Chapter 3
Autoethnography: Internal Dialogue and Research of the Self

ABSTRACT
This chapter presents current research insights into the selection of autoethnography for doctoral-level inquiry. Autoethnography translates the personal to social science research with accessible self-as-subject representations, and autoethnography can reveal unheard voices of experiences to inform larger sociocultural contexts. The use of autoethnography in doctoral education remains widely accepted for doctoral-level inquiry as autoethnography often appeals to the doctoral scholar due to its fluidity, flexibility, and as both process and product. It is also essential for doctoral scholars to situate the autoethnography within the bounds of the scholarship, field of study, the doctoral degree program, and institution to meet all institutional requirements and ethical assurances as relational aspects between doctoral scholar and research supervisor are vital to successful autoethnography for the transformative experience of the doctoral scholar as new investigator.

INTRODUCTION
Autoethnography is a spiritual act of political self-determination, of reclamation. – Aisha Durham (2018)

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In one of their earlier collaborations on autoethnography that remains extant, Ellis and Bochner (2000) highlighted the vulnerable self as the subject of autoethnography typically written from a first-person point of view through a variety of means including fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, photography, visual arts, and traditional social science exposition. Thereby this depiction of I as a vulnerable self with deep, untold experiences worthy of inquiry is often at the heart of a doctoral researcher’s desire to pursue autoethnography as a culminating research study; however, this choice is not an easy path to a doctoral research project even though a readily available research subject exists (Ellis, 2007). The authors also offered a backdrop to autoethnography that encompassed then disparate fields of anthropology, narrative research, literary criticism, poetics, and more (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), which makes the research design attractive across doctoral disciplines and research interest areas worthy of doctoral-level inquiry. More recently, Rubinstein-Avila and Maranzana (2015) revisited the vulnerability of doctoral researchers and the value that autoethnography as the doctoral research study can bring to the scholar through the synthesis of ideologies, subjectivities, reflections, and positionality with larger social constructs. The authors also revisited Behar’s (1996) “irrevocable journey” (p. 2 as cited in Rubinstein-Avila & Maranzana, 2015) as a figurative path for the doctoral autoethnographer turned independent researcher to gain experiential entry into the academic community and continue research and academic publication post-doctorate.

Although autoethnography as a specific social science research design, which involves consistent conventions and systematic procedures of inquiry as other qualitative methods, did not emerge widely until the mid- to later-1980s, interpretive social scientists had used many forms of narrative story to excavate the lived experience of a particular construct or phenomenon (Adams, Ellis, & Jones, 2017; Anderson, 2006; Golding & Foley, 2017) and the integration of science and art through postmodern interpretations of data and merger of empirical and literary conventions (Leavy, 2017; Richardson, 2000a). Thus, autoethnography as a specific research approach used within doctoral education has evolved considerably especially over the most recent two decades to move more aligned with and closer to the conventions of autobiography (Drechsler Sharp, Riera, & Jones, 2012; Ings, 2014) imbibed within the systematic empirical procedures of ethnography to employ the use of hindsight to consider epiphanies or deep moments of insight or the difficult time through an existential crisis that led to examine a particular life event
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