate this abusive lived experience altogether.

The Vocal Tapestry of Lived Experience

> As a child I always believed that EVERYTHING was connected. Music to Color to Art to Music to Math to Physics to Chemistry to Healing to Plants to Animals to Stars to Rocks to Ocean to sand and so on and so forth. . . . [I am] passionate about music and strive to bring healing through its vibrational force. (Martinez, 2010, n.p.)

Jana Martinez's (2010) words remind us of life's inherent connectivity. In this chapter, I introduce each of my eight co-researchers in the order we engage in our first conversation together. Prior to this study, these eight individuals do not know each other's stories of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. They are surprised at how connected their stories, and, in turn, they, are. Together, their stories weave a vocal tapestry of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Listen attentively. You will hear repeated cadences that turn familiar. Listen closely. You will attune to unique chords that enrich the fabric of this experience. Listen care-fully. You first may notice what Heidegger (1927/1962) names as "present-at-hand" (p. 79) – the familiar, the clear, the obvious. It is what we notice as we "dwell alongside" (p. 80) others as Beings in this world, as kindred spirits, one may say. By listening care-fully, with "authentic care" (p. 159), we shift from what *concerns* the Other to focus on the *existence* of the Other. Through care, we shift from "what" to "who" in seeing and hearing the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. In these moments of authentic caring, seeing, and hearing, we reveal the deeper tones and richer vibrancy that at first pass unnoticed or seem unremarkable, perhaps, until these many voices join in concert to create the healing, vibrational force Martinez expounds.

Together, as Heidegger suggests, we create transparency for the Other, and, with care, "become *free for* it" (p. 159).

Michael

Michael[52] shares two experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Each he experiences in his fifties while supporting two separate groups within a single Federal agency located in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. While he recognizes and accepts clear distinctions between the government employee status and that of a Federal contractor, Michael's stories of imposed social isolation are not strictly due to this work-place distinction. In each of his experiences, he lives daily with the social isolation imposed by his government supervisor, while other contractors in those work-places enjoy a privileged status and are treated like members of the family.

At the age of 54, Michael experiences imposed social isolation in a work-place where he remains for just over one-and-a-half years. Not long thereafter, at the age of 57, he once more experiences imposed social isolation. This time he remains in that work-place for a single year. In each work-place, he leaves the organization due to the completion of the contract period. Michael comments on having this experience at this stage of his professional life:

> It's difficult because I've reached a level of maturity . . . where society would say, and I should say, "Whatever." I showed up for work, and I did a good job, and I did what I was supposed to do. I supported my family. . . . And you're stifled because other than these conversations I never say [anything] because I'm not supposed to. I'm a grown man. You know?[53]

Michael discusses adapting during this lived experience because, even though you don't like it, that's just what you do to address these types of work-place issues and situations.

In reflecting on giving voice to his experience, Michael marvels at our first conversation together:

> I looked at all the stuff that I talked about – my military experience, those years in the military to as recently as . . . the training organization. . . . I didn't realize that I had that many feelings and that much baggage that I was carrying concerning some of those things. I don't know if you'd call it baggage. I haven't become dysfunctional or anything like that. I have been collecting a lot of those thoughts. I never would talk about it before.

Michael also reflects on why he says nothing while remaining in his socially isolating work-places. He acknowledges his decision to say nothing is one of balancing being the "squeaky wheel" or being a whiner. He concludes that while he can speak up, it is truly others in the work-place who will judge whether or not his voice deserves positive attention. It is a risk he chooses not to take, resigning himself and admitting, "It creates for a very challenging, difficult situation." As I honor Michael's lived experiences, I ask: *What does it mean to remain in a place and be unwilling to allow yourself voice?*

Angela

Angela[54] shares a single experience of other-imposed social isolation in a work-place where she still remains at the time of our conversations. She has over ten years of tenured experience in this Federal human resources organization, which is headquartered in Washington D.C., although her work location is just outside the metropolitan area. Angela experiences imposed social isolation in the work-place for the first time at the age of 48 after enjoying a successful career. Before her current lived experience, she repeatedly advances in this organization, where she begins as a temporary employee, is promoted twice, and, until this experience, consistently receives excellent performance ratings. Angela self identifies as having a customer-focused, "entrepreneurial spirit" and being a forward-thinking, optimistic person. Despite her success in this and previous organizations, she endures, nearly daily and for a period of one-and-one-half years, what

she perceives as daily insults – first, at the hands of her direct supervisor; eventually, from a gang of four to five supervisors and managers.

Highly trained in a corporate work environment as a manager and supervisor in a Fortune 500 company, Angela expresses genuine shock at her experience in this work-place:

> I never thought that something like this would ever happen to me. . . . As a supervisor and manager for other companies, I've held very high standards on the . . . EEO issues. And I guess I never thought that I, personally, would be in an experience where it was the opposite for me.

She is also weary of her abusive work-place experience: "I have struggled with the discrimination, isolation, and exclusion in the workplace for a very long time now. As I reflect back on what has happened . . . , I feel a sense of numbness [and] sadness." At the time of this study, Angela remains in this work-place and is searching for a new opportunity outside her current organization.

Angela speaks proudly and confidently of the many ways in which she gives voice to her experience, believing she does stand up for her rights and is doing all the right things to address her imposed social isolation. While remaining in place, she confronts her supervisor and the Center Director concerning some of the isolating tactics she experiences. When her situation does not improve, she works with a lawyer and an employee assistance counselor. Still:

> I didn't feel like anybody in the agency was listening or helping me. I felt very, very isolated, very alone . . . with the violations that I was feeling. And it bothers me. What if somebody out there isn't outspoken, doesn't say anything?

As I honor Angela's lived experience, I ask: What does it mean to remain in a place where your voice is routinely ignored and unheeded?

Wendy

Wendy,[55] like Michael, shares two experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place – separate experiences that occur just over two decades apart. Wendy's first experience is at the age of 23 in her first professional work-place, when she works as a for-profit defense contractor located on the New England coastline. Her second experience is at the age of 46, when she supports a different for-profit organization as a program manager located in metro Washington D.C. During her second experience, she recognizes a troubled situation immediately, and on the first day of employment returns home to tell her husband it is not going to work out and she will need to look for another job.

Wendy considers the differences that mark her reaction to these two experiences. As an untenured worker in her first professional role, she acknowledges:

> I guess in retrospect I should have filed a grievance. But I was young. .. . . I didn't know what my options were. I knew I wasn't being treated properly, but . . . HR protects management, not the worker. . . . And so I took it.

After weighing her options to stay or leave this first organization, she lives with the socially isolating tactics of her direct supervisor for two years, leaving when she is offered a transfer to a different division within the same organization. Over twenty years later, once more socially isolated by a direct supervisor, she reacts to an all-too-familiar situation much differently. She leaves within three months, after securing a position with another organization.

> I started there November 4. I said, "Let me get through the holiday." The Monday after Thanksgiving, I sent my resume out. By the first week in January, I had a contingent offer . . . . and the [formal offer] on the 19th.

While remaining in place, Wendy's inexperienced voice is more timid. She shares her isolating situation with her husband, who also works for the organization. Once

approached, she also shares some details of her situation with a director from elsewhere in the organization, someone who recognizes her strengths and potential and arranges a transfer for her to his division. As a more mature worker, Wendy leverages her voice, but only upon exiting the organization. She explains the futility of sounding her voice earlier: "This guy . . . is in very well with the CEO's son, who is now running the company. And he's brought in so much business, in the six years that he's been there, that he can do no wrong. No wrong." As she leaves the organization, Wendy directly confronts her supervisor about his isolating tactics and shares information with Human Resources during the exit interview:

> The good part about that is that I'm glad I said something. Because I said [to HR], "I'm gone. This is not for me. I'm telling you this because of the women I'm leaving down there, that are not leaving." And that made them dig deeper.

As I honor Wendy's lived experiences, I ask: What does it mean to remain in a place where you believe your voice does not matter? Further: What does it mean to remain in a place, even for a brief time, where sounding your voice represents negative consequences only to you?

Sandy

Sandy[56] shares a single experience of other-imposed social isolation in a not-for-profit work-place in the metro Washington D.C. area. It is an experience she previously anticipates as her ideal job:

> When I started working at [this organization], I was so excited – so, so excited. . . . This was kind of like my dream job. . . . Animal welfare is something that I cared deeply about. . . . So I was ecstatic to get this job.

Sandy initially embraces this opportunity as her second professional position after completing her undergraduate degree, although she has worked since her early teen years

in several organizations, including a veterinary office that fosters her love of animals and develops her advocacy for their humane treatment.

Sandy admits how disillusioning this experience is for her so early in her professional career: "Well, it was actually crushing. . . . And it was really disappointing. It really was. . . . It's hard. I was young. I was 25. Twenty-five is pretty young." For three years, she endures regular isolation tactics and remains in this work-place that sours her completely in many ways. Eventually, she leaves the organization, returns to school, and pursues a career in a different industry, conceding a prejudice to the mission of an organization she once placed on a pedestal: "I hated them towards the end. And then I started to make generalizations. I started to hate people who liked animals."

While remaining in place, Sandy struggles but finds the courage to voice her concerns and objections to her direct supervisor, who is imposing the social isolation and is dismissive of Sandy's perspective. Sandy also casually mentions her experience to someone who is more senior than she in the organization, someone in a different department who also dismisses her, saying she does not see anything. Mostly, however, Sandy recognizes no opportunity to give voice to her experience: "I didn't feel like there was anybody safe I could talk to at the time. I was just so very much alone." As I honor Sandy's lived experience, I ask: *What does it mean to remain in a place where your voice becomes so quickly and effortlessly silenced?*

Larry

Larry[57] shares a single experience of other-imposed social isolation in a work-place he first joins as an intern while completing a graduate degree. Upon degree completion, he joins full-time and is stationed at a New Jersey office of this global, for-profit organization, reporting to a new supervisor, who is the source of his imposed social

isolation. Based on his internship experience, and like Sandy, Larry discusses his initial, positive expectations:

> I was very lucky to get an internship there, and I had this awesome manager. . . . I [also] was very lucky to get a full-time offer for the next year. . . . So when I got there, I had high hopes for the position.

Also like Sandy, Larry's hopes are quickly dashed: "I had no idea the buzz saw I was going to." He learns almost immediately that six people, who precede him in this position, leave because of the difficult relationship with this new supervisor. He realizes a bad situation, especially as co-workers offer consolation to him during his first week.

For nine months, his supervisor subjects Larry to daily social isolation tactics. At 33, he is an accomplished professional and unable to make sense of how this situation differs so drastically from his previous success:

> I [was] coming from a background where I was always a straight "A" student, number one. In school, I was always in the top of my class, always doing extremely well. And then in the workplace, as . . . a biologist . . . , I always did really well. I was always at the top. I was seen as one of the rising stars in the company.

After seriously contemplating the situation for a few months and deeming it hopeless, and during a particularly difficult exchange with his supervisor, Larry resigns and leaves the organization *before* finding another job.

While remaining in place, Larry demonstrates early courage in giving voice to his experience. He first confronts his supervisor directly, and when the situation remains unchanged, brings it to the attention of his supervisor's supervisor. Again, nothing changes. During his exit interview, Larry provides a six-page documentation of his brief experience to a Human Resources representative, who admits they have been trying to oust the difficult supervisor but feel challenged by upper management's affinity for her.

As I honor Larry's lived experience, I ask: *What does it mean to remain in a place where your voice is devalued and deemed less important?*

Dave

Dave[58] shares a single experience of other-imposed social isolation in a Federal work-place where he enjoys significant tenure. At the onset of his lived experience with other-imposed social isolation, he is 55 and has thirty years of experience in the professional work-place, twenty working in this same Federal community located in the greater Washington D.C. area. Like Michael and Angela, Dave is able to reflect on decades of professional experience and comments on this aberration within an otherwise stellar career. At the time of his socially isolating experience, he leads a research division of 215 people, has been promoted to the highest grade level, and consistently receives high performance ratings.

Among the eight co-researchers, Dave uniquely expresses unwavering confidence in his abilities to emerge from this experience wholly unscathed:

> I knew I was good. I knew at some point, I'd get . . . another job or jobs, where I could be the kind of contributor that I knew I can be. . . . I never had any doubt that I could go elsewhere and do good things.

Dave also recognizes his experience is not without impunity. He acknowledges his talents are wasted during the time of his imposed social isolation. He also admits his isolating assignment is not the kind of job that is career-enhancing or that will earn him a promotion. At the end of his assignment, Dave's supervisor, who is the source of imposed social isolation, returns Dave to his former department, this time as the deputy rather than the director, a conceivable demotion in authority, although not in pay grade. Within a year, Dave applies for and accepts a senior position in a sister organization that recognizes his accomplishments and hires him to start up a new program.

While remaining in place, Dave's experience is unique from the other co-searchers in this study, in that during his sidelined assignment, he maintains some, although not full, strength of voice within the organization:

> I still had a role. I still had a voice. But my status, obviously or arguably, was diminished in an organization that was as hierarchical as [it] was at that time. And much more notable, day-to-day, I was out of the loop.

In fact, it is Dave's *voice* he and others suspect influences his supervisor's decision to assign him to a newly created, title-less, and, as it eventually proved, temporary, position:

> I clearly had a reputation on our corporate board. . . . I knew all [of the members] and had a good relationship, I think, with all of them. I don't know that I talked with all of them about this, but those to whom I spoke agreed with me – either prompted or non-prompted – that it looked like [my supervisor] was trying to get me out of the way. . . . I was probably the one who could be depended upon the most to ask him the difficult questions, even challenge him at times in terms of things he wanted to do, and in general just speak up.

As I honor Dave's lived experience, I ask: What does it mean to remain in a place where your voice is unwelcomed and cast aside?

Thais

Thais[59] shares an experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place that spans five years and two separate work roles within a single organization. Like Wendy's, Thais's experience occurs at the onset of her professional career when, just before her eighteenth birthday, she accepts an administrative assistant position at a not-for-profit English school in Brasilia. After a year, she leaves this organization to pursue a teaching career, only to return a few months later, this time as a teacher and working for the same supervisor, the individual who is responsible for imposing social isolation during the one year of her administrative experience and during the four years of her teaching experience.

The enduring pain of her experience is palpable as Thais describes the unimaginable difficulty of living other-imposed social isolation. For five years, she deflects recurring tactics. Throughout this period she fears what will happen each day. She stays because she believes teaching is her calling, something she was born to do. For her, the situation seems impossible to understand and equally impossible to leave:

> It would have been a lot easier to just go. . . . But because it's something that I was really passionate about, I really enjoyed doing, I couldn't [leave]. I just couldn't understand why they would do this to somebody who could [teach] and do it well.

Despite top-rated evaluations and performance observations, Thais' supervisor removes her without cause and, according to Brazilian law, pays her a substantial severance.

Throughout her experience, and while remaining in place, Thais demonstrates perseverance and fortitude of voice that many might claim as unusual for her young age and work-place inexperience. She confronts her supervisor *during* her tenure as the administrative assistant, *before* agreeing to return to the school as a teacher, and repeatedly *while* in her teaching role. She pushes back when others in the organization become complicit, requesting, even demanding, to speak with her accusers directly. The weight and influence of her supervisor's voice within the organization is reminiscent of the experiences Wendy and Larry share. While other teachers exert their voices to circulate a petition to halt the process of Thais' removal, no other voice proves loud enough:

> [My supervisor] did a really good job of surrounding herself with people who would just turn a blind eye or not really do anything about things. . . . She knew *I* couldn't do anything about it. She knew she wasn't going to lose her job over it. She knew there would be no consequences for her – at all.

As I honor Thais' lived experience, I ask: What does it mean to remain in a work-place where your voice is drowned by an un-touchable other?

Julie

Julie[60] shares a single experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Like Angela and Larry, her experience occurs in the middle stage of her professional career. At 35, during the time she is actively finishing her doctorate, she joins a for-profit consulting firm in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. Despite positive feedback from her direct supervisor and other project leads, Julie suffers repeated assaults of social isolation from her second-level supervisor, who holds the position of group director. Julie's experience, like those of each of the other co-researchers, proves a painful professional anomaly to her previous work-place success and integration with co-workers.

Julie's experience proves unique to those of the other co-researchers in that she truly stands alone – without another individual who shares her targeted condition. In her attempts to remain in place, she is forced to display, even parade, her isolating experience, as she essentially begs work assignments from project leads and peers, and as she is noticeably moved from a premium office space to multiple workstations, each less desirable than the last. After staying for just over two years and reducing her work hours to part-time status, Julie's assignments dry up completely, and she collects unemployment before landing a new job.

As a seasoned professional, Julie is unhesitant in giving voice to her experience while remaining in place. She confronts her second-level supervisor directly about some of the more egregious behaviors. She shares her concerns with her direct supervisor. She contacts Human Resources at multiple points during her tenure and as part of the exit

interview process. She even reluctantly voices her situation to peers and other co-workers in attempts to integrate and slow the process of her exclusion. Julie's attempts meet with mixed reaction. Her second-level supervisor minimizes Julie's concerns and denies accountability for the situation. Her supervisor is sympathetic, but powerless to stem the flow of escalating behaviors. Human Resources representatives ignore and deflect her complaints. Julie bonds with some peers, who, although untargeted, similarly perceive the group director as difficult. With other coworkers, Julie's interactions are awkward at best. Still, giving adequate voice to this experience remains foremost in Julie's mind. She shares that as she reads the transcript of our first conversation together, she thinks, "I'm not even doing this justice – what it really felt like." As I honor Julie's lived experience, I ask: *What does it mean to remain in a place where your voice proves tremulous and inadequate?*

A Hermeneutic Pause

In the role as the primary researcher for this study, I am entrusted and emboldened to carry forward the voices of the eight co-researchers who bare their experiences and place in me their confidences. My research advisor encourages, even cautions, me to pause and sit with these voices following our time together and before moving forward to draw themes from the seventeen conversations that comprise our work. Energized by the marvelous engagement with these individuals and empowered by their stories, I am eager to move forward and impatient with the notion of pausing. While I acknowledge the wisdom of my advisor's suggestion, pausing feels like a luxury at this stage of my research journey. Frankly, I consider pausing an interruption of momentum. I am uncomfortable with putting aside my work and struggle to appreciate what seems most natural to Longfellow's (1864/2000) laborer in the poem "Divina Commedia":

> Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
> A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
> Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
> Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
> Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er; (p. 480)

Hesitant to pause, I fear all that I may waste or lose – time, progress, my muse, and the rhythmic zone of writing.

In spirit, a pause is simply an intermission. Pausing is necessary, perhaps, but is anxious time during which I await the second act and culmination of this study's journey. However, as the first week of my intermission comes and goes, I cast aside my fears and place my faith in the spirit of pausing. I surrender as the "far off noises of the world retreat" (Longfellow, 1864/2000, p. 480) until I no longer begrudge the temporary casting off of my burden. A pause may be quite brief, but what of its power? In the introduction to *The Power of Pause*, author Terry Hershey (2009) acknowledges the "sacred necessity of stillness" as a means of allowing our "souls to catch up with [our] bodies" (p. xix). He sees the practice of pausing akin to the practice of Sabbath, which means, literally, "to cease and to rest" (p. xiii). Hershey entreats us:

> To stop.
> To take a break.
> To make uncluttered time. (p. xx)

So, I stop. I take a break. I *make* uncluttered time. I allow my soul to catch up with my body, a body that engages with co-researchers in seventeen conversations over nine weeks. I sit with the questions I pose as I conclude the introduction of each of the co-researchers in the text of this study. I sit with the meaning and the task of hermeneutic research. What do I hear in the voices of these eight individuals? What do I see of this phenomenon as it reveals itself further through *their* lived experiences? In inviting these

eight voices, I establish a phenomenological foundation from which we construct our conversations and the meanings we give to this phenomenon and its lived experience. As the nine of us together attempt understanding, we invite you, as well, to our hermeneutic circle. Come, stand or sit with us. Beckon forward this phenomenon. Invite it, as does Heidegger (1927/1962), to "be encountered unconcealedly" (p. 187) and to "become itself" (p. 188) before us. Join us in giving voice to those targeted by the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Living the Abuse of Other-Imposed Social Isolation in the Work-Place

> [The story, around the corner]
> is not turning the way you thought
> it would turn, gently, in a little spiral loop,
> the way a child draws the tail of a pig.
> What came out of your mouth,
> a riff of common talk.
> As a sudden weather shift on a beach,
> sky looming mountains of cloud
> in a way you cannot predict
> or guide, the story shuffles elements, darkens,
> takes its own side. And it is strange. (Nye, 2005, p. 55)

When sharing their lived experiences during our conversations together, the co-researchers relay dramatic details of other-imposed social isolation within their work-places. Like Naomi Shihab Nye's (2005) poem, "The Story Around the Corner," theirs are stories that turn corners in ways they "cannot predict / or guide" (p. 55). Their stories "shuffle elements [and] darken" (p. 55) before becoming their own. Both to themselves and to me, their stories seem hauntingly familiar, yet surprisingly strange. The co-researchers' "what happened" storytelling comprises well over half of the time spent during the first conversations. In truth, while the stories themselves have strange tenor, the necessity of this type of storytelling – the "what happened to me" storytelling – seems

a comfortable and necessary space for the co-researchers to dwell, as they repeatedly return to these storylines throughout all three conversations. This type of storytelling seems reminiscent of Heidegger's (1927/1993b) thinking on dwelling, where dwelling is "the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth" (p. 349). In these moments, the co-researchers tell stories of "what happened" as ways in which they *are* in those work-places.

What makes it so important to focus first and primarily on what happened? In Chapter One, and once more in the introduction to this fourth chapter, I suggest that naming remains an important way of pointing to an experience. In Heidegger's (1927/1993b) words, naming is dwelling in order "to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for" (p. 349). Through naming as dwelling, I am "brought to peace" (p. 350). For these co-researchers, naming these behaviors provides concrete, indisputable evidence of what happened during their socially isolating experiences. Moreover, through their storytelling, these co-researchers name what happens *to* them – naming behaviors that demonstrate their work-place social isolation *is* other-imposed, stemming from the actions of one or more others. As the co-researchers reveal the socially isolating behaviors they endure, the phenomenological naming becomes increasingly familiar. Each, like others before them, eventually name these behaviors, and their experiences, as targeted abuse.

Naming Abuse Once More

In my invitation to these co-researchers, and during our conversations, I carefully and purposefully avoid naming or identifying the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place as abusive behavior. I do not want to influence the co-researchers' naming of their experiences. I know that my own naming is not destined to

become their naming. In opening up this phenomenon, I hope and expect to reveal a multi-faceted lived experience. I watch and listen as these co-researchers' nominal and descriptive naming unfolds.

In naming their experiences, the co-researchers acknowledge work-place social isolation as I first name it in Chapter One. Some experience out group behavior and exclusion from the office's inner circle (Smith & Calasanti, 2005). All experience, to some degree, the absence of social support (Linzer et al., 2002; Silver, 2003) and mentoring (Kalev et al., 2006); the severing or distancing of at least some meaningful work relationships (Hitlan et al., 2006; Mulki et al., 2008; Smith & Calasanti, 2005); and real damage to professional reputation and limits to professional success (Hitlan et al., 2006) – at least while remaining in their socially isolating work-places. The longer we talk, the more clearly this phenomenon reveals itself. In the beginning, and standing at the outermost edge of this phenomenological space, the co-researchers name social distancing, favoritism, and exclusion. Time passes; our conversations lengthen. The co-researchers seem increasingly comfortable with our conversational style and draw closer to their experiences to open up the phenomenon. They name mistreatment, hostile work environment, and emotional violence. Before our conversations draw to a close, the co-researchers seem relaxed enough with me to trust fully the phenomenological process. They name abuse, bullying, and terror. Allow me to share with you how these co-researchers relax into the meaning of their experiences and open to phenomenological storytelling.

From naming to storytelling. In my own turning to this phenomenon, I share the tension I feel between naming and storytelling. While the co-researchers do not

acknowledge such tension, our conversations unfold in ways that move past naming what happened to them into sharing the meaning of their experiences. I witness this first as the co-researchers peel back the layers to name their experiences. Early in our conversations together, some focus on their experiences strictly in terms of other-imposed social isolation, without calling these experiences abusive. Angela first names the behaviors she experiences as social distancing. Sandy also discusses distancing by her supervisor and colleagues and the associated confusion and shame she feels:

> Why am I not good enough? Do I have a mark? And it would almost be like I was ashamed to be at work. And there's no logic for it. I felt like I had some sort of social leprosy or something. I didn't want to be there. I didn't want people to see me there.

Wendy discusses her first work-place experience with other-imposed social isolation as favoritism, where she is excluded by her supervisor and several, although not all, of her immediate co-workers.

In some of our conversations, co-researchers suggest abusive experiences without directly naming them as such. Michael admits to a hostile work environment in which he starts to feel truly socially isolated. Julie talks about being mistreated. Angela, after discussing social distancing in our first conversation, stakes a more direct claim when we meet for the second time: "It's a form of workplace violence. It might be emotional. It might not be 'take the gun out and shoot somebody,' but it is emotional violence." The co-researchers' terms – hostile work environment, mistreatment, work-place violence, and emotional violence – firmly point to the abusive nature other-imposed social isolation represents.

During these early stages of conversation, I wonder at these suggestions. It begins to feel like a dance of language in which the co-researchers step toward the phenomenon,

brush against it, then step away before making full contact and calling it abuse. The dance I perceive is akin to what Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) describes as hidden ideas and truths that elude physical grasp:

> . . . they are in transparency behind the sensible, or in its heart. Each time we want to get at it immediately, or lay hands on it, or circumscribe it, or see it unveiled, we do in fact feel that the attempt is misconceived, that it retreats in the measure that we approach. (p. 150)

I experience these moments as shy, furtive glimpses into the co-researchers' lived experiences. Something unspoken – just beyond grasp – seems to linger in their long and frequent pauses and in the awkward laughter that punctuates their speech at strange and onerous moments. I ask myself: Do these co-researchers feel abused by their experiences? Is this other naming innuendo? While I allow these internal thoughts, in practice, I remain vigilantly careful, faithful to my phenomenological role and the bracketing of my own experience. I nurture the unfolding of these conversations to remain true to the co-researchers' lived experiences. I remain patiently attentive so as not to hurry or influence the peeling back of each layer of experience.

At some point during our individual conversations together, most of the co-researchers seem to abandon their shy dances to embrace their experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. With this embrace, their conversations become less focused on their supervisors, the offenders, and a bit more centered on themselves. It is at this point I perceive a shift that gives them permission to name abuse directly. Dave acknowledges: "I knew I was being used. I knew I was being abused, in effect." Julie equates her work-place experience with domestic abuse, claiming no difference in how she is treated in the relationship with her second-level supervisor. Larry's words reveal a similar parallel Julie's:

> It's like domestic abuse, where you're not getting hit physically, but you're getting emotionally beaten every day. . . . You can take a domestic abuse situation and move it to the workplace – [it's the] same thing.

Several of the co-researchers, recognizing the targeted nature of their experiences, speak specifically about work-place bullying and their quiet fears of how consuming, even tragic, this experience can become. At one point in our conversation, Wendy realizes that she may be targeted more intensely because she cares about her work. She ponders it is like her supervisor saying, "I can really bully her because she cares. I'm not going to bother with [another worker] because he doesn't."

Angela relates her abusive experience to school-age bullying. Larry seems to pick up on Angela's thoughts and extends them to his work-place experience:

> I think that if anybody can put themselves in a place at some point in their life when they faced somebody, maybe it was a bully, or they faced some situation where they were treated poorly, really horribly . . . .

He pauses before completing his thought, seemingly uncertain if he is on the right track to convey true meaning, searching for the words that will help me understand the magnitude of his experience. He resumes:

> Think about how that feels. Magnify that by about a hundred times. And then have to face it every single day while you're at work.

I am not shocked by the co-researchers' revelations. I wonder if others will be. If the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place remains enigmatic, how do you react to such claims – with agnosticism? with surprise? with bewilderment? with skepticism? And then Thais discloses something that reveals new meaning for this phenomenon to me, one who feels painfully intimate with its many nuances. In a hushed voice, she shares:

> I felt terrorized. I really did. I was always afraid. I was always afraid going to work. . . . That's terrorism. You just keep people in fear. Nothing needs to happen. It's just the fear that something might.

With Thais' tender confession, our conversation rounds a corner, and I encounter something unexpected. Her startling admission exposes her experience in ways previously unspoken, heretofore unsounded. My reactions? Empathy. Compassion. Communion. Although my experiences with other-imposed social isolation never leave me truly fearful, I hear in Thais' voice a hidden truth, a stunning, although recognizable, facet of the abusive nature of this lived experience.

Seeing through the lens of rooted meaning. As happens many times throughout our time together, I am humbled by the co-researchers' stories. In sharing my own story in Chapter One, I ground my experience as work-place abuse. Now, the co-researchers do the same. As work-place aggression, their stories tell of the emotional harm (Rai, 2002) they endure. As I prepare to explore the ways their testimonies and storytelling bear witness and ring true as abuse, I ask once more: What is abuse? What does it mean to abuse another? Knowing that I will build upon a foundation of academic research and perspective, I also turn to etymological meaning. It is here that I discover anew not only the act of abuse but its lethal impact.

From its Middle English origins, an *abusion* is a "wicked act or practice" that shames and violates decency.[61] The earliest Latin roots yield meanings of misuse and using up (see Endnote 60). Intertwined in these etymological origins and in the naming by these co-researchers exist both the act itself and the action's impact. Beckoning forward this phenomenon, I recognize an inextricable cause-and-effect dynamic that speaks to the target*ing* and target*ed* nature of this lived experience. For to abuse is to

impose wicked acts that shame and violate, leaving targets misused and used up. In what ways is this true by those who have been targeted by the abuse of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place? To answer this question, I follow the lead of my co-researchers and turn first to the abusive acts themselves.

More than Tough Management

I extend the invitation to participate in this research by calling those who have experienced what it is like to remain in a work-place when the intentional actions of another – whether a supervisor, peer, subordinate, or other work-place colleague – forces a social isolation from others or restricts access to others, information, and/or opportunities. Academic research supports that work-place abuse, behaviors that include but are not limited to other-imposed social isolation, aims at targets by those in superior, peer, and subordinate organizational roles (Keashly, 1998; Lybecker & Sofield, 2000; Rayner & Keashly, 2005; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2010) and, in some cases, targets' customers (Merecz et al., 2009). Although not by design, each of the eight co-researchers in this study suffers work-place abuse through the actions of a supervisor – in most cases a direct supervisor, in one instance a second-level supervisor.

Within the supervisor-employee relationship lies implicit and explicit authority. McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone (2012) equate supervisory authority with work-place power. Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, and Lupiáñez (2011) define power as simply "the capacity to control the outcomes of others" (p. 166). By organizational practice and, in some instances, by policy, a supervisor exercises authority, power, and control to set expectations for, monitor, and evaluate an employee's performance – that individual's tasks, priorities, and goals. As such, a supervisor influences the employee's actions, activities, and career. It is feasible to consider a supervisor's influential reach to include

not only daily performance but also near-term and long-term performance, sometimes extending beyond the temporal scope of the formal relationship.

Accepting an inherent power dynamic between supervisor and employee need not imply a negative relationship. Supervisors have the authority to include, provide opportunity, and promote. Supervisors have the power to mentor and coach performance and development. This is not to suggest that these positive relationships are not sometimes difficult and demanding. When business times are tough, so might be a supervisor's interactions. Gary and Ruth Namie (2011), founders of the Workplace Bullying Institute and authors of multiple books aimed at raising awareness for and stopping work-place bullying, acknowledge what they call tough management:

> Tough managers are consistently harsh during crunch times. Everyone feels the wrath and mistreatment. Tough, but consistent and fair given the fact that misery is equally distributed, is something workers will tolerate and even respect. (p. 13)

Whether or not one agrees stylistically with tough management or with the Namies' assertions of employees' temporal tolerance and respect for this style, the differentiating question at hand is when does tough evolve to abusive? In specifically addressing one type of work-place abuse, bullying, Namie and Namie (2011) suggest asking "what has this got to do with work?" and offer this contrast:

> Bullying will always be used to advance a manager's personal agenda . . . rather than about getting work done. Bullying actually prevents work from getting done; it's interference. (p. 13)

Abusive work-place behavior often is targeted at *some* rather than *all* employees, as Namie and Namie further describe:

> The abusiveness of bullying is disproportionately dumped on the targeted few. And there is no end to crunch time. (p. 14)

I suggest that when supervisory power and authority are used to subjugate one or more others, abuse seeps into the relationship. Subjugation suggests conflict and conquering. It is at odds with collaborative and shared power, including efforts aimed toward meeting crunch-time demands. As Namie and Namie (2011) suggest, work-place abuse is not about getting work done. It is targeted behavior aimed at circumventing, overpowering, or, even, vanquishing another within the work-place. With this understanding, I ask: What abusive power and authority are evidenced within the supervisor-employee relationship in the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

Stunning, untouchable power. While the hierarchical positioning of a supervisor neither infers nor gives permission for abuse, one organization dedicated to addressing and eradicating work-place abuse recognizes how easily, and perhaps unwittingly, these dynamics may be set into motion. The American Institute on Domestic Violence© (2010), attending to abuse within work-places, acknowledges:

> The concept of exercising power and control over others is not exclusive to intimate relationships and home life. . . . In fact, most business management schools focus personnel curriculum on "how to manage" employees, rather than how to cultivate the human resource within the employee base. This mentality easily and frequently leads to the establishment of power and control in the workplace. (n.p.)

Namie and Namie (2011) also acknowledge the inherent power and control dynamics between supervisors and their direct reports. They caution that these relationships must be "handled with care," as they can easily, albeit "disgraceful[ly]," be "misused to subjugate" (p. 101) others. These authorities recognize how power and control can mutate to imbalance the supervisor-employee relationship and manifest in unintended, cancerous

ways. The targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place also recognize the malignancy of this lived experience.

Near the onset of our second conversation, Larry, in reaction to reviewing the transcript of our first meeting, purposefully and directly addresses what it means for a supervisor to be the source of abusive, work-place social isolation:

> The abuse was coming from a supervisor. This is no small point. This power differential creates problems beyond a conflict with a mere co-worker who is on the same level. With a co-worker, you can more easily talk things out or take them to a higher authority. But handling a situation with your supervisor presents additional challenges. They can only be handled one way: delicately.

Larry's words leave little doubt as to the implicit power and control wielded by a supervisor. As I note earlier, a supervisor's influential ability and authority may reasonably extend beyond one's current position and may impact future positions, even a career, whether inside the offending organization or in subsequent ones. Verbal and written performance appraisals, as well as referrals and recommendations for bonuses, promotions, and successive positions, speak to a supervisor's explicit power and control.

Larry is not alone in his assessment of how abusive power and control seem central to the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. For Larry and others, an employee may feel powerless to address a supervisor's abusive behaviors based on implicit expectations and explicit policies for work-place respect and conduct. Angela seems stunned that it is "people in power, people that are in authority, people [for whom] you are supposed to have respect," who are the sources of her imposed social isolation. Other co-researchers share how their supervisors' power and control prove indisputable. Wendy states: "Power shows up, I believe, because these people think they are untouchable and they can do anything they want."

Julie concedes the degree to which her second-level supervisor takes advantage of her own power and strips Julie of hers. During our first conversation, Julie admits her powerlessness, seeing her abusive supervisor as free to do whatever she wants. During our second conversation, she expounds:

> [To be powerless is] to have zero control over what you do. . . . In particular, in this situation, the powerlessness was regardless of how much effort I put in, regardless of the [work] quality that others and myself thought was there. It would just be degraded by one person.

Thais strikes a similarly despondent chord as she views her experience with a supervisor's abusive power and control in this way: "The person [experiencing the abusive social isolation]. . . has no say, has no option, and has nowhere to go." In a subsequent conversation, she observes: "[My supervisor] knew I couldn't do anything about it. She knew she wasn't going to lose her job over it. She knew there would be no consequences for her – *at all.*"

These experiences reveal the type of power Kreisberg (1992) names "the ability to get one's way" (p. 30). It is the power "to intimidate [and] to manipulate" (p. 30). It is a "*relationship of domination*" and, as such, represents "*power over*" (p. 36) another. Kreisberg qualifies:

> Dominating relationships are characterized by inequality: situations in which one individual or group of individuals, in order to fulfill their own desires, have the ability to control the behavior, thoughts, and/or values of another individual or group of individuals. (p. 36)

Drawing on the theories of Thomas Hobbes, Kreisberg further asserts: "In human relationships, power is the accumulation, by the individual, of the means (e.g., wealth, reputation) by which she or he can obtain what she or he desires" (p. 37). How achingly true to the co-researchers' observations are Kreisberg's statements! Larry, Angela, Julie,

Wendy, and Thais each describe supervisors who have accumulated the wealth of professional reputation. Through tenure, executive relationships, and some measures of performance, these supervisors become seemingly sacrosanct within their work-places. My choice of sacrosanct may, at first, appear hyperbolic. However, each of these five co-researchers in multiple ways confronts directly their imposed social isolation. Regardless of their attempts, their social isolation is minimized and dismissed, and in some instances outrightly ignored by others, festering until each target leaves the offending work-place. Their supervisors' demonstrations of power speak to what C. Wright Mills (1956/2000) identifies as the actions of a "power elite" (p. 34): "By the powerful we mean, of course, those who are able to realize their will, even if others resist" (p. 9).

The co-researchers use compelling language to describe their experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. As I reflect on their statements, and with consideration of power theory, I wonder the degree to which explicit hierarchy and implicit permission make addressing supervisory abuse so delicate, as Larry discerns it. How do you make contact with this lived experience when the offender seems untouchable and omnipotent? How do you stand firm when the offender's misuse of power seems without consequence? What makes it possible to move forward when abusive disrespect stuns, even paralyzes, you? In this lived experience, in what ways and from what sources are abusive power and control sustained? By whose authority are abusive power and control ordained?

Ordained by whose authority? Modern conceptualizations of work-place authority credit seminal theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber. In *Economy and Society*, Weber (1968/1978) defines dominating authority as the "probability that certain specific

commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (p. 210). Weber further states that compliance with such dominating authority is likely based on diverse motives, which Guenther Roth, editor of Weber's original publication, summarizes: "Men act as they do because of a belief in authority, enforcement by staffs, a calculus of self-interest, and a good dose of habit" (p. xxxv). More recent studies conceive work-place authority as accepted social stratification (Mintz & Krymkowski, 2010) and "an important dimension of social inequity" (Smith, 2002, p. 509). Some researchers actually equate work-place authority with holding supervisory positions and with supervising the work of others (Klunk, 2009; McLaughlin et al., 2012). Other researchers have even measured work-place power *as* supervisory authority (Uggen & Blackstone, 2004).

In what ways, if any, does acceptance of work-place authority, particularly between supervisors and supervised employees, influence the existence of and reaction to work-place abuse? In answering this question, I turn to Geert Hofstede's work with culture and power distance. Hofstede (1980) examines culture as four dimensions, one of which is power distance. Hofstede defines culture as "the collective mental programming of the people in an environment" (p. 43) and power distance as the "extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally [as] reflected in the values of [both] the less powerful members . . . [and] the more powerful ones" (p. 45). Hofstede suggests that power distance is the group's belief in whether inequality among its members should be minimized ("small power distance") or whether inequality represents the "rightful place" of its members ("large power distance") (p. 46).

While Hofstede's work focuses on culture and power distance at a societal level, his theory is operationalized and studied on smaller scales, including at the individual level and specifically with research on abusive supervision in work-places (Wang, Mao, Wu, & Liu, 2012). In work-places, researchers characterize power distance as the culturally accepted "degree of power that authorities should have over employees" (p. 44). From an organizational lens, cultures characterized by high power distance prescribe that "an important role of employees or subordinates is that of following the orders of the superior" (p. 49). Individuals, however, may or may not share the organization's cultural perspective on power distance. In fact, these researchers find: "Employees with low power distance react more negatively to abusive supervisors than do those with high power distance" (p. 56). Further, "Employees with low power distance are more likely to perceive themselves as being unequally treated when they are faced with abusive supervision" (p. 49).

In examining work-place authority, researchers echo and extend Weber's position: Authority exists within organizations and is implanted most noticeably within the supervisor-employee relationship. Moreover, authority suggests and accepts hierarchical inequality, which may be reinforced through cultural norms within the organization. Individuals may knowingly or unwittingly consent to the organization's norms for the authoritative stratification of workers. In doing so, employees may adhere to the organization's culture-driven authority by following a supervisor's or leader's explicit commands or implicit expectations.

I am now ready to ask, In what ways are these conceptualizations of work-place authority demonstrated and reinforced in instances of abusive other-imposed social

isolation? Does such mental programming authorize inequity and give permission for the abusive social isolation that reigns supreme in some work-places? In the lived experiences of the co-researchers for this study, the abusive nature of their social isolation seems evident in the hierarchical relationship between supervisor and employee. Most of the co-researchers, however, confront their supervisors' abusive behaviors in some way, suggesting these targets are willing to stand alone outside a cultural norm that accepts or allows abusive authority.

What about others in the organization? How do they align with the accepting or allowing culture? That few, if any, others in their work-places notice or confront this abuse suggests a culture – a shared mentality, if you will – of acceptance of these behaviors – and, if not outright acceptance, perhaps an unwillingness to step outside their rightful places within the organization to address such behaviors. One distinct indicator of entrenched, stratified authority is the reactions of the targets' peers to the abusive social isolation. While their peers' cultural obedience seems least offensive to these co-researchers, it remains hurtful, as peers distance to maintain for themselves a non-abusive status quo or, as Weber (1968/1978) names it, to protect their self-interests. While admitting his peers' disassociation, Michael generously acknowledges that the members of the other contracting teams are also at battle with his supervisor, although they do not have to fight quite as hard and never "break a sweat." Angela likewise expresses empathy for her co-workers' dilemma when they do not respond to requests from the EEO office to corroborate Angela's testimony: "They probably would have been treated the same way. I mean, why would they throw themselves under the bus? They saw it happen to me."

The deeper the hurt, the less easy it is to excuse complicity, even with peers. Julie laments lost opportunities for relationships with distancing peers and also expresses frustration at other peers' silent complicity with her second-level supervisor's authoritative commands:

> The director . . . forced a lot of oversight on me. And even the people that were . . . asked to [provide that oversight] didn't really understand why. And they would voice that with me: "You know what you're doing. I don't know why I have to do this, but I need to, so let's just go ahead and say that I checked things over and things are fine."

Experiencing similarly willful compliance by her peers, Sandy ponders her repeated abandonment by her office mates: "My entire department would go to lunch together, and I'd be sitting there by myself wondering, 'I wonder what happened there?'" In each of these situations, the co-researchers suffer further isolation as peers acquiesce to a culture that permits abusive authority.

Wounding the co-researchers more deeply are the other managers in the organization, who either embrace or fail to resist abusive hierarchical authority. Some, like in Julie's situation, initially try to support her but eventually distance themselves when they deem their efforts futile. Thais recognizes similar self-preservation by managers in her organization who know what is happening to her but, again, fail to act: "[My supervisor] did a really good job of surrounding herself with people who would just turn a blind eye or not really do anything about [my situation]." Other managers demonstrate more overt support of abusive authority, rallying together and joining what becomes a mob mentality, as in the case of Angela's work-place:

> It felt like there were teams of managers and supervisors ganging up on me. . . . I had three and four and five managers at a time giving me different work to do. . . . So, no matter what I do, they keep assigning me to a friend of a friend.

Such reinforcement may extend upward within the organization beyond the offending supervisor's peers. In some instances, the abusive supervisor's direct supervisor honors existing relationships, perhaps the management position itself, and ignores early warning cries. Larry comments on his experience: "First, I went to her supervisor, which was worthless, basically. . . . Her supervisor was inclined to believe her because he already had a good relationship with her and didn't really know me." Dave has a similar experience in his organization: "If my boss's boss realized what he was doing, he let him get away with it because organizations tend to let managers do stuff like that. They don't call them to task."

Most outrageous to these co-researchers is an executive culture that seems to hold sacred organizational stratification to such an extent it is willing to permit, even encourage, abusive authority. Larry blames his organization's senior leaders, whose myopic focus on business results relegate his abuse to a status of incidental carnage:

> They looked the other way as long as she was doing a good job in managing the business. . . . My manager was hitting her numbers, so her bosses had every incentive to keep her in her position. They didn't want to see the evidence that was right in front of their face: She was leaving a trail of wounded in her path.

Equally culpable within the executive sphere is the human resources department. Purported to serve the needs and rights of *all* employees, management and non-management alike, human resources proves a weak and ineffective foe against Julie's and Larry's forced social isolation.

> I had gone and talked to HR at one point and voiced my concerns over what was going on. . . . It fell on deaf ears, pretty much. (Julie)

> [Human Resources] knew what a terror she was, and they'd had a lot of complaints about her. They were trying to get her out of there. They just didn't have enough ammunition to do it. (Larry)

At other times, like in Wendy's work-place, human resources even appears to deliberately side with the supervisor, working against the target: "HR protects management, not the worker, especially in this environment." In blaming the organization itself, targets also hint that lack of policy contributes to their intolerable work-place existence. Wendy once again accuses: "Companies are supposed to make sure [abuse] doesn't happen. And that company is not doing that." Thais agrees: "[My manager] was just fully in control, and there was no mechanism to make it stop."

Through willful disregard, fractious alliances, unyielding distancing, and persistent silence, members of these organizations authorize abuse. They give opportunity to abusive supervisors, making abusive power and control practical and easy. Perhaps some workers have a fundamental belief in an organization's authoritative stratification, which, as I reference in Chapter Two, implies an Animal Farm mentality that deems "some more equal than others" (Orwell, 1946/1977, p. 134). Reasonably, whether through passive avoidance or active participation, workers may reinforce and sustain abusive authority due to self-interest and as a means of self-preservation within the current organization and for future career aspirations. Feasibly, compliance may simply be a force of habit, in which some workers simply no longer notice the divisive or punitive lines of organizational authority – abusive or otherwise. Regardless of the reason, enforced social inequity breeds abusive authority and power that directs a mighty force toward undeniable targets.

Undeniable targets. Without prompt during our conversations, the co-researchers freely recognize the role of power and authority in their lived experiences. This is a role long recognized by those who study the nature of abuse. A seminal model of abusive

relationships, the Power and Control Wheel was first derived in Duluth, Minnesota, as the "staff of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project [*sic*] . . . listened to heart-wrenching stories of violence, terror and survival" (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, 2011) told by women about their battering experiences. Since its inception, the Duluth Model has been adapted for a multitude of abusive situations and populations, including multicultural intimate partner abuse (Chavis & Hill, 2009); abusive dating relationships (Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, n.d.); youth bullying (Anton, n.d.); and the abuse of children (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, 2011), teens (TeensAgainstAbuse.org, 2009), the elderly (Spangler & Brandl, 2007), people with disabilities (Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.), and immigrants (National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2009). This model has also been adapted to portray abuse in work-place settings (American Institute on Domestic Violence©, 2010; Barnes, 2010).

Across these adaptations, one element remains constant and unaltered: power and control form the hub of the wheeled model. Why does this remain the case? Originators of the Duluth model explain the central positioning of power and control as acknowledgement that the abuse "is characterized by the pattern of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate" (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, 2011). To accept the intentionality, conscious or otherwise, of these abusive behaviors is to appreciate the *targeted* nature of this phenomenon.

While none of the co-researchers mention or indicate awareness of the Duluth model, they recognize and voice their lived experiences as ones in which they are

undeniable targets. At first, Angela and Thais seem to question if the intentionality they suspect is possible or true:

> It was almost like it was intentionally being done to try to set me off or drive me crazy or something. I don't know. It was the weirdest thing. (Angela)
>
> I just couldn't understand why they would do this to somebody. . . . Why did this even happen? This is crazy! (Thais)

With the repeated and relentless onslaught of other-imposed social isolation, the co-researchers come to acknowledge their targeted status. Thais follows her earlier comment with this one: "She was directing everything at – she was yelling at – me, specifically." Julie accepts her targeted situation as she learns of others' experiences: "Apparently she had done it to others in the past, from what I heard, but at that time I was, for some reason, [the] target." Larry's daily assaults make clear his targeted condition: "I was the person she was doing battle with. . . . I was the person that she went to fight with *every day*." Dave admits his inferior position in a pursuit he is unlikely to win: "I'm experiencing some of the more negative aspects of gamesmanship. And I'm a pawn in that."

The power and control dynamics of abusive other-imposed social isolation in the work-place are real. The experiences of these eight co-researchers speak to the dynamics identified in academic literature that addresses abusive work-place relationships. In the co-researchers' experiences, the behaviors they endure, like those identified by Djurkovic (2005), are "unwanted" and "repeated over a period of time" (p. 440). In addition, the co-researchers recognize the importance of their abusive supervisors' "dominant position" (Keashly, 1998, p. 96), as does Keashly, who acknowledges such "power differences" as one "dimension or qualit[y]" (p. 89) of work-place abuse. Beyond "organizational

position," Keashly also recognizes other power authorities, including those named by the co-researchers, such as a supervisor's "influence on workplace norms," and a supervisor's "reward and coercive power in the form of performance evaluation, recommendations for promotions, and assignment of (un)desirable tasks" (p. 109).

Seeming to appreciate struggles like those endured by targets of abusive, work-place social isolation, Martin Buber (1923/1958), in *I and Thou*, asserts:

> Power over the incubus is obtained by addressing it with its real name. . . But how can the man in whose being lurks a ghost . . . muster the strength to address the incubus by name? How can the ruined power in a being to enter into relation be raised again, when an active ghost tramples continually on the ruins? (p. 58)

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is the ghost that lurks within its targets. It is lived experience that tramples continually. Some might argue the incubus is the abuser – the isolating, offending supervisor. I contend the incubus is the oppressive nature of the abusive, isolating behaviors. Over time, as each of these co-researchers endures targeted abuse and, eventually, addresses it with its real name, they assert power over the incubus and the shameful, indecent acts of this lived experience.

Shameful, Indecent Acts

Earlier in this chapter, I ponder the duality of abusive behavior and its impact. Using etymological reasoning, I propose abuse as wicked acts intent on shaming and violating a target's decency. What is the intent of shame? How does it propose to violate decency? It is the dissolution of spirit and Being that Maya Angelou (1978/1994) recognizes in her poem, *Still I Rise*:

> Did you want to see me broken?
> Bowed head and lowered eyes?
> Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
> Weakened by my soulful cries? (p. 163)

Unlike guilt, which is about what I do or do not do, shame's lens points toward self, toward who I *am*. Shrouded by bowed head, lowered eyes, and falling shoulders, shame bores down and settles in as broken spirit and weakened soul. What work-place acts wreak such destruction of Being? What abusive acts prove so shameful and indecent in the lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

Out of favor. For these co-researchers, involuntary social isolation manifests in multifarious ways. Withdrawn meeting invitations and removal from email distributions or daily discussions not only represent a disruption of preferred and essential communication but also intimate a reduction in the target's organizational rank and importance. Angela, whose role includes telemarketing and outreach, finds herself dis-invited from the marketing meetings. Her co-workers share with her a rumor that someone else is going to get her job. Dave continues to attend standard meetings but his re-assigned role removes him from daily discussions with his supervisor:

> During that year, I did continue to attend our office's meetings. But my status obviously, or arguably, was diminished in an organization that was as hierarchical as [it] was at that time. And much more notable day-to-day, I was out of the loop.

For some co-researchers, other-imposed social isolation is a disgraceful lived experience that includes their supervisors' relentless favoritism toward other employees. Michael admits he is not considered one of the cool contractors. He is never invited to lunch with the other contractors or with the government client, and, unlike other co-workers, he is not invited to a Thanksgiving celebration at his supervisor's home. Compounding these insults, Michael's supervisor delivers a devastating blow to his work-place prestige when she by-passes him in her selection of attendees for an annual conference, selecting instead a co-worker who lacks Michael's professional experience

and credentials. His suitability called into question, Michael concludes: “I was stunned. I was angry. It was the same feelings [I had been experiencing] of being not part of the team, but I’ve grown used to them now. Well, I’m not part of the team. Well, of course I’m not.”

Wendy recalls her first experience of other-imposed social isolation in a work-place where her supervisor unabashedly spends his days surrounded by and talking with his favorite female employees, while Wendy and a male co-worker do all the work. This ill-favored status leads to Wendy’s selection – in advance of the other women in the office – for an undesirable, rotational assignment. Sandy’s fall from grace begins, like Michael’s, with her exclusion from office lunches: “So then I became aware that any time I asked someone to go to lunch, they wouldn’t. And when they went to lunch, they wouldn’t ask me.” Later in her tenure, Sandy’s supervisor questions her professional suitability when she denies Sandy a promotion opportunity. When Sandy asks why she is not considered, her supervisor irrationally explains: “Well, you already have a job.”

What is happening to these co-researchers? What underpins these particular abusive acts? Once valued, in all previous work-places if not their current places of employment, these co-researchers find themselves out of favor. They experience the disrespectful discarding of Being that Alison Stine (2011) describes in her poem, “After the Party.” After addressing the question of what to do with the once colorfully bright and drifting balloons that epitomize the gaiety of the party, now deflated “sacs of plastic, stale with air,” Stine is reminded of a newspaper photo she once saw of the Egyptian queen Nefertiti, who purportedly fell from grace:

> . . . Nefertiti,
> bound in the antechamber of a tomb,

> cast out of favor, her body, barely wrapped.
> How they know her: by the queenly jaw,
> age of limbs and teeth. Also, by the broken
> mouth, smashed by priests so she cannot
> eat, cannot breathe in the afterlife. (p. 38)

Like once revered royalty, these co-researchers are tossed aside dismissively like Nefertiti's corpse. Without favor, these targets suffer repeated indignities, disrespected in ways that violate common norms. Their spirits broken and smashed by the abusive acts of supervisors and other co-workers, these co-researchers are left to languish for whatever eternity remains while they stay in place. Out of favor, some targets are abandoned and cast aside to also become out of sight.

Out of sight. The shame and indecency of these co-researchers' lived experiences are most apparent as they discuss the physical isolation that accompanies, and is sometimes a precursor to, their social isolation. Angela loses a premium closed-door office and is relegated to a cubicle, quite unsuited for her daily telemarketing and outreach tasks. Dave also loses a closed-door office when his supervisor transfers him from a department chief position, which allows him to be "in the trenches" and "in the thick of things," to an invented, title-less office representative role that lands him in a bull-pen environment.

Julie and Michael share tales of multiple moves, each of which is a further violation, a greater loss of prestige, and a new badge of dis-honor. Julie talks about moving repeatedly to make room for more senior co-workers who never materialize:

> I started out and had a window office. . . After my first year, even though we had probably six empty window offices, I was told that I needed to move to another office in preparation for other people . . . more senior to me. . . . So I moved my office, and I went from a window office to the other side of the hallway, where if I looked across the hall I could still see out the window. So I lasted there for

> probably another six months or so and had to be moved again. And this time I had to move to an interior hallway.

Michael considers the lasting effects of his repeated moves that each time isolate him further from the center of office activity:

> I was moved four times in less than a year. I could never put anything up in my cube. . . . To this day, I don't put anything up in my cube. I have my nameplate. I got a picture of the girls. Period. All my books I used to keep, I don't keep that stuff anymore because I never know when someone's going to say, "Get out!"

These tactics of physical isolation reinforce the target's shame. Each move deteriorates the target's work-place prestige. Each move exacerbates social isolation from colleagues and work-place activities. Each move further questions the target's suitability within that work-place and threatens the target's station and rank. To be out of sight is to wear a badge of dis-honor visible to all.

Being out of sight begets invisibility. I first acknowledge the invisibility of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place in Chapter One, likening it to watercolored Being. I return to invisibility in Chapter Two, as Romero and Chloe don this cloak and, like my co-researchers, are invisible simply because others refuse to see them. In this way, targets become absent presences within their work-places – their Being relegated to the strange dichotomous world Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) describes in the negative:

> Their carnal texture presents to us what is absent from all flesh; it is a furrow . . . , a certain hollow, a certain interior, a certain absence, a negativity that is not nothingness . . . . (pp. 150-151)

In the invisible moments of their shame, these co-researchers *are* absent presences. As you and I gaze upon their lived experiences, listening as lived experience is conceived through storytelling, we recognize their absence and, with what Merleau-Ponty claims as "first contact," extend to them a certain possibility of Being:

> It is therefore not a *de facto* invisible, like an object hidden behind another, and not an absolute invisible, which would have nothing to do with the visible. Rather it is the invisible *of* this world, that which inhabits this world, sustains it, and renders it visible, . . . the Being of this being. (p. 151)

Contact with targets' lived experiences renders their invisibility visible. From their furrowed and hollowed negativity, by way of connected awareness, comes visible authentication of their ontological Being. In these instances of contact, out of sight does not presume nothingness. Yet, *during* their lived experiences, contact is rare if at all. As such, targets remain invisible, and out of sight proves out of mind.

Out of mind. Being out of mind is Being forgotten. In the title of this dissertation, I reference the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place as one in which the target is forgotten. Forgotten by whom? It is an answer I address earlier in this chapter when I explore the authorities that en-able the abuse of enforced work-place social isolation. Based on the testimonies of the eight co-researchers in this study, I assert the complicity of senior leaders, managers, peers, and the organization itself, as represented by the human resource office and its staff. I note their disregard, alliances, distancing, and silence. The same behaviors that en-able abuse also render the targets out of mind. The same individuals and organizations complicit in the abuse are those who have forgotten the targets.

What is the lived experience of being forgotten and out of mind? Julie experiences what it means to be forgotten in a poignant way. When her direct supervisor leaves the organization, her second-level supervisor refuses to assign her a new supervisor. Although Julie questions this directly with both her second-level supervisor and the human resources office, it takes six months for her to receive a temporary supervisor and another three months to receive a more permanent one, who is a part-time

employee, which presents additional difficulties for Julie's performance. Julie explains how being forgotten in this way violates her work-place status: "In consulting, [it is your supervisor] who makes sure you're fully staffed," meaning that Julie has regular work assignments and is connected with others and their work. Forgotten in this way also threatens Julie's work-place station, as the drop in her billable client hours represents unequivocal evidence of poor performance, since she is unable to meet established performance goals. Julie's forgotten status is what poet John Ashbery (1979/1986b) names "the chronic inattention / Of our lives [that] drape[s] itself around us" (p. 164, lines 11-12). While Ashbery characterizes such chronic inattention as conciliatory, Julie's experience of forgotten inattention is practically conspiratorial in nature, hastening her exit from the organization.

Michael talks about being forgotten as being disenfranchised because the rules that apply to other contractors within the organization seem not to apply to him. He characterizes his abusive work-place experience as one riddled with feelings of disenfranchisement and second class citizenship. Michael's lived experience is one in which he is denied the privileges that others enjoy. It is a dis-honor-able experience that reminds him of his mis-treatment as an Army enlistee in the early 1970's, when being a member of the Vietnam-era military was unpopular. He contrasts that with his current experience as a flight instructor:

> As a pilot, even if you are a student pilot, you're part of something much bigger than yourself. You're part of a legacy of aviation. . . . In our lifetime, just over our lifetime, we've learned how to do this. . . . So when you are out there at the airport, whether you're a student pilot or a flight instructor or a jet pilot coming through town . . . , you are part of [something] much larger than yourself.

Phenomenologist Edward Casey (1987/2000) declares "that remembering is a paramount, perhaps *the* paramount, connective power in our lives!" (p. 63). In his story-telling, Michael intimates this powerful distinction between being remembered and being forgotten. In his lived experience of other-imposed social isolation – in his socially isolating work-place and during his Vietnam military service, Michael is forgotten and disenfranchised, without privilege and membership, disconnected from those who remain proximally quite close. As a pilot and flight instructor, he is wholly remembered, temporally connected to the legacy of aviation that predates his lifetime by decades.

Other co-researchers, recalling what it means to be forgotten in their work-places, enter what Arab poet Mahmoud Darwish (2011) calls "realms of what is lost" (p. 84). In her outcast status, Sandy longs to be remembered in her work-place. Thais laments the loss of her joy of teaching:

> As a teacher, for me, it's always been a part of who I am. . . . Having that stuff happen really affected me as a teacher and just feeling like it didn't matter. I couldn't focus on the job anymore. . . . It became about the survival of my sanity more than it became about the work at certain points.

In her forgotten state, Angela *and* her work are sidelined, set aside, without attention. Absent from his supervisor's mind, Dave realizes he is no longer considered essential to departmental success. For these co-researchers, the present ache of forgotten Being mingles with a longing for remembered past. It is a tension Darwish illustrates with poetic prose:

> The present tense is hesitant and perplexed, [*sic*] the past tense hangs from a cypress tree standing on its rooted leg behind a hill, enveloped in its dark green, listening to one sound only: the sound of wind. Longing is the sound of wind. (p. 108)

For two co-researchers, being out of mind exists in sharp contrast to the laser-like focus of unwanted, abusive attention. Larry describes how this strange coexistence manifests for him in his work-place:

> From an organizational standpoint, I was definitely lost and forgotten. From [my supervisor's] perspective, I was far from lost and forgotten. I was the person she was doing battle with. So, [for her], I wasn't forgotten.

Under the microscopic scrutiny of abuse, Wendy passionately conveys how lonely such intensely abusive attention can be:

> You are absolutely forgotten because you can't tell anybody. That is a forgotten space. It's a lonely space. . . . So you're forgotten because you're lonely. And so you feel forgotten because you're just out there, and you *can't* tell and . . . you don't even know *how* to tell someone.

Larry and Wendy embody what Casey (1987/2000) claims as "memory of place" (p. 183). Their collective language is less about the *who* in their abusive work-places and more revealing of their memories of "*having been in a place*" (Casey, p. 183). Their lonely forgotten-ness is possible only for having been in previous work-places where they are cherished and remembered.

Mis-Used and Used Up

In their places of work, these co-researchers claim as abusive the same shameful, indecent acts academic researchers recognize. They endure "threat[s] to professional status" (Djurkovic et al., 2005, p. 444), such as the "humiliation" (Keashly, 2010, p. 12) of a supervisor's targeted "screaming" (Merecz et al., 2009, p. 259) and "angry outbursts" (Keashly, 1998, p. 97) in "front of colleagues" (Keashly, 2010, p. 12). They suffer "threat[s] to personal status" (Keashly, 2010, p. 12), such as the "insults" (Keashly, 1998, p. 97) and "devaluing" (Keashly, 2010, p. 12) of repeated moves and questioned credentials. They bear the burdens of "overwork [and] unreal expectations" (Keashly,

2010, p. 12) represented by inequitable performance assignments and tasks. They are "destabiliz[ed]" (Djurkovic et al., 2005, p. 446; Keashly, 2010, p. 12) by denied opportunities and promotions. Finally, and of utmost attention for this research, these co-researchers are "isolat[ed]" – "exclud[ed] from work-related gatherings" and denied access to or provided "incomplete information" (Davenport, et al., 1999, p. 19; Keashly, 2010, p. 12), dismissed and not taken "seriously," and labeled as "poison[ous]" (Keashly, 2012, p. 12) to others.

The abusive nature of these shameful, indecent acts leaves the targets out of favor, out of sight, and out of mind. Their stories illustrate the shame, dis-honor, and dis-grace of this lived experience. In her book, *Stalking the Soul: Emotional Abuse and the Erosion of Identity*, Marie-France Hirigoyen (1998) states, "Abuse is established when dialogue stops and the abused person cannot make himself heard. Prevention therefore means reintroducing dialogue and real communication" (p. 181). Innately knowing these statements to be true, these eight targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, battling to reintroduce dialogues and real communication, alternately whisper and howl of the insults and violations that leave them mis-used and used up.

After allowing ample time for the co-researchers' initial storylines to run their course, I purposefully shift the conversations to what it is like to *experience* other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. The conversations' timbre likewise shifts. The angered energy and passionate rhetoric subsides. Intensity wanes. During the "what happened to me" conversations, co-researchers lean forward, gesture frequently, and lock eyes with mine. When we turn to the "what it was like" conversations, these same individuals lean back and rest against their seats. Some even push away from the tables

where we are seated. Nervous laughter, winded breath, and pregnant pauses punctuate startling confessions. Voices slow. Eyes avert. Voices catch. Eyes tear.

While naming the *behaviors* of what happened seems not only important but also easy, naming the *experience* proves more difficult. To name the phenomenon is to call it forward in such a way as to reveal more than the "what." It is to unconceal the "so what." What is it like – what does it mean – to live as the target of these abusive, socially isolating behaviors? Trying to see and speak these aspects of the phenomenon leads us to quieter and, I suggest, more sacred, ground. These conversations prove sacred in the sense of its earliest etymology, meanings closely akin to those I explore at the onset of Chapter Three as engagement. Interestingly, we bind together with an accompanied distance. It is a space of togetherness and separateness that Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) discusses in *The Dance*:

> It is where I am simultaneously aware of both my solitude in my deep connection with others that the experience of the sacred enters. Silence invites me into my solitude, makes me aware of my distinct and separate existence. To be aware of both who and what I am, there must be a boundaried I as both subject and object. (p. 160)

In opening the conversation, we open up the phenomenon. Sitting in the stillness of shared silences, we are keenly, sometimes rawly, aware of ourselves, as subject of self and object of the other. In these moments we find ourselves deeply connected, bound together in protective, sacred engagement.

In these moments, these eight individuals share with me what it is like to be the targets of other-imposed social isolation in their work-places. Their voices speak to the truths of being misused care-lessly, improperly, and harm-fully. Their tenor is heavy. In these moments, our conversations shift from the acts themselves to their impact, leading

us gently yet firmly away from "what happened to me" to what it is *like* to live this abusive work-place experience. Our turning proves not, as poet Naomi Shihab Nye (2005) reminds us, "the way [we] thought / it would turn, gently, in a little spiral loop" (p. 55). Instead, our conversations "shift . . . in a way [we] cannot predict / or guide" (p. 55). Their stories continue to be strange, yet familiar, tales that shuffle and darken to illustrate this lived experience. Remain with us at this window, as we continue to beckon forward this phenomenon and this time ask: In what ways does the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place wound those it targets?

CHAPTER FIVE:

RECOGNIZING THOSE WOUNDED BY OTHER-IMPOSED SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE WORK-PLACE

In the introduction to Chapter Three, I ruminate on what it truly means to see and engage phenomenologically. These ruminations have a place in this chapter as well. I build from Martin Heidegger's (1927/1962) confident assertion that to see is to "encounter unconcealedly" (p. 187). I build from Martin Buber's (1964/1991) humble, yet powerful, entreaty to point to what is seen:

> I have no teaching. I only point to something . . . I point to something in reality that had not or had too little been seen. I take him who listens to me by the hand and lead him to the window. I open the window and point to what is outside. I have no teaching, but I carry on a conversation. (p. 693)

Building from these philosophers, I contend that to point is to see more clearly, more deeply, and, by consequence, more fully to *know*. I contend that to point is to engage – with the phenomenon and with each other – in such a way as to bind oneself in full commitment, even if it means to risk. Throughout this dissertation, I share the many times I stand at the window to point to the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. In Chapter One, I stand alone, pointing to my own work-place experience. In Chapter Two, I stand side-by-side with colleagues, academic researchers, authors, poets, artists, and musicians, pointing existentially to this lived experience. In Chapter Three, I stand in concert with Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Buber, and others, pointing to the philosophic underpinnings of this lived experience.

In Chapter Four, and once more in the spirit of *sawubona*, I invite eight co-researchers to stand with me at the window, each and all of us beckoning forward this phenomenon. We engage one with another to consider this lived experience. Weaving a vocal tapestry, the co-researchers narrate experiences in which they are targeted by the

abusive actions of another, in some instances multiple others, within their work-places. They charge supervisors, who are in positions of trust and support, with shameful, indecent acts. They confess, by degree, to being mis-used and used up by this abusive lived experience. In this fifth chapter, I remain at the window and ask: To what else should we point? What yet is unconcealed and remains to be seen? What more is there to know? I also ask: How should I recognize this lived experience in order to honor it?

At its simplest, to recognize is to notice. In recognizing this phenomenon, I do not limit myself to mere glance. I engage and formally acknowledge this lived experience. I invite others to share this recognition. Together, and in this present time, we embrace an obsolete meaning of recognition: "to admit the fact, truth, or validity of"[62] this lived experience. Such tenor is apropos to a committed, binding engagement with this phenomenon. Such tenor also honors the etymology of recognition, which is to know again what is already known.[63] Such tenor implies effort and engagement. Together, we do not gaze passively out this window. We actively, passionately recognize this phenomenon in its truth and unconcealedness. Further, we recognize the validity of this lived experience. As we gaze, we perceive anew what we, at least in part, have already known: the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place wounds its targets. This lived experience traumatizes, leaving these co-researchers to grieve all that is lost as they are targeted by the shameful, indecent acts of abusive social isolation.

Living the Trauma of Other-Imposed Social Isolation in the Work-Place

Hunkered down, nerve-numb,
in the carnal hut,
the cave of self,
while outside a storm
rages.

Huddled there,
rubbing together
white sticks of
your own ribs,
praying for sparks
in that dark
where tinder is heart,
where tender is not. (Orr, 2002, p. 7)

In "(Trauma) Storm," Gregory Orr (2002) poetically illustrates a traumatized individual huddled alone in a cave of self, desperately, yet numbingly, hoping to re-ignite life from the tinder of one's own heart. It is a painstaking struggle devoid of tenderness and existing within the eye of a raging external storm. Orr could easily be portraying the traumatic struggle of those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. In what ways does this lived experience serve to rage and traumatize its targets? What kinds of trauma relegate these targets to huddle within their carnal huts? The co-researchers describe trauma primarily in terms of emotional and psychological stress, and secondarily as the physical after-shocks produced by such stress. They also acknowledge deeper wounds, ones more closely tied to etymological roots that mean to bore, grind, and wear away.[64] The abnormal stress of this lived experience proves an emotional trauma with physical aftershocks that bore deeply and wear away the target's spirit-of-Being. The huddled target does not emerge unscathed from the cave of self to escape the wrathful storm.

Hunkered Down, Nerve-Numb

In our conversations together and early in the conversational shift to "what it is like" to experience other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, all eight co-researchers readily recognize the emotional and psychological stress of this lived experience. They name their stress emotional hurt, pain, and cruelty. They acknowledge

the pressure of this lived experience. It is pressure that brings psychological fear. For some, it is the fear simply of going to work and not knowing what to expect. For others, it is the fear of losing their jobs. These co-researchers' experiences of hardship and adversity cause relationship rifts at work and in their personal lives. The difficulty of their lived experiences triggers emotional retreats from others – or, at times, emotional inertia – that leave them apathetic and unfocused on daily tasks, including, for some, the task of preparing to leave the organization.

In attempts to create havens from the raging storm of this lived experience, these targets hunker down. Nerve-numb and huddled to themselves, their lived language speaks to the emotional trauma that threatens their safety, perhaps even their momentary sanity. Thais notes her isolating work-place as one that lacks safety and emotional stability. Larry portrays his experience as a time when he is emotionally beaten every day. Across multiple conversations, Angela repeatedly emphasizes the emotional toll, describing her experience as emotionally draining and an emotional turmoil. She eventually acknowledges the deepest of wounds, calling her abusive experience one of emotional rape. These targets speak of instability, battering, and almost unspeakable depredation. I contemplate the ways the emotional storm of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place force it targets into carnal huts and caves of self.

Cloaked in anger. They enter their carnal huts uncomfortable and frustrated. Thais' discomfort translates to insecurity. Larry implores me to imagine "going into a place where you know when you walk in the door you're going to be in a fight every day." Julie roots her frustration in the rocky soil of absolute powerlessness. Michael sources his frustration with feelings that all his efforts seem to benefit only his

competition: “I’m just doing this for another contractor to pick up. That’s all I’m doing. I’m paving the way for the next contractor. . . . That’s a frustrating place to be in.” Repeated discomfort and frustration lead first to misery. Recognizing her own misery, Julie finds herself bonding over this emotion with her peers, as misery loves company, so to speak. In addition to expressing his dejected misery, Larry also recognizes that his peers, specifically those who report directly to his abusive supervisor, are also miserable.

Walled in by discomfort, frustration, and misery, anger seeps in to cloak the huddled victims. Anger is associated with experienced trauma (Brooks, Silove, Steel, Steel, & Rees, 2011; Day et al., 2008; Orth & Wieland, 2006), including trauma stemming from abuse (Flemke, 2009). Experiencing repeated or multiple traumatic incidents leads to greater anger (Hagenaars, Fisch, & van Minnen, 2011), and anger may be present both during the traumatic period as well as post-trauma, particularly when traumatic memories are cued (Taft, Creech, & Kachadourian, 2012; Taft, Street, Marshall, Dowdall, & Riggs, 2007). It is unsurprising, therefore, that anger is the emotion several co-researchers recognize as dominant in their lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Two co-researchers are almost confessional with me about their anger. Their self-revelations expose the solitude of cloaked Being:

> I was so angry because it was completely undeserved. . . . I got so angry because I didn’t initiate any of it. And I think part of the anger too was that I knew that there was no place I could go. . . . I knew there was nobody who would stop her from doing what she was doing. (Thais)

> And I was really lucky. If I didn’t have options, I don’t know if [my fiancé] and I would have eventually gotten married. Because who wants to marry someone who sits on the couch and is angry all the time? (Sandy)

In her poem, “The Double Image,” Anne Sexton (1981) talks about visitations with her daughter: “how we bumped away from each other like marionettes / on strings” (p. 41). Confessional moments, such as these with Thais and Sandy, are like those bumping marionettes. These co-researchers know their anger is present in their abusive lived experiences, yet they embrace it with jerking, entangled motions. Anger, for them, is an ill-fitted cloak.

Three co-researchers talk about anger in the way Audre Lorde (1973/1997) observes in the opening lines of her poem, “Who Said It Was Simple”:

> There are so many roots to the tree of anger
> that sometimes the branches shatter
> before they bear. (p. 92)

For Michael, Angela, and Wendy, their anger is deeply and broadly rooted. Michael talks about becoming physically angry when his peers are granted certain privileges denied to him. Angela, the lone co-researcher who remains in her socially isolating work-place during the time period of our conversations, frequently brings up her anger, admitting it is so great she does not even want to think about it. Wendy not only remembers her anger during the times of her forced social isolation, but also admits she still has a lot of anger during her recollections. In our conversations together, these co-researchers burst with anger to provide lightning glimpses of their lived experiences. In these flashback moments, I witness their shattered branches. Their cloaks of anger penetrate flesh. I cannot see where one ends and the other begins.

As the storm of abusive, other-imposed social isolation rages on, I ask: What lies hidden beneath these cloaks of anger? I enter their caves and offer to take these cloaks and cast them aside, although also to keep remain near, in full sight, and close enough to

don once more and as often as needed. Underneath, closer to the soul of lived experience, I witness the tattered vestiges of shame, caution, and insecurity.

Tattered remnants of ontological security. Anger cast, at least temporarily aside, I notice the frayed edges of this humbling, shaming lived experience. Dave accepts:

> [My situation was] humbling in a sense that I knew that other people might think less of me, that they probably were. I'd bet money they were: "Something's wrong here. Dave's done something wrong. He hasn't been successful in something that he's been doing. Something's wrong here." There's nothing I could do about it.

Sandy shares how embarrassed and ashamed she is, likening her experience to children who are ridiculed at school but will not tell their parents because they are so embarrassed and don't want to burden them. Living the shame of this experience, targets become cautious. Some are judicious about how they interact with others in the work-place. Angela admits her retreat from electronic communications, as meeting face-to-face rather than communicating through email seems safer somehow. Julie talks about the careful barriers she builds with younger co-workers: "I was cautious a lot [with them], because I didn't want to jade them, given that it was so early in their careers. I certainly didn't want there to be guilt by association [with me]." Sandy shares how she becomes hyper cautious *outside* the work-place, especially when meeting new people and considering another job.

More deeply woven than shame in the ragged remnants of this lived experience is self-doubt. For some, it is the thinnest of threads. Dave, even while maintaining his personal confidence remains securely in place, recognizes other-imposed social isolation as the type of experience that typically calls self-confidence into question. For others, like

Larry and Julie, self-doubt patches the shredded fabric of their former confidence. Larry concedes:

> I think that my confidence was shaken a little bit. . . . That's the way I felt all the time. . . . [I felt] I could never do anything right. . . . I felt incompetent. And that is a horrible feeling, feeling incompetent.

Julie also admits to crises of confidence, some of which extend years after she exits her isolating organization. Why can she not shed such tattered apparel, especially as it shows the wear of time? She explains, "[Because] that's always in the back of my mind that there was some kernel of truth to whatever she was putting out there and saying both to me directly and also about me to others."

At risk, in lived experiences like Larry's and Julie's, is what Smith and Jones (1993) identify as ontological security. Describing trauma-induced ontological insecurity in terms of neophobia, a reinforced preference for making familiar choices rather than new ones, these researchers view neophobia as a numbed form of "treading water" by those who "are struggling to stay psychologically present" (p. 92) during traumatic situations. Is it possible that neophobia is at the heart of the decision to remain in place, even when all indicators alert targets that abusive conditions are not altering, subsiding, or terminating? It seems quite possible when you consider that the longer targets remain in abusive place the more ontologically insecure they seem to become. Smith and Jones, building on the seminal work of R. D. Laing, claim: "A person [who experiences *primary ontological insecurity*] may feel more unreal than real and be so tenuously separated from the rest of the world that personal autonomy and identity are always in doubt" (p. 93). Sandy's explosive commentary gives credence to this argument:

> I was this fake! I didn't belong there. I didn't care enough. And they didn't care – I was like this charlatan [to them]: "Yeah, we know you're here. We know you say the right things now, but we know you're not real. You're not real."

Ontological insecurity is what Sartre (1943/1984) names anguish. It is "distrust [in] myself and my own reactions in [a] situation" (p. 65). Alone, in the cave of self, targets embody Sartre's notion of bad faith and from themselves "hide the truth" (p. 89) of their situations. In truth, this lived experience calls much more than the target's self-confidence into question. This lived experience questions others' intentions and trust. It questions how targets make sense of the work-place and their work-place relationships. What perseveres as targets remain in place and abusive other-imposed social isolation continues to rage? Having entered the caves of self with these targets, I look past the cast-off cloaks and the ragged remnants that expose huddled flesh. I see them shiver, near-stripped of ontological security. Nakedness is hope-lessness.

The nakedness of hope-lessness. Paulo Friere (1992/1998), Brazilian educator and philosopher, writes:

> Hopelessness paralyzes us, immobilizes us. We succumb to fatalism, and then it becomes impossible to muster the strength we absolutely need for a fierce struggle that will re-create the world. . . . And hopelessness can become tragic despair. (pp. 8, 9)

How does one degenerate into a state of hope-lessness? Where does it begin? For Sandy, hope-lessness gestates from small events that she first deems merely odd but that later add up over time. Angela, a seasoned professional steeped in human resources and management competencies, finds herself immobilized in an uncertain work-place where she does not know where or how to get help. Michael's hope shatters as his faith in predictive process is shaken to the core: "I recall the daily grind of not knowing if I was going to be asked to leave or not. I was not sure if anyone in our company could survive."

From these roots of hope-lessness sprout the nonsensical and surreal. Sandy simply observes there is no logic for her abusive lived experience. Thais exclaims: "I feel my mind going into overdrive again. WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY? – and then possible answers, none of which makes any sense because none of it was logical to begin with." Julie notes she could leave sooner if she simply understood enough to make judgments about the rationality of her situation. Angela questions her own sanity as she tries to make sense of what is happening to her: "Does anybody understand what I'm going through? Am I crazy? . . . Am I paranoid? Is this happening to anybody else?" Similarly, Thais queries: "A lot of the time when I was there, I honestly, I kept thinking, 'Is this real? Am I doing something that is causing this to happen?' There were so many times when I questioned myself!"

Mis-trust blossoms. Angela acknowledges she no longer trusts the managers in her organization or anything they do. Without trust, hope-lessness propagates until all else chokes and disappears, as Thais attests:

> It was just panic and anger and [a] kind of hopelessness. I just knew, "Fine. You're going to do whatever you're going to do. And I'm not going to be able to do anything about it. Great. Just let me have it." You know, arguing is just useless.

Larry allows how low his hopes had fallen: "You are out of options. You don't know what to do. My only hope was quitting and dreaming of quitting and living in my friend's basement. That was my hope. Like some kind of bomb shelter." For Sandy, hope-lessness also means a lack of choices and a view of the world that gets smaller and smaller and smaller.

Waning trust and dwindling options paralyze and immobilize targets of this lived experience. For some, hope-lessness casts an omnipresent shadow like that of Edgar Allan Poe's (1845/1984) haunting raven:

> And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting
> On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
> And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
> And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
> And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
> Shall be lifted—nevermore! (p. 756, lines 103-108)

Targets feel fatally trapped in the shadows of hope-lessness. The storm of abusive social isolation continues to rage. The demon raven remains perched and watchful. Davenport et al. (1999) report:

> What happens most often is that the victims feel alone. They cannot believe what is happening to them. It is both difficult to express, and difficult for others to understand. 'Just move on' is the advice often given [to these targets]. (p. 84)

But often it feels quite impossible to move on. Miller (1995) explains: "Researchers have done thousands of studies on the effects of isolation, using subjects as far ranging as birds and pigs to primates and humans. All report that isolation and the loneliness that ensues seriously damage the psyche" (p. 64). Before daring to hope to emerge from the isolated loneliness of their caves of self, targets often experience unprecedented physical wounds that they attribute to their abusive lived experiences.

Rubbing Together White Sticks of Your Own Ribs

In Gregory Orr's (2002) poem, the huddled individual, self-isolated to brave the a raging storm, resorts to rubbing together rib bones – a survivalist's effort not only to ignite warmth but also to spark the exterior storm into abeyance. Orr's suggestion is that in order to persevere and withstand the storm one may have to sacrifice a bit of one's Self – in this case, one's corporeal self. How true is this to a target's survival of other-imposed

social isolation in the work-place? Five of the co-researchers answer my question and share how physically debilitating their lived experiences prove to be.

Some targets experience mere abrasions of heightened physical stress triggered by specific work-place events. Larry talks about how the simple act of going to work each day fills him with gut-wrenching dread, a sickness in his stomach, all because he knows he walks into a peculiar kind of war zone where he is forced to fight each day. Thais shares a specific encounter when she is summoned to her supervisor's office:

> And I got to the [door], her door, and there was a chair in front of her desk. So she was sitting down, and there was a chair, and, I mean, there's never a chair. And I was like, "Oh, my, oh." When I saw that chair, . . . my stomach dropped. I thought, [whispered], "Oh, God."

Repeated incidents for the duration that these targets remain in place, however, prevent abrasions from healing. Unhealed, some wounds fester, causing corporeal decay. Wendy talks about her recurring illness, which she initially attributes to her physical workspace: "I thought it was the environment, just being down in the shipyard maybe, a trailer type situation, not enough ventilation or whatever." She eventually realizes, however, that her work-place environment is sick in a much different way:

> But now that I know what I know, I know that it was a sick workplace. It was a dead place to be. And, as such, it was affecting my health. And that's why I was always sick. I was always on antibiotics. . . . There was a cycle.

Wendy credits some of her insight to the fact that in her second socially isolating work-place, over two decades later, she gets sick for the first time in years.

Un-mended wounds become chronic health concerns. Angela's blood pressure sky rockets and requires medication. Julie unintentionally loses a significant amount of weight, suffers recurring headaches, and struggles to sleep well. Sandy also experiences sleep difficulties, among other physical maladies, such as hair loss, a stomach ulcer,

brittle nails, and a shallow complexion. One of her friends remarks that Sandy is starting to look like a cancer patient. Sandy's physical trauma eventually escalates, culminating in a genuine panic attack as she drives to work one morning:

> I was pulling up that long drive . . . , and [my work-place] was at the top of the hill. And you go by the hotel. You go by some office building. You go by some power lines. And with each landmark I passed, I knew it got me closer, and I just felt heavier and heavier and heavier. My skin felt hot. I felt like I couldn't get enough air. And I thought, "Get yourself together. Good God!"

What is happening to these co-researchers? The chronicity of their physical symptoms is indicative of the unyielding assault of this lived experience. The work-place abuse literature chronicles similar corporeal wounding – from crying and occasional sleep difficulties to high blood pressure, persistent sleep difficulties, gastro-intestinal problems, excessive weight loss and, at full escalation, severe depression and panic attacks (Davenport et al., 1999). Moreover, the co-researchers' experiences exemplify the symbiosis of spirit and body that Carl Jung (1964/1970) observes as "mysterious truth": "The spirit is the life of the body seen from within, and the body the outward manifestation of the life of the spirit – the two being really one" (p. 94). The incursive onslaught of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place sacrifices the target's spirit and manifests as broken body.

The interconnections between spirit and body are most agonizingly evident as three co-researchers share how they lose voice while weathering this lived experience. Wendy remarks that, while remaining in her socially isolating work-places, she always has a sore throat or a cold. Julie's vocal symptoms become frighteningly severe:

> I remember near the end . . . , I ended up getting this sinus infection slash bronchial thing where I would cough so much I'd lose my breath. I remember sitting on . . . the stairs [in my apartment], I was wheezing and I couldn't get breath, and I was frightened. I thought, "Literally, I'm going to stop breathing

> here." And I hadn't even had a cold in probably five or six years, so it was very bizarre to get something so severe.

Thais repeatedly loses her physical voice and ponders the association of this loss with her lived situation in which she feels she has no spiritual voice:

> In the end, I lost my voice a lot – physically. And I have wondered. . . . Obviously, I can't teach without my voice. And for the last year I was there, it was just a recurring thing. And I've often wondered. I felt like I didn't have a voice anyway. And I'm not generally very esoteric in my thinking, but that's one of the things I've always thought about. Was that my body saying, "Yeah, you really don't have a voice, you know? You might as well not talk at all and not go" [to work].

Recognizing the severity of these wounds, I ask once more: What is happening to these co-researchers? If Jung (1964/1970) is right, their broken bodies clearly reflect their nerve-numb spirits. The raging storm of this lived experience coats their corporeal limbs much like the ice-storm ladens Robert Frost's (1920/1979a) "Birches":

> They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
> And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
> So low for long, they never right themselves:
> You may see their trunks arching in the woods
> Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground (p. 121, lines 14-18)

Frost compares the temporary weight on birch branches from young boys' swinging to the ice-storm's permanent, hope-less damage. Perhaps it is such a scene that Julie and Thais glimpse when they respectively read the transcripts of our first conversations:

> Near the end of reading the transcript for the second time, my eyes welled up, and I was taken back to how powerless I felt in dealing with the experience…I didn't even know that it was happening until I noticed things becoming blurry to read. (Julie)

> It was hard. I would read a couple of pages, and I would have to stop and put it away. I would just be like, "I can't do this right now." Then I'd go back, and I would feel the same way. . . . It's been long enough that I thought it would mostly be okay, and it really wasn't. It was really difficult to read. . . . It just kept bringing up all of these emotions. (Thais)

Their voices reflect the carnage of spirit that never fully rights itself. Theirs are spirits brought low, and, perhaps, irreversibly, by the weight and the fury of the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Our time together opens old wounds. I am privy to what King (1995) recognizes as the psychosocial damage of alienating work-places: "An individual's position in the social and work environment profoundly affects health and well-being; it can either suppress the human spirit or encourage development of full potential" (p. 36). As we linger across weeks of conversations, I am witness to their huddled, broken selves and to their suppressed spirits. Bound by our conversational relation, the co-researchers reveal the totality of their sacrifices, as well as their will to survive.

Tinder is Heart

One definition of the verb wound is to tear, breach, or open.[65] Considering the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I wonder what is torn, breached, or opened when a target is wounded? Certainly, this phenomenon does to include direct physical wounding. Wounding, then, is likely to occur to the target's ontological Being. To answer my question, I connect with Martin Heidegger and notions of everyday *Dasein* and authenticity. As I explore in Chapter Three, standing at the window with Heidegger, "the 'they' . . . [is] the 'who' of everyday *Dasein*" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 165). The "they" is everydayness. It is the mundane and the routine, in which nothing – and no one – stands out. Because each individual is subsumed within the "they," this state of being is inauthentic. Heidegger (1927/1962) claims that to "become *authentic* Being-one's-Self" one must find oneself with the "they," a process by which "Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the "they" (p. 313).

I suggest that the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation wounds the target's authentic Being. The repeated traumas of emotional and psychological stress coupled with the physical aftershocks of this lived experience wound targets – tearing, breaching, and opening authenticity. Wounded authenticity arrests *Dasein's* process of "bring[ing] itself back to itself from its lostness in the "they" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 313). Wounded authenticity arrests the target's search for Self with the "they." The cave of self is harsh, without tenderness. Confined to the carnal hut, the huddled target turns further inward, asking: Will my own heart beat strongly enough to ignite authenticity? Will I be able to hear and feel it over the thunderous roar and vibrations of this experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

Tearing life's fabric. As I consider the target's wounded authenticity, I ponder a question yet unspoken: What drives the target to seek the shelter of the carnal hut and cave of self? Surely, within the realm of the storm's reach, other safe havens exist. What makes the target self-isolate rather than seek shared shelter? This self-imposed seclusion is one I first acknowledge in Chapter One as part of my own lived experience. In Chapter Three, I explore what Heidegger (1927/1962) names a push or abrupt arousal, and what Sartre (1943/1984) identifies as an occasion. Each trigger – the push or occasion – is an original situation that propels an individual from everyday existence and toward a mode of solitary silence, in which the individual seeks authentic Self.

As I reveal more of this phenomenon, and begin to consider the Heideggerian push and the Sartre-ian occasion as they disclose what I now name the target's carnal hut, I recognize that the woundedness of this lived experience tears at the very fabric of life.

In her poem, poet Kay Ryan (2010) characterizes the fabric of life as stretchy and complexly woven. Yet,

> when any strand snaps –
> hurts working far past
> the locus of rupture,
> attacking threads
> far beyond anything
> we would have said
> connects. (p. 172, lines 13-19)

Ryan's description fits. The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is toxically infectious. For the co-researchers, the lived experience ruptures relationships with the offending supervisor, metastasizing to taint relationships with others in the work-place. Quite unanticipated is the far-reaching debilitation to targets' personal lives and their relationships outside of the noxious work-place. Thais claims to think of her abusive situation the whole time she is away from her work-place, dreading each time she must return. Larry admits his abusive isolation colors his entire life – at work and outside of work. Sandy startling reveals her abusive work-place experience nearly destroyed her marriage plans with her fiancé.

In contrast to these testimonies, some targets do communicate their socially isolating situation with others. Angela shares her situation with her husband, who is always supportive. Larry reaches out to friends and talks about his social isolation regularly. Others fully retreat. Julie neglects friendships because she does not want to burden others. She spends her time away from work at home watching television with her dogs. Sandy refuses to talk with family and friends, reasoning they will not understand, especially since they, unaware of her abusive social isolation, believe the job to be perfect

for her. Sandy even avoids her best friend for nine months, telling her fiancé to intercept phone calls and say she is sleeping.

Breaching life's passion. As the storm of other-imposed social isolation intensifies, targets' passions erode and disintegrate. Once considered top-rated performers, targets bow and then buckle under the abusive offensive, sacrificing their professional engagement and commitment. Some targets daydream of different work-place realities. Larry comically jokes about trading jobs with the person who comes to his office to water the plants. He confesses he watches her daily with envy: "She just looked relaxed, watering her plants, going about her business." Wendy's work-place daydreams are a bit more ghastly: "I would wish in the wintertime, when the steps, the metal steps, were icy to get down to the shipyard, that I would fall [and] be out of work for a while."

Apart from escapist daydreaming, targets begin to engage in work activities that belie their previously superior performance standards. Sandy and Thais turn daydreams into action, altering their realities as best they can. Sandy uses accrued sick and vacation leave for non-traditional purposes: "Did I take any vacations? No. But I used my vacation time – anything I could do to get me out of that office." Thais, who practically gushes when talking about how teaching is for her a genuine calling, how being a teacher is simply who she is, admits that in her abusive, socially isolating work-place she resorts to choosing less challenging courses for her teaching schedule:

> When I did my preference sheet, one of the last semesters I was there, I did basic courses. I didn't do any advanced [courses], anything that would have required all of the prep that I'd had to do. . . . It's much simpler to just go in and teach kids than it is to go in and teach English proficiency.

Wendy and Sandy become clock watchers:

> Eight hours to the minute – I'd come in and I'd leave. If I came in at 8am, I was gone at 4pm. If I came in at 9am, I'm gone by 5pm. If I come in at 7am, I'm gone at 3pm. (Wendy)
>
> At the end, I just didn't care. Another phone call, another hash mark in this column. Alright, it's five o'clock; we're going home. (Sandy)

These co-researchers experience what van Manen (1990/1997) calls lived time: "Lived time is the time that appears to speed up when we enjoy ourselves, or slow down when we feel bored . . . or anxious . . . . [It is] our temporal way of being in the world" (p. 104). Trapped in their caves of self, time appears agonizingly slowed. Eight hours in clock time no longer presents as eight hours in lived time. Eight hours becomes an eternity that one must relive each day. Like Bill Murray's character, Phil Connors, in the movie *Groundhog Day* (Albert & Ramis, 1993), these targets become hypersensitive to lived time and its past, present, and future. In these moments, targets' senses of time distorts, as O'Donohue (2008d) describes in "For the Interim Time":

> No place looks like itself, loss of outline
> Makes everything look strangely in-between,
> Unsure of what has been, or what might come. (p. 119, lines 1-3)

Others around them seem to move normally throughout days, unaffected by the raging storm, while targets attempt any number of tactics to affect a different present, a different future. They daydream. They plan and enact temporary escapes, until each abandons the charade once and for all and leaves the offending organization.

As I listen to their stories of other-imposed social isolation, I attune to an undercurrent these targets dare not speak. They *talk* of less passion, energy, and drive. I *hear* something more devastating: I hear impotence. While remaining in abusive work-places, their passion, energy, and drive do not merely lessen. They evaporate. I witness what van Manen (1990/1997) recognizes as "the past chang[ing] under the pressures and

influences of the present" (p. 104). These targets begin to "reinterpret who [they] once [were] and who [they] now [are]" (p. 104) with perspectives skewed by battering abuse. Angela first attests she feels less commitment and obligation to go the extra mile. She calls it having the wind taken out of her sails. Later, she concedes:

> I don't care about my performance ratings any more. I don't care about my agency mission. I'm going to go to work, and do the best I can do, and that's all I can do. . . . I'm drifting away. I'm drifting away from it. And that's not me. . . . I just don't feel like it anymore. I don't have it in me anymore.

Thais' love for teaching disappears as her professional focus becomes one of survival. She redirects all of her energy to considering what will happen to her: "What's going to happen next? What's the next thing they are going to do? What is it that I'm going to do that is going to cause everything to collapse, even though it shouldn't?"

Opening life-long wounds. The lived time of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place alters not only present time and past time but also future time. Van Manen (1990/1997) notes: "Through hopes and expectations we have a perspective on life to come, or through desperation and lack of will to live we may have lost such perspective" (p. 104). Angela, who at the time of our conversations remains in her socially isolating work-place, predicts, "I think that hurt's going to always be there. . . . . Emotionally it's going to take a while. It will take a while to be able to come through this." Other targets, who no longer remain in their socially isolating work-places, claim these predictions to be true. Sandy, wondering if she could have done anything differently, talks about lingering regret, guilt, and shame. Wendy claims her experience established a new work ethic and attitude that remains for her in each subsequent work-place. Larry divulges he went from envying the plant waterer to wanting to eject entirely from his life

to become a bartender on an island somewhere. He recounts how his lived experience changes his entire perspective on what work means to him:

> I started to think the world is pretty miserable. [This experience] was perspective changing. . . . It totally changed my perspective on workplace satisfaction. I now judge jobs on a totally different scale than I used to. Now I say, "Is there misery?" And if there's no misery, that's okay. At least there's no misery. I'm not miserable. That's a good thing. That's my new bar: "Am I not miserable?" Which is pretty sad, right? It's sad.

Angela, Sandy, Wendy, and Larry resign to their woundedness. Others express dismay and despair at wounds that simply will not heal. Julie ponders: "Why can't I just let it go at this point? There's nothing anymore. She's not hurting me anymore. But still, it's still there deep inside." Similarly, Thais contemplates: "I should be able to get over it. . . . All of this crazy stuff happened. It was really crazy, but it's over now. And it's fine." But it isn't fine. Talking with me and reading the transcripts of our conversations triggers traumatic flashbacks for these two co-researchers. Julie visualizes the faces of her former co-workers and the house where she lived during this abusive time. She admits to tears as she is overcome by reading the transcript of our conversation. Thais also reflects on re-living her experience:

> I'd read a page [of the transcript], and I would try to respond. . . . I couldn't get it out. And I would feel like there was something choking me. And I just couldn't get it out, and I'd have to stop. Then I'd go back to it, and I'd maybe get a half a page further than I had before, and the same thing would happen. It was difficult. It was really difficult. I just couldn't respond, and, partly, I think that's because it all seemed so unacceptable. I mean, how do you respond to that?

Pregnant pauses disrupt Thais' discourse. She falters mid-sentence, mid-reflection, before moving on to complete a thought. Her wounds are appreciable. Her pain is contagious.

Lived time haunts and re-wounds these co-researchers – for some, long after they leave abusive work-places. Larry recalls experiencing a Pavlovian response: When he

approaches his manager's office in a subsequent job, he still hears his former manager screaming in his head. Will this new manager do the same? Julie cringes when she sees her former supervisor's name in writing. The hair on the back of her neck stands up; she grits her teeth; her hands form involuntarily into fists. To present day, Thais experiences weekly nightmares about still working in her abusive work-place, which she left a decade ago. During a recent vacation to Brasilia, she learns that her former supervisor lives in the same apartment building where she and her family are staying with a friend. She has heart palpitations each time she leaves the apartment building. In addition, she times building exits and entrances to avoid this unwanted reunion.

Leaving to find authenticity. Unable to connect to their authentic selves, targets self-isolate in order not to become fully absorbed in the "they." They self-isolate to nurse their woundedness and mend the rent fabric of their lives. They self-isolate to restore authenticity. Huddled in their carnal huts they discover wounds heretofore unnoticed, some un-conceived. At some point while remaining in work-place, each realizes the unyielding storm is also interminable. Each decides survival depends on leaving the organization. Larry explains that, like in biology, organisms, when stimulated, have three options: to adapt, flee, or die. Considering dying a non-viable option, each co-researcher tries unsuccessfully to adapt. As they evaluate their social isolation, each chooses the only option left: each decides to flee. Larry explains:

> [If I had stayed], the misery would have continued. I mean there would have been no healing. . . . You can't heal when you're constantly getting broken. When you're constantly getting broken, you can't heal. You have to remove yourself from the situation to give time to heal.

Other co-researchers mirror Larry's justification. Julie claims her lived situation only worsens, never improves. In her socially isolating work-place, Angela feels she can

never do anything correctly or satisfactorily, and her difficulties only escalate: "Everything kept mounting . . . . Every month it was something new. And every day it kept going on and on." Thais uses an unusual metaphor to describe the impact of her escalating isolation. She sees herself as an industrious ant dodging abusive feet:

> It was just the people who were attacking me. . . . People kept being added along the way. . . . Then it just became completely unsustainable. I can manage, or I guess I could manage, dodging two feet, even though I shouldn't have to. But when it's four feet and six feet and eight feet, it's just – you can't do it.

These targets chronicle a lived experience that cannot be tamped down and cannot be contained within the walls of their work-places or the walls of their carnal huts.

To survive and return to authentic Selves, they leave. Heidegger (1927/1962) addresses this as leaving to find "authentic Being-one's-Self" in the "lostness of the 'they'" (p. 312). For Heidegger, this is an active choice: "deciding for a potentiality-for-Being, and making this decision from one's own Self" (p. 313). It is hearing the "voice of conscience" (p. 313) and answering its call. They leave, perhaps whispering to themselves poet Alice Notley's (1976/1993) words: "May I never be afraid / especially of myself" (p. 12, lines 1-2). They leave, perhaps hope-ful of a future that poet Anna Swir (1996) assuredly describes:

> There are moments
> when I feel more clearly than ever
> that I am in the company
> of my own person.
> This comforts and reassures me,
> this heartens me,
> just as my tridimensional body
> is heartened by my own authentic shadow. (p. 47, lines 1-8)

The wounds of those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place are as diverse as the individuals themselves. Some, like Dave, bear no true scars and

recognize a lived experience that is merely a glancing, almost imperceptible, blow. Some, like Thais, are maimed deeply, perhaps permanently, and recognize a lived experience that touches foundational Being. Others – like Angela, Michael, Wendy, Sandy, Larry, and Julie – display scars faded to varying degrees and recognize lived experiences that layer the truths and validity of this abusive phenomenon. Yet, seeing them huddled in their carnal caves, we make no mistake in recognizing their woundedness. Before gathering the strength to leave, we see their numbed nerves, their worn ribs, and their tindered hearts, cradled in trembling hands. We see individuals that Courtenay (1989/2008) recognizes as Beings "fighting more by instinct than by conscious will" (p. 97), for, as Courtenay observes, "Man [*sic*] brutalized thinks only of his survival" (p. 215). Trauma, however slight, stresses and shocks, debilitates and damages the human system. As we gaze upon and beckon forward this phenomenon, we also recognize the loss this trauma wreaks upon its targets.

Living the Grief of Other-Imposed Social Isolation in the Work-Place

> As he often remembered afterwards, and always with no small wonder, he found himself at first gazing at the portrait with a feeling of almost scientific interest. That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him. And yet it was a fact....He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror. (Wilde, 1890/2003, p. 22)

Oscar Wilde's (1890/2003) magnificently flawed character, Dorian Gray, gazes transfixed upon the portrait that once "taught him to love his own beauty" and that now he fears will "teach him to loath his own soul" (p. 99). How does this transformative presence come to pass? Dorian Gray "utter[s] a mad wish" that his portrait, rather than he himself, "bear the burden of his passions and his sins; that the painted image might be seared with the lines of suffering and thought" (p. 98). With granted wish, his portrait

morphs over time into a grotesque representation of his physically flawless self. Capriciously willed, the transformation leaves him gazing in sickened horror at his true Being. It is a moment of recognition in which Dorian Gray finds himself – and his Being – lost at the pleasure of youthful vanity. Gray, through this recognition, is incontrovertibly *lost* – loosened and divided[66] from his true Self.

Listening to the voices of those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, recognizing their woundedness, I see individuals no less horrified at the Self-transformation they witness. They watch themselves morph from valued, acclaimed work-place professionals to de-value-d, criticized workers – only, unlike Dorian Gray, they see themselves reflected not in a private portrait but on the work-place stage before a full-house audience of work-place others. I see them shudder with pain, even fear. I gaze upon lost Beings.

What does it mean to gaze, especially as it informs my intent to reveal this targeted lived experience? What responsibilities accompany the privilege of gazing? David Michael Levin (1999) discusses the philosopher's gaze as "monothetic, contemplative . . . , fixed on, and also fixed by" (p. 12) that which holds its attention. He names the ability to gaze as not only a "*capacity* to see" but also "the way of seeing by which, for the most part, we actually live our lives" (p. 17). He mourns the modern gaze as one of "immediate interests" measured by "calculated ratios of loss and gain" (p. 14). He queries how a different type of gazing might alter who we are – alone and together – in this world. He challenges us to cultivate and protect "collective memory, a re-collection (*anamnesis*) of what our culture has refused to recognize and to see" (p. 17).

I consider Levin's criticism and entreaties. I wonder what is left in my own capacity to see those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. As I gaze, I recognize already the abuse and trauma these targets endure. What else do I and others have yet to recognize? What else must we acknowledge and add to our collective memory? As I fix on, and remain fixed by, this lived experience, I see targets existing and grieving in work-places of *other-imposed*, transformative social isolation. To grieve is to suffer. In our humanity, we grieve loss, wrongs, and injustices. We speak of the burden of grief and its power to crush. Do targets of this lived experience grieve in all these same ways? If I and others gaze with the intent of collective memory, how will we see their grief evidenced? I first answer these questions by explicating the ways in which these targets are care-lessly wronged.

Care-lessly Wronged

The lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation run contrary to the co-researchers' prior work-place existence. The care-less wrongs they endure stand in stark contrast to their accustomed accolades. For most, these contradictions confound targets' sensibilities of who they are and how they fit in their work-places. Dave initially shares with me that the relationship with his socially isolating supervisor is generally good – that his supervisor gives him affirming verbal feedback and favorable formal performance evaluations. Later in our conversations, Dave compares his abrupt social, and physical, isolation with the balance of his professional experience:

> I was disappointed, in a sense, that my career had taken this turn. . . . I already had 30 years in the professional workplace and relatively consistent success in a series of challenging roles. So I had a pretty good idea of how successful I had been to date.

When considering their previous successes, Sandy and Angela express disbelief that they are experiencing such targeted social isolation. Sandy's personality is noticeably friendly and effusive. Her lived experience of not fitting in with her abusive colleagues is completely foreign to her. Angela, who is highly trained as a corporate manager and supervisor in a Fortune 500 company, has high standards for how an organization and its representatives take care of employees and other workers. She is mystified to find herself in a situation that violates her standards of work-place quality and caring. Larry expresses genuine shock at his unexpected work-place circumstances:

> I was always a straight "A" student, number one. In school I was always in the top of my class, always doing extremely well. And then in the workplace as well, . . . I always did really well. . . . I was seen as . . . one of the rising stars in the company. So this, for me, was like a total shock, [this] incompetent feeling.

The juxtaposition of other-imposed social isolation with their previous professional inclusion shatters targets' established and entrenched sensibilities. Reactions to their injustices range from disappointment to disbelief to shock. But, we must ask ourselves, is this grief? Yes, this is grief! As grief is first, and perhaps foremost, a wrong or injustice, the co-researchers' expressions of disappointment, disbelief, and shock are indeed expressions of grief. They encounter grief unexpectedly and abashedly, as if rounding a forbidden corner, the way poet John Ashbery (2001) asserts:

> I tell you, something went wrong there a while back.
> Just don't ask me what it was. Pretend I've dropped the subject. (p 76, lines 6-7)

They grieve in ways poet and activist June Jordan (2005) describes as ontological and prerogative:

> I am the history of the rejection of who I am
> I am the history of the terrorized incarceration of
> myself (p. 311, lines 69-71)

At the conclusion of Chapter Four, I return to the rooted meaning of abuse and query what it means to be mis-used by this lived experience. Mis-use *is* in-justice. This lived experience is not impartial or fair. It is targeted. This lived experience is not based on the truth or fact of the target's work performance or work-place contributions. For many, if not most, its basis of action is often unknown or unclear and, certainly, not performance-based. Finding themselves in wronged and unjust circumstances, these targets grieve. Challenged to make sense of insensible situations, my co-researchers turn our conversations from the shameful, indecent acts themselves to describe *what it is like* to be targeted by abusive, involuntary social isolation. In doing so, they disclose additional wrongs and injustices, portraying work-places in which they are dis-respect-ed, de-value-d, and neglected.

The silent prophet of dis-respect. Targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place find themselves mis-used and wronged in ways that dis-respect and de-value their credentials and contributions. Wendy's supervisor dis-respect-s her by addressing her only by her last name, a practice he uses with none of her other colleagues. Larry feels dis-respect-ed when his supervisor publicly ridicules and berates him over insignificant work details, such as the font type used on internal memos no one else will see. Julie recognizes dis-respect when her second-level supervisor reverses and downgrades a positive performance evaluation completed by her direct supervisor.

At times, targets experience dis-respect when supervisors wait until the last minute to provide approval or feedback, leaving the target unable to make changes or correct direction. Larry feels dis-respect-ed by his supervisor's repeated refusals to approve work products:

> She would say, "No. No. No. No." I would come back to her again with a design. "No, I don't like it. No, I don't like it. No, I don't like it." Right? Up until . . . the deadline, and she would finally say, "Okay. I don't like it, but send it in."

One week before a play she is directing is scheduled to debut, Thais receives feedback for the first time that the play she directed months earlier included inappropriate situations and, now, there is concern that the current play may also be offensive. While she does not agree with the feedback, Thais is willing to address the concerns with her supervisor and the school Director – both of whom are attributed with the feedback, but neither of whom delivers it directly to her. The injustices Thais suffers and her related grief are multi-fold. What is she to do with feedback she receives only a week before the debut? She can hardly change anything within this short time period. She requests a substitute for her next class so that she is free to leave the classroom and speak with the school Director. The messenger forbids her to approach the director – yes, forbids! She also is unable to address her questions and concerns with her direct supervisor, who is away from the work-place on international travel.

The dis-respect of these targeting supervisors is as transparent as the grief it incites. Dis-respect-ful behaviors defy commonly accepted social and work-place considerations. Dis-respect-ful behaviors are absent dignity and de-value targets. What does it mean when one loses respect? Lost respect is a silent prophet. It selfishly guards the secrets it foreshadows. It egocentrically fails to sound the alarm that just might reverse impending danger. Caught unaware of the future that awaits, targets shrug off this silent specter: *Oh, he is just having a bad day. She is feeling the pressure and stress of work. I have not done anything, so this is just a bump in the road.* They see a speck of

sand, naively and myopically oblivious of its companions and their rushing descent within the hourglass.

Wasting time, being wasted by time. A worker's value is weighed in terms of relative worth, rank, and importance. It is clear to my co-researchers that their offending supervisors do not consider or rate them highly. In their socially isolating work-places, de-valu-ation manifests in several ways. Some supervisors pull rank, assigning meaningless tasks that degenerate and waste targets' talents and skills. Julie receives assignments primarily reserved for entry-level staff. Despite working to complete a doctoral degree and touting ten years of consulting experience, her assignments render her a mere note-taker. Dave also finds himself both under-value-d and underutilized. Struggling almost daily to find work tasks, he busies himself with activities that are noticeably three pay grades below his earned station.

Some supervisors impugn rank by assigning tasks that unfairly test the targets' skills or deny developmental and promotion opportunities. Angela receives assignments at odds with her work role and tasks typically reserved for those in a higher work grade. She wonders if she is being subtly forced out of the organization. Sandy asks to be assigned to a project that seems a perfect fit for her unique combination of experience in the EMS, disaster management, and veterinary fields. Her supervisor denies Sandy's request and assigns the work to others, explaining she does not feel Sandy is thankful enough for the opportunities she has already been given. Julie watches as colleagues, hired at the same time she is and with less prior experience, get better projects and bonuses, even promotions, while she is left languishing. Dave acknowledges his new

work role is not a promotion-track assignment and is likely a setback for any promotional opportunity in his current organization.

Other supervisors deal a final blow to these targets' senses of importance by withdrawing tasks altogether or severing the work relationship completely. In her second socially isolating work-place, Wendy's supervisor moves her to a back room and then proceeds to assign her no work tasks. She reports to work each day to do absolutely nothing. Thais' supervisor delivers an ultimate injustice:

> My evaluations were always great. . . . They couldn't fire me because they had no reason to. [In Brasilia], if you decide to fire somebody without cause, you have to pay them money. . . . And they did that. [They] called [me] one day, right before the beginning of the semester . . . saying, "We no longer need your services."

Each day the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place remain in place, they are, as author J. M. Coetzee (2005) observes, "wasting time, being wasted by time" (p. 141). Herbert Applebaum (1992), exploring the concept of work, notes: "The human condition is such that time is one of the most precious resources" (p. 563). He further observes: "Work in one's own free time is quite different from work under the constraint of an employer or institution" (p. 563). Applebaum acknowledges what I introduce earlier in this chapter as van Manen's (1990/1997) notion of clock time versus lived time. In the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation, clock time and lived time are at odds. What makes this so ontologically true? In their abusive wastelands of work, targets are conscious of a negation Sartre (1943/1984) calls *lack*:

> A lack presupposes a trinity: that which is missing or "the lacking," that which misses what is lacking or "the existing," and a totality which has been broken by the lacking and which would be restored by the synthesis of "the lacking" and "the existing" – this is "the lacked." (p. 135)

Conscious of their other-imposed social isolation, targets miss – are grievously aware of the absence of – respect and value. Existing in this void, targets are not whole. They are broken. Remaining in place, they atrophy, as supervisors couple overtly dis-respect-ful and de-value-ing behaviors with the more covert injustice of in-attention. In-attention wrongs and harms as soundly as abusive scrutiny. In these moments, targets grieve the lived experience of neglected dis-regard.

The drought of in-attention. Neglected dis-regard implies invisibility. Neglected, one receives insufficient attention or care. With regard, I see and take notice of another. Without regard, I treat another as un-worth-y. In what ways does the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place leave its targets un-tend-ed and un-notice-d? How does the drought of in-attention render targets worth-less?

Angela feels like a social outcast. Michael agrees and also suggests he is unwelcomed in his work-place, treated like hired help. Sandy's and Thais' co-workers distance themselves, turning blind eyes to their supervisors' socially isolating and targeting behaviors. Originally socially isolated by offending supervisors, each of these targets suffers additional wounds as others in the work-place are complicit in these abusive behaviors. Larry recognizes this secondary isolation all too well: "All the while the organization looked the other way, denying there was a problem."

Un-notice-d, these targets exist below the radar of consideration. Deemed un-worth-y of attention, they grieve the loss of care and compassion from others within their work-places. Larry believes his organization is setting him up to fail rather than to succeed. Similarly, Angela concedes: "I didn't feel like anybody in the agency was

listening or helping me. I felt very, very isolated, very alone. . . . I just didn't feel like they gave a crap about me, you know? I felt worthless."

The absence of care and compassion fosters a complacency that extends beyond the first offenders, as work-place Others fail to become allies. Angela sends emails to her supervisor and the Center Director that go unanswered, her abusive situation un-addressed. Julie's repeated attempts to engage other supervisors and Human Resources prove futile, all for naught. Un-tend-ed while remaining in place leaves targets exhausted and consumed. The drought of in-attention withers targets in a work-place blighted with unchecked complacency. They are, as poet John Clare (n.d.) declares:

> I am – yet what I am none cares or knows;
> My friends forsake me like a memory lost:
> . . . like vapours tossed
> Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,
> Into the living sea of waking dreams,
> Where there is neither sense of life or joys,
> But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems (n.p., lines 1-2, 6-10)

Yes, these targets grieve. They grieve the vapored nothingness to which they are reduced. Witness to their own grotesque transformations, they discover themselves shipwrecked in nightmarish work-places, tossed about and tossed aside. For the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, lived experience becomes a weighted existence, heavily burdened by grief.

Heavily Burdened

Grief is rooted in the Latin *gravis*, representing weighty and heavy feelings and the Old French *grever*, meaning to burden.[67] In his war-time novel, *The Things They Carried*, author Tim O'Brien (2005) devoutly describes the soldiers' hump through corporeal imaging of grievous burden:

> [The soldiers] plodded along slowly, dumbly, leaning forward against the heat, unthinking, all blood and bone, simple grunts, soldiering with their legs . . . . It was anatomy, the hump was everything, a kind of inertia, a kind of emptiness, a dullness of desire and intellect and conscience and hope and human sensibility. Their principles were in their feet. Their calculations were biological. They had no sense of strategy or mission . . . . They carried their own lives. The pressures were enormous. (p. 15)

In what ways do the targets of other-imposed social isolation plod and hump through their work-places? What inertia, emptiness, and dullness characterize their biological calculations, as they trudge to survive their lived experiences? Given the enormous pressures that burden their work-place existence, in what ways do they truly carry their own lives as targets of abusive social isolation?

Carrying their reputations. The incongruity of other-imposed social isolation with previous work-place experience becomes a burden of proof, as targets dispute others' presumptions about their professional reputations. Larry explains how an established reputation, compared with untenured status, carries weighted importance in his lived experience:

> The managers are the ones who have more tenure in the organization. So they're the ones with all the clout. So if any kind of arguing goes against them, they're going to be more likely to be viewed as correct versus you. You're likely to be the outsider, the one that's wrong . . . unless you already have a built-in reputation over years with that organization.

Dave concurs with Larry's assessment, although he is fortunate enough to *have* the established organizational tenure that Larry lacks. Dave admittedly recognizes his reputation *could* be at risk. He knows others may think less of him for being in his down-graded position. He concludes, however, that, while possible, his reputation is never truly at risk due to three decades of successful performance prior to this singular, socially isolating experience:

> Among the affiliate managers at [that organization], I had a very excellent reputation. . . . I could have gone back into [other parts of the organization] at a fairly significant level of management. So, yeah, I never had any doubt that I could go elsewhere and do good things.

Both Larry's and Dave's conclusions prove correct. Larry, predicting others will not believe or, perhaps more accurately, side with, him, remains in his socially isolating work-place only a few short months. During his abbreviated tenure, he never sheds his novice status, and upper management does nothing to address his supervisor's abusive tactics. Dave, however, predicting a brighter future just beyond the immediate horizon, exits his socially isolating work-place to join a sister organization that is familiar with and welcomes his expert experience. He lands on his feet and, in a few short years, retires at the top of his professional game.

Length of service and professional experience aside, other targets carry the burden of establishing and proving their reputations by taking extraordinary measures. During her first experience with other-imposed social isolation, Wendy, in her mid-twenties, attempts to establish a strong working reputation by allying with a co-worker. The two of them work all day to complete the office's tasks, while their supervisor and his favored employees sit around and chat the day away. Julie shares her determination to fix what is quickly becoming for her a tarnished reputation:

> I started going above and beyond on everything and really trying to overcompensate. . . . I really went guns in and would be there long hours, volunteering for anything else I could do, whatever proposals, all this stuff I was trying to do.

Sandy's burden of proof borders on the fantastical, as she attempts to establish an animal-friendly reputation with her colleagues. While at work, she changes her eating habits to mirror those of her vegan co-workers. She stops wearing leather to work. She even

confides that, in a desperate attempt to re-integrate socially, she takes up smoking, so she can share smoke breaks with her abusive supervisor.

Professional reputation is unquestionably important, but what makes it so essential that targets will go to such astonishing lengths to protect it? O'Donohue (1999/2002) shares the following insights:

> We rarely think of the esteem and reputation we enjoy until we are in danger of losing it. This esteem allows us an independent and free space among people. We can get on with our lives. When you are shamed, the space around you is eviscerated. Now your every move draws negative attention. Hostility and disgust are flung at you. (p. 112)

With this wisdom comes greater understanding of the heroics targets are willing to embrace. They stand naked in a hostile, work-place arena before hordes of disgusted ill-wishers. Researchers have long attested to the pressured existence of harassed workers (Brodsky, 1976). Remaining in an inhospitable, even malicious, work-place proves an interminable, solitary condition that Billy Joel (1982/1998) captures in the lyrics to his song "Pressure":

> Pressure
> Don't ask for help
> You're all alone
> Pressure
> You'll have to answer
> To your own
> Pressure (track 3)

With few if any character witnesses willing to come forward on their behalves, and unable to argue strongly enough to establish burdens of proof in their favor, these co-researchers endure the pressured weight of carrying their tarnished professional reputations until they exit their respective organizations. Their reputations, however, are

not their only burden. The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place often seems an existence of ontological survival, as Joel also notes:

> But you will come to a place
> Where the only thing you feel
> Are loaded guns in your face
> And you'll have to deal with
> Pressure (track 3)

For some, choosing to remain in place risks livelihoods and, perhaps, careers – with landscapes and horizons beyond the threshold of this work-place, and, more specifically, beyond those carrying the loaded guns of social isolation and abuse, obliterated from natural sight.

Carrying their livelihoods. In financial support of themselves and their families, targets carry their livelihoods. For several co-researchers, it is the burdened weight of present and future economic concerns that ponderously influences their decisions to remain in their socially isolating work-places. During her first lived experience of other-imposed social isolation, Wendy's focus is on the basics; she needs to pay bills and purchase necessities, such as weekly groceries. Additionally, she and her husband plan to start a family, so savings are essential. Another financial consideration is that she is in the process of completing her bachelor's degree, an expense her company is funding.

As Michael considers remaining in place, he thinks not only of his role in supporting his family, but also his larger goal of securing a financial future that allows him to retire. For Sandy, financial obligations loom ominously. In addition to her recent home purchase, she and her fiancé plan to get married. She needs to save for wedding expenses, and she also needs the benefits her job provides – for herself and for her fiancé, who is still in graduate school. Although Thais, earning a significant severance payment,

eventually leaves her organization before securing another job, she recognizes the hardship this represents to most targets:

> If you need your salary, and if you don't have a choice of a place to go, then what do you do? And that's the thing that's maddening to me. . . . I would probably leave at this point [in my life] because I've had *my* very bad experience for life, and I don't want to do it again. But a lot of people can't just leave. They have kids. They need a roof over their heads. And what do you do? You stay. And you deal. And that shouldn't be what happens.

In addition to present-day livelihood, some targets carry the burden of their future careers. As I note earlier in this chapter, Dave, who enjoys thirty years of professional tenure, admits his socially isolating assignment limits his chances for promotion and career advancement. While Julie trusts that her professional tenure will alleviate some of her career burden, she also acknowledges that experiencing abusive social isolation early in a career may be tough from which to bounce back. Angela, on the other hand, buckles under the weight of this particular burden: "If I try to go get another job, am I going to get good references? Is the word going to get out? Is this going to shatter me? Is this career suicide?" Larry also feels the full, yet impotent, weight of this burden: "A supervisor has your career in their hands. They can make you or break you. Get on their bad side and your career at the company is doomed."

While they may dream of different, and better, work-place futures, most of my co-researchers trudge through this lived experience, hoping simply to survive it professionally. Angela regularly envisions escaping her toxic environment. Michael recalls his existence as a daily grind of humping through his socially isolating work-place. Julie recognizes the writing on the wall and volunteers to reduce her hours and work part-time, hoping she can focus more on writing her dissertation and searching for a new job. Larry reaches his tipping point, decides he simply cannot deal with his situation

anymore, and leaves before securing another job. Sandy does the same. She feels fortunate to have the fallback position of returning to a previous work-place, although she does so with cuts in pay and benefits.

These co-researchers' burdened experiences are typical for targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Seagriff (2010) reports that abusive mistreatment threatens targets' economic livelihoods and "may escalate to such an extent that it impacts a target's career as a whole, threatening years of educational and professional investment" (p. 582). For nearly all of the co-researchers in this study, financial livelihood and professional survival are intertwined and inseparable. Even so, at times, these career burdens prove too oppressive to bear, and targets exit organizations for which they once felt duty bound. Unable to resolve their abusive situations, leaving the organization represents the final breach of once impregnable codes of conduct.

Carrying codes of conduct. Some targets of work-place social isolation remain bound to time-honored codes of conduct that influence and direct their reactions to abusive treatment. Hoang and Jones (2012) characterize codes of conduct as "standard-setting rules" (p. 69), "civil society campaigns" (p. 68), and "corporate social responsibility" (p. 67; see also Yu, 2009). Professional codes of conduct or ethics guide behaviors, duties, and obligations for a variety of workers, including but not limited to clergy (Kane, 2006), mental health practitioners (Bernstein & Hartsell, 1998), social workers (National Association of Social Workers, 2008), medical practitioners (American Medical Association, 2012), and educators (National Education Association, 2012). Professional codes extend to individual organizations and work-places, where they may also be identified as rules of conduct (Kelly & Waddington, 2006) that govern

interpersonal and relationship behaviors between workers, including supervisor-employee relationships, and between the worker and the organization itself. In Chapter Two, I address covenants or psychological contracts – beliefs, often implicit, that forge workers' relationships with each other and shape their work-place experiences. Now, considering the burdened grief of this lived experience, I ask what codes of conduct influence the relationships and experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

Larry considers his own behavior in his abusive situation. What is appropriate for him to say or do in response to the abusive social isolation he experiences? What is inappropriate and may prove more harmful than helpful? He concludes that a relationship with a supervisor has its own code of conduct with implicit rules and assumptions: "You are not to talk back to your supervisor. You are to show them respect." Wendy shares Larry's code and also speculates this code may have exacerbated her abusive and isolating lived experience:

> I grew up in a time where you want your supervisor to be happy. You want to do a good job. You want to be recognized, and so on and so forth. [My co-worker] just didn't care. The fact that [he] didn't care made it worse because I did. It was like [my supervisor thought], "I can really bully her because she cares. I'm not going to bother with [the other guy] because he doesn't." So it made it more intense, if that makes sense.

Wendy's assessment is that her own caring about work-place performance and standards of positive conduct contributes to the escalation of her abuse. Peeking beneath the surface of Larry's conclusion and Wendy's somewhat startling judgment, I recognize a duplicitous code in play within their work-places. The longer and more stringently Larry and Wendy adhere to respectful codes of conduct, the more egregiously their supervisors violate these same codes. In these co-researchers' lived experiences, work-place codes become interminable, push-pull volleys that seems to weary and weather only the targets.

Each of their supervisors, on the contrary, seems to have a vast and insatiable penchant for the game.

During her social isolation, Julie's burden is one she considers general work-place etiquette and decorum. While remaining in place, she reaches a point where, wearied by the hump, she begins to slow, no longer putting in extra time or doing extra tasks. She also is mindful of her manners, saying whatever needs to be said in meetings with her offending supervisor and always remaining faithfully professional. Michael, in his work-place, vacillates between two seemingly conflicting codes of conduct: "No whining!" and "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." During our conversation, he queries aloud – "Am I a squeaky wheel or am I a whiner? Where do I balance that out? What's the correct answer to that?" – and then heavily sighs, resigning himself to having no answers and to the possibility that there is no correct answer.

Humping under the weights of conduct, etiquette, and decorum, my co-researchers battle time-honored traditions that Applebaum (1992) suggests are rooted in the labor contracts – "verbal or before a notary" (p. 273) – of medieval apprenticeships. They adhere faith-fully and cooperatively to what Hodson (2001) discusses as work-place citizenship – remaining committed to organizational goals and giving extra effort and time (p. 69) until their burdens become simply too heavy to bear – until inertia, emptiness, and dullness characterize their work-place existences.

Carrying codes of silence. Admittedly, some targets speak freely to others about their lived experiences of work-place social isolation. Others, however, seem bound to codes of silence. What drives a target to one extreme or the other? In some severe lived experiences, how does the grief of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place

trigger an uncompromising silence for its targets? From the earliest lines of this dissertation, I explore silence as a curious by-product of this lived experience. Silence is the retreat into one's cave of self. It is an absent presence, a specter lurking in the shadows of the target's day-to-day existence. At times, silence is an embodied complicity that enables continued abuse. In stark contrast, silence is also the stillness that centers and stabilizes the target. What else is there to recognize about the burdens of silence carried by targets as they hump to remain in their work-places?

Sandy admits that shame triggers her silence. She tells no one about her abusive social isolation: not her fiancé, not her parents, and not her best friend, whom she avoids for months. During the period of her social isolation, Julie intends her self-imposed silence to protect friends she does not want to burden and young co-workers she does not want to jade. While also self-imposed, Angela's silence runs contrary to her personality and true Being. Her decision to be silent plagues her. During our first conversation, she shrugs defeatedly:

> I've always felt it was important to be open and honest. And now I feel in this situation that I'm in, I don't want to be open and honest any more. I don't want to tell them anything. And that's not me.

As our conversations unfold, each of these three co-researchers expresses grieved loneliness in their choice to weather their lived experiences in silence. Each recognizes this decision as a personal choice, so what makes their silence so increasingly difficult to bear? Is it the length of time they remain in place that makes the burdensome weight increasingly difficult? Perhaps, but some of these co-researchers choose to shoulder this burden long after they leave their socially isolating work-places. In fact, some do not lay

down this heaviness until they connect in conversation with me – over a decade after their departures from abusive work-places.

Phenomenologist Clark Moustakas (1961) identifies burdens, such as codes of silence, as "loneliness anxiety," which "results from a fundamental breach between what one is and what one pretends to be, a basic alienation between man [*sic*] and man and between man and his nature" (p. 24). Moustakas asks:

> Why is it that so many individuals in modern life yearn for a fundamental relatedness to others but are unable to experience it? . . . What makes so many people today act in opposition to their own natures, to their own desires and requirements? (p. 25)

Moustakas looks through a societal lens. I look through a lens focused on the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. Elsewhere in this dissertation, I uncover the alienating tension between Being implaced, yet dis-placed, and between inauthentic and authentic selves. I also reveal the target of this lived experience implaced as a present absence – existing within the tension of a hiding behind a secret, shadow self and the yearning to be real. These ontological realities seem to identify the loneliness anxiety Moustakas describes.

Also, in Chapter Two, I recognize silence as an absent presence in the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation. Silence is present, but when targets and others in the work-place notice its presence, they quickly avert their eyes, maybe even turn their backs, pretending not to see, daring not to ask what its presence means or why it lingers. As I now consider the weighted burden of silence, what more is there to recognize about this absent presence? What makes silence so difficult to lay down?

Moustakas (1961) describes loneliness anxiety as the fear of loneliness, "a feeling of alienation from the human world" that leads to suffering and "a corroding feeling of

estrangement" (p. 25). It is an implaced existence "without intensive ties which have genuine meaning" (p. 25) – a world in which one is not oneself. This is exactly how I and others describe our lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. The abusive treatment of supervisors and others within our work-places is a heavy weight dropped in the center of our Being, a sensation James Foley (n.d.) captures in the first stanza of his poem, "Drop a Pebble in the Water":

> Drop a pebble in the water:
> just a splash, and it is gone;
> but there's half-a-hundred ripples
> circling on and on and on,
> spreading, spreading from the center,
> flowing on out to the sea.
> And there is no way of telling
> where the end is going to be. (n.p., lines 1-8)

For some, the weighted drop of a single, isolating act may prove damage enough. Repeated acts send endless ripples to corrode Being and guarantee estrangement. Moreover, as Foley notes, the target has no way of telling when and where this unwanted social isolation will end.

Moustakas (1961) also recognizes that loneliness anxiety causes serious health impact. While one may well argue the rarity of a target's loneliness reaching the pathological state Moustakas acknowledges as possible, his description of "bland existence" perfectly characterizes the inertia, emptiness, and dullness of the target's hump through – and, at times, beyond – the socially isolating work-place. Moreover, his recognition honors the effect abusive escalation has on targets. Larry diagnoses his lived experience as situational depression, a negative outlook that colors his entire view of the world. Larry's experience is one Buber (1923/1958) observes:

> Man meets what exists and becomes as what is over against him, always simply a *single* being and each thing simply as being. What is opened to him in happenings, and what happens affects him as what is. Nothing is present for him except this one being, but it implicates the whole world. (p. 32)

In Larry's lived experience, *what* happens in his socially isolating work-place becomes *all* that happens. There is nothing else. His abusive lived experience becomes his world.

Thais vividly describes how difficult it is to bear her silence. After leaving her abusive work-place, Thais mentions her experience of involuntary social isolation to others only in small sound bites. When we meet for our second conversation, she comments on how heavy the burden of silence seems to her:

> It's so heavy. . . . I guess this is somewhat new. This is since thinking about it as a whole experience, rather than little pieces of an experience. But right now, it just feels like a big block of stuff, that doesn't really fit inside me.

Thais pauses during her explanation to gesture. She extends her arms several inches away from her body, then moves them vertically from her throat to her waist to demonstrate just how large her burden – and how firmly embodied its presence.

Whatever the reasons, the codes of silence borne by these targets become increasingly heavy. Pause a moment to listen with me. Can you hear their voices? Can you also hear their silence? The heaviness they bear is the loneliness of not knowing, or even recognizing, the worlds in which they exist and the shadow selves they have become. Moreover, the simply cannot understand why their isolation is so exhaustively without companionship. Theirs is the loneliness portrayed in the lines of an untitled poem by Eithne Tabor (1950) that Moustakes includes in his phenomenological investigation:

> And does this empty silence have to be?
> And is there no-one there at all
> To answer me?
>
> I do not know the road –

> I fear to fall
> And is there anyone
> At all? (lines 11-17)

Look with me. Can you see these targets in their "barren and eroded" (Moustakas, 1961, p. ix) states? Can you touch their "rock-bottom loneliness and despair" (p. 59)? Perhaps, their silence is a response to the extreme grief they bear for their lost worth, lost relationships, and lost Selves – a grievous silence that Gregory Delaplace (2009) explores as a mourning ritual, a silence imposed to honor what no longer exists with us in this work-place world. Yes, self-imposed silence weighs dangerously and threateningly upon these targets as they trod through daily routines and escalating social isolation and abuse. The paths they hump lead them one-directionally, without u-turn, toward ontological nothing-ness.

Carrying nothing-ness. The burdens of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place are indeed unimaginably heavy. Perhaps the heaviest burden these targets bear is one I first explore in Chapter One as the terrible weight of being nobody. In my earlier reflection, I draw upon feelings of home-lessness, poignantly described in Colm Toibin's (2009) novel, *Brooklyn*:

> [Eilis] had not really thought of home. . . . All this came to her like a terrible weight. . . . She was nobody here. . . . Nothing here was part of her. It was false, empty, she thought. (p. 69)

Eilis' experiences the dis-place-ment phenomenologist David Abram (1996) discusses as being "displaced from . . . familiar lands":

> [They] suddenly found themselves in a world where their ritual gestures, their prayers, and their stories seemed to lose all meaning, where the shapes of the landforms lacked coherence, where nothing seemed to make sense. (p. 269)

Eilis recognizes the weight of her isolation as a nothing-ness because she is nobody. However, it is her new world, rather than herself, that she sees as false and empty. Having acknowledged their own falseness and emptiness, what do targets of other-imposed social isolation see as false and empty in the work-places through which they hump? How does the weighted burden of nothing-ness further manifest in their lived experiences?

Dave's work-place loses meaning as his other-imposed social isolation wastes his talents and his contributions. As a former department chief, he is accustomed to being in the trenches, immersed in his division's daily agenda. In his fabricated and socially isolating office representative role, he enters an unrecognizable work-place: "There were days that would go by, when I hardly had any contact with any of [my division colleagues]. I didn't do anything of significance." What makes no sense for Dave is that he knows himself to be a strong work-place contributor, yet he finds himself in a world where he is simply a non-entity.

Wendy's lived experience is quite similar. In her second isolating work-place, her supervisor hires her as an essential contributor to his team. Within days of onboarding to this position, Wendy rebuffs her supervisor's abusive tactics and finds herself physically and socially isolated from him and the rest of his team. Given no assignments or tasks, she faces how extremely dispensable she clearly is in this work-place. Everything Wendy knows herself to be as a worker loses meaning. Nothing in her work-place makes sense. She is disoriented and unsure how to continue the hump while remaining in this socially isolating place.

As targets of other-imposed social isolation, these and other co-researchers, namely Angela, Larry, and Julie, endure analogous experiences of weighted nothing-ness. They struggle to contribute something – anything – positively to their organizations. They feel replaceable, unwanted, and unimportant. Remaining in their socially isolating work-places, these targets are lost in Heideggerian (1927/1962) "they" – a meaningless everydayness, where they are distanced from authentic Being and "stand in *subjection* [*Botmässigkeit*] to Others" (p. 164). They are average and unexceptional, their Being "noiselessly suppressed" and "glossed over" until "all possibilities" (p. 165) are reduced to nothing-ness.

For Sandy and Michael, nothing-ness is invisibility. Sandy's burden is her mark of social leprosy, which holds others at bay and propagates her self-isolation within her work-place. It is easier, less painful, to be invisible, than to remain a visible target for others' abuse. Following the lead of his *other*-imposed social isolation, Michael purposefully navigates his abusive work-place to remain off the radar. He reasons that as a grown man, he is expected to behave maturely, stably. Reacting negatively to his social isolation violates those social expectations. So Michael withdraws, trusting he remains undetected and less easy to target. Toiling under the weight of her increasing invisibility, Thais disappears completely. Told she is no longer needed in her work-place, her nothing-ness is indelibly confirmed. Sandy, Michael, and Thais are *invisible* because they simply are *not visible* in ways Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) distinguishes. Within their socially isolating work-places, they are "flat beings [rather than] beings in depth" (p. 136). They are Beings without "texture" (p. 136). They are, as I first note in Chapter Four, Beings in the negative: "furrows," "hollows," "interiors," and "absence" (p. 151)

within their abusive work-places and in the eyes of their offending supervisors and co-workers.

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation burdens all eight of my co-researchers. Like O'Brien's (2005) soldiers, they hump through work-places – first dulled by shouldered reputations and livelihoods and later rendered inert by wearying codes of conduct and silence. Finally, the weight of nothing-ness erodes previously paratonic biological calculations until these targets truly carry their own livelihoods and lives, almost independent of volition. Each of these targets humps through emptied existence that relentlessly crushes while they remain in socially isolating work-places.

Forcefully, Relentlessly Crushed

In the introduction to this chapter, I ask in what ways targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place grieve. I first answer that they grieve care-less wrongs and injustices. I next answer that they grieve weighted, heavy burdens. I now answer that these targets bear oppressive grief. In their lived experiences, these targets are more than subdued by abusive power and control. They are forcefully and relentlessly crushed. Living the weight of crushed existence deforms and destroys. In recognizable ways, it is Angela's numbness, Sandy's flat affect, and Larry's interminable dread.

The grief of this lived experience produces surface wounds as well as those that gut more deeply. Julie diagnoses her woundedness as damaged psyche. She cannot compartmentalize her feelings or her lived experience. She is unable to relegate them only to work hours. Her woundedness becomes her Being. From rooted meaning, damaged psyche is damaged mind and spirit, body and soul.[68] Humping through socially isolating work-places, targets are crushed under the weight of their own existence. In ways they can readily identify, yet hardly admit, they are destroyed: broken, neglected,

and reduced to useless fragments. Each becomes the dismantled house in Stephen Dunn's (2003) poem:

> With the right leverage
> Anything can be hoisted, driven off. (p. 257, lines 2-3)

Left to grieve their broken, dismantled Selves, they search for evidence "to . . . lift [them] back into the world" (line 21), only first to discover their fragmented souls.

Fragmented souls. Considering the *trauma* of this lived experience, as I do earlier in this chapter, I see how these targets are scarred and crippled. Now, as I consider the *grief* of this lived experience, I recognize fragmented souls. It does not happen all at once, resulting from a single shameful, indecent act, although it may be triggered by one. The first act may appear innocent enough, similar to Jillian Becker's (2002) characterization of Assia Wevill's first visit to the home of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. This innocent visit by Wevill, who later becomes Hughes' lover, proves an untoward event that represents the "day when Sylvia's ideal life began to unravel" (p. 58). Each act of abusive social isolation further deforms and threatens to destroy, dismantling the target bit by bit. As described in the novel *Dismantled* (McMahon, 2009), each abusive act cleaves "something open inside . . . , a tear too jagged and unexpected to close neatly" (p. 52).

In recognizing the woundedness of this lived experience, I am beholden also to see the necessary triage. Dave is fortunate. Among these eight co-researchers, his tenure and experience afford him a unique perspective. As such, he is minimally wounded and successfully eludes destructive grief. He resigns himself to the year in work-place social isolation but admits:

> If I was in a situation where the light went on, "You've got to get out of this," I would get out of it. I don't care how long I'd been there. Three weeks and I'd be gone because I've got to take care of me first. Because if I'm broken, I'm not good to anybody.

For the remaining seven co-researchers, grief ravages by degree. Michael's fundamental frustration becomes stress then stunned anger. His abusive conditioning results in fatigued acceptance. Although he appreciates the impact to psyche and Self, he views his socially isolating lived experience as simply the way it is, the nature of his profession and the organizations he supports. Angela's initial confusion becomes hurt and anger, escalating to a shock that leaves her emotionally drained. Her abusive conditioning leaves her hopelessly resigned to a dim future while remaining in a work-place that she expects never to change. Like Hansel and Gretel in woods without end, Michael and Angela are lost, evidence of their breadcrumb trail long gone, blown away by abusive fury and ravaged by un-caring co-workers. In their socially isolating work-places, they hump aimlessly and soullessly.

Larry's early disbelief later becomes stress, misery, and dread. He unravels, always on edge, ever ready for his supervisor to explode. Julie's original resolve to fix her situation becomes frustration and pain. Her lived experience dismantles her, leaving her in tears most nights. She vacillates between wanting to punch her abusive supervisor in the face to cracking jokes, trying to make light of a burden clearly too heavy to bear. Wendy's elementary and naïve acceptance of her work-place condition degenerates first into robotic numbness, then repetitive stress and illness. She is always sick. She is ever stuck. Sandy's exuberant outlook devolves to sleep deprivation, ulcers, hair loss, and near incessant crying. Her lived experience fragments her view of her work-place, the world, and, eventually, all people who liked animals." For Thais, confidence becomes

uncertainty, then avoidance, and eventually hopelessness mingled with anger, panic, and fear. She ontically and ontologically dissolves:

> I felt terrorized. I really did. I was always afraid. I was always afraid going to work. You know that feeling of, "What's going to happen today? What's it going to be?" . . . It was always [there], . . . trying to figure out why it was happening. And there was never any reason why it was happening. It was always random.

Yes, these targets are forcefully and relentlessly crushed. They begin their lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation whole and intact, untouched and unharmed. Eventually, some sooner than others, some more caustically than others, each is dropped, like the ball of mercury Sylvia Plath (1971/1998) contemplates in *The Bell Jar*, and "break[s] into a million little replicas of itself" (p. 183) – still themselves, just less so, somehow. On the mercury, Plath reasons, "If I pushed them near each other, they would fuse, without a crack, into one whole again" (p. 183). I wonder if this could be true for these targets, as well. If reconnected with their authentic, visible Selves would they fuse once more, no longer fragmented? Perhaps, but to heal in such a way first requires facing the losses they sustain and for which they sufferably grieve.

Grieved loss. What does it mean to suffer loss? Moreover, what does it mean to lose one's Self? The voices of these eight co-researchers speak of their deterioration and decay. Their stories chronicle the untimely ruin of their once heralded work-place reputations and passions. I suggest that to heal, to re-integrate and become whole once more, these targets must first face their losses. They must turn toward and answer the question: What is lost, what perishes, in the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

Lost to these targets is the meaningfulness of work. Wendy, whose first isolating experience occurs at the beginning of her career, remembers this as a time when she is

chronically sick and feels inextricably stuck. She exclaims: "Dang! Is this what work is? This really sucks!" Thais, also isolated at a young age, experiences shattered innocence: "Work is supposed to be [this] idyllic notion that you love your job and that's what you love to do and you're just so happy going [to work]." Dave, whose isolating experience occurs near the *end* of his career, is no less adamant when he loses meaningful work that contributes to his agency's mission:

> When you're not working at the level or with the meaningfulness to your work that it had been, and when it's the result of a decision made by somebody else, not by you, it's even more noticeable. . . . I took the job. It sucked. I worked in the professional workplace for 35 years, including 11 years as a teacher. It was the worst of those 35 years from the standpoint of challenge and meaningfulness.

Larry's loss of meaningfulness lingers beyond his socially isolating experience, his standards of work permanently altered. Like other targets, he begins with a very optimistic view of the world, a view that devolves into judging future jobs on a totally different scale of just how miserable he is in a given work-place.

Applebaum (1992) associates work "with self-esteem and well-being, with social progress and quality of life" (p. xii). Further, he makes two astonishing claims. First, he asserts "work [as] the precondition for human existence" (p. xii). Second, he declares "that work is probably the most important single factor in status and self-respect for the individual" (p. 586). In losing the meaning of their work, these co-researchers lose vital parts of themselves – not only their present-day Selves but also their future Selves. In many respects, they lose elements that define them as people and who they are and want to be. They also lose what Applebaum sees as durability – the legacy of their contributions to the work-place, the "things which do not disappear" (p. 492) even when they are long departed from place.

In the lived experiences of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, targets also lose their senses of belonging. In Chapter One, I explore this loss as a home-less and faith-less place. In Chapter Four, I explore lost belonging as the experience of living an out-of-favored status. What more is there now to see and recognize in the lived experiences of these co-researchers? It is Sandy's achiness of being an outcast, a fake, and a charlatan who does not belong in her work-place. It is Michael's repeated preclusion from staff lunches and travel, as he is sidelined to watch the other contracting team be treated like members of the family, all the while knowing his is a bastard's existence. It is Angela's habitual exclusion from meetings and email communications that leaves her feeling orphaned, no longer part of the team and different than everybody else. It is Dave's absence from day-to-day operations, Wendy's denied opportunity to simply hang out with her supervisor and his favored co-workers, and Sandy's denied promotion.

For the co-researchers in this study, work is meaningful. As such, their sudden and unprecedented lack of belonging is meaningful. Their losses of meaningful work-place matters in ways they cannot articulate. O'Donohue (1999/2002) explains why: "The deeper the intimacy and belonging, the more acute the sense of absence will be. . . . True belonging alters and re-creates your identity. When that belonging is fractured or lost, something of our deepest self departs" (p. 226). The braided losses of meaningful work and work-place belonging devastate targets' minds, bodies, and souls. Theirs is the kind of deep loss that poet Deborah Miranda (2005) suggests in her poem, "Our Lady of Perpetual Loss":

> Maybe all the losses before this one are practice:
> maybe all the grief that comes after . . . seems tame. (p. 21, lines 1-2)

In the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation, targets find it impossible to anticipate how devastating their losses are, and inconceivable that any other professional loss will be comparable.

The loss of work's meaning and the related sense of belonging is enmeshed with the target's senses of worth and Self. Michael risks losing his identity and status as his family's breadwinner. Larry quickly realizes that, as a result of his social isolation, he has lost his personality. Gone is the light, personable, and humorous guy people love to hang out with in the work-place. Julie shares how her lived experience overpowers and consumes her:

> It felt like I was drowning at times. . . . I just couldn't psychologically handle things, so, of course, it manifests itself physically. My worth was drowning. Because when you hear a certain thing, you start to believe, "There's got to be something there." And that's a huge thing to lose.

Her eyes filling with tears, she concludes: "I lost *me* there for a while. . . . I didn't feel like myself anymore." Thais is bitter about the loss of her livelihood and career, the absence of her passion and joy for teaching. Most graphically, Angela equates the loss of her sense of Self as the experience of emotional rape:

> I felt like I was being raped by my organization after all the years, ten years, of giving my soul and heart to this place. I felt like I was being raped of all my emotions, of all the good, happy things I've done for this place. . . . [They] were violating my values and how you would treat people. . . . When I say rape, that's the only way I can really describe it is emotional rape – stealing my charge, my positivity.

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place violates its targets. In an abusive work-place, targets discover themselves perishable Beings, left to wonder what expiration dates are stamped on souls that never cease to query how this ever came to pass. Who callously and un-care-ingly marked them so? Dented, faded, and

ripped exteriors are superficial wounds that wrap wasted and bitter bits and pieces. Targets of this abusive lived experience are shelved and discarded Beings who they and others no longer claim or want to recognize.

Recognizing Woundedness (Reprise)

Each of the co-researchers in this study enters their respective work-places full of faith, a rudimentary conviction I share in Chapter One as fundamental to my own lived experience. It is the faith of unsuspecting innocence Dorian Gray displays when his portrait first teaches him to love his own beauty. It is a faith-ful infatuation with what work ought to be and how a worker deserves to be treated. As I and others attest in Chapter Two, other-imposed social isolation in the work-place betrays faith. Through deceit and deception, this lived experience shatters faith. Now we, like Dorian Gray, stare horrified and transfixed, repulsed by an incredible lived experience that teaches us to loath our own souls.

Targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place exist within the eye of a raging storm. Mirroring Gregory Orr's (2002) portraiture, these targets hunker down, nerve-numb, in their carnal huts, their caves of Self. This lived experience mortally wounds its targets. Recognizing their woundedness is a first and crucial step in honoring these targets and offering them the dignity denied by abusive work-place and socially isolating Others. What more, beyond recognition, have we still to do? Join me as we journey forward, extending our hands and hearts, as gestures that will re-member these targets and restore them from their lost work-places and absent Selves.

CHAPTER SIX:

SEEING *AND* HEARING THE TRUTH OF LIVED EXPERIENCE TO ANSWER THE CALL TO CONSCIENCE

> Do not worry. You have always written before and you will write now. All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know. (Hemingway, 1964/2009, p. 22)

> Truth is singular. Its "versions" are mistruths. (Mitchell, 2004/2012, p. 185)

As I embark on this final chapter, I am humbled, reminded once more how difficult it is to begin the writing process. In *A Moveable Feast*, Ernest Hemingway (1964/2009) acknowledges this struggle. He talks about standing and "look[ing] out over the roofs of Paris" and reminding himself to begin with "one true sentence" (p. 22). Within the phenomenological method, this final chapter offers pedagogical insights for the chosen lived experience. I consider the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. I wonder, "What is *my* one true sentence?" What are the truths of this lived experience? Is there, as author David Mitchell (2004/2012) suggests in *Cloud Atlas*, singular truth, with any "versions [merely] mistruths" (p. 185)?

Following Martin Buber's (1964/1991) example, I go repeatedly to the window to point to what I see. In authentically seeing, I reveal the truth of this lived experience. In Chapter One, I reveal the truth of dis-placed implacement. In Chapter Two, I reveal the truth of fractured, altered, and betrayed Being. In Chapter Three, I reveal the truth of the collapsed everydayness that triggers ontological anxiety and anguish. In Chapter Four, I reveal the truth of abusive power and control and its shameful, indecent acts. In Chapter Five, I reveal the truth of relentless trauma that assails and wounds Being. In Chapter Five, I also reveal the truth of wrongful, burdensome, and crushing grief.

I *see* and *recognize* this lived experience and, in doing so, reveal truth. As I consider van Manen's (1990/1997) description of the researcher as a "guardian and defender of the true nature of the phenomenon" (p. 20), I wonder if these efforts are enough. In considering the phenomenon of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, what more am I called to do? Heidegger suggests I now must authentically hear the call to conscience. The first step is to desire the call to conscience, and desire requires resoluteness, for which Heidegger (1927/1962) identifies three elements: I must understand my own "potentiality-for-Being" (p. 342); I must ready myself for the anxiety that accompanies the call to conscience and heightens my awareness and attention; and I must keep silent, so that I can hear the call above the everyday chatter of the "they." For Heidegger, the call of conscience is the call of care. With care, we beckon forward what we seek, away from everydayness, so that we may now grasp it the way it intends. Heidegger claims, "Listening to . . . is Dasein's existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentialty-for-Being" (p. 206). We must see *and* hear to answer the call to conscience. In seeing and hearing, not only do we connect with others, but also we realize the potential for our own Being in this world *with* others.

How does the Heideggerian call to conscience apply to my desire to see and hear the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place? In preparing to answer the call to conscience, I open myself to this phenomenon. I ready myself for the anxiety that requires me to see and listen beyond what has already been shown and spoken. I still myself in silence, standing at the window to see what has yet to be revealed and to listen to the voices of those targeted by this lived experience. In answering the call

to conscience, I see and hear the *lived experience* itself as singular truth. Any versions – the *intention* of the shameful, indecent acts that target workers or the *degree* of trauma and *depth* of grief suffered by those wounded – are mistruths. I am resolute in uncluttering these mistruths from the primordial truth of this lived experience, for mistruths overshadow and dilute. Mistruths about other-imposed social isolation in the work-place rob additional dignity and further dis-place its targets. *Authentically seeing and hearing the truth of lived experience to answer the call to conscience restores dignity and implacement to those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.* This is my one true sentence.

Restoring Dignity

> Do you feel you are valued and treated with respect and dignity? (Adams, 2012, n.p.)

Figure 5.1. Comic strip explicating work-place respect and dignity. Adapted from *Dilbert*, by S. Adams, November 4, 2012. Retrieved from dilbert.com. Copyright 2012 by Universal Uclick. Reprinted with permission.

Syndicated cartoonist Scott Adams (2012) exposes and scrutinizes work-place issues through the comic strip *Dilbert*. Through humor, his strip exposes truthful nuggets,

some which may prove quite painful in reality, about a myriad of work-place issues and challenges, including work-place communication and relationships. Adams' November 4, 2012, strip (see Figure 5.1) explicates work-place respect and dignity. In this strip, the character Catbert, designated by Adams as the evil Director of Human Resources, sits down with the character Dilbert, a kind of working "everyman," to conduct the annual employee survey, which begins with the question, "Do you feel you are valued and treated with respect and dignity?" (n.p.) Dilbert's imaginative response is that he feels like a shoe soiled from stepping in something gross and must now be cleaned. Dilbert's response to the survey question reveals how pedestrian, purposeless, and trapped he feels when working *without* respect and dignity.

I imagine Adam's (November 4, 2012) pun as Dilbert explains this begrimed feeling as "a sweaty foot shoved all the way to the end of its sole" (n.p.), for it is truly a bit of one's *soul* that is targeted, wounded, and grieved in the lived experience of working without respect and dignity. Marie-France Hirigoyen (1998) acknowledges this in the introduction to her book, *Stalking the Soul: Emotional Abuse and the Erosion of Identity*:

> There are, in life, stimulating encounters that encourage us to give our best; there are others that can undermine and ultimately destroy us. One individual can succeed in destroying another by a process of emotional abuse. This animosity sometimes culminates in a virtual murder of the soul. (p. 3)

Franco Berardi (2009) agrees with this conviction. In his book, *The Soul at Work*, he addresses estrangement in the work-place, acknowledging the impact to a worker's soul:

> The soul . . . is a metaphor for the energy that transforms biological matter into an animated body. In a sense we could say that the soul is the relation to the other, it is attraction, conflict, relationship. (p. 115)

If soul is my relation to another, what happens to my soul when that *other* seeks to undermine and destroy me? Can it, as Hirigoyen suggests, culminate in a virtual murder of my soul and, therefore, my relation with the other and with otherness?

I suggest emotional abuse undermines and destroys one's soul-ful dignity. In addressing what it means to work with dignity, Randy Hodson (2001), author of *Dignity at Work*, summarizes human dignity as "the ability to establish a sense of self-worth and self-respect and to enjoy the respect of others" (p. 1) As such, dignity is my own sense of being worthy, as well as another's sense of my worthiness. As I consider the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place and its pedagogical implications, I ask what it means to restore lost dignity. How can I or any other, including the target, give back or repair the dignity lost through this lived experience? Its rooted meaning suggests that restoration is an act of presencing.[69] But *whose* presencing? In restoring dignity to the *targets* of abusive social isolation, do we invite and recognize *their* rightful presences among us and within our work-places? Or is it, as poet Denise Levertov (1961/1983) suggests, the presence of others, including our own, that we restore?

> Those who were sacred have remained so,
> holiness does not dissolve, it is a presence
> of bronze, only the sight that saw it
> faltered and turned from it. (p. 23, lines 21-24)

Targets of other-imposed social isolation retain sacred presence – their bronzed resilience and fortitude often belying their damaging and damning lived experiences. It is we, in our otherness, who falter and turn away. As such, it is *our* conscience that we are called to heed, and it is *our* presence that is required to see and hear the truth of this lived experience. If our steadfast, caring presence turns toward, rather than away, to recognize

targets' enduring sacredness, then answering the call to conscience surely will restore dignity to the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

The Dignity of Attention

What is required of us when we give attention? If restoring dignity is presencing, how are we present when offering such a gift? In *Parabola*, a quarterly publication of the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition, founder and editorial director D. M. Dooling (1990) acknowledges the full effort of attentiveness:

> Every tradition has a name for it – mindfulness, remembering, *dhyāna*, *kavanah*, *dhikr*. . . . In spite of the different names, what is described as the highest attention is quite clearly the same inner state. All agree that real, liberating attention cannot come exclusively from the mind as we are usually taught, but must be generated from feeling, and entered into with the body; it is an activity of the whole person, and closely allied with conscience. (pp. 2-3)

Once more, we return to conscience. In answering its call, we do not see and hear through the mind alone. Conscientiously, caringly, we see and hear emotionally and corporeally, as well.

In Chapter Three, I first acknowledge the necessity of whole-person attention through Leder's (1990) integration of mind and body in appreciating Self. Buber (1923/1958) also asserts the *I-Thou* relationship as one of whole being "concentration and fusion" (p. 11). Indian-born spiritual philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti also echoes the whole person effort of attention. Krishnamurti (1964) encourages disciplining the mind in ways that contrast with traditional notions that "paying attention is a narrowing-down process" (p. 150) that excludes and resists all but one's focus of attention. His argument is that the energy directed toward exclusion and resistance detracts from true attention. One also needs to pay attention to the space and silence that are in, about, and among the objects of attention. To illustrate, Krishnamurti asks: "Have you ever paid attention to the

ringing of the temple bells? Now, what do you listen to? To the notes, or to the silence between the notes" (p. 149). He answers and suggests, "If you listen both to the sound of the bell and to the silence between its strokes, the whole of that listening is attention" (p. 151). Later, Krishnamurti asks:

> Now, is there also space in your mind? Or is it so crowded that there is no space in it at all? If your mind has space, then in that space there is silence – and from that silence everything else comes, for then you can listen, you can pay attention without resistance. (p. 153)

In reflecting on what it means to answer the call to conscience and restore the dignity of attention to the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I am drawn to the following questions. In this lived experience, what captures our attention as the sounding of the bell? To what will we also attend as the silence between strokes? And before we can attend to the bell's sound and its silence, what should we, as Others, discard or move around in order to make space for our own silencing that is necessary for full, caring, and conscientious attention?

Uncluttering Cognitive Attics

Making space for attention means uncluttering. Our preparation for this cognitive housekeeping may necessitate reframing what we mean by cognition. Boucouvalas (2005) traces the derivative roots of thinking and cognition to invite broader understanding. Differentiating between the Latin roots *cogito* (I think) and *cognosco* (I know), she concludes that cognition is derived from *cognosco* and refers to knowing and ways of knowing. Further, "Thinking [*cogito*], while important, is only one way of knowing" (p. 111). This distinction informs our efforts to attend to lived experience. What do we think of this lived experience and its targets? How do we open to other ways of knowing and invite broader understanding? In Piagetian terms, uncluttering our

cognitive attics is the consideration of new information and insights and their fit with what we already know – or think we know. What makes sense and can be stored alongside articles that are like in kind? What will we do with new information and insights that do not fit or, at first, seem to fit? Will we "ignore, discard, or reject the new" (p. 111)? Or will we unclutter to make space for attention and additional ways of knowing?

Uncluttering our cognitive attics may prove closely akin to cleaning the attic of a house:

> The day had finally come
> when everything there
>
> seemed misplaced or out of place
> . . . . The unused
>
> beside the irreplaceable, . . . (Pallas, 2002, p. 273, lines 1-5)

Let us accept together that the day has come to peer into the cognitive attics that house our attention for the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. What antiquated remnants of thinking and knowing lay tossed and jumbled in these attics? What treasured cognitions are we now storing dearly that may prove only to be obsolete, something "inherited and out of style" (Nemerov, 1960/1977, p. 225, line 17).

Antiquated remnants of thinking and knowing. Likely taking up longtime residence in our cognitive attics are two antiquated, yet semiprecious, myths. The first is that abusive social isolation is simply an established way to work. A seminal author in the field of work-place dynamics, Studs Terkel (1972/1974), states unequivocally in the introduction to his acclaimed book, *Working*:

> Work is, by its very nature, about violence – to the spirit as well as to the body. . . . It is, above all (or beneath all), about daily humiliations. To survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us. (p. xi)

Similar claims include assertions that harassment, even bullying, are timeless work-place fixtures (Hirigoyen, 1998; Namie & Namie, 2011).

What happens if we dis-avow this entrenched way of knowing our work-places and replace it with a different standard of normal – one that is without humiliation and woundedness and instead filled with care? With newly created space for attention, we will see that alongside the claims of perennial abuse flourish durable examples of managers and other workers who *can* and *do* treat colleagues with respect and dignity. Angela talks about her years of training, in Fortune 500 environments and within the hospitality industry, that create an unshakeable standard for how she takes care of others in the work-place. Dave's peers and Larry's brand managers, recognizing these targets' difficult social isolation, check in regularly to offer support and to see how they are faring. Michael talks about how his front-line team rallies together to weather the assault of his government supervisor and the competing contracting team. Thais' fellow teachers sign a petition to stop her abusive mistreatment and social isolation. Julie, Sandy, and Wendy realize their lived experiences leave them more sensitive to work-place aggressions and, in subsequent organizations, they actively work to mentor and safeguard others. Called to conscience, these co-researchers, along with innumerable others in our work-places, care in the way Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) describes as touching and being touched. It is a way of seeing that dispels any distance between us to bring one another into proximity and to make each visible "according to [its] being"; it is our "means of communication" (p. 135) in work-places characterized by care.

A second myth, likely housed quite prominently in our cognitive attics, is that other-imposed social isolation, when enacted by supervisors, as is the case of all targeted co-researchers contributing to this study, is a necessary by-product of tough management to address poor work-place performance or, in some cases, social misfits. Should we choose to discard this myth as an outdated relic, we open ourselves to hear voices that command different ways of knowing - voices, such as those of my eight co-researchers, my colleagues who contribute to the existential investigation in Chapter Two, and mine. As is true with other targets acknowledged in academic research (Davenport et al., 1999; Duffy & Sperry, 2007; Hirigoyen, 1998; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2011-2012), our experiences of abusive social isolation do not result from poor performance – nor are we social misfits within our organizations. Competent and capable, our co-workers frequently look to us for guidance and mentoring. Unanimously, we represent the truth that, even though we find ourselves as targets of other-imposed social isolation, we are accoladed workers with positive, collegial relationships in our work-places *before and after* our abusive lived experiences.

Rather than dogmatic rhetoric, our testimonies serve as faithful interpretations that Buber (1957/1999b) acknowledges. They serve as pathways to those who would be "guided to the reality" (p. 101) of this lived experience. Such testimony is what Buber calls standing firm. It is a way of *knowing* that bridges to *telling* to reveal "the lived hour" (1957/1999c, p. 92) of experience. Telling in this way is interpretation, story-telling if you will, that brings forward the phenomenon and offers its possibilities of discovery to those who would listen and embrace new ways of knowing lived experience.

Dis-inheriting the obsolete and out-of-style. Taking stock of our cognitive attics, we discard two myths that no longer hold value. What remains stored that we may move around in order to make room for additional ways of knowing this lived experience? Are there irreplaceable heirlooms to dust off and discover anew? Yes. More sacred, perhaps, than either of the previous myths is an inherited, yet obsolete, trinket that may seem quite intractable from our cognitive attics. It is this: Knowing *why* managers and other workers mistreat and isolate co-workers is essential to understanding and giving attention to this lived experience. We seem to possess insatiable appetites for profiling abusers (Burroughs & James, 2005; Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereira, 2002), their intentions (Keashly, 1998; Neuman & Baron, 2005), and the individual and organizational factors that influence their abusive behaviors (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Bennett, Aquino, Reed, & Thau, 2005; Koonin & Green, 2005; LeBlanc & Barling, 2004; Spector & Fox, 2005). It is an appetite my co-researchers share. Angela, Julie, Sandy, and Thais believe knowing why will bring closure and begin to heal their woundedness. Wendy suspects knowing why will reveal root causes and, in turn, empower prevention, or, at least, anticipation and avoidance of abusive interactions. During our conversations, Michael, Larry, and Dave express understanding and acceptance of why they are mistreated, long past answering these questions for themselves.

But what if knowing why, in this sense, proves not to matter? What if Namie and Namie (2011) are correct and that "Trying to change bullies is a fool's errand" (p. 4)? Cleansing our cognitive palettes, so to speak, may whet our appetites toward new and different research strands that illuminate more brightly this lived experience in order to diminish its presence and effect. Instead of chasing scenarios that demonstrate why

bullies bully or why supervisors mis-use and abuse power, we could chose instead to raise questions such as: What prevents organizations and their representatives from addressing work-place abuse? Despite a proliferation of research that touts the costs of work-place abuse to organizations and their employees, what unspoken barriers and perceived risks discourage proactive stances, such as work-place policy? What fears or insecurities plague the decisions to reinforce rather than disintegrate power imbalances in supervisor-employee relationships? These questions, along with others, dust off our need to ask and understand why. We do not ignore or repress this most human way of knowing. We simply repurpose this need in ways that move us closer to a new, more caring work-place normal.

Uncluttering the mis-placed and out-of-place, the outdated and unused, opens space for the new and re-newed. It invites our presence for conscientious and caring ways of knowing this lived experience. It creates space for silence where we can, as Krishnamurti (1964) encourages, pay attention without resistance. Uncluttering allows space for deeper, concentrated attention. Author David Ulrich (2002) notes:

> Concentration is an intentional act – we must try, we must direct our attention; and it does not always come naturally. It begins in the mind as purpose . . . and as mindfulness . . . ; at such times we are present in equal measure with ourselves and what is in front of us. (p. 24)

With uncluttered attention, we, in Heideggerian terms, achieve a different ontological state-of-mind – a different mood and "Being-attuned" (1927/1962, p. 172). With uncluttered attention, we may now concentrate more fully on the pedagogical insights and implications for the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. With uncluttered attention, we are now present in equal measure with the phenomenon before us.

Hearing the Sound of the Bells

In Chapter One I acknowledge my personal tension between naming and story-telling. It is a tension that threads through my entire lived experience of dissertation research and writing. I perceive the source of my tension as the endless, academic research loop of naming and quantifying this phenomenon. An uneasy bed-fellow with this tension is my appreciation for these necessities. My struggle is one poet Julia Ward Howe (1866/1997) seems to communicate in her poem, "The House of Rest." She begins by addressing the thoughtful, careful attention needed to build a house, as she "Square[s] the corners every one" (p. 72, line 2). Howe concludes the poem with contemplation of her finished house of rest.

> Oh! My house is far away;
> Yet it sometimes shuts me in.
> Imperfection mars each day
> While the perfect works begin. (p. 73, lines 49-52)

Howe portrays her house of rest as both far away yet near enough to enshroud. She also sees the building process as one ridden with imperfection yet aimed at the perfect. Considered a religious poet, Howe's house, unsurprisingly, is not a physical one but one of Being. In all these ways, Howe seems to recognize the same juxtaposed struggle that I call the tension between naming and storytelling.

As I evolve my consideration of, and attention to, the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I conceive the process of naming as the sounding of the bells. The sound of the bells is what first draws our attention. It is the beginning, perhaps obvious, work. Sounding is easy to see and to hear. In lived experience, the sound of the bells must be named and reckoned. Attending to the sound of the bells is necessary to establish and evolve the process: I name before I am able to

tell stories of my lived experience; I listen to the sound of the bells before I am able to hear the silence between their strokes. In the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, what calls to us as the sounding of bells? Where are we in our process of seeing and hearing this lived experience? Where yet do we need to be?

From foundation and framing to rough-in. For decades, we attune to the foundation and framing that brings essential definition and awareness to this lived experience. The earliest foundational groundwork demonstrates the need for effective definition (Raynor, 1997) and construct operationalization (Keashly, 1998) of work-place aggression and abuse. Studies over time demonstrate researcher awareness and frame this phenomenon in terms of prevalence and cost (Jennifer et al., 2003; Keashly, 1998; Merecz et al., 2009; Raynor, 1997; Richman et al., 1999; Stebbing et al., 2004; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2010). Lingering, however, in foundational and framing stages narrows the sight and sound of possibility. It leaves our work and vision unfinished and raw. It perpetuates the current state in which approximately half of the American workforce remains unaware that abusive social isolation occurs in work-places (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2010). It is the state in which my co-researchers find themselves as they remain in place during their lived experiences. They share with me repeated expressions of disbelief that abusive social isolation is even possible in work-places. Surely these behaviors are relegated to immature, schoolyard antics? Confounded by their lived experiences, what hope is there for a promising future?

Most recently, grassroots efforts sound the call to assemble a variety of impassioned and engaged supporters who want to address and eradicate work-place abuse and social isolation. In construction terms, we seem to enter the rough-in phase, where

the inner workings are assembled into place with a more palpable vision toward a finished, if not perfect, work-place future. Evident before us today is the rough-in effort to enact the Healthy Workplace Bill into U.S. law. This legislation, authored by David Yamada (2011),

> Provides severely bullied employees with a legal claim for damages, creates legal incentives for employers to act preventively and responsively with regard to bullying behaviors, and protects those who have made complaints or filed suit about workplace bullying from retaliation. (n.p.)

Yamada's blog cites successful introduction of the bill, with some variation, in over 20 state legislators in the past decade. Awareness campaigns rely on a number of citizen-empowered efforts, such as using personal social media to share educational information with others; signing online, legislature-intended petitions; and participating in events, such as 5K runs, where runners sport healthy work-place t-shirts (Massachusetts Healthy Workplace Advocates, 2013).

Imagining finished interiors. Entering the rough-in phase to address this phenomenon invites us to envision the finished interior of our house. With each effort a new reality – a new work-place normal – begins to materialize. Yet, roughing-in is often a slow process that leaves us anxiously to anticipate these finished interiors. At state and national levels, with each pamphlet distribution, online signature, completed petition, and introduced legislature bill, we begin to see laws materialize to protect workers from work-place abuse and social isolation. We know from experience in other areas of harassment and abuse – such as sexual harassment and school bullying – that organizational policies will follow. In academic institutions and commercial programs, review of graduate and undergraduate curricula and certification requirements opens conversations for how we portray work-place authorities and relationships. Within

organizations, similar opportunities exist to examine and reconstitute existing paradigms found within leadership and management curricula and onboarding programs.

Uncluttered by previous mental models that lack imaginative richness, we are open to attend as each behind-the-wall element is put into place. Considering rough-in actions that address work-place training, academic and commercial work-place curricula, organizational policies, and state and national laws, what finished interiors are we likely to envision? Initially, perhaps, we achieve a degree of saturated awareness that sensitizes students, workers, and organizational representatives to this phenomenon's reality within work-places. We enable them, as Angela hopes, to recognize the phenomenon before it happens to them personally and, as Julie desires, when it happens to an employee and co-worker. Through extending comfort to those who are targeted, we acknowledge they are not alone – that their experiences are not aberrations or unprecedented. Targets' voices suggest that more saturated awareness of this phenomenon genuinely matters to individual workers who may be or have already been targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place.

As building this vision is truly a labor of attentive dignity, rough-in actions allow us to anticipate a world-of-work in which Being and Being-with-others are absent abusive, isolating relationships. Heidegger (1927/1962) distinguishes between Being-with and Being-there. Being-with means I exist alongside others in this world. It is a co-existence without conscious thinking or knowing. We simple *are*, together. Being-with, however, requires more conscious, and conscientious, awareness. Heidegger evolves his discourse so that Being-with is associated with how we attune to the world and understand it. Being-with involves transparency, which Heidegger designates as

"knowledge of the Self" (p. 186), and sight [*Sicht*], which "lets entities which are accessible . . . be encountered unconcealedly in themselves" (p. 187). Envisioning a new work-place normal, one that is absent abusive social isolation, requires us, therefore, not to be merely *with* one another but to be *there* for one another. It requires of us a state-of-mind that acknowledges you, my presence with you, and how we are together in this work-place and in this situation. This state-of-Being asks from us the type of mindful presencing that opens us to listening to the silence between the strokes of the bells.

Listening to the Silence between Strokes

Abusive, work-place social isolation, despite increased academic research and popular media attention, is not abating. A decade of studies reveals that the number of targets reporting work-place aggression, including abusive social isolation, remains essentially unchanged (see Richman, 1999; Stebbing et al., 2004; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2010). I continue to consider the attention we choose to pay to this lived experience. It seems quite plausible that uncluttering our cognitive attics and attending to the bells' strokes will not suffice. With these efforts alone, we are unlikely to realize our vision of a new, dignified work-place normal. Caring, conscientious attention asks us to also attend to the silence between the bells' strokes.

So what does this mean? When listening to the silence between the bells' strokes, to what are we actually attuned? I believe we hear the bells' reverberations. Now, in addition to the conscious cognition that represents our ways of knowing the bells' strokes, we also open to the cognitive unconscious, our "subliminal perception" (Boucouvalas, 2005) of what remains before us between strokes. This quality of listening returns us to whole-person attentiveness, as author David Ulrich (2002) notes:

> Isn't it true that all of our responses to the world take place within us, in our bodies, mind, and feelings? Yet, when we look, we do not necessarily see; we generally focus all of our attention on the outer event, the scene in front of us. Seeing is not out there, it is in here, in the very core of our being. (pp. 24-25)

Ulrich's observation reminds us yet again of our presence in this lived experience and the ways of knowing on which we rely. How often do we focus solely on the outer event of the bells' strokes? During moments when we choose also to attend to the bells' reverberations, in what ways does our presence shift? In the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, let us continue to open up space for new ways of seeing, hearing, and knowing. Let us now make conscious the unconscious.

Ghosts of work-places past. In his book, *Breaking the Fear Barrier*, Tom Rieger (2011) identifies what he calls an organization's *ghosts*:

> Ghost are rules that are not really rules. . . . Most ghosts . . . . start off as a practice to cope with a specific situation. But over time, those situations change or simply cease to exist. And yet the rule survives because old habits can be hard to break. (p. 67)

Organizational ghosts represent the type of shared hallucination that Dan Lechay (2003) portrays in the opening line of his poem, "Ghost Villanelle": "We never saw the ghost, though he was there –" (p. 40, line 1). In a later line, Lechay remarks, "We told nobody." Organizational ghosts tend to prosper, outliving the tenure, or residence, of individual employees. Why is this true? Is there an unspoken pact among employees to avoid any challenge to the ghost's rightful existence? Maybe. Perhaps, though, agreement to the ghost's existence represents the employees' collective – and cognitive – unconscious. Making conscious the unconscious, then, is one way to exorcise unwanted ghosts from our organizations.

What organizational ghosts haunt the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place? In Chapter Five, I acknowledge burdensome codes of conduct that some of my co-researchers bear as they hump through their lived experiences. Now, making conscious the unconscious, allow me to reframe these codes as organizational ghosts. Larry, Wendy, Julie, and Michael identify codes that command respect for supervisors and work-place decorum. What makes these behavioral codes ghostly is their interpretation. Targets and witnesses to other-imposed social isolation may translate watchwords such as, "no talking back to your supervisor" and "no whining," to mean they should not engage in conversations regarding abusive behaviors. In adhering to their belief in this organizational ghost, targets and witnesses attract another specter: the codes of silence I acknowledge throughout this study.

Ghostly silence differs from the attentive silence I introduce earlier in this chapter. Attentive silence makes space for new ways of seeing, hearing, and knowing lived experience. Ghostly silence shrink-wraps degenerative organizational practices and rules, preserving them for current and future workforces and making them difficult to unpack or destroy. Ghostly silence fossilizes lived experience, much like Clarence Major's (2002) characterization of a photographic image:

> Side rows of trees waving in a tide of wind,
> and because what is moving is not moving,
> you catch a state of stasis.
>
> Opposite of this inactivity
> you imagine . . . (p. 53, lines 4-8)

Ghostly silence entraps us in the Heideggerian (1927/1962) "they," forcing us to be alongside, even opposite, others. Ghostly silence creates and immortalizes distances between us. Unable to truly connect in ways Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) would have us

touch, the invisible remains invisible. We are left to imagine, rather than to realize, new ways of knowing lived experience.

With ghostly codes of conduct and silence wailing within our work-places, how are we to listen to the silence between the bells' strokes? As poet Katie Cappello (2009) suggests, would paying attention to, rather than ignoring, this lived experience prove to be the antidote to targets' haunted existence?

> You ignore the way light filters through my cells,
> the way I have of fading out – still
> there is a constant tug, a stretching,
> what is left of me is coming loose. (p. 16, lines 1-4)

In truth, our attention to this lived experience – not only to the visible but also the invisible – tugs, stretches, and loosens the ghosts that habituate abusive and isolating work-places. When our attention takes hold, ghosts tend to lose theirs: "You will hear a rustle and watch me spill / grains of rice across the cracked tile" (lines 15-16).

Being in work-places future. In his poem, "The Truth," published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in the volume, *Long for this World: New & Selected Poems*, Ronald Wallace (2003), professor of English and poetry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, explores the awkward discomfort of truth through an exchange between co-workers, as one acknowledges the other's metastasized breast cancer.

> . . . I didn't know her well.
> We were co-workers and
> I liked her, but
> what do you say when someone
> actually answers the question
> *how are you?*
> with the unvarnished truth:
> *Not well*, she said. *I haven't*
> *long to live*. And should I
> have smoothed it over
> with the syrup of nervousness,

> or done what I did
> which was to
> talk about terror and anger,
> the unfairness and the lie,
> to take the truth at face value? (p. 98, lines 5-21)

Wallace unravels a common-place pleasantry to expose truth as it might present itself when we make the space to see and recognize one another in our work-places. I imagine a brief, although perhaps perceptible, hesitation co-mingled with a resolute decision to move from the everydayness of Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1927/1962) to a more authentic way of Being-with-self and Being-with-an-Other. Inauthentically and listening only to the bells' strokes, the dying co-worker might have offered "not bad" or "hanging in there." Instead, she utters harsh and painful truth, which her colleague accepts as an invitation for authentic discourse, choosing not to mask politely any distaste for embittered reality. Each turns toward rather than away from the Other. Each makes space to listen to the silence between strokes and, in doing so, reveals truth of this lived experience.

Wallace (2003) invites our glimpse into the possibilities of Being in work-places when we make the space to take one another at face value. In the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, presencing at face value means offering the miracle of a rainstorm to the drought of in-attention I recognize in Chapter Five. In Being-there for one an-Other, I no longer see Angela as a social outcast, Michael as hired help, or Sandy as a social leper. Presencing at face value means I do not retain blinders or turn away but become proximal with targets' social isolation. I am hand-in-hand, soul-to-soul, with Wendy's and Thais' losses of work-place innocence and Dave's, Larry's, and Julie's losses of work-place meaning.

In *The Power of One*, author Bryce Courtenay (1989/2008) recognizes the sometimes agonizing, sometimes excruciating, process of making space for presencing at face value. The character Peekay, now a young adult, travels alone to the crystal cave of Africa, the final resting place of Doc, his beloved mentor and friend. Seeking spiritual guidance for an important decision that he sees as a return to true self, Peekay sits cross-legged on a rocky shelf, hoping Doc will send him a sign:

> I continued to sit completely still as Doc had taught me to do when observing any living thing: "Still like rock, Peekay, past the itch and the scratch and the pain, where concentration sees with a diamond-sharp light." And so I sat perfectly still, emerging slowly from the cocoon of the trance I had been in. (p. 473)

Peekay's trance is the masking of Being when one is lost in inauthentic, Heideggerian everydayness. The living thing he seeks to observe and attend is himself. Un-shrouding one's Self is not simple or easy. It requires concentration, silence, and stillness. Upon receiving what he understands to be Doc's sign, Peekay describes the sensation of bursting fully from his cocoon: "Slowly the numbness left my body, and I felt the rush of adrenaline as it hit my bloodstream, leaving me trembling" (p. 473).

Earlier in this chapter I pose the question, During moments when we choose also to attend to the bells' reverberations, in what ways does our presence shift? How are we to summon Peekay's brand of courage to recognize ourselves at face value and shift our presencing to affect a new normal of dignified work-places? Is it possible to shape future work-places to mirror the calls to conscience found in today's free school movement? In the January 14, 2011, episode of *This American Life*, host Ira Glass (Glass & WBEZ Chicago, 2011) explores the free school movement, an unusual democracy where teachers and students alike call meetings – some scheduled; many, if not most, impromptu – to decide virtually everything about how the school runs and how its

members should behave. Near the end of the broadcast, Malia, a female student at the Brooklyn Free School, calls an impromptu, all-school meeting because she has been called a whore by two male students, ages nine and ten, seemingly because she asked them to stop annoying her when she was in the library.

During the meeting there is genuine confusion as to why Malia has called an all-school meeting to address the actions of two students. She first explains that it is important to point out when others do something wrong. Then she improvises and asks for a show of hands of anyone in the room who has ever been called a derogatory name. Nearly all raise their hands, to which Malia concludes, "See, it's just so many people" (Glass & WBEZ Chicago, 2011, n.p.). Malia sees herself and her lived experience at face value. The students never decide the consequences for name-calling, an in-decision that school co-founder, Katherine Chew, accepts:

> You know, so what if there's no resolution? The point is they're left with something to think about. What are you going to do about it? You know, that's more interesting to me than somebody deciding that this is the way it should be. (n.p.)

Malia shares with the filmmaker that she pities adults who cannot just meet and vote to address things that bother them in their work-places. The filmmaker sympathizes: "I get that. Once you're grown up, democracy is not so pure" (Glass & WBEZ Chicago, 2011, n.p.). But what if it were? What if in our future work-places, we answer calls to conscience and simply invite others to a meeting to answer them alongside us? Answering the call to conscience is making space to recognize ourselves and Others at face value. It is meeting one an-Other with dignified respect. Answering the call to conscience is attentive courage that hears the silence between the bells' strokes. In the

lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, such silence may be brutally truthful, as voiced by poet Billy Collins (2005):

> There is the sudden silence of the crowd
> above a player not moving on the field, . . .
>
> the silence of the belt when it is not striking the child. (p. 45, lines 1-2, 6)

The silence between strokes is the bells' reverberations, which rooted meaning suggests are its reflections.[70] Standing in the bleachers or as witness to abuse, our attention is like audible ripples that surge soundlessly from the focal point to crest at the core of our very Being. Being-there for one an-Other in such reflective silence, how can we but help to attend to lived experience with conscientious care and compassion?

Reverence for work-places present. I continue to bring to consciousness the truth that our acts of attention are ones of choice. It is a distinction Heidegger (1927/1962) makes between Being authentic and Being inauthentic, where the everyday *Dasein* makes no choices, as it is "carried along by the nobody" (p. 313). Making the choice for attention is also what Heidegger names authentic caring, which, as I note in Chapter Four, requires a shift from seeing the "what" to "who" within lived experience. Phenomenological choice is also one Levin (1999) explores as a shift from witnessing the "immediate interests" (p. 14) before us to cultivating and protecting a "collective memory" (p. 17) through the intentionality of our gaze.

Recently, a beloved colleague directed me to the following passage from Madeline Albright's (2007) forward to the poetry anthology, *Leading from Within*:

> Leadership is found most often in simple acts of self-expression, when conscience overcomes reticence and we make our presence known by challenging a falsehood that has been advertised as truth, calling injustice by its name, stopping to help another, or on one memorable occasion, daring to take a seat at the front of a bus. (p. xvi)

Albright's keen qualifier – when conscience overcomes reticence – is kindred to my own call, earlier in this chapter, for new and different research strands that unmask this lived experience, for to move forward along new pathways requires us to move past that which restrains us.

Later in her remarks, Albright points to the choices we make in our attention to poverty. Albright suggests that helping is not simple, ". . . but we have learned that progress can be made through a combination of giving more, teaching more, expecting more, empowering women, and developing more equitable rules" (p. xviii). She concludes: "For failure to act to ease suffering is a choice, and what we have the ability to choose, we have the power to change" (p. xviii). Albright's words apply equally to any choice where truth and dignity are at stake. In making the choices that currently face us, we ask ourselves: What attention will we pay to the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

In making the space to listen to the silence between the strokes of this lived experience, one choice we may make in today's work-places is to banish the silence that shrouds and entombs targets. Perhaps it will prove simpler than we think to overcome the bashful silence that poet A. E. Stallings (2006) describes:

> That it was shy when alive goes without saying.
> We know it vanished at the sound of voices
>
> Or footsteps. It took wing at the slightest noises,
> Though it could be approached by someone praying. (p. 385, lines 1-4)

With reverent attention we may raise our voices to refuse silence and choose a new work-place normal where targets are met with dignity, worth, and respect.

> . . . I admit
> I delayed. I was the Empress
> of Delay. But I can't be
> put off now. . . .
> . . . I insist.
> Insist for us all,
> which is the job
> of the voice . . .
> . . . Else
> what am I for, what use
> am I if I don't
> insist? (Gallagher, 1987, p. 148, lines 6-17)

As I entreat earlier in this chapter, let us accept together that the day has come to refuse silence and raise our voices. Let us choose to act rather than fail to act. With conscientious, care we open up, without need for apology that we have not done so sooner. Let us delay no longer, for restoring dignity to the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place may prove a choice we are called to make again and again without end.

Restoring Implacement

> No one can tell what goes on in between the person you were and the person you become. No one can chart that blue and lonely section of hell. There are no maps of the change. You just . . . come out the other side. (King, 1978/1990, p. 449)

In many respects, which I reveal throughout this study, the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is a solitary experience. Like King (1978/1990), I recognize this lived experience as an experience of Becoming. Like King, I know that for each target the experience of Becoming is unmapped and uncharted. This lived experience truly navigates a "blue and lonely section of hell." Despite its solitary characterization, however, this lived experience may also be one of communal togetherness. How can this be true?

Earlier in this chapter, in considering the dignity of attention for targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I assert that restoration is an act of presencing – *our* presencing. We are called to conscience to care about this lived experience and its targets. We are called to presence in the way Gadamer (1975/1989) describes as "being outside oneself [in] the positive possibility of being wholly with something else" (p. 122). Gadamer sees this quality of presencing as being drawn to lived experience in a way that I give full attention and, in forgetting myself, I am claimed by the experience. I am not, however, subsumed or consumed by the lived experience. On the contrary, through my presencing, I discover my own Being in ways heretofore unknown: "What rends him from himself at the same time gives him back the whole of his being" (p. 125).

Throughout this study, I return time and again to the role and importance of place in this lived experience. Place matters. Work-place matters. As Casey (1993/2009) reminds us:

> Where something or someone is, far from being a casual qualification, is one of its determining properties. As to the *who*, it is evident that our innermost sense of personal identity (and not only our overt, public character) deeply reflects our implacement. It follows that threats to this implacement are also threats to our entire sense of well-being. . . . When places change aspect or fade in significance, I change or fade with them: *their* alteration is *my* alteration. (p. 307)

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation changes the work-place and threatens implacement. In turn, I change; I fade; I alter: "Even though I am literally here in a particular place, my place is not *this* place. By the same token, this place is no longer my place: indeed, my place has become other to (and other than) me" (p. 308).

Seeing and hearing the truth of this lived experience, that we may answer the call to conscience, not only restores dignity, it restores implacement. We discover ourselves, as Casey (1993/2009) claims, "back on the road to a resolute return to place":

> The road itself is a route of renewed sensitivity to place, affording a refreshed sense of its continuing importance in our lives and those of others. The sense and the sensitivity offer a viable alternative to being and feeling out-of-place. (p. 310)

For Casey, every journey is "place-bound" and "place-specific" (p. 274). With renewed sensitivity to place, what pedagogical insights are we to glean from our journey with the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place?

Re-placing Self

Casey (1993/2009) asks the question: "What goes on when I (or anyone else deprived of place) undertake such concerted actions of re-placement" (p. 311)? He answers that re-placement is an act of re-creation for the individual who seeks place. He claims an indisputable connection between place and self-formation and self-identity. As I consider restoring im-placement to the targets of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place, I ponder how I am changed by the alterations in place I now perceive. If sensitive not only to place but also Others with whom I share place, how can I be implaced when Others are not? To restore targets' implacement must I not first re-place myself?

In his phenomenological study, *Remembering*, Casey (1987/2000) explores remembering as senses of self-presence and co-presence. He examines personal memories to question the strength and clarity of his own place and role, as well as the place and roles of others, whom he knows to be present in remembered situations. Sensitivity to place implies sensitivity to self-presence and co-presence. The distinction is critical, for co-presence is third-person presence, a removed witness to lived experience. Self-presence, on the other hand, is first-person presence, familiar, and "the only kind of presence in which actuality is experienceable and hence rememberable" (p. 42).

As restoration – whether of dignity or implacement – is about presencing, I consider my presence when others are targeted by other-imposed social isolation in our work-places. In these abusive lived experiences, is my presence one of self-presence or co-presence? Co-present, I do not remember targets. In fact, I share responsibility for their forgottenness. Co-present, I am the human resources officer who fails to assign Julie a permanent supervisor for nine forgotten months, and who ignores Larry's abusive plight, as he is merely the most recent in a series of forgotten employees who have passed through this work-place. Co-present, I am the co-worker who reinforces Sandy's social leprosy and Michael's second-class citizenship with each forgotten lunch invitation. Co-present, I am the co-worker who forgets to pitch in with Wendy's workload, include Angela on critical emails, catch up Dave on daily routines, or sign the petition to save Thais' job.

Re-placing self in the lived experience of other-imposed social isolation requires self-presence. It is our way of re-creating our role – and our responsibility – within these isolating work-places. By re-placing self, I alter how I am in this work-place with targeted Others. Targets and I are betrothed as brethren, no longer separated as the distant relatives Ashbery (1979/1986a) describes:

> However the distances, it so happens, come to seem
> Like partitions, both near and far (p. 185, lines 20-21)

No longer a distal witness to this lived experience, I become a proximal actor, remembering place and re-membering targets. For as Casey (1987/2000) explains: "The remembered calls for the presence of the rememberer at its original happening. . . . Our own role in the experience . . . becomes integral to what we remember" (pp. 42, 69).

Re-placing self in this lived experience creates with targets a shared sense of exile. Though, myself, not ontically targeted, I ontologically share targets' isolated anguish-of-Being. In his self-elegy, *In the Presence of Absence*, Darwish (2011) names exile "a misunderstanding between existence and borders, a fragile bridge between images" (p. 85). Further, he illuminates the importance of shared exile to place:

> Exiles have a shared smell: the smell of longing for something else; a smell that remembers another smell. A panting, nostalgic smell that guides you, like a worn tourist map, to the smell of original place.

Ontologically co-exiled with targets of other-imposed social isolation, I share their longing and nostalgia for remembered place – dignified work-places where no one is forgotten and where all are re-membered with conscientious, care-ful attention.

Em-powering Community

The journey to implacement is one of truth. Steeves (2006), as I first note in Chapter Three, sees objective truth as "coming to see the public world as clearly as possible from the perspective of each Other, and doing one's best to forge a perspective that does justice to the whole" (p. 7). With shared perspective, I do not see *I* or *you*, but *we* and *us*. Shared perspective creates community. With a shared sense of community, work-places become home-places, which, as O'Donohue (1999/2002) proclaims, "provide shelters of belonging" (p. 99). Throughout this study's journey, I often linger to explore the importance of belonging. What pedagogical insights remain as we now consider work-place communities as shelters from, rather than battlefields for, abusive social isolation?

Kreisberg (1992) sees community as co-agency:

> What distinguishes co-agency from domination is that one's experience of effectiveness does not come from the ability to impose one's will on others.

> Rather, a sense of efficacy evolves from accomplishing tasks through cooperation and mutually supported action. (p. 120)

Essentially, Kreisberg's premise is that community is based on *power with*, not *power over*, Others in the work-place. As early as Chapter One, I establish power as a nascent presence in this lived experience by framing my study of other-imposed social isolation as one of emotional abuse. Whether you are Carroll's (1865/2011) Alice, struggling to survive the Queen's macabre game of chess, or Orwell's (1949/1977) Winston, realizing the existential dismemberment through inflicted pain and humiliation, abusive power negates community and mutates work-places into other-worldly, soul-crushing domiciles.

Belonging and community are lacking in abusive, isolating work-places – not only between the offender and the target, but also between the target and many others who share the same place. Casey (1987/2000) claims, "Remembering is a paramount, connective power in our lives" (p. 63). I may begin with re-placing my self-presence in these work-places in order to re-member targets. I continue with one of the elements Courtenay (1989/2008) names the power of one: "The power of one was based on the courage to remain separate, to think through to the truth, and not to be beguiled by convention or the plausible arguments of those who expect to maintain power" (p. 360). Courtenay's tale is set in South Africa during apartheid, when the courage to stand apart likely means standing alone. The power of one is, first, standing alone to re-member Others with dignified attention. The power of one is, next, convincing others to stand with you, in community one with an-Other. As the character Doc explains to the young Peekay, "Sometimes in life, doing what we shouldn't do is the emergency" (p. 75). Harnessing the power of one re-members to me my song.

Remembering Our Songs

I open Chapter One with the East African fable of Deo, a boy who is reminded by those who surround him to live according to his purpose. Before arriving in this world, Deo's parents consider his purpose in this world, what the authors call Deo's song. His mother teaches Deo's song first to his father, then to the rest of the villagers, all of whom learn Deo's song and sing it to him in times of celebration and in times of pain. As I prepare to conclude this phenomenological study and pen a précis to the pedagogical insights I offer, I ponder once more the significance of these fabled lessons to our work-places. Before we are hired, existing members of the work-place village prepare for our arrival. They assess the importance of the work we will do and the roles we will play. They identify our work-place purpose, our song. They share it with us early, during the interview process and during the period of onboarding. They remind us of our purpose as they assign tasks, make project and committee selections, and conduct performance appraisals, all the while celebrating our accomplishments with awards and promotions and providing, when necessary, corrective feedback and actions.

This fabled existence seems not so different until we meet the harsher reality of those who turn away from us when we stumble – and, more disturbingly, when one or more members of our own village become the source and cause of our imbalance. In this disturbing reality, where are those who vowed to notice and stop what they are doing to encircle us and remind us of our purpose so that we, too, remember? As I draw this parallel, I pause a moment to consider if Deo represents the offender, the abusive employee who, forgetting true work-place purpose, imposes social isolation on others. Or does Deo represent the target, the employee who faces the repeated and continual isolation that festers and strangles purpose? Whom should the villagers encircle? To

linger and answer these questions may represent mistruth, a dulled version of truth that confuses our attention and distorts our calls to conscience.

I like what they are doing at the Brooklyn Free School. In our work-places, let us call a meeting to talk about what bothers us, as soon as it bothers us, and every time it bothers us. Should we care if resolution does not come quickly or at all? Can we be satisfied with simply raising the questions and agreeing to think about it – as a community?

What am I going to do about it?

What are you going to do about it?

What are we, together, going to do about it?

It feels like a good first step. It reminds me of the awakening that Buber (1947/2006) suggests comes from asking the question, "Where are you in your world?" (p. 6). Maybe the conversation alone will prove more interesting and effective than someone else deciding and telling us the way it ought to be.

I begin this final chapter crafting my one true sentence: Authentically seeing and hearing the truth of lived experience to answer the call to conscience restores dignity and implacement to those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place. This truth is generous, unselfish, perhaps even noble. Does such a statement seem hyperbolic? If so, consider this: In Courtenay's (1989/2008) epic tale, we witness young Peekay's triumphant struggles to overcome early abuse in a boarding school, a place not unlike those of isolating work-places. In Courtenay's final pages, Peekay reflects: "The year of despair I had spent as a five-year-old in the hands of the Judge had tainted everything I had subsequently done" (p. 495). Peekay's despair is painfully reminiscent of the

tribulations shared with me by several of my co-researchers. Another of Courtenay's reflection, found earlier in the text, also rings of agonizing truth: "Sometimes the slightest things change the directions of our lives, the merest breath of a circumstance, a random moment that connects like a meteorite striking the earth" (p. 60). In this reflection, Peekay remembers Hoppie Groenewald, a happenstance acquaintance, who is the first to extend the hands of friendship to cradle a broken boy, tossed about by abusive social isolation while remaining in his school-place, which is also his home-place. We learn that in many ways it is Hoppie's gesture, not the Judge's behavior, that truly changes Peekay's life and sets the course for who he is to become.

As we consider this or the next work-place, the pedagogical insights I offer in this study may well restore implacement as Casey (1993/2009) describes it:

> By taking up the pathway of place anew, we can discover the riches of the place-world again. At the end of this journey, we shall know once more, perhaps for the very first time, what it means to get back into place. (p. 310)

We learn that sometimes, when one answers the call to conscience, the striking meteorite is not catastrophic at all. It is, instead, an event of wonder and awe. It is an event that calls us back from the lost-ness of Heideggerian everydayness and triggers the re-membering of Self – just as Deo re-members his song and as Peekay re-members his truth, a truth that seems all too easy to forget when living the experience of abusive, other-imposed social isolation:

> I had come to identify with my camouflage to the point where the masquerade had become more important than the truth. While this posturing was so finely tuned it was no longer deliberate, it had nevertheless been born out of a compulsion to hide. (Courtenay, 1989/2008, p. 472)

Such lived experience threatens true Being with every abusive, socially isolating act. Re-membering Self is, perhaps first of all, a faith-ful act of Self-recognition. For

some, like Peekay and several of the co-researchers in this study, it may even take years to reach this state of Self-awareness and Self-renewal:

> My camouflage, begun so many years before under the persecution of the Judge, was now threatening to become the complete man. It was time to slough the mottled and cunningly contrived outer skin and emerge as myself, to face the risk of exposure, to regain the power of one. I had reached the point where to find myself was essential. (p. 472)

Re-membering truth means tapping the power of one to remove camouflage, abandon the masquerade, and return to true Self – who I really am, rather than who I am forced to be.

The lived experience of other-imposed social isolation in the work-place is fraught with hideous truths. Yet, one marvelous truth is this: Answering the call to conscience and extending care to those targeted by other-imposed social isolation in the work-place restores dignified implacement not only to targets, but also to those who answer the call. Answering the call to conscience, as Wallace (2003) concludes in his poem that I introduce earlier in this chapter, requires faith and, perhaps, belief in miracle:

> . . . And only then
> did I see what she needed from me
> was miracle, a simple belief
> in miracle, and if that was varnish,
> well, it would bring the grain
> of the truth out, would save it
> from wear and weather.
> It would make the truth
> Almost shine. (p. 98, lines 24-32)

Throughout this study, I remain intent on honoring truth and the way of knowing that Buber (1957/1999c) calls standing firm. I trust this work is a truthful unfolding of this lived experience that restores dignity and reveals pedagogical possibilities. For as Buber (1957/1999d) asserts: “All we can do is to work from the place and moment where we

are, and to hope that our work, if it succeeds in being true to our intention, will not remain unblessed by the spirit" (p. 71).

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

March 2012

Dear Potential Research Participant:

I am a workplace professional in the metro Washington D.C. area, and I am currently soliciting research participants willing to discuss their workplace experience. I am conducting this research study as a doctoral student in the Virginia Tech Department of Human Development, the Adult Learning and Human Resource Development program, at the National Capital Region campus in Falls Church, Virginia.

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to understand **what it is like to experience involuntary social isolation in the workplace.** Specifically, what is it like to remain in a workplace when the intentional actions of another – a supervisor, peer, subordinate, or other workplace colleague – forces your social isolation from others or restricts your access to others, information and/or opportunities. I am motivated to conduct this study based on my own experience and the experience of numerous colleagues and professional acquaintances who have acknowledged their experiences.

The role of a research participant is to share his or her own experience of involuntary workplace social isolation through conversation and writing. Your specific involvement in this study would include:

- an initial telephone or in-person contact;
- two individual conversations with me about your experience;
- an optional group conversation with me and other co-researchers;
- a short journal entry that reflects on your experience;
- responses to possible follow-up questions.

I will audiotape and transcribe our conversations, keeping all tapes and transcriptions, as well as your identity, confidential. You may select aliases for use in these transcriptions to mask your identity, identities of colleagues, and the organization. For our conversations, we will meet in a mutually convenient location at agreed times.

I am interested in meeting with you for the initial telephone or in-person contact in March 2012, and completing our conversations by July 2012. If you would like more information, including learning how to participate in this study, please contact me. It is my hope that insights revealed through this research study will inform practice and policy to promote healthy workplace environments and to address involuntary social isolation before it escalates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

C. Leanne Wells, cwells2@vt.edu, (240) 676-0583

APPENDIX B: INVITATION DISTRIBUTION

I distributed the invitation to participate through the following channels.

Personal work-place associates[1]

I distributed the invitation to my current and past work associates, some of whom redistributed to members of their personal and professional networks. (43 contacts)

CAMOM (Columbia Area Mothers of Multiples)

CAMOM is a non-profit support network for mothers and mothers-to-be of twins, triplets and higher order multiples in Central Maryland. (358 contacts)

CBODN (Chesapeake Bay Organization Development Network)

CBODN is a non-profit, premier organization for Organization Development professionals in the mid-Atlantic region and beyond. (unspecified number of contacts in two SIGs – special interest groups)

DC Working Moms

The DC Working Moms listserv is place for working moms to connect and share their thoughts, anxieties, passions, and absurdities, about social and family issues unique to the working family and the DC area. (456 contacts)

DCE

DCE is a private listerve for networking women in the DC Metro area. (47 contacts)

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site that allows users to create personal profiles and join common-interest user groups, organized by work-place, school or college, or other characteristics. (287 contacts)

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-related social networking site. (35 contacts)

MCPOM Montgomery County Parents of Multiples

MCPOM is a volunteer group that provides both support and social activities for its membership. (597 contacts)

New Hope Academy

New Hope Academy is a private school located in Landover Hills, Maryland. (32 contacts in the kindergarten listserv)

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[1] I included no current co-workers as co-researchers in this study.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE RESPONSE LETTER

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to engage with me in a research study of the experience of other-imposed social isolation in the workplace. I appreciate your time commitment, and your willingness to share your personal story. I sincerely believe that our conversations and this study will contribute to the work that is being done to address, and even eliminate, the type of workplace cultures that foster and make complicit these types of damaging behaviors.

I would like to schedule our first meeting within the next two weeks if possible. Please suggest possible dates and times when we can meet. We can select a quiet location – perhaps a convenient restaurant, library, or office space – where we can meet and audio-record our conversation.

During this first meeting, I will answer all of your initial questions, obtain your signature on a consent form, gather some non-attributive demographic information, and begin our conversations together. Following our first meeting, I will transcribe our conversation and provide that transcription to you. I ask that you reflect on our words, and your story, to write a short journal entry that explores something that really speaks to you as you review this transcription. We will use your journal entry, and any additional insights you may provide, as a foundation for our second conversation.

During our second meeting, we will continue our conversation, following our earlier procedure to audio-record your story. I will invite you and other participants to engage in a group conversation. This allows us to share stories and further explore this workplace experience of being socially isolated by the intentional actions of another.

At any time, you will have the opportunity to contact me and to review my writing as it develops over our time together. At the end of the study, I am also happy to return to you your biographical sketch and journal entry, as well as provide you a copy of the taped recording.

I look forward to meeting you for our first conversation in the next two week. Thank you for your interest and commitment to shaping healthier workplaces that nurture rather than erode our professional experience.

Respectfully,

C. Leanne Wells
cwells2@vt.edu, (240) 676-0583

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Initials _____ Date _____

I agree to participate in a research study on people who have experienced involuntary social isolation in the workplace through the intentional actions of others. The exact title of this study is "Lost and Forgotten While Remaining in Place: The Lived Experience of Other-Imposed Social Isolation in the Work-place." I understand the purpose and nature of this study and am participating voluntarily. In addition, I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a doctoral degree, including a dissertation and any other future publication(s). While granting this permission, I understand that my responses will remain confidential and that my identity will not be revealed.

I understand that I will be one of a small group, perhaps five to seven, individuals who will share what it is like to experience this type of workplace social isolation. I understand that I will participate in two, perhaps three, in-person conversations with the researcher. I also understand that, in order to participate, these conversations will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that these transcriptions, as well as my written journal entry, will be used to describe my experience.

I understand that I will provide an alias that will be used during the audio-recorded conversations, for the transcriptions, and in the research publication(s). I may also provide aliases for colleagues and the organization I discuss as part of my experience. These aliases will be used to protect my identity and to provide confidentiality.

Only the primary researcher will know my true identity and will not reveal it in any written or recorded information. Only the researcher and, perhaps, a professional transcription service will have access to the digital audio-recording files. I understand the digital audio-recording files will be kept up to three years past the dissertation publication date. I also understand the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

I acknowledge that the intended benefit of this research is to increase awareness and understanding of the experience of involuntary workplace social isolation. Further, it is hope that this research study will inform practice and policy to promote healthy workplace environments and to address involuntary social isolation before it escalates.

I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation in this research study. In sharing my workplace experiences, I may discover some new meanings. I likewise acknowledge that sharing my personal experiences may trigger unpleasant memories. If this is the case, I understand that the researcher will treat these memories, and their related feelings, with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

Initials _____ Date _____

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study, and understand my total time commitment is approximately six to seven hours. I also understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. In participating, I agree to:

- schedule and complete two individual conversations about my experience with the researcher, at an agreed location, date, and time;
- participate, as available, in an third, group conversation with the researcher and other co-researchers;
- write a short (one- to two-page) journal entry that reflects on my experience;
- answer possible follow-up questions.

I have read the above Informed Consent Agreement that details the purpose and conditions of this research study. The research has been explained to me, and I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research study.

I understand that should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, or my rights as a co-researcher, I can contact any of the persons listed below.

_____ _____
Research Participant Name Date

_____ _____
Researcher Name Date

C. Leanne Wells, Researcher
Department of Human Development
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
cwells2@vt.edu, 240-676-0583

Dr. Marcie Boucouvalas, Advisor
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Dr. Francine H. Hultgren, Co-Advisor
Department of Education Policy Studies
University of Maryland
fh@umd.edu, 301-405-4562

David M. Moore, Chair, Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
moored@vt.edu, 540-231-4991

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS FOR CO-RESEARCHER CONVERSATIONS

Please tell me about your experience of being involuntarily socially isolated in the workplace by the intentional actions of another.

What types of social isolation did you experience?

I'm wondering how this experience "showed up" for you.

- What emotions do you recall?
- What bodily impact do you remember?

I'm curious how this experience altered who you are at work.

- How would you describe yourself during that time?
- How does that compare to how you were prior to the social isolation?
- In what ways did this experience change you in subsequent workplaces?

I'm interested how this experience altered your relationships at work.

- With the person who imposed the social isolation?
- With others in that workplace?
- With others outside that workplace?

After the social isolation began, what informed your decision to remain in that workplace?

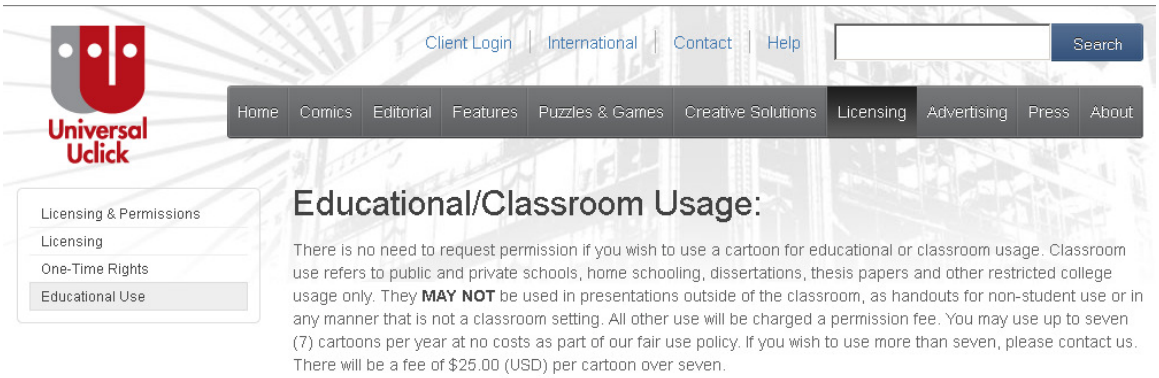
If you left that workplace, what informed that decision?

What have you learned from this experience?

What advice would you have for others who may be experiencing something similar?

APPENDIX F: PERMISSIONS

Approved educational use of the Dilbert comic strip:
http://universaluclick.com/licensing_permissions/educational_use



From: Raegan Carmona <rcarmona@amuniversal.com>
To: clwells <clwells@aol.com>
Subject: RE: Dilbert.com "Permission to Use Strip" Inquiry
Date: Wed, Nov 7, 2012 10:35 am

Dear Leanne,

Thank you for your email. You may use (1) DILBERT cartoon in your dissertation. Here is a copy of our educational use statement: [see screen capture above]. . . . As long as you do not abuse the permission or the creators work, we are glad to offer it free of charge.

All materials remain the property of Universal Uclick. All Rights Reserved. No changes, deletions or additions are to be made to the cartoon or text. You must reprint or post in its entirety. Please include the cartoonists name and the Universal Uclick name in the credit line.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Raegan Carmona
Permissions Coordinator
Universal Uclick
1130 Walnut St
Kansas City MO 64106
P 816.581.7358
F 816.581.7395
rcarmona@amuniversal.com

Approved educational use of the poem, “The Truth,” by Ronald Wallace:

From: Ronald Wallace <rwallace@wisc.edu>
To: clwells <clwells@aol.com>
Subject: Re: seeking permission to use your poem, "The Truth"
Date: Sun, Jan 27, 2013 7:31 pm

Dear Leanne Wells,

Thanks for asking. I'd be pleased for you to reprint part or all of the poem in your dissertation, assuming you credit me as author, and the University of Pittsburgh Press as publisher, of the book in which it appears (LONG FOR THIS WORLD: NEW & SELECTED POEMS) in the notes somewhere. If your dissertation is eventually published, we should probably get permission from the Press as well, but, for now, my permission will suffice. Thanks for your interest in my work! Ron Wallace

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ENDNOTES

[1] For my own work, I hyphenate "work-place," using a phenomenological technique to emphasize the importance of place within the studied phenomenon. I leave "workplace" un-hyphenated when directly quoting other resources, within proper names (e.g., Workplace Bullying Institute), and in the communications with co-researchers (see appendices).
[2] In keeping with APA style, I italicize "foreign phrases and abbreviations not common in English" (*American Psychological Association,* 2010, p. 105). When these same words and phrases are included within direct quotes, I italicize only as indicated within the quote.
[3] While van Manen's six activities do not indicate ordinal position, I use Arabic numerals, rather than bullet symbols, for this listing to mirror van Manen's textual presentation of these activities.
[4] Merriam-Webster, "displace," 2002; I use endnotes for etymological citations in order to minimize interruption to textual flow
[5] Ammer, 1997/2003, p. 352
[6] *Wikipedia*, "avalanche," 2013
[7] HarperCollins Publishers, "faithful," 2013
[8] Merriam-Webster, "faithful," 2002
[9] *myEtymology.com,* "faith," 2013
[10] HarperCollins Publishers, "abide," 2013
[11] HarperCollins Publishers, "abode," 2013
[12] Merriam-Webster, "wander," 2002
[13] Harper, "dwell," 2013
[14] HarperCollins Publishers, "schizophrenia," 2013
[15] *myEtymology.com,* "desolate," 2013
[16] Merriam-Webster, "imponderable," 2002
[17] Harper, "nostalgia," 2013
[18] *myEtymology.com*, "cultivate," 2013
[19] Harper, "wilderness," 2013
[20] HarperCollins Publishers, "decathect," 2013
[21] Harper, "reflex," 2013
[22] Harper, "heuristic," 2013
[23] "Zach" is a pseudonym, which my colleague selects for use in this study.
[24] "Zoe" is a pseudonym, which my colleague selects for use in this study.
[25] Merriam-Webster, "authentic," 2002
[26] Harper, "authentic," 2013
[27] Harper, "vulnerable," 2013
[28] "Chris" is a true name, which my colleague selects for use for this study.
[29] *myEtymology.com*, "betray," 2013
[30] Merriam-Webster, "betray," 2002
[31] Harper, "beginning," 2013
[32] *myEtymology.com,* "mentor," 2013
[33] *Wikipedia*, "queen (chess)," 2013
[34] "Romero" is a pseudonym, which my colleague selects for use in this study.
[35] Merriam-Webster, "vastation," 2002
[36] Harper, "refuge," 2013
[37] Kramer does not cite the Buber source for this quote, and this author has been unable to locate the original Buber source through other research queries.
[38] Harper, "engage," 2013
[39] Merriam-Webster, "engage," 2002
[40] Merriam-Webster, "reflexive," 2002

[41] Husserl is the first to introduce the life-world concept. In his translated works, "life-world" is hyphenated. As such, I use this format exclusively, except within direct quotes where the term is not hyphenated.
[42] Klein, "essence," 2003/2008, p. 258
[43] Harper, "sensitive," 2013
[44] Harper, "perceive," 2013
[45] Harper, "dialogue," 2013
[46] Harper, "conversation," 2013
[47] Harper, "hermeneutic," 2013
[48] In this bulleted list, I follow APA guidelines for seriation, rather than van Manen's textual presentation, as van Manen's use of parentheses with Arabic numerals violates APA seriation standards. As such, I replace the numbered bullets in van Manen's original text with the bullet symbol indicated on this page.
[49] I follow APA guidelines for citing a personal communication. I also follow the phenomenological writing style and do not attribute any quotation until the co-researcher is introduced by name later in this chapter.
[50] Harper, "target," 2013
[51] Merriam-Webster, "target," 2002
[52] "Michael" is a true name, which my co-researcher selects to use for this study.
[53] I continue to follow APA guidelines for citing a personal communication. As each co-researcher is introduced, I attribute direct quotes. I also continue to follow the phenomenological writing style which omits the phrase "personal communication" and the date within the citation itself, indicating in the text only the name of the co-researcher.
[54] "Angela," is a pseudonym, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[55] "Wendy," is a true name, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[56] "Sandy," is a true name, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[57] "Larry," is a true name, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[58] "Dave," is a true name, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[59] "Thais," is a true name, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[60] "Julie," is a true name, which my co-researcher selects for use in this study.
[61] Harper, "abuse," 2013
[62] Merriam-Webster, "recognize," 2002
[63] Harper, "recognize," 2013
[64] Harper, "throw," 2013
[65] Merriam-Webster, "wound," 2002
[66] Harper, "lost," 2013
[67] Harper, "grief," 2013
[68] Harper, "psyche," 2013
[69] Harper, "restore," 2013; Harper, "stand," 2013
[70] Harper, "reverberation," 2013