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He Seemed Like Such a Nice Guy: Young Adults' Understandings of Intimate Partner Violence

by

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence is a serious concern with consequences related to physical, social, and emotional health of individuals, families, and society. Despite extensive research and targeted strategies to address this problem, incidents of intimate partner violence occur while local, provincial, and national agencies track this violence over time. Emerging adults are in a life stage where they are forming beliefs about intimate partner relationships. They are engaged in adult learning that occurs incidentally as they navigate experiences in life, work, and love. As such, they are in a position to contribute to an understanding of the range of intimate partner relationships (healthy, unhealthy, and violent) with the possibility of informing strategies aimed at preventing this violence.

In light of the magnitude of the concern of intimate partner violence, I conducted a study using hermeneutics as a philosophy and method to explore how emerging adults understand violence in relationships. Data sources included unstructured interviews with 12 individuals aged 18 to 29 years and media reports of a critical incident of intimate partner violence wherein four young people were shot by an ex-boyfriend of one of the young adults before he shot himself. Findings included: the importance of being connected to friends and not isolating oneself; the existence of sexual pressure and issues of ambiguity regarding consent to sexual activity; the challenge of recognizing violence in relationships and the stigma that goes with labelling it as such; the influence of media reports of intimate partner violence, in particular the use of the rhetoric of *he seemed like such a nice guy*; the powerful impact that texting has in communication between emerging adults in intimate partner relationships and its connection to stalking and jealousy; and the protective effect of loving family and friends on young people as they navigate intimate partner relationships. Implications of this study include the possibility of

multiple strategies for prevention of intimate partner violence situated in adult learning. These strategies include utilizing the voices of emerging adults to reflect the challenge of recognizing and naming violence in relationships to make a powerful impact on cognitive and emotional levels.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to young adults navigating the terrain of intimate partner relationships, their friends, and their families, who walk alongside of them gently supporting and guiding them in the spirit of peace and non-violence.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I first learned the concepts of non-violence in my marriage.

~Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi is renowned as an activist who used non-violence as a strategy for political matters related to social justice in British-ruled India. Over the course of his lifetime, Gandhi led India to independence. His influence was manifested globally. Today, his messages about non-violence remain relevant and are often cited by scholars, politicians, and teachers. That Gandhi's initial learning about non-violence occurred in his marriage is notable and compelling. The beginning of his learning was not formal. Gandhi's learning as an adult in his marriage was informal, it occurred in his everyday life with his wife, Kasturba. Gandhi learned about non-violence in his intimate partner relationship and he used this informal learning to influence the world. This learning took root and grew into a system of beliefs around non-violent civil disobedience. Ultimately, Gandhi's learning influenced generations long after his death in 1948. This influence showcases the power of informal adult learning.

The study of violence (and non-violence) in relationships could be situated in any one of a number of disciplines. Before applying to Graduate Studies, I looked at the possibility of being a student in a number of Faculties and departments including Education, Nursing, Social Work, Interdisciplinary Studies, Community Health Sciences, Social Work, Psychology, and Sociology. I was attempting to determine the discipline in which my research study about intimate partner violence would be suitably located. Studies involving the exploration of intimate partner violence could be (and are) situated across many disciplines because violence is a universal phenomenon. The study of violence has been taken up by teachers, nurses, social workers, public health professionals, physicians, dentists, psychologists, and sociologists. After much

deliberation, I decided that this inquiry into emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence would be situated within the field of education, and more specifically, adult education. While I acknowledge that this study could have taken place under the purview of any one of a number of disciplines, Gandhi's words about his learning about non-violence in his marriage provided support for my decision of finding a home for this study in adult education.

The context for situating this particular study in the field of adult education is warranted. I will begin with a prologue of my learning journey. A focused exploration of adult education including critical definitions and descriptions as well as important scholarly voices will be offered. A second prologue will be presented to strengthen the connection of this inquiry of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence in the landscape of adult education. This prologue consists of two critical incidents that profoundly influenced the research topic and research question of this study.

Prologue 1: Adult Education, My Learning Journey

"This is how it was for me, that's all …" (King, 2000, p. 18). I am not sure if this is how it actually happened or if this is just how I remember it.

I have always been curious. I have always asked questions. Questions rush into my head simultaneously, as though they are on top of each other and overlapping, most of the time it is difficult to sort them out. I process information by talking. This slows the flood of questions as I make choices about which question I might pose and the words I choose to express myself. Sometimes, I have long conversations in my head, with myself. My teenagers and my husband tell me on a weekly basis that my lips have been moving: "It looks like you are having a great conversation with yourself…again."

As I reflect on earlier school experiences, I understand that processing information by talking and asking questions is not always considered an asset. To elaborate, I recall an experience when my kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Banning, who was kind and patient, lost patience with me. I remember talking to whoever was sitting beside me in the circle. I was talking when Mrs. Banning was talking and I was also chewing gum. My punishment involved standing in the circle while everyone else was sitting with my gum stuck on the end of my nose. Although I burned with shame, this experience did not curb my need to talk. A few years later, my grade three teacher referred to me as "inquisitive" in the comment section on my report card. As I had no idea what that meant, I looked it up in the dictionary. Thinking back, I have to smile at the situational irony.

At 18 years of age, I was accepted into Foothills Hospital School of Nursing and was due to begin this program of study in September. At the time, there were several routes to earning a Registered Nurse (RN) designation. In Calgary, as with other large Canadian cities, there were two and three-year nursing programs based in a college or hospital which lead to earning an RN. The four-year university program was different as it led to a degree that provided both an RN designation and a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) degree. Significantly fewer individuals opted for the four-year, BN route. There was a general perception that these baccalaureate-prepared nurses were book smart and less capable of bedside patient care, compared with hospital-prepared RNs. Nurses in Canada with a BN degree constituted the minority in the mid-1980s; the overwhelming majority of nurses were RNs trained in hospital-based programs (Health Canada, 2006). Two weeks before I was set to commence my studies at Foothills Hospital School of Nursing, I received a phone call from the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary, notifying me that I was accepted into the BN program. I was pleased as I wanted to earn a university degree. I was

scared, however, because I knew that my 80% high school average barely qualified me for entrance into the program.

I found my studies difficult. In retrospect, however, I wonder if this was less about my studies and more about how I was spending and managing my time. I attended university full-time, worked part-time in a nursing home, and played inter-varsity soccer with the women's team at University of Calgary. In addition to these commitments, I was quite interested in socializing and spent a good portion of time with friends, student colleagues, and soccer teammates. The juggling of competing priorities, while pursuing a degree, has been a common thread for me as an adult learner pursuing studies at the Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral levels. My experiences reinforce the central idea that lifelong learning occurs in the context of the rich and complex life of the adult learner (Jarvis, 2009; Kegan, 2009; MacKeracher, 2004; Mezirow, 2000, 2009). Learning as an adult is about extending, reforming, and transforming. The opportunities for transformative learning may present in the lives of adults as a result of a experiencing a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000, 2009) or disjuncture (Jarvis, 2009). These dilemmas or disjunctures provide opportunites for critical reflection. It is precisely because the adult is living and dwelling in the midst of a rich and complex life, experiences with the potential to lead to transformative learning manifest.

As an undergraduate student, I have a vivid memory of being scolded by one of my professors in the third year of my studies. The professor always spent at least part of a class reviewing the correct answers to multiple-choice questions once exams had been graded. Quite possibly, I had been a bit too persistent with my rationale, lobbying the professor to see my point of view (with the hope of being awarded another point or two) on a particular question. I cannot actually remember the topic for the exam. I do remember, however, the exasperated tone of voice

she used when she responded with, "Lynn, just answer the question!" Context was always important to me. I wanted to add details to the lives of the fictional patients in my exams who underwent a bowel resection or experienced a psychotic break. As I felt empathy for, and reflected on, the circumstances of my patients in these exams, I went beyond the black-and-white thinking that was being asked of me. This example illustrates the significant roles that emotion and reflection play in adult learning. Scholars of adult learning pay particular attention to the influence of affect (also labelled emotions or feelings) and reflection (also referred to as critical reflection or critical self-assessment) in learning (Groen & Kawalilak, 2014; Jarvis, 2009; MacKeracher, 2004; Mezirow, 1981, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2009; Palmer, Zajonc, & Scribner, 2010; Taylor, 2000). Regardless of the words or labels used, the impact of affect and reflection on learning are undeniable. Specifically, Mezirow (2000, 2009) when referring to transformative learning in the context of changing a frame of reference (which consists of a habit of mind and a point of view) highlights affect (in addition to cognition and connotation) as significant. Feeling fearful, angry, guilty, or ashamed are powerful and move adult learners to reflect or critically assess assumptions including what they thought they knew or believed to be true. Groen and Kawalilak (2014) identified the role of emotion in a list of underlying assumptions in their book showcasing and exploring narratives related to the diverse pathways to adult learning stating that "learning can be emotional" and "learning is affected by emotions" (p. 28). Reflective thinking is also a thread throughout their book. The embeddedness of emotion and reflection in the dynamic process of learning something new or coming to know something differently as an adult is evident.

It was not too surprising that years later, I applied to and was accepted for a Master of Nursing (MN) program. Somewhere in the midst of my MN program, I felt as though my brain

was a Rubik's Cube. Although all of the same pieces of my brain remained, they were no longer in the same place and were not connected with anything that felt familiar to me. Like a Rubik's Cube, the pieces of what I thought I knew to be true, had been reconfigured. Class discussions with my student colleagues pushed my thinking and provoked me to seriously reconsider some of my beliefs and assumptions about how I understood the world. At the time, I was studying the role of the public health nurse in shelters for abused women. One professor in particular, a quiet and brilliant woman, invited me to think differently as she drew her thoughts related to my topic on a page in my notebook. She made looping and squiggly connections to nursing theories and encouraged me to do the same. Context remained all-important as I considered the nurse in the shelter not only in the context of nursing but also in the contexts of power, gender, and culture. It was these experiences, by myself, alongside of my professor, and with my classmates that I can now see that adult learning is an individual and personal as well as a relational and collective experience (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Groen & Kawalilak, 2014; Jarvis, 2009; Kegan, 2009; MacKeracher, 2004; Mezirow, 2003, 2009; Palmer et al., 2010; Taylor, 2000). Belenky et al (1997) articulated ways of knowing related to women that ranged from silence to received knowledge (e.g., listening to others), subjective knowledge (e.g., an inner voice based on personal experiences used to discover oneself), procedural knowledge (e.g., using reasoning based on received and subjective knowledge either separately or connected with others), and constructed knowledge (e.g., recognition of the relationships between knowledge, knowing, and those who know). Learning in an individual/personal and a relational/collective context is apparent in this work. MacKeracher (2004) contended that adult learning is autonomous and separate as well as relational and connected. Adult learners (and those who facilitate adult learning) are not meant to choose one or the other of these polarities rather adult

learning shifts and may depend, at times on the context of the learning environment. The assimilation of the experience of learning as individual and personal as well as a relational and collective is evident in the work of respected adult learning scholars.

Years passed after I completed my MN degree and I remained curious in my work life as an RN. I worked as a counsellor in a women's shelter, then as a public health nurse visiting new mothers and their infants, and after that, I began to teach undergraduate nursing students. My interest in nurses working in shelters expanded to a broad interest in violence against women. My questions seemed to multiply in number and increase in complexity. I wondered about: nurses and exemplary screening for intimate partner violence, emerging adults and their understandings of healthy/unhealthy/violent intimate partner relationships, and the role of media in reporting and portraying intimate partner violence. With an ongoing desire to explore these questions further perhaps it is not surprising that I began doctoral studies. My learning journey over the decades illustrates one example of how adult learners bring considerable life experience to their learning (Groen & Kawalilak, 2014; Kegan, 2009; Knowles, 1980; MacKeracher, 2004; Mezirow, 2009). Not only do adult learners carry their life experience with them but, these experiences have a profound influence on their learning. The questions developed and posed by adult learners, how adult learners think about what they already know and what they are coming to know, as well as how adult learners integrate new learning with previous learning are several examples of how life experience informs and ultimately transforms learning.

Adult Education

With my learning journey as an adult learner as context, it is worthwhile to explore the landscape of adult education including definitions and descriptions as well as scholarly voices that have shaped scholarship and practice of in this field.

Definitions and Descriptions

Adult education, adult learning, higher education, higher learning, and lifelong learning are terms used in the literature in the field of adult education. There is some contention around the use of various terms to identify the education of adults (Nesbit, 2013). A first glance at the literature could easily lead to the assumption that the terms adult education and adult learning are interchangeable. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provided some guidance in delineating between terms related to the field adult education on a global level. In the Hamburg Declaration of Adult Learning, adult learning is referred to as encompassing "formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multicultural learning society, where theory and practice-based approaches are recognized" (UNESCO Institute for Education, 1997, p. 1). In a global report titled, *Learning: The treasure within*, education throughout the life of an adult is based on four pillars, "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be" (Delors et al., 1996, p. 37). This broad definition of adult education involves acquiring and combining broad and specific knowledge as well as learning to learn (learning to know); acquiring the skills needed for work, learning to do what may be needed in the context of social and work experiences, and working in teams (learning to do); developing a mutual understanding and appreciation for one another to carry out projects or manage conflicts in a context of respect and peace (learning to live together); the ability to act with autonomy, judgement, and personal responsibility (learning to be) (Delors et al., 1996, p. 37). Simply put, in the context of the UNESCO definitions of adult learning and adult education, adult education is much bigger than adult learning. Adult education refers to all processes and contexts facilitating

the needs of adult learners. Adult education is about facilitating and supporting people to become active, respectful, peaceful, and responsible citizens of the world.

A description of the sites as to where adult learning takes place is also important when setting the stage for exploring the philosophies of adult education. The sites of adult education can be categorized as formal, non-formal, and informal (Rubenson, Desjardins, & Yoon, 2007; Spencer, 2006). Formal learning is structured learning occurring in an educational or vocational institution. The adult learner in a formal context is intentional and credentials or certification are earned. Non-formal learning is also structured and intentional. However, credentials or certification are not typically earned. Individual, recreational, organizational, or social objectives are met in non-formal learning. This type of learning may be organized by the workplace, organizations, or groups. Informal learning is unstructured, does not lead to credentials or certification, and is usually non-intentional. It is the learning that incidentally happens all the time in activities of daily living (Rubenson et al., 2007; Spencer, 2006).

Adult education can be structured and intentional or unstructured and non-intentional, or exist somewhere in between these designations. From post-secondary settings to workplaces and organizations to homes and communities, adult education can occur in any setting. Adult education can occur with individuals or groups, with the goal of earning a credential or meeting an objective or not.

In attempting to define adult education, I have come to a new appreciation regarding the depth and breadth of it. This sets up a problem for attempting to recount (and to a degree, contain) the scholarly voices that have made significant contributions to this field. I have chosen to exclude an examination of Greek philosophers because although their ideas around wisdom and truth are significant they are peripheral to a history of adult education over the past century. I

have chosen to explore the work of John Dewey because his work in thinking, thought, and democratic education is frequently cited as foundational by scholars in adult education. Eduard Lindeman built on Dewey's work, therefore his ideas around social justice and democracy will also be examined. The ideas and writing of Paulo Freire warrant attention for anyone researching topics linked to critical theory so for that reason, I am recounting his work. Malcolm Knowles delineated andragogy as a separate and distinct field of study; it is for this reason that I will include his work in this review of the history of adult education.

Scholarly Voices

When considering the history of adult education, the thinking and writings of John Dewey, Eduard Lindeman, Paulo Freire, and Malcolm Knowles are significant. Dewey made contributions in the disciplines of philosophy and education. Lindeman is considered a pioneer in the field of adult education. Freire is renowned for his work and writings as a Brazilian educator. Knowles' work developing the theory of andragogy shifted thinking around adults and education. The following is a review of the work of these scholars.

John Dewey was an American philosopher and educator as well as a prolific writer. *How We Think* (2007) is a classic book about the philosophy of thinking and thought. Dewey (2007) placed some importance on reflective thought as the active careful consideration of a belief in consideration of grounds to support (or reject) it. This process necessarily involves suspension of judgment and uncertainty. It is not surprising that Dewey also touched on empirical thinking and scientific method (2007). *Experience and Education* (1997) reflected Dewey's philosophy related to progressive education. Some important themes emerged including the importance of quality experiences and freedom of intelligence (Dewey, 1997).

Eduard Lindeman was a pioneer in the field of adult education; he was a friend and colleague of John Dewey (Kawalilak, 2006). *The Meaning of Adult Education* was first published in 1926 and has been reprinted several times over the years until 1989. Lindeman believed in the potential of adult education as a process for social change and social justice (Kawalilak, 2006). Lindeman advanced several critical ideas: adult education is a co-operative process between learners and teachers; adult education is a lifelong process in which the individual's personal experience is central; adult learning (andragogy) is different from the learning of children in schools; adult education is a social endeavor with the goal of countering oppression; small group discussion (rather than lecture) is a key strategy in adult education; and the agenda for adult education curricula needs to be based in social issues (Brookfield, 1984; Lindeman, 1961). Lindeman's scholarship built on John Dewey's work and laid a foundation for Malcolm Knowles in the area of andragogy.

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian philosopher and educator. His best known work is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2000). From his work with literacy and adults living in oppressive conditions, he asserted that knowing involves people scrutinizing the culture that has shaped them, reflecting on this, and acting to effect positive change in the world (Freire, 1970a, 1970b). Freire rallied against the "banking" concept of education whereby the powerful teacher/depositor makes deposits of knowledge into the powerless student/depository. Conscientization or critical consciousness is cultivating awareness around the social, political, and economic conditions in which one is living, and it is integral to education (Freire, 1970a, 1970b, 2000). Freire (2000) emphasized the dialectical process of dialogue and critical thinking in a humanistic context of love, humility, faith, and hope. Ultimately, education is a political act in which the oppressed are

liberated through their collective action and reflection based in the foundation of critical thinking/consciousness (Freire, 2000).

Malcolm Knowles, an American scholar, made significant contributions to the field of adult education. He embraced the term *andragogy* (the art and science of teaching adults) and contrasted it with pedagogy (the art and science of teaching children). Knowles (1980) maintained that the four main differences that distinguished child and adult learners were in the areas of: self-concept, life experience, readiness to learn, and orientation to learning. Knowles (1980) further asserted that adult learners are self-directed and draw on their life experience to make meaning in their learning. According to Knowles, readiness to learn as an adult is connected with the immediate application of this learning to real life situations where the goal of learning is oriented toward problem-solving or performing (Knowles, 1980).

Summary

John Dewey, Eduard Lindeman, Paulo Freire, and Malcolm Knowles made significant contributions to the field of adult education. Dewey's progressive education had an impact on the use of scientific method and collaborative problem solving in schools (Gutek, 2005). The influence of Lindeman's contributions to the discourse of adult education has been noted by adult education scholars in North America (Brookfield, 1984; Kawalilak, 2006; Knowles, 1980; Spencer, 2006). The legacy of Paulo Freire relative to critical theory endures, as his influence is evident in the work of many scholars in education (Giroux, 2011; Gutek, 2005; Kincheloe, 2002; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2012; Mezirow, 1981, 2009). Although scholars (including Lindeman) used the term andragogy before Malcolm Knowles, his contributions included distinguishing andragogy or adult education as different from pedagogy or child education. Adult

learners and teachers of adult learners are distinct from children and from those who teach children (Spencer, 2006).

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us" (Oliver Wendell Holmes cited by Kabat-Zinn, 1995, p. 101). While the background history of adult education are significant, it is up to all adults in Canadian society in the contexts of their daily lives – as women and men, learners and teachers – to chart the course of our future. I believe the future of adult education in Canada is instrumental in the lives of emerging adults navigating their intimate partner relationships. Adult education is fluid and changeable; it reveals different faces. It is manifested in structured and intentional classes or programs oriented toward achieving outcomes, goals, or a designation. However, adult education quite often also presents as unstructured and non-intentional; it is insidious and embedded in everyday learning and everyday living. I believe much unstructured and non-intentional learning takes place in the lives of emerging adults in their intimate partner relationships. The humanistic and critical theoretical lens of adult education is a secure fit with the practice disciplines of nursing and education; these disciplines have a role to play that is relational and oriented toward social action and social justice.

I have worked and studied intimate partner violence for years; Prologue Two will reveal my history with this topic. The occurrence of a critical incident, described at the end of this second prologue, will demonstrate the intersection where I recognized the important connection between adult education and intimate partner violence and its significance in the lives of emerging adults.

Prologue Two: Intimate Partner Violence, The Family that Changed Everything

Nothing fixes a thing so intensely in the memory as the wish to forget it.

It was a busy day at our inner city community health clinic. As I scanned the waiting room between appointments, I could see a family that was struggling. Both parents looked extremely tired, their clothing was soiled and tattered. The baby seemed to be sick; her nose was running. On the bright side, the pre-school aged boy was active and seemed to be enjoying the toys in the clinic, but he was highly spirited and knocked over other children as he played. The parents stood off to the side, away from the other parents who were visiting with one another and chatting about their babies.

I invited this family to the clinic room; the intent for the visit was to vaccinate the four year old son and the eight month old daughter. As I attempted to obtain a vaccination history for the children, I was struck by some unusual patterns in our communication. The father, Mark, who was 31 years of age, answered all of my questions; he alone responded to me. Even though I felt I was skilled at engaging families in conversations, I was unable to engage the mother, Michelle, who was 19 years of age, into this conversation. When I directed my questions towards Michelle, Mark answered. I was taken aback by his tone of voice; it seemed to be just a little more than assertive. Michelle looked down, at her toes, for almost the entire clinic visit. Despite a lengthy visit, I was unable to vaccinate the children. I was unable to obtain a suitable vaccination history and in consultation with my supervisor, it was decided that I would follow up with this family with the goal of vaccinating these children, at a later date. I was also relieved about this because I sensed this family was struggling. I hoped I could develop a rapport with them as I wanted to help them. They were new to the city of Calgary having just moved from Saskatchewan to Alberta two months before. I was hoping to assist them to access services they might need. I wondered if they needed help with access to an early intervention program for the

preschooler or to the milk fund, the food bank, or other services that I knew were available in our community.

I attempted to contact the family by phone shortly after the clinic visit. Their phone was out of service. I decided I would drop by for a home visit. I tried this several times when I was out in the community, but the family was never at their apartment. Each time, I left my card with my name and phone number in the mailbox. Once or twice, Michelle initiated contact and she called me while I was in the office. We had short, clipped conversations and although I tried to steer the conversation towards how the children were doing and the possibility of vaccination, the conversations always ended abruptly and if the issue was broached at all, we never quite arrived at a clear plan involving another clinic visit. During one short phone conversation, Michelle confided to me that she was four months pregnant. Our conversation ended prior to my being able to assess how she was doing and what assistance she might need. I wondered to myself, "What exactly does she need? Why does she call and then hang up? How can I help this family?"

After several weeks and in consultation with my supervisor, it was decided that I would try one final home visit. If the family was not at home, I was instructed to close the file and label it "lost to follow-up." I dropped by the apartment. Mark answered the door. I asked if Michelle was at home and he said, "No" and that she had "gone away for a while." He stated that the children had been "taken away"[by Children's Services] and he was hoping that I might "help him get them back." Mark was drunk and high on drugs. I felt unsafe asking any probing questions about Michelle's whereabouts; I quickly ended the visit by giving my card to Mark. I asked him to call me if he needed any assistance when Michelle and the children returned. In consultation with my supervisor, it was decided that I would no longer visit this family; they

were labeled "lost to follow-up." I was conflicted. Part of me knew this family really needed help, another part of me was relieved. I felt unsafe around Mark. I could not exactly put my finger on it but I had a feeling that something was terribly wrong.

Weeks later I walked into the back room in our office, where all the community health nurses met at the beginning of the day to divide up our work. We worked together and always spent the first 30 minutes of the day deciding which nurse would visit which family, who would be in the clinic administering vaccinations, and who would go out and do school visits. Bev, a kind and the most senior nurse at the clinic, handed me a newspaper and gently said, "Lynn, I think this was your family." On the front page of the newspaper there was a headline about a man who had allegedly murdered his partner in their apartment; he hit her over the head with a hammer four times. It was Mark and Michelle. My knees felt weak and I sat down. Michelle was the victim of a violent and deadly assault and Mark was the sole suspect. My nursing practice from that day forward was upended. I was plagued with self-doubt. I wondered: "What did I miss? What might I have done to prevent this tragedy?" The newsreel in my head went around and around replaying the few contacts I had with this vulnerable family.

The repercussions as a result of my professional relationship with this family went on for years. In the immediate aftermath, I was interviewed by two burly homicide detectives: "What did you see? What did you hear? What did he say to her while you were there? Did you know that Michelle was pregnant?" In my broken sleep, I had vivid dreams; they were not-quite-nightmares. About a year and a half later, I was a witness in a child custody case as Mark had not been tried or convicted of the murder of his wife. Mark had only allegedly murdered Michelle so the Crown needed to determine whether or not he was fit to parent the two children. I testified. Mark remained incarcerated as the sole suspect in the alleged murder of Michelle, so the custody

trial was a formality. Mark did not get custody as his ability to parent two small children while in prison was impossible. Around four years after Michelle's murder, Mark was tried and convicted of this crime. My guilt remained heavy. It lived in my bones. Mark killed Michelle and I had no sense of what was unfolding.

In the time since the day that Mark murdered Michelle, I earned a MN degree focusing on "The Role of the Public Health Nurse in Women's Shelters." Following the completion of my MN, I worked in various areas with an enduring interest in intimate partner violence. I worked as a counsellor in a women's shelter; I wrote policy related to intimate partner violence for the health region; I facilitated countless in-services for nurses across practice settings around assessing, screening, and intervening related to intimate partner violence.

Through my years of experience in a variety of nursing practice settings (hospitals, clinics, schools, and homes) I have come to know that nurses are not consistently screening for intimate partner violence and/or they are uncomfortable asking questions around intimate partner violence. They squirm, roll their eyes, and say to the new mother with the baby at a postpartum home visit, "We have to ask everyone this; you don't have any troubles with family violence, do you?" I develop and hold fast to a firm belief that exemplary screening for intimate partner violence is the key to prevention. I believe that nurses are capable of this; they just need to learn a bit more and deal with some of their own biases and personal experiences related to violence. I was drawn to doctoral studies to figure out ways to teach nurses how to clearly, accurately, and consistently ask questions to screen for intimate partner violence across practice settings. I wove these ideas into my application and I was accepted into doctoral studies in the Werklund School of Education at University of Calgary.

Twenty Years Later

I began my doctoral studies in September 2011. In early December, I completed my first term and remained steadfast in my belief in nurses and exemplary screening for intimate partner violence as a solid strategy related to prevention. My proposed research study was centered on this belief. This belief was challenged on the morning of December 15th when I glanced at the morning news on television. I saw a scenario whereby one car rammed another car just outside of Claresholm, Alberta during the night. The obligatory tarps were covering the bodies of several young people who had been shot to death. I thought to myself, "Gang stuff. Gang violence. Weird. Weird how it has also now has spread out to the rural areas. I thought gang violence was contained to the big cities, like Calgary." However, this was not gang violence. Later that day, the story unfolded that a young man had stalked a car with four young people, including his ex-girlfriend from Lethbridge to Claresholm. The young man, a jealous and enraged ex-boyfriend of one of the young women in the car, rammed their car. He shot them all, murdering three, wounding one, and then he turned the gun on himself. The story in the media was often referred to as the "Claresholm Murders."

The stories in the media were reported over the next week. For the first 24 to 48 hours, the media pumped out the *he seemed like such a nice guy* rhetoric, in reference to the gunman. Later in the week, more in-depth reporting indicated that this young man had access to weapons (he was a hunter and he owned several guns), had exhibited stalking behaviours (e.g., obsessive texting, checking up on his ex-girlfriend's whereabouts), and was seen pushing his ex-girlfriend off a chair in a crowded bar frequented by university and college students hours before he shot himself and the other four young people. I felt sick to my stomach.

Connecting Adult Education with Intimate Partner Violence

As a result of this critical incident, I began to connect adult education with the exploration of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence. In the week following the murders in Claresholm, one of my first thoughts was that there has been 20 years of bullying education and dating violence classes in Alberta elementary, junior high, and high schools. There have been local and provincial adult education strategies in the form of television advertisements, public service announcements, and "Turn off the Violence Month" has been held every November since 1991, and still, this incident happened. Those young people had no idea of the potential danger that they faced. Professionals informed about risk assessment and intimate partner violence would know that the gunman possessed numerous significant risk factors that put his ex-girlfriend as well as her friends and family at risk. Universal and targeted screening for intimate partner violence are strategies employed in the health and social service systems however, this incident illuminated that screening of this nature is limited. For example, it might be unlikely for a nurse to have the opportunity to assess and screen healthy young people. They may have had little or no contact with the health system if they were healthy young people with no reason to book an appointment with a physician in an office or a nurse at a clinic. My initial ideas around nurses and screening were short-sighted. Although opportunities exist for nurses to access emerging adults for screening, assessment, or education around intimate partner violence these opportunities are limited. Many emerging adults would be missed and would not be screened. This led me to the conclusion that my research topic was off the mark.

Although screening emerging adults for intimate partner violence is one formal strategy related to prevention, I began to consider an informal strategy such as young people screening themselves and each other. The messages about intimate partner violence need to be different,

new, and somehow compelling enough for emerging adults to take notice of the violence in their

relationships and those of their friends. The issue of emerging adults and intimate partner

violence includes nurses and nursing but it is much bigger than that. The health and education

systems have also played a part in coming up short in addressing how emerging adults come to

know about, recognize, understand (or misunderstand) intimate partner violence. A research

study situated in the scholarship of adult education with its rich history based in democracy,

humanism, and socialism within collaborative, relational practice has the potential to shed new

light on this ongoing problem.

Research Question

The overarching research question for this study is: *How might emerging adults understand*

intimate partner violence?

Definition of Terms

In this study, I used the term intimate partner violence. I chose this term because intimate

partner can be used in the description of a range of relationship types: monogamous dating,

common-law, or marriage. This term can be applied to all forms of partner violence: male-to-

female, female-to-male, bi-directional, female-to-female, and male-to-male. Furthermore, it is

the term commonly used in the research literature at present.

It is widely acknowledged that intimate partner violence can occur in the full range of

intimate partner relationships inclusive of all labels pertaining to gender and sexualities. In this

study, intimate partner violence included all violence in intimate relationships involving

emerging adults aged 18 to 29 years. I adopted the defintion of intimate partner violence

presently being used by the World Health Organization (WHO) and established Canadian and

American researchers in the area of violence as follows: intimate partner violence includes all

forms of abuse, actual or threatened, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner (Basile & Hall, 2011; Ford-Gilboe, Varcoe, Wuest, & Merritt-Gray, 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly, Gonzalez-Guardia, & Taylor, 2011; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002; Plichta, 2004; Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Gene, 2002; WHO, 2010).

Locating Myself as Researcher

As the researcher of this study, I occupy several roles. First, I am enrolled in doctoral studies in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary, I teach undergraduate nursing students at Athabasca University, and I am an RN with 25 years of experience. Generally, my academic background and work as an RN have provided knowledge and experience in both research and clinical aspects related to this research topic. About 10 years ago, I worked as a counsellor for women and men mandated to group therapy for intimate partner violence. This work experience over the course of a five year period profoundly influenced my attitudes and beliefs about intimate partner violence. Bearing witness to the suffering of these women and men as a result of intimate partner violence situates me deeply within this inquiry. Second, and equally important, I am a woman - a wife and mother, a daughter, sister, auntie, and niece. My experience of being female has provided me with life experience that intersects with my research on an ongoing basis. With all of these roles in the foreground, it is worthwhile to explore some of my assumptions.

Researcher Assumptions

This study is not a starting point as I have worked and studied in the area of intimate partner violence since the 1990s. This work and studying is ongoing. With this as context, it is critically important to state, up front, the assumptions that I have developed as a result of

working, studying, reading, and living with this topic. It is naïve to construct a list of assumptions and to have faith in the absoluteness of such a list. Rather, these assumptions are fluid, they have changed over time, and they will continue to change based on my relationship with this research topic.

The following are four of my assumptions regarding this study. First, emerging adults, both women and men, are unclear about what is healthy and unhealthy, or unhealthy and violent in their intimate partner relationships. This assumption is based on Arnett's (2000, 2004, 2015) theory of emerging adulthood as the developmental period following adolescence when young adults are developing their beliefs about love and relationships. Second, because emerging adults are unclear about what constitutes unhealthy and violent behaviours in intimate partner relationships they are unable to recognize signs of violence in their own relationships and those of their friends. This assumption is also grounded in Arnett's (2000, 2004, 2015) theory of emerging adulthood and it progresses logically from the first assumption. If emerging adults are unclear about behaviours that are healthy, unhealthy, and violent, then recognizing these behaviours when they occur would be difficult if not impossible. Third, media reports of intimate partner violence perpetuate stereotypes, trivialize violent acts, and are rife with rhetoric around violence and violent behaviour (e.g**.,** "He seemed like such a nice guy"; "We sure didn't see that coming") making it even more difficult for emerging adults to know about, recognize, predict, and prevent intimate partner violence. This assumption is premised on 20 years of reading the newspaper and watching television reports of intimate partner violence in Canada and the United States. I have read newspaper articles about ordinary people in and around my home in Calgary, Alberta such as Mark and Michelle, the couple I visited as a community health nurse 1992, until the day that Mark murdered Michelle in their home. I have read countless in-print and on-line

newspaper articles and watched video clips reporting on the Claresholm Murders. I have read

with interest and watched with morbid fascination the sensationalized media reports of

celebrities involved with intimate partner violence such as the murder of Nicole Brown Simpson

by O. J. Simpson in 1994 to the more recent incident of abuse of pop star Rihanna at the hands of

on-again-off-again boyfriend, Chris Brown. Reading, observing, and reflecting in addition to an

understanding of media literacy leads to my final assumption. Perpetuation of stereotypes,

trivialization of violence, and the rhetoric apparent in media reports make it exceedingly

challenging for emerging adults to recognize intimate partner violence in their lives.

      Two of these four assumptions are grounded in the theory of emerging adulthood (Arnett

2000, 2004, 2015). As such, a closer examination of this theory is warranted.

Emerging Adulthood

      In this section, I will provide a description of emerging adulthood theory. How this

theory has developed as well as advances in emerging adulthood research over the past 15 years

will be detailed. Theories are open to scrutiny by researchers and scholars across disciplines, so I

will also touch on critiques of this theory. Lastly, I will provide rationale for reference to

emerging adulthood theory in this particular study.

      Description and development of the theory. In 2000, Dr. Jeffrey Arnett authored an

article titled, *Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the

twenties*. In this article, he provided the theoretical basis for emerging adulthood as a distinct

stage in the context of demographic shifts occuring in industrialized countries over the previous

50 years (e.g., residential status, age of first marriage, age of becoming a parent, patterns of

pursuing post-secondary education). Arnett (2000) made reference to several aspects of this

theory in the area of identity exploration in the areas of love, work, education, and formation of

worldviews. In 2004, Arnett authored a book, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens to Through the Twenties*. A second, revised edition of this book was published in 2015. Five main features of emerging adulthood were outlined in detail: identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and the scope of possibilities (Arnett, 2004, 2015). In the area of identity exploration, in addition to exploring the question, "Who am I?" emerging adults are trying out a potential range of possibilties in the areas of love and work. These shifts in love and work (and also frequently moving residences) serve to highlight the second feature, that of instability. Self-focus is manifested in that emerging adults have decisions to make but typically, they have few obligations. The goal of focusing on oneself is self-sufficiency prior to making committments to relationships in the areas of love and work. Feelings of being in-between are experienced as emerging adults are neither adolescents nor adults. The final feature is about high hopes and optimism related to the feeling that there is a range of possibilites open to emerging adults as the direction of the course of their lives has yet to be determined (Arnett, 2004, 2015).

In the past 15 years, research in the area of emerging adulthood has grown. An international conference showcasing research from beginning and established scholars focusing on emerging adults and emerging adulthood has been held biannually since 2003. The first issue of the journal, *Emerging Adulthood* was published in March 2013; currently, six issues are published yearly. Each issue of this interdisciplinary journal contains six or seven research studies by scholars related to theoretical and/or applied knowledge in the demographic of people aged 18 to 29 years. To date, researchers are primarily from countries in North America, South America, and Europe as well as Australia. When the second edition of *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens to Through the Twenties* was published (Arnett, 2015)

additional chapters were added on the topics of social media use (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and digital communication (e.g., texting), high risk behaviours (e.g., crime, substance use/abuse) and mental health concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety) experienced by 18 to 29 year olds. In the forward to this second edition, Arnett (2015) admitted that his research has been conducted with samples of emerging adults exclusively in the United States. Additionally, in response to the ongoing critique of this theory related to a lack of inclusiveness, a chapter on social class was added. In light of the ongoing critiques of this theory, I will explore the ideas of scholars challenging the theory of emerging adulthood.

Critique of the theory. Theories can be contentious and are subject to scrutiny and critique. Theories can change and develop over time, often as a result of this intense and collective scrutiny. These changes might reflect scholars' openness to robust critique and an appreciation for fluidity and contextual nature of theories. The theory of emerging adulthood has been the subject of scrutiny since its inception in 2000. In 2007, in an issue of the journal, *Child Development Perspectives*, a series of four articles were published wherein Jeffrey Arnett (2007a, 2007b) and Welsh researchers, Leo Hendry and Marion Kloep (2007a, 2007b) debated in a point/counter-point format, the usefulness of the theory of emerging adulthood. Two main points of contention for Hendry and Kloep (2007a, 2007b) were the lack of utility for the label or term, *emerging adult* and delineation of emerging adulthood as a stage as opposed to a process. Hendry and Kloep (2007a, 2007b) advocated for the abolition of all stage theories, including emerging adulthood. This respectful but adversarial discussion continued between these scholars and was developed into a book, *Debating Emerging Adulthood: Stage or Process* (Arnett, Kloep, Hendry, & Tanner, 2011). For their part, Arnett and Tanner (2011) conceded on two major points. First, there are likely many paths to emerging adulthood and that social class and culture

dramatically impact individuals during this period. Second, emerging adulthood is normative in economically developed countries but, in developing countries, as yet, it is limited to urban middle classes.

More recently, Cote (2014) labelled emerging adulthood as a dangerous myth and proceeded to deliver a detailed critique of the theory. Cote (2014) believed emerging adulthood theory is methodologically flawed in that Arnett did not report in sufficient detail the strategy he used to analyze 300 interviews upon which the initial theory was based. In particular, Cote disagreed with and took exception to Arnett's use of metanarrative and its generalizability across social classes (2014). The dangerousness of the myth of emerging adulthood is in its potential impact on economic and social policies that influence the lives of young people (Cote, 2014). Of note, Arnett acknowledged and thanked Cote as a colleague related to provision of feedback on his seminal article in 2000 and in the forward of the 2004 and 2015 editions of his book, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens to Through the Twenties.*

Support for the use of the theory. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a complete analysis and synthesis of the strengths and challenges of the theory of emerging adulthood. Similarly, a detailed deconstruction and reconstruction of the arguments put forth by scholars and researchers dissecting this theory may be of limited utility. I have highlighted three scholars' perspectives. However, an explanation of the utility of *this* theory in *this* study is warranted. In this research study, I chose to focus on the romantic relationship facet of emerging adulthood theory study because this facet closely aligned with the topic for my study. Simply put, emerging adults are in a time period in their lives when they are forming their beliefs about romantic relationships. With little or no relationship experience it can be difficult to ascertain and also recognize what might be healthy or unhealthy, unhealthy or violent. There are many

examples of studies over the past 10 years of researchers choosing one facet of emerging adulthood theory and undertaking scholarly research on that specific facet. With this extensive body of literature serving as a guide and an example, I felt it was reasonable to focus on the romantic relationship aspect of this theory.

I am aware of the discussion related to the shortcomings of emerging adulthood theory related to its focus on American, white, college students in the context of ethnocentrism and privilege. While I believe this criticism may have held up related to the initial iteration of this theory, I suggest there has been work done to counterbalance this argument with studies across cultures. Multiple examples were included in a special issue in 2007 of the journal, *Child Development Perspective*. The focus of this special issue was on cultural variation and emerging adulthood. Topics included the impact of social and cultural expectations such as family obligation and an orientation toward group (as opposed to the individual) of Chinese culture on emerging adults (Nelson & Chen, 2007); rethinking emerging adulthood in the context of single women in Japan (Rosenberger, 2007); cultural and traditional family obligations of emerging adults in families immigrating to the USA from Asia and Latin America (Fuligni, 2007); characteristics of emerging adulthood in 10 European countries (Douglas, 2007); variations in emerging adulthood across developing countries in Latin America (Galambos, & Loreto Martinez, 2007); and similarities and differences between emerging adults in the USA and Argentina (Facio, Resett, Micocci, & Mistrorigo, 2007). However, there remains work to be done in the area of research of emerging adults and diversity beyond culture and ethnicity. Small steps in this area might be noted in the following studies of emerging adults in marginalized populations: emancipated foster youth (Grey, Berzenski, & Yates, 2015); emerging adults with substance use and conduct disorders (Trim et al. 2015); emerging adult same-sex romantic

partners (Frost, Meyer, & Hammack, 2015); and emerging adults with autistic features or autism spectrum disorders (Ratner & Berman, 2015; Wei, Wagner, Hudson, Yu, & Shattuck, 2015).

With the limitations of emerging adulthood theory as context, in my research study, I deliberately recruited participants with a focus on seeking out diversity. The inclusion criteria for this study were few: male or female, aged 18 to 29 years, and willing to talk about their understanding of healthy, unhealthy, and violent intimate partner relationships. Balancing the ethical principle of protection of anonymity and confidentially of participants while remaining cognizant of the potential shortcomings of emerging adulthood theory, I remained vigilant when I was recruiting participants to this study. In particular, male and female participants were equal in number; there was distribution across the age range of participants; although interviews were conducted in English, some participants spoke languages other than English; employment status varied from full-time to part-time to unemployed to seasonally employed; the majority of the participants were not presently pursuing post-secondary education; living arrangements and conditions were also varied. Generally, I attempted to address some of the shortcomings of emerging adulthood theory through deliberate recruitment and selection of participants. While this strategy could also be scrutinized, it was what I chose to do in light of the discussion and debate of the limitations of this theory. Next, I address the significance of this study.

Significance of the Study

Since the mid-1980s, there has been an abundance of published research literature related to all aspects of intimate partner violence (Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Lindhorst & Tajima, 2008). Public education programs aimed at addressing interpersonal violence including family violence, child abuse, dating violence, and bullying have been launched en masse; policy has been developed to address violence in schools, workplaces, and in

the health and legal systems (Johnson & Dawson, 2011). Despite these efforts in research, education and policy, the rates of intimate partner violence and domestic homicide in Canada have remained relatively unchanged (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2011).

This study provides a new way of looking at understanding intimate partner violence in the layered and complex lives of emerging adults navigating their way through a critical life stage. The main beneficiaries of this research will be emerging adults and all those people who live with, work alongside, and care about emerging adults. The potential reach and impact of the outcomes of this study can be realized in wide dissemination and targeted social action. Further significance of this study resides in emerging adults coming to recognize, articulate, know about, and protect themselves against violence in intimate partner relationships. On a societal level, new program and policy initiatives in education, health care, and the legal system can be re-informed with the goal of shifting the rate of intimate partner violence, including domestic homicide, downwards.

Overview of the Thesis

This is a description of the sequencing of the content within the chapters of this dissertation. In Chapter Two, I review relevant literature related to intimate partner violence as well as emerging adulthood and romantic relationships. In Chapter Three, I explore hermeneutics as a research method and explain how hermeneutics plays out as a research design. In Chapter Four, I set the context for and process of this research study by offering observations about conversational interviews with the research participants, and detailing the process of collecting media accounts of the case exemplar, the Claresholm Murders. The voices of emerging adults in interviews and media accounts become loud and clear in Chapters Five through Ten. In Chapter

Eleven, I address limitations and suggest implications for adult education, practice, research, and

policy. Lastly, I offer a few brief insights and understandings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I offer a literature review as context for my study *He seemed like such a nice guy: Emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence.* A literature review involves a process of exploration of published literature on a certain topic. I will describe, summarize, and appraise the literature which reinforces the importance of the research question (Jesson, Matheson, & Lacey, 2011). In this chapter, I examine relevant literature related to my research question: *How might emerging adults understand intimate partner violence?*

I have studied and practiced in the area of intimate partner violence for 25 years. Therefore, I am acquainted with the literature regarding this topic. Balancing what I know with what I am coming to know, this literature review consists of the following subtopics: a brief history of intimate partner violence; defining and describing intimate partner violence; the health consequences of intimate partner violence for women and children; and screening for intimate partner violence. Following this, I undertake a review of literature related to emerging adults and relationships. I review literature in the area of emerging adulthood (the demographic of emerging adults aged 18 to 29 years) including: intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence; individual personality characteristics used to predict violence in intimate partner relationships; romantic relationships; and theories and frameworks. I will conclude with an evaluation of the literature related to emerging adults and intimate partner violence and I will identify gaps in the literature.

Two more points warrant mention prior to beginning this literature review. I will describe my process of searching the literature and I will make an assertion about the "grey" literature. First, the majority of publications in this review of the literature have been accessed via scholarly databases from University of Calgary online libraries. Databases included Academic Search

Complete, CINAHL, Education Research Complete, ERIC, MEDLINE, Psychology and

Behavioral Sciences Collection, and SocINDEX. The following search terms were used in

various combinations: intimate partner violence, partner violence, partner abuse, family violence,

violence against women; additionally, young adult/young adulthood, and emerging

adult/emerging adulthood was combined with intimate partner violence, healthy relationship,

unhealthy relationship, and violent relationship respectively. Second, several documents in this

review are considered grey literature. Grey literature includes documents that are not in peer-

reviewed journals, but are typically government publications or policy reports (Jesson et al.,

2011). There is utility in accessing and considering these documents for the purposes of a

literature review on the topic of intimate partner violence. These publications add context to

peer-reviewed publications and are important in the exploration of my research question. For

example, the WHO is a leading authority and has done a great deal of work on policy

development in the area of violence against women on a global scale. Additionally, the Centre

for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, has maintained records of Canadian statistics related to

all aspects of interpersonal violence, including the rates of domestic homicide, over the past 20

years.

In support of this study, the following key literature streams have been explored and

examined:

1) Intimate Partner Violence: A Brief History (1960 – present),

2) Defining and Describing Intimate Partner Violence

3) Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, and

4) Emerging Adults and Relationships.

In order to know where you are going, it is important to consider where you have been. The following is a review of the literature related to a brief history of intimate partner violence including several important milestones and changes in the language/languaging of intimate partner violence.

Intimate Partner Violence: A Brief History (1960 - present)

Recognition of violence against women as a societal problem arose from the women's movement of the 1960s (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Walker, 2009). By the 1970s, shelters became an option for women choosing to leave abusive relationships. The first modern place of safety for for women leaving violent intimate partner relationships was a shelter established in 1971 in Cheswick, England. Today shelters are an integral part of all formal support systems protecting women and children from violence (Kelly et al., 2011; Walker, 2009). In 1979, an American psychotherapist named Lenore Walker wrote a classic book titled, *The Battered Woman*. At the time, little had been studied or written on the topic of women and intimate partner violence. From her research, Walker (1979, 2009) developed the Cycle of Violence, including the Tension-Building, Acute Battering, and Loving Contrition phases. This framework has endured providing practical information for women in support groups, shelters, and undergoing therapy in terms of their own awareness of predicting and preventing violence in their intimate partner relationships (Walker, 1979, 2009). The 1980s saw substantial growth in published research literature in the area of intimate partner violence; this body of literature has continued to grow over the past three decades (Kelly et al., 2011). Over the past 10 to 15 years, on a global level, both the United Nations (UN) and the WHO have demonstrated support for ending violence against women and girls through policy initiatives, research publications, and public education programs (Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & Garcia-Moreno, 2008; Garcia-

Moreno, Janssen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Krug et al., 2002; UN, 2012; WHO, 2010).

The UN and the WHO are concerned with all types of violence against women and girls

(including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, bride burning, dowry murder, and rape of

women as a military tactic in countries involved in war/conflict). Intimate partner violence is one

sub-topic as part of the larger topic area of violence against girls and women (UN, 2012; WHO,

2010).

Interestingly, over the past 40 years, the terminology and language around the

phenomenon of violence between intimate partners has changed. Battered woman, the batterer,

and the battering relationship were words and phrases used to indicate violence between intimate

partners in the 1970s (Walker, 1979). These terms are limited as they tend to emphasize physical

abuse while concealing other equally damaging aspects of violence such as psychological abuse.

The terms family violence and domestic violence came about in the 1980s and revealed a de-

gendering in both the meaning of and the language connected with this social problem (Johnson

& Dawson, 2011). These terms cast a wide net and included child abuse, elder abuse, as well as

abuse occurring between common-law and marital partners. In my experience, the word abuse in

combination with other words to identify the particular phenomena was widely used in the

1990s, for example, woman abuse, abuse of women, and women in abusive relationships. The

term intimate partner violence emerged in the literature in the early 2000s and is consistently

being used today. Shifts in terminology, language, and labeling will continue to occur over time

but it is important for the purposes of my research study to mindfully choose a consistent term

and define this term.

It would be exceedingly difficult to study intimate partner violence without taking a

critical look at its definitions and descriptions. Intimate partner violence can occur in all intimate

partner relationships inclusive of all labels pertaining to gender and sexualities. Violence can, and does, occur across the full range of intimate partner relationships: male-female, male-male, and female-female. It is possible for either or both partners to be a perpetrator and/or victim. For this literature review, intimate partner violence is all violence directed toward the female partner from the male partner in relationships of emerging adults.

Defining and Describing Intimate Partner Violence

There is a degree of consensus in the literature of health, psychology, sociology, and education regarding a uniform definition of intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence includes all types of violence, actual or threatened, perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Basile & Hall, 2011; Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Plichta, 2004; Saltzman et al., 2002; WHO, 2010). Interestingly, this defintion is referred to in the published literature generated from Canada, United States, and globally within publications from the WHO. I believe a uniform definition of intimate partner violence links researchers by providing consistency in conceptualizing this phenomenon. Additionally, for those working in the field of violence prevention, this definition helps practitioners (such as nurses, teachers, counsellors, psychologists, and physicians) more easily recognize literature related to their practice setting.

As a logical extension of this defintion, there is further agreement around a description of what constitutes intimate partner violence (Bloom, Bullock, Sharps, Laughon, & Parker, 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Saltzman et al., 2002; WHO, 2010). The following are common descriptions from published literature as to how intimate partner violence manifests physically, psychologically, and sexually.

Common forms of physical violence include pushing, grabbing, burning, beating, slapping, kicking, biting, hitting, and threatening to hit, as well as throwing something at a woman (Bloom et al., 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Saltzman et al., 2002; Statistics Canada, 2011). Psychological or emotional violence is the thread that runs throughout all forms of abuse. Frequently, women report that this type of violence is worse than physical violence as it can seem insidious and occurs over a long period of time (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011). Psychological violence often precedes physical violence (Johnson & Dawson, 2011). Examples of psychological violence include: verbal abuse (put downs, name calling, belittling, threats), intimidation, exploitation, humiliation, isolating or limiting contact with others, harming/threatening to harm loved ones, damaging/destroying possesions/property, and limiting access to finances or financial information (Bloom et al., 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Saltzman et al., 2002; Statistics Canada, 2011). Sexual violence includes forced intercourse, all forms of sexual coercion, unwanted sexual comments or advances, and sexually degrading activities (Bloom et al., 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Saltzman et al., 2002).

In this literature review, I am using the term intimate partner violence. The term intimate partner can be used in the description of a range of relationship types: monogamous dating, common-law, or marriage. Intimate partner violence is a term that is commonly and currently used by researchers nationally and internationally. In this research study, I used the following definition: intimate partner violence includes all forms of violence, actual or threatened, including physical, sexual, and psychological by a current or former intimate partner (Basile &

Hall, 2011; Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Plichta, 2004; Saltzman et al., 2002; WHO, 2010).

The literature reveals the depth and breadth of what can be defined and described as intimate partner violence as indicated in these specific examples of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. To extend this exploration of the research literature, it is important to consider the following question: What are the health consequences of intimate partner violence on women and children?

Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence on Women and Children

Prior to an exploration of the health consequences of intimate partner violence on women and children it is important to define health. For the purposes of this research study, I adopted a broad defintion characterizing health as a resource for everyday living. This statement aligns with the Constitution of the WHO (1946/2005) and the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, Health & Wellness Canada, & Canadian Public Health Association, CPHA, 1986). Health is physical, mental, and social well-being. Health is not limited to the absence of disease. In addition to physical capacities, health encompasses social and personal resources (WHO, 1946/2005; WHO, Health & Wellness Canada, & CPHA, 1986).

Women experiencing and children exposed to intimate partner violence encounter a wide range of potential acute and chronic health concerns. The following section begins with an exemplar of the health consequences of of intimate partner violence on a young woman. A review of physical and psychological consequences affecting women as well as the sexual, reproductive, fetal, and pregnancy-related consequences will be detailed. The literature on health consequences of intimate partner violence on women often includes details about the effects of this violence on children so a review of this literature will follow. Lastly, screening for intimate

partner violence has been put forth as a strategy to mitigate the health consequences of violence on women and children. For that a reason, a review of this literature will conclude this section.

Physical and Psychological Health Consequences: Women

On March 15th, 2012, Global National News provided an update on the recovery of the sole survivor of the Claresholm Murders, a 22 year old woman who was seriously wounded after being shot four times on December 15th, 2011. This young woman spent three months in the Foothills Hospital in Calgary, Alberta undergoing and then recovering from surgeries to remove the bullets in her stomach, shoulder, and leg. When I watched the news report, I could see some of the young woman's physical injuries. She was in wheelchair but she got out of it and was able to walk. Her left hand hung limply by her side and media reports indicated that she would need more physiotherapy to help return function (Global National Calgary, 2012). It was her psychological injuries that haunted me. Tears streamed down her face as she spoke in an apprehensive tone of voice, "Everyone keeps telling me that it's going to be OK. I guess at some point it will be for *everybody*." She shrugged her shoulders and looked away and as her voice trailed off she said, "*I* don't know…" (Global National Calgary, 2012). This news clip for me was an exemplar of what can be found in the literature regarding the physical and psychological effects of intimate partner violence on women.

Physical injuries as a result of intimate partner violence are recounted in detail in the literature of public health, nursing, and medicine and include acute injuires as well as chronic injuries and health conditions. Acute injuries range from scratches, bruises, welts, lacerations, sprains, fractures, and burns to injuries to the head (brain injuries and concussions), face (dental injuries, ruptured eardrums, ocular injuries), neck, thorax (abdominal and internal injuries) and breasts, vagina, and rectum as well as knife or bullet wounds (Bhandari, Tornetta, & Matthews,

2006; Campbell et al., 2002; Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007; Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Nelms, Gutmann, Solomon, DeWald, & Campbell, 2009; Plichta, 2004; Saltzman et al., 2002). When injuries go untreated or violence is of an ongoing nature, chronic health concerns can sometimes be manifested including chronic pain, chronic stress, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disturbances, headaches, and back pain (Campbell, 2002; Campbell et al., 2002; Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Plichta, 2004).

Although it may seem arbitrary to separate and measure the physical from the psyhological effects of intimate partner violence, individual studies are often divided up in this manner. Some of the common psychological effects for women experiencing intimate partner violence include anxiety, depression, low self-worth, low self-esteem, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, sleep disturbances, self-harm, and suicidal behaviours (Ansara & Hindin, 2011; Campbell, 2002; Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Plichta, 2007; Svavarsdottir & Orlygsdottir, 2009). Building on this research about physical and psychological health effects, risky health behaviours including alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, unsafe sexual behaviour have also been identified in women experiencing intimate partner violence (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Plichta, 2007; Svavarsdottir & Orlygsdottir, 2009).

Interestingly, when searching this body of literature, several studies were located that examined the connection between women with cancer and intimate partner violence. Connections have been made between women with cancer (an already vulnerable aggregate) and increased incidence of intimate partner violence (Onishi et al., 2005; Sawin, Laughon, Parker, & Steeves, 2009; Schmidt, Woods, & Stewart, 2006). Additionally, several studies have

demonstrated that women with a history of abuse in childhood and those who are currently involved in an intimate partner relationship where violence is the norm, have decreased access to routine and high-risk follow up screening for cervical and breast cancers (Farley, Golding, & Minkoff, 2002; Farley, Minkoff, & Barkan, 2001; Moy, Park, Feibelmann, Chiang, & Weissman, 2006).

Sexual, Reproductive, Fetal, and Pregnancy-related Health Consequences

Sexual and reproductive consequences as a result of intimate partner violence include infertility, unintended pregnancy, spontaneous abortion/antepartum hemorrhage, preterm labour/preterm delivery, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (Bloom et al., 2011; Janssen et al., 2003; Plichta, 2004; Sharps, Laughon, & Giangrande, 2007; WHO, 2010). In light of these reproductive sequalae, it follows that there are significant fetal health consequences including intrauterine growth retardation, low birthweight, AIDS-related mortality, maternal mortality, as well as increased risk of maternal homicide and maternal suicide (Bloom et al., 2011; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Janssen et al., 2003; Plichta, 2004; Sharps et al., 2007).

In Canada, women between 15 and 45 years of age experience the highest rates of abuse and this age range coincides with the childbearing years (Hart & Jamieson, 2001). Some researchers indicated that pregnancy is a risk factor for intimate partner violence and that often intimate partner violence begins or escalates during pregnancy (Bloom et al., 2011; Campbell et al., 2007; Hart & Jamieson, 2001; Janssen et al., 2003; Kendall-Tackett, 2007). Other scholars pointed toward abuse in the year prior to pregnancy as a predictor of abuse during pregnancy and into the postpartum period (Bloom et al., 2011; Sharps et al., 2007). Either way, pregnancy (in the year before, during, or after) is a significant risk factor for intimate partner violence.

Summary. Women suffer serious health consequences both acute and chronic, as a result of intimate partner violence. Many of the health consequences of intimate partner violence tend to linger and do not go away when the woman leaves the violent relationship (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011). However, an exploration of the health effects of intimate partner violence is incomplete without exploring the effects this violence has on children.

Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Children

On an individual and family level, the cyclical nature of intimate partner violence has been widely acknowledged. Children, both female and male, who witness this type of violence are at significant risk to be involved in relationships where violence is the norm when they become adults (Bent-Goodley, 2007; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Krug et al., 2002). Common health effects on infants and children who witness violence in the home include anxiety, depression, irritability, low self-esteem, sleep disturbances (e.g., insomnia, nightmares), headaches, back pain, stomach aches, gastrointesinal disturbances such as nausea and diarrhea (Berman, Hardesty, Lewis-O'Connor, & Humphreys, 2011; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Krug et al., 2002; Onyskiw, 2003; Osofsky, 2003). Toddlers witnessing intimate partner violence may be delayed in reaching their developmental milestones (e.g., speech/langauge, toilet training) while school-aged children may have poor social skills and and have increased rates of absenteesim from school (Berman et al., 2011; Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008; Osofsky, 2003). In light of the seriousness of the health consequences for women and children experiencing and witnessing intimate partner violence, screening has been suggested as a critically important strategy in the intervention and prevention of such violence.

Screening for Intimate Partner Violence

Screening for intimate partner violence is an issue that has been debated in the research literature over the past 10 years (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Nelson, Nygren, McInerney, & Klein, 2004; Phelan, 2007; Rabin, Jennings, Campbell, & Bair-Merritt, 2009). Some scholars assert that universal screening, that is, asking all women at all contacts with a health care provider is an important strategy in the prevention of intimate partner violence while others argue that inconsistencies in how women are screened for violence results in inaccuracies in assessment or decreased disclosure of intimate partner violence (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Nelson et al., 2004; Phelan, 2007; Rabin et al., 2009). Although a consensus has yet to be reached (universal screening versus routine assessment based on idenfication of risk factors) there is general agreement that the importance of compassionate, skillful and mindful asking of questions to assess for violence acrosss health care settings (in a doctor's office, the emergency room, at postnatal home visits) and over time is a solid strategy for intervention with women experiencing intimate partner violence (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2011; Lachs, 2004; Phelan, 2007).

Upstream thinking is a concept in public health where importance is placed on consideration of a macroscopic perspective. It is moving towards what determines health contextually and it involves the consideration of economic, political, and environmental factors (Stanhope, Lancaster, Jessup-Falconi, & Viverais-Dresler, 2008). While universal screening for violence may be an important strategy, I suggest it represents the beginning of upstream thinking. It is my belief that taking a broad view of the literature of emerging adults and relationships can provide deeper understanding into the roots of healthy, unhealthy, and ultimately violent intimate partner relationships as well as the liminal spaces between these designations and labels. In the next section of this dissertation, I will begin with an introduction

to the theory of emerging adulthood. Emerging adults are the participants in my study; a thorough examination of the literature related to emerging adults and all aspects of their intimate partner relationships is warranted.

<div align="center">**Emerging Adults and Relationships**</div>

Arnett (2000), in his classic article, *Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties*, emphasized that, during the ages of 18 to 25 years, emerging adults' explorations in love become more serious and intimate. Arnett (2000, 2004) suggested that the ages of 18 through 25 years represent a stage of development following adolescence, and he named this stage emerging adulthood.

> …emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews. Emerging adulthood is a time of life when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future is decided for certain, when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period in the life course. (Arnett, 2000, p. 469)

Compared with adolescence, romantic relationships in emerging adulthood last longer and intimacy is explored (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2015). Arnett has continued to develop his work in this area and there is acceptance in the literature around use of the terms emerging adult and emerging adulthood when referring to young people aged 18 to 29 years (Arnett, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2015; Arnett, Kloep, Hendry, & Tanner, 2011). Arnett's theory is applicable to my research in relation to the age group (emerging adults 18 to 29 years of age) and a focus on one of the developmental tasks of emerging adults, that of developing perspectives about love and relationships.

For this next section of the literature review, I review research studies and scholarly journal articles related to emerging adults and intimate partner relationships. The databases Academic Search Complete, CINAHL, Education Research Complete, ERIC, MEDLINE, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, and SocINDEX from the University of Calgary online library were accessed using the following search terms: young adult/young adulthood and emerging adult/emerging adulthood was combined with intimate partner violence, partner violence, violence, healthy relationship, unhealthy relationship, and violent relationship. Based on this literature search, I categorized studies and scholarly papers into four main topic areas: intergenerational transmission of violence, individual personality characteristics or behaviours used to predict intimate partner violence, romantic relationships, and theories and frameworks.

Intergenerational Transmission of Violence

A review and apprasial of studies on the topic of intergenerational transmission of violence highlights the impact of children witnessing violence between their parents in their family of origin by examining the effects this witnessing has on emerging adults in their intimate relationships. Black, Sussman, and Unger (2010) explored the correlation between female emerging adults witnessing psychological or physical aggression and/or violence between their parents and experiencing psychological and physical violence in their own romantic relationships. A sample of 223 undergraduate students in California completed the Conflict Tactics Scale which is a reliable and valid tool commonly used in violence research) (Black et al., 2010). Support for intergenerational transmission of violence was revealed; the impact of parents and modelling behaviours was also highlighted (Black et al., 2010).

The Conflict Tactics Scale was also used by Fite et al. (2008) to measure whether young adults who witnessed intimate partner violence while growing up were able use social cognition

processes to not carry on with violent behaviour in their romantic relationships. Response generation (possible responses that could be imagined) and response evaluation (evaluation of possible responses based on goals, expected results, and self-efficacy) had a mediating effect on perpetration and victimization (Fite et al., 2008). Those young adults in romantic relationships who felt provoked by their partner, who were able to consider what they might do, and the effectiveness/outcomes of these behaviours were less likely to engage in relationship violence (Fite et al., 2008). Social cognition, in terms of generating possible responses and considering the outcomes of these responses, mediated violent behavior.

The role of cognitive processes and transmission of violence across generations was also studied by Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Hankla, and Stormberg (2004). These researchers studied a sample of 110 male and female students at a Midwesterm American university. Differences in experiences in family-of-origin (e.g., growing up in a nonviolent or violent household) were associated with differences in cognition processes about relationships. Young adults who grew up in nonviolent families were better able to delineate violent behaviours (e.g., yelling, screamming, using put downs) as different from negative relationship behaviours (e.g., avoiding, pouting, refusing to talk). Young adults from violent families were less able to delineate violent behaviours as distinctly different from negative relationships behaviours (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). The experience of violent behavior in the family of origin lead young adults to a lesser ability to separate violent behaviours from negative behaviours.

While the impact on cognition and cognitive processes of emerging adults related to exposure to violence in the family of origin is significant, the effect of witnessing parental violence on emerging adults' behavior also warrants scrutiny. Ireland and Smith (2009) used data from a previous study on development of criminal and problem behaviours to examine the effect

that living in a "partner-violent family" had on antisocial behaviour (e.g., committing a crime, being arrested) and relationship aggression in young adulthood. These researchers were exploring whether adolescents who witnessed violence would be likely to perpetrate violence. Findings indicated that exposure to severe parental partner violence was associated with young adults being involved in violent interactions in their communities and intimate partner relationships (Ireland & Smith, 2009).

Interestingly, in a study by Lohman, Neppl, Senia, and Schofield (2013) parent-to-child (rather than parent-to-parent) psychological violence during adolescence predicted initmate partner violence in emerging adulthood and adulthood. These researchers examined transmission of psychological violence in emerging adulthood and adulthood as a result of exposure to psychological violence in adolescence. A prospective longitudinal design was used and variables such as risk factors related to the adolescent (e.g., substance abuse, sexual activity) were controlled (Lohman et al., 2013).

Summary. These studies on intergenerational transmission of violence are related to my research topic of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence in terms of providing background and context (Black et al., 2010; Fite et al., 2008; Ireland & Smith, 2009; Lohman et al, 2013). These studies underscore the importance of considering the effect of children and adolescents witnessing violence. These studies tended to use standardized instruments (e.g., Conflict Tactics Scale) and were laden with data separated into individual items whereby statistical tests were applied to support or reject hypotheses. Two studies re-analyzed data from previous studies (Ireland & Smith, 2009; Lohman et al., 2013). The studies reviewed in this part of the review involved exclusive use of quantitative approaches and experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental designs. The findings of the

Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. (2004) study are particularly relevant because I believe understanding how emerging adults recognize specific violent acts is significant. Identifying behaviours in the liminal spaces between unhealthy and violent intimate partner relationships could lead to a better understanding of the some of the more subtle indications of intimate partner violence. It is important to explore how emerging adults recognize the difference between unhealthy and violent behaviours in intimate partner relationships, as this type of data could inform strategies for the prevention of relationship violence among emerging adults.

Characteristics or Behaviours Predicting Intimate Partner Violence

If there are patterns of individual characteristics and/or behaviours of emerging adults that are related to or predictive of perpetration of intimate partner violence then reviewing and examining literature of these characteristics and/or behaviours is warranted. In two separate studies, Herrera, Wiersma, and Cleveland (2008, 2010) analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in the United States to examine gender differences and perpetration of violence. In the 2008 study, Herrera et al. examined the relationship between violent behaviour and the use of violence in intimate partner relationships. Young women expressed violent tendencies to a greater degree when involved in romantic relationships with violent young men. However, when young women were romantically involved with non-violent young men, violent tendencies were curbed (Herrera et al., 2008). In the 2010 study, Herrera et al. explored gender differences in relationships in late adolescence and young adulthood and connections to criminal and violent behaviour. Findings in this study indicated that for young women, their male partners' violent behaviour had an impact on *their* violent behaviour. The opposite was *not* true as there was little evidence to suggest the young men's use or non-use of violence was influenced by their female partners (Herrera et al., 2010).

Gender differences related to intimate partner violence were also explored in a study by Schnurr, Mahatmya, and Basche (2013). The Dating Relationships Survey was administered to a sample of 148 heterosexual dating couples at a Midwestern university in the United States, to determine whether dominance and cyber-aggression was associated perpetration of psychological and physical intimate partner violence (Schnurr et al., 2013). One significant finding was that for young men and young women, cyber-aggression was a significant predictor of intimate partner violence perpetration (Schnurr et al., 2013).

Relationship patterns of behaviour were the focus of a study by Halpern-Meekin, Manning, Giordano, and Longmor (2013). These researchers surveyed young adults aged 17 to 24 years to determine whether relationship "churning" was associated with verbal abuse and physical violence. Relationship churning (unstable, on/off relationships where young adults engage in a pattern of breaking up and getting back together) was contrasted with relationships in which the young adults were stably together as a couple or stably broken up. Relationship churners were more likely to report verbal abuse and physical violence than those young adults stably together or stably broken up (Halpern-Meekin et al., 2013). The pattern of the relationship (e.g., churning) was associated with violence.

Similarly, relationship processes (perceived relationship bond) and individual vulnerabilities (aggression and depression) were researched using a sample of 65 heterosexual dating couples in a mid-sized university in New York State (Woodin, Caldeira, & O'Leary, 2013). A poor perceived relationship bond in the couple combined with symptoms of depression in the female and an attitude condoning aggression in the male put the couple at increased risk for perpetration of dating aggression (Woodin et al., 2013). This study highlights the impact of

the individual characteristics of aggression and depression on cognition specifically, perceived relationship bond.

In a qualitative study using narrative analysis, Amar, Bess, and Stockbridge (2010) described the help-seeking behaviours of 64 young women aged 18 to 25 years attending a private American women's college who had experienced intimate partner violence. The four themes that emerged included: *learning from one's mother; we're strong women, we fight; we didn't talk about it; and where I'm from.* These findings pointed to the importance of messages that young women receive from their family, community, and culture (Amar et al., 2010).

Summary. The findings of the majority of these studies examining individual characteristics and behaviours used to predict violence are relevant to my research topic of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence. The Amar et al. (2010) study stood apart from the studies in this section of the literature review as it used a qualitative approach. This study was informative in that there were inferences regarding *when and how* young women became aware that violence was occurring and therefore, these women knew that they needed to seek help. Additionally, relevance can be seen in the following quote: "The findings provide knowledge in response to the question of how one's family, community, and culture can shape perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs and extends the science on sociocultural influences on perceptions of violence victims, and seeking help" (Amar et al., 2010, p. 116). This extends the understanding of the context of intimate partner violence beyond the individual characteristics and behaviours of the young women and men in violent relationships to those not directly involved. This underscores the importance of considering societal perceptions and beliefs about violence.

The research studies completed by Halpern-Meekin et al. (2013), Herrera et al. (2008, 2010), Schnurr et al. (2013) are also relevant to my research topic. The Halpern-Meekin et al. (2013) study findings are relevant as identifying patterns of relationship (on/off or stable) provide young adults with signs for recognizing the potential for violence. The Herrera et al. (2008, 2010) studies warrant reflection on the influence of young mens' violent behaviour on young women. The applicability of these findings to my research is compelling, in terms of gender differences and proclivity towards violent behaviour in intimate partner relationships. The Schnurr et al. (2013) study stands out as it included cyber-aggression and the role of electronic communication in perpetration of intimate partner violence. Although the Woodin et al. (2013) study is interesting, the flow of this research from the hypotheses through to the discussion of findings is complex to the point where the details of this 30 page study seem unwieldy.

Romantic Relationships

The topics for the remaining studies addressed emerging adults and romantic relationships; the subtopics within each of these studies varied. In a broad sense, Banker, Kaestle, and Allen (2010) and Mongeau, Jacobsen, and Donnerstein (2007) examined understanding and meaning in romantic relationships in their studies. Banker et al. (2010) analyzed narratives from 57 male and female American college students aged 18 to 24 years to gain an understanding of romantic and sexual relationships in young adulthood. Males and females used an extensive vocabulary to describe and delineate relationships. Shared language represented relationships in a hierarchy as follows: romantic partnership, sexual partnership, combination partnership (sexual and romantic) and not yet romantic or sexual (Banker et al., 2010). Although Mongeau et al. (2007) studied the dating practices of college students compared with single adults, defintions and goals delineating the relationships were found, which was a

similar outcome to the Banker et al. (2010) study. Differences between two groups, college students with an average age of 22 years and single adults with an average age of 45 years were examined in terms of defining dates (e.g., friendship versus a date) and first date goals (e.g., have fun, have sex, escalate the relationship, and reduce uncertainty). Overall, major differences between college students and single adults were not identified. A date and going out with a friend were similar in terms of behaviour (e.g., engaging in a mutual activity) but differed in cognition including emotions, goals, and expectations. Dating goals included having fun and reducing uncertainty for both groups (Mongeau et al., 2007).

While these two studies are of interest in terms of gaining a sense of the meaning of romantic relationships of emerging adults - quality, commitment, and intimacy in relationships between young adults were explored in several studies (Demir, 2008; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008; Manlove, Welti, Barry, Peterson, Schelar, & Wildsmith, 2011). Demir (2008) reported on two studies examining the connection between the quality of romantic relationships and happiness. Overall, the quality of romantic relationships contributed to happiness irrespective of the influence of personality traits (including extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness) for emerging adults. Emotional security and companionship in romantic relationships predicted happiness; when emerging adults experienced high quality romantic relationships at high levels of identity formation, they were happier (Demir, 2008). Hampel and Vangelisti (2008) reported on three studies with the purpose of determining if commitment expectations in romantic relationships could be explained using a pattern-interaction model. The samples included American college students aged 17 to 25 years. Findings in the studies indicated that interpersonal expectations, in particular, commitment could be determined by examining patterns of interaction such as faithfulness, devotion, and

unconditional suppport (Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008). Lastly, Manlove et al. (2011) used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth in the United States to study contraceptive use and relationship characteristics of 18 to 26 year old males and females. Generally, a longer duration of the relationship and greater intimacy were associated with use of contraceptives. The greater the level of conflict in a relationship, the lower the use of contraceptives (Manlove et al., 2011).

Studies by Olmstead, Pasley, Meyer, Stanford, Fincham, and Delevi (2011) and Wright, Simmons, and Campbell (2007) focused on healthy relationships and successful relationships, respectively. Olmstead et al. (2010) explored the effectiveness of a project involving a relationship education intervention designed to help emerging adults maintain healthy relationships. A sample of male and female college students (n=1587) were enrolled in a relationship education course taking place over a semester (13 weeks). Emerging adults were satisfied with the course and indicated that curriculum delivery such as small class size, small group discussion, and use of movie clips were positive features of this course. Researchers theoretically linked the provision of relationship education with healthy relationships (Olmstead et al., 2011). Wright et al. (2007) studied undergraduate students and family educators to discern their beliefs about successful relationships. These researchers wanted to see if the students and the educators held similar or differing perceptions on what constitutes a healthy marriage. A small sample of 23 undergraduate students and 18 educators rank ordered 48 items reflecting attitudes toward marriage. The students and the educators agreed on three major aspects for healthy, satisfying marriages: love, agreeing on major decisions, and working together to succeed (Wright et al., 2007).

A study using Erik Erikson's developmental stages theory seemed to exist in a category by itself. Beyers and Seiffge-Krenke (2010) Erikson's classic theory in a longitudinal study of to explore whether (i) ego development in middle adolescence predicts intimacy in emerging adulthood and (ii) identity achievement at the transition to adulthood mediates this process. Several standardized tools were used to measure ego development, intimacy, and identity achievement in a sample of 93 German males and females aged 15 to 25 years. Findings supported Erikson's theory that identity precedes intimacy in both adolescents and emerging adults (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010).

Summary. My appraisal of these studies on emerging adults and romantic relationships is mixed. The studies using Arnett's (2000, 2004, 2015) theory of emerging adulthood are of interest in terms of considering how these researchers situated this Arnett's theory within their inquiry (Banker et al., 2010; Demir, 2008; Olmstead et al., 2010). Demir's (2008) work might be considered relevant among these studies with its focus on happpines and healthy romantic relationships. It is interesting to consider understanding the phenomena of violence by looking at what might be considered the opposite of the phenomena, happiness. The Banker et al. (2010) study used a qualitative approach. I have located few studies using a qualitative approach, for this reason it was important for me to critically review this study. I believe that the focus on the language of relationships was interesting but it shed little light on furthering understanding of intimate partner violence (Banker et al., 2010). Several studies seemed unduly lengthy and/or extensively used scientific jargon making it difficult to capture the essence of the findings (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008; Mongeau et al., 2007). The Manlove et al. (2011) study focused on contraceptive use moreso than relationships. Two studies were focused on more specifically on ideal/successful marriages rather than more broadly

looking at relationships (Olmstead et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2007). Overall, these studies added to my knowledge of emerging adults and romantic relationships. The majority of these studies informed my research of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence.

Theories and Frameworks

I retrieved and reviewed three scholarly papers that examined theories and theoretical frameworks explaining relationships and sexual development (Burton, Halpern-Felsher, Rankin, Rehm, & Humphreys, 2011; McKee et al., 2010; Zimmer-Gembeck, 2002). McKee et al. (2010) proposed a framework for healthy sexual development of children. Much of the published literature is focused on child sexual abuse; it is necessary to move past this to an understanding of healthy sexual development (McKee et al., 2010). Fifteen domains comprising a framework for healthy sexual development for children were presented including one domain that distinguished healthy sexual development (fun, playful, and lighthearted) from unhealthy sexual development (aggressive, coercive, and joyless) (McKee et al., 2010). Similarly, Zimmer-Gembeck (2002) proposed a systems approach to studying romantic relationships in adolescence in the context of peer relationships/friendships and the transition to romantic relationships in later adolescence. In a discussion paper about theories, Burton et al. (2011) asserted that abuse in adolescent dating is an understudied problem. These researchers suggested that relationships theories, including attachment theory, the investment model, feminist theory, gender role conflict as well as betrayal trauma theory, should be connected to develop a comprehensive theory to support and guide scholarship in this area (Burton et al., 2011).

Summary. McKee et al. (2010) and Zimmer-Gembeck (2002) focused on children and adolescents respectively. As childhood and adolescence precede emerging adulthood, their work provides additional context around developmental milestones for development of sexuality and

romantic relationships. Burton et al. (2011) used the ages of 11 to 25 years to conceptualize adolescence so again there is some overlap with the latter part of this age range and emerging adults. These scholars searched the literature of relationship theories over nearly three decades. Their discussion of theoretical constructs, phenomena, and major concepts warrants consideration not only for a historical perspective but, for consideration of future theory development in this area.

Summary: A Review of the Literature of Emerging Adults and Relationships

Topics for the studies specifically addressing emerging adults and intimate partner violence seemed to fit into four categories: intergenerational transmission of violence (Black et al., 2010; Fite et al., 2008; Ireland & Smith, 2009; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Lohman et al., 2013); individual personality characteristics or behaviours predicting violence in intimate partner relationships (Amar et al., 2010; Halpern-Meekin et al., 2013; Herrera et al., 2008, 2010; Schnurr et al., 2013; Woodin et al., 2013); romantic relationships (Banker et al., 2010; Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Demir, 2008; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008; Manlove et al., 2011; Mongeau et al., 2007; Olmstead et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2007); and theories and frameworks about relationships and sexual development (Burton et al., 2011; McKee et al., 2010; Zimmer-Gembeck, 2002).

When considering research approach and design, the vast majority of the published literature that I accessed was quantitative research studies using an experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental design to study very specific aspects of emerging adult relationships (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Black et al., 2010; Demir, 2008; Fite et al., 2008; Halpern-Meekin et al., 2013; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008; Herrera et al., 2008, 2010; Ireland & Smith, 2009; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Lohman et al., 2013; Manlove et al., 2011;

Mongeau et al., 2007; Olmstead et al., 2011; Schnurr et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2007). I located two qualitative studies; both studies used a narrative design (Amar et al., 2010; Banker et al., 2010). Three scholarly discussion papers addressing theoretical perspectives were retrieved and reviewed (Burton et al., 2011; McKee et al., 2010; Zimmer-Gembeck, 2002).

Of the all the studies and papers on emerging adults and relationships in this review, the majority of the researchers conducting these studies consisted of scholars from American universities (Amar et al., 2010; Banker et al., 2010; Black et al., 2010; Burton et al., 2011; Demir, 2008; Fite et al., 2008; Halpern-Meekin et al., 2013; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008; Herrera et al., 2008, 2010; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Lohman et al., 2013; Manlove et al., 2011; Mongeau et al., 2007; Olmstead et al., 2011; Schnurr et al., 2013; Woodin et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2007; Zimmer-Gembeck, 2002). Subsequently, emerging adults in the research studies tended to be college students attending American universities (Amar et al., 2010; Banker et al., 2010; Black et al., 2010; Demir, 2008; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008; Mongeau et al., 2007; Olmstead et al., 2011; Schnurr et al., 2013; Woodin et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2007). One study was co-authored by a German and a Belgian scholar; the data was collected from German youth (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010). Another paper was authored by a team of Australian scholars (McKee et al., 2010).

In summary, I have experienced some difficulty locating qualitative research studies directly or peripherally related to the topic of emerging adults and intimate partner violence. The dearth of studies using a qualitative approach leads to an absence of the voice of emerging adults in the literature of intimate partner violence. Additionally, I have yet to locate relevant research studies written by Canadian researchers with Canadian emerging adults as the participants in the study. At this point, I am identifying a gap in the literature regarding qualitative research studies

exploring emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence in a Canadian context. This gap reinforces the importance of my research of the topic of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence.

Summary

In this literature review, I offer an exploration of the literature related to my research question: *How might emerging adults understand intimate partner violence?* I addressed four main literature streams including a brief history of intimate partner violence, definitions and descriptions of intimate partner violence, health consequences of intimate partner violence on women and children, and emerging adults and their relationships.

My exploration of this research question was done using a qualitative approach and a hermeneutic method which requires openness to possibilities and a genuine acceptance of multiple truths. In the next chapter, I provide the details of hermeneutics as a research method to explore how emerging adults might understand intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY, METHOD, AND DESIGN

In this chapter, I detail the philosophy, method, and design of my study, *He seemed like such a nice guy: Emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence.* I begin with the primary research questions and sub-questions that guided this study and how the research question was best addressed qualitatively, specifically through hermeneutics as a research method. A detailed description of hermeneutics, the philosophy and the research design that informs this work follows. Also included in this chapter is an introduction to hermeneutics, a brief history of hermeneutics, and a description of hermeneutics including address, prejudice, rhetoric, conversation, and understanding.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was: *How might emerging adults understand intimate partner violence?* Sub-questions in this study included questions about relationships: How do emerging adults describe and recognize healthy, unhealthy, and violent intimate partner relationships? What is a healthy intimate partner relationship? What is an unhealthy intimate partner relationship? What is a violent intimate partner relationship? Additional sub-questions are related to liminal spaces: What exists between healthy and unhealthy intimate partner relationships? What exists between unhealthy and violent intimate partner relationships? How would emerging adults recognize if they were in one of these "in between places" in an intimate partner relationship?

Qualitative Research: Multiple Truths

I think it's more to the right," said Piglet nervously. "What do you think, Pooh?" Pooh looked at his two paws. He knew that one of them was the right and he knew that when you decided which one of them was the right, then the other one was left but he could

never remember how to begin. "Well," he said slowly. (Milne, 1928, as cited in Jenkins, 1990, p. 3)

This quote comes from the beginning of the book *Invitations to Responsibility: The Therapeutic Engagement of Men who are Violent and Abusive* by Alan Jenkins (1990). When I worked as a counsellor with men who had been mandated to group therapy as a result of perpetrating acts of violence against their partners, wives, or girlfriends, I used this book to guide my counselling practice. This work profoundly influenced me. Jenkins (1990) believed theories providing a causal explanation for men's violence towards women (and children) were very limited. He asserted that engaging with an abusive man and inviting him to take responsibility for his actions was the key to changing his violent behaviour (Jenkins, 1990). The rejection of one theory of causation as a portal to understanding is a belief that I have adopted. My choice of a qualitative approach for this research study was based on my acceptance of multiple truths when seeking understanding.

The quote at the beginning of this chapter indicates that a decision needs to be made and that there is some difficulty with getting started with the process of decision-making. Once a decision is made, there are significant implications as a result of this decision. My process of decision-making regarding choice of a research design mirrors this process. Choosing a research design is a deliberate process. As a result of this choice, there is a cascade of implications related to all aspects of the research process including the approach, philosophy, and design (including the theoretical framework, research setting, data collection, and data analysis).

The focus of this study aligns with a qualitative approach; qualitative inquiry is well-suited to exploring peoples' understanding of experiences (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Polkinghorne, 2006; Ulin, Robinson, & Tolley, 2004). To elaborate, exploration of how

emerging adults experience, describe, and understand their intimate partner relationships, and looking at multiple meanings aligns with the qualitative paradigm.

The bulk of published research literature over the past 30 years on intimate partner violence is situated in the dominant quantitative research paradigm. Exploring intimate partner violence in the qualitative paradigm signals a belief in the value of this paradigm as a portal to understanding and making meaning around my research topic. Specifically, hermeneutics is the philosophical and methodological approach used in my research study. I chose hermeneutics as a method for coming to some understanding of this complex topic.

Hermeneutics: An Introduction

"Knowledge would be fatal; it is the uncertainty that charms one. A mist makes things wonderful." (Wilde, 1998, p. 234)

This quote underscores my belief in hermeneutics as a suitable philosophy to guide my research approach. When I first heard of hermeneutics, it seemed quite abstract. I thought about it briefly and dismissed it. With encouragement from a respected professor, I began to consider hermeneutics and extend my thinking to using it as a potential philosophy to guide my research. A shift in my thinking was occurring. A tentative understanding of hermeneutics and an appreciation of its uncertainty was unfolding. The potential for using hermeneutics to explore my research topic, emerging adults and intimate partner violence was manifesting.

An important aspect surrounding the choice of a research philosophy is consideration of the fit between these and the research topic/question (Creswell, 2007; Holloway & Todres, 2003; Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). In my research study, I explored emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence as a doctoral student in the Werklund School of Education and as an RN with 25 years of work experience. Research topics

in the areas of education and nursing are well-suited to exploration using hermeneutics (Jardine, 2000, 2006; Moules, McCaffrey, Field, & Laing, 2015; Moules, McCaffrey, Morck, & Jardine, 2011; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Education and nursing are practice disciplines. The context of the practice of teaching and nursing is relational; the teacher-student relationship and the nurse-patient relationship are foundational in these disciplines. Relational practice is highly interpretive as teachers and nurses use verbal and non-verbal communication in both the context in which the relationship is occurring (social, political, cultural) as well as the setting (hospital, school, community, home) over time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years). There is breadth and depth in the potential for interpretation in the disciplines of education and nursing.

Interpretations of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence are highly contextual and do not occur in isolation. Hermeneutics pays heed to lived experiences by giving memory to them; through meditations, conversations, day dreams, inspirations, and other interpretive acts we assign meaning to the phenomena of lived life (van Manen, 1990). It is my belief that using hermeneutics to study intimate partner violence will contribute to new understandings. It is important to substantiate this belief. A deliberate and mindful explanation of the details of the philosophy underlying hermeneutics is needed. Hermeneutics has a long and significant history that can be traced back through the 19th and 20th centuries (Moules et al., 2015). It is important briefly explore the history of hermeneutics by acknowledging the contributions of several influential scholars including Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer.

A Brief History of Hermeneutics

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was a German theologian and philosopher; he is considered by some to be the father of contemporary hermeneutics (Moules, 2002; Moules et al.,

2015; Newberry, 2012). Three themes have remained present and instrumental in hermeneutics as a result of Schleiermacher's work. These themes include the importance of creativity in interpretation, the crucial role that language plays in understanding and the interplay between the parts and the whole in the interpretive process (the hermeneutic circle) (Moules, 2002; Smith, 1999). Schleiermacher identified two types of interpretation, grammatical and psychological. Grammatical interpretation included the interpretation of words based on their definitions and extended to the context in which the words were being used, while psychological interpretation focused on the art of deriving or reconstructing the thoughts of the author of the text. Schleiermacher acknowledged the limits of an accurate interpretation and insisted that vigilance related to the inevitability of misunderstanding could lead to better understanding (Moules et al., 2015; Newberry, 2012).

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) was a German historian and philosopher who contended that there was a historical aspect to understanding; this moved understanding in hermeneutics beyond Schleiermacher's assertions around the importance of the author and the text (Moules, 2002; Moules et al., 2015; Newberry, 2012). Dilthey also clearly differentiated between the natural sciences and the human sciences. In making this distinction, Dilthey asserted that the human sciences were about understanding and establishing meanings of human life and culture. Dilthey articulated and conceptualized the phrase *lived experience* which later became foundational in phenomenology (Moules et al., 2015; Newberry, 2012).

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) was a German mathematician and philosopher and is considered to be the founder of phenomenology. Although Husserl would not specifically be considered a hermeneutic philosopher, his work in developing phenomenology as a method of inquiry was pivotal in the development of philosophical hermeneutics (Koch, 1996; Laverty,

2003; Moules et al., 2015; Newberry, 2012). Husserl conceptualized the *life world*, that is, the world of everyday things and experiences; he emphasized "a renewed attention in philosophy to the question of everyday human experience and how to understand it in a rigorous way" (Moules et al., 2015, p. 18). Husserl was interested in the study of phenomena intentionally and through a conscious awareness to determine essences. The process of denoting the essences of phenomena involved bracketing, the setting aside or suspension of presuppositions and judgements to see phenomena purely and discretely as they are (Laverty, 2003; Moules et al., 2015).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a German theologian and philosopher as well as a student of Husserl. Heidegger's classic work is *Being and Time* (1927/2010). Heidegger's work departed from Husserl's phenomenology and would more accurately be labeled hermeneutic phenomenology. While Husserl contended that presuppositions needed to be set aside to achieve understanding, Heidegger advocated that all interpretation flows from presuppositions; our fore-understandings are necessary pre-requisites to our understanding. While Husserl concerned himself with the *life world,* Heidegger focused on *Dasein* or *being-in-the-world* (Laverty, 2003; Moules, 2002; Moules et al., 2015; Newberry, 2012). Heidegger's philosophy was largely existential.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) was a German philosopher; he was Heidegger's student. Gadamer's most influential book, *Truth and Method* (1960/1975), demonstrated an elaboration of and a veering away from Heidegger's philosophy. Gadamer believed that the world is interpretable; interpretation could not be separated from understanding and this understanding is contextual, shifting, and temporary (1960/1975). Gadamer's philosophy was less existential and more relational compared with Heidegger. Gadamer (1960/1975) expanded

and extended hermeneutic concepts such as prejudice (or fore-understanding, fore-meaning, and fore-structures) and horizon.

Three fundamental concepts in Gadamerian hermeneutics include: the universality of hermeneutics, history, and language (Moules et al., 2015). Gadamer believed that hermeneutics was both universal and finite; understanding in language can present endless possibilities but, at the same time, the choice of certain words, as expressed in language can limit this understanding. The influence of history on understanding acknowledges that there is a temporal dimension related to an interpretation. An historical awareness or consciousness allows for establishing a context for understanding so that another, new understanding can come to light. The importance of language is a thread throughout Gadamer's philosophy and is connected with universality and history. Language holds the interpretation and in doing so both extends and may limit understanding. Therefore, it is "…incumbent upon the hermeneutic researcher to choose his or her words carefully, explaining what is after all, methodical, rational, and rigorous about this approach" (Moules et al., 2015, p. 40).

With a brief history in the background, what follows is my exploration of several key concepts including prejudice, rhetoric, conversation, and understanding as they relate to philosophical hermeneutics. I will keep my research topic present throughout this exploration.

Hermeneutics: Address, Prejudice, Rhetoric, Conversation, and Understanding

I believe hermeneutic research scholars interpret hermeneutics in subtly different ways. In my study, I chose to explore address, prejudice, rhetoric, conversation, and understanding. Understanding though temporal and unfolding in nature, becomes possible in the context and process of the hermeneutic circle, fusion of horizons, and language. It is for this reason that I will also provide an explanation of these sub-concepts.

Address

It is important (and logical) to begin at the beginning. **"**Understanding begins…when something addresses us" (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 298). Hermeneutic interpretation begins when one is addressed (Gadamer, 1960/1975; Jardine, 1992, 2006; Moules, 2002; Moules et al., 2015). Address or *Ansprunch* means to claim or to request; this request is always extended to someone (Grondin, 2003). From my experiences of address and as I witnessed the description of experiences of address from my student colleagues in graduate class discussions, I believe address can be deeply personal, is often visceral, and may occur repeatedly. It is the openness to address as shown in receptivity (hearing, heeding, and accepting) that leads to openness to possibilities and in time, a new understanding: "…only the person who allows himself to be addressed – whether he believes or doubts – understands" (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 328).

Relative to the topic of intimate partner violence, I was addressed in 1992 when I arrived at work, at my job as a public health nurse, and my nurse colleague handed me the front page of the newspaper. The picture and accompanying article detailed how the father of one of the families I had been visiting in their home for the past few months (for concerns such as food security and immunization status) had allegedly murdered his partner, a pregnant mother of two small children, by hitting her over the head with a hammer, four times. "We experience the limits of our experience by experiencing something that that calls us to go beyond the limits of our experience" (Jardine, 2006, p. 3). After the murder, I sought to understand this violent incident in particular and intimate partner violence in general, in the context of my nursing practice in the community.

In 1995, I entered the MN program at University of Calgary to study the role of the public health nurse in women's shelters. Naively, I believed this learning and understanding

would alleviate the persistent discomfort of the pebble in my shoe that was intimate partner violence. After I earned my MN degree, I worked as a counsellor with groups of men who had perpetrated physical and emotional violence against their intimate partners. More recently, I have facilitated classes and in-services for nurses and nursing students about how to assess for and intervene with families experiencing violence. As a doctoral student, I have researched emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence. "In responding to this address, there is a sense of opening and transforming into a living, provocative conversation that was already going on before our arrival" (Moules, 2002, p. 28).

Prejudice

Address is the starting place in the philosophy of hermeneutics. An understanding of the concept of prejudice is also critical when using hermeneutic inquiry in the research. Heidegger (1927/2010) and Gadamer (1960/1975, 2001, 2007) and several scholars who have interpreted their scholarly writings paid particular attention to prejudice (Binding & Tapp, 2008; Grondin, 2003; Koch, 1996; Moules, 2002; Moules et al., 2015; Walsh, 1996). Heidegger seemed to favour the term fore-understanding; Gadamer more commonly used the term prejudice. As a noun, prejudice comes from the Latin word, *praejudicium*, meaning prior judgment, from *prae* (before) and *judicium* (judgment) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). These meanings are significant in that I believe they are what frequently come to mind when the word prejudice is used. However, in the context of hermeneutics, I do not believe these meanings are a fit, "…prejudice certainly does not necessarily mean a false judgment, but part of the idea is that it can have a positive or a negative value" (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 273). Gadamer described prejudice in the contexts of fore-meaning and fore-understanding. It is in these contexts that I

remained alert to my prejudices using hermeneutics as the philosophy for the exploration of my research topic.

> …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 texts 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 to be aware of is 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. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, pp. 271-272)

Acknowledging and considering my prejudices is an ongoing step in the research process, "…our prejudices move with us and stand in front of and between us and the world, filtering our perceptions and interpretation" (Moules, 2002, p. 25). Prejudice is linked with consciousness; I have access to my prejudices through my consciousness (this consciousness is referred to as historical consciousness and/or hermeneutical consciousness) (Gadamer, 1960/1975, 2007; Grondin, 2003). Prejudice is part of the lens through which I view the world. "Prejudices are merely the conditions by which we encounter the world as we experience something. We take prejudices…with us into the research process and these assist us to understand" (Koch, 1996, p. 177). I possess prejudices of which I am unaware; these unavailable prejudices also influence my understanding (Grondin, 2003; Moules, 2002; Moules et al., 2015). To emphasize this point:

> …prejudices are always at play in hermeneutic understanding, it is incumbent upon us to reflect actively on our own angles of concern for a topic and remain open to the possible surprise of stumbling over our own prejudices or having someone else stumble on them and point them out to us. (Moules et al., 2015, p. 44)

My prejudices manifest because intimate partner violence is a topic that is familiar to me. It is familiar as a result of my nursing practice, by the sheer volume of scholarly research articles I have read, reviewed and considered, and through my every day being-in-the-world. As one example, over the course of five years, I worked with groups of men mandated to group counselling for abusing their intimate partners. As I worked alongside of these men, I developed prejudices including: many men have difficulty accepting responsibility for their violent behaviours; many men who have perpetrated violence witnessed horrendous acts of violence in their families of origin when they were little boys; men who have been violent are capable of change, it is slow and incremental but still possible. I will not set aside, bracket, or suspend my knowledge and experience of the past 25 years, nor am I required to do so using hermeneutics to guide my research. Intimate partner violence has informed, shaped, and marked me. I have earned my tentative understandings about intimate partner violence through study and work experience; these understandings informed my research. This dynamic process remains in play. My prejudices add colour, context, and meaning to the layers of hermeneutic interpretation and understanding.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is not typically a central concept in Gadamer's hermeneutics, I believe there is a place for the concept of rhetoric in a hermeneutic interpretation and understanding of emerging adults and intimate partner violence. The word rhetoric has French (*rethorique*), Latin (*rhetorice*) and Greek (*rhetorike*) roots and literally means "that which is spoken," (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). Gadamer (2007) articulated a circular connection between hermeneutics, rhetoric, and understanding:

Rhetoric was close to hermeneutics in that it was the art of articulating an understanding, while hermeneutics was the art of understanding the articulation, especially when in writing. Each was a reverse version of the other. Each required an underlying ethical understanding to be successful; and each in a way presupposed the other, since rhetoric presupposed understanding and understanding required a persuasive articulation of the meaning of a text. (p. 227)

The relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric can be realized in that the abilities to speak, interpret, and understand are universal, "One can talk about everything, and everything one says should be understandable" (Gadamer, 2007, p. 251). Speaking and understanding are evident in writing; text is a product of writing. Hermeneutics is "the art of bringing what is said or written to speak again" (Gadamer, 2007, p. 251). This writing or speaking again is the process of interpretation; it is partially manifested in rhetoric.

I am keenly interested and deeply concerned in that which is spoken, the rhetoric surrounding intimate partner violence. The discourse of intimate partner violence is fed to the public in sound bites by the media reinforcing myths and misunderstandings about gender, power, and violence. In this research study, in addition to participating in interviews with emerging adults to gain understanding about intimate partner violence, I collected and interpreted data consisting of media reports following the Claresholm Murders, a case exemplar of intimate partner violence. Anecdotally, over the past 20 years, I have witnessed media reports (on television, online, and in print newspapers) of the shock and disbelief of friends and family following domestic homicides. In referring to a man who seemingly randomly murdered a partner, wife, or girlfriend, the *he seemed like such a nice guy* quote uttered by a close friend is often presented in the media to the public, in the aftermath of these horrific events. Mindful

interpretation of the the texts from media reports, rather than limiting understanding to a simplistic sound bite of tired rhetoric, expands understanding by offering a richness of possible viewpoints. Rhetoric is another route to interpretation; these interpetations need to be argued well. Hermeneutic research has the potential to expose and shift the rhetoric of intimate partner violence.

Further to Gadamer's thoughts on rhetoric, he also believed conversation was important. An examination of rhetoric in the context of hermeneutics implicates language (in the forms of dialogue, words, writing, and text). It is no coincidence that conversation also implicates language in these same forms.

Conversation and Dialogue

Conversation is central to understanding in hermeneutics (Binding & Tapp, 2008; Bonomi, Allen, & Holt, 2006; Gadamer, 1960/1975, 2001, 2007; Koch, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The word conversation has Latin and French roots from the mid-14th century; the Latin word *conversationem* means "act of living with" and "to live with, keep company with" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). It is interesting to me that there is nothing in the origin of the word conversation to suggest talking, which is what might be implied when using the word conversation today. However, being present, relational, and alongside of another is strongly implied in these root meanings which align well with Gadamerian hermeneutics. Conversations in a hermeneutic context are not arguments to be won or lost or debates whereby one builds and solidifies one's position. Conversations in a hermeneutic context are relational and humanistic with the topic remaining in the middle. "To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented" (Gadamer,

1960/1975, p. 361). There is openness to the other that further opens oneself to the topic in all its potential and possibilities.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) believed that "interview is a special form of conversational practice" (p. 49). In my exploration of emerging adults' understandings of initmate partner violence, conversation, in the form of semi-structured interviews with research participants was one source of data. I also examined media reports involving emerging adults and incidents of intimate partner violence. Conversations in a hermeneutic context are not always occurring between human beings. A conversation can be with a text, such as, in my research, a media report. "When one is in conversation with a text, the text also speaks, just as another person speaks" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 11).

Whether the conversation is with a person or a text, ultimately a transformation occurs as a result of the conversation. During and after the conversation, I am changed, I am different, I am no longer the person I was prior to the conversation,

> …a conversation is something one gets caught up in, in which one gets involved. In a conversation one does not know beforehand what will come out of it, and one usually does not break it off unless forced to do so, because there is always something more you want to say. That is the measure of a real conversation. Each remark calls for another, even what is called the 'last word' does this, for in reality the last word does not exist. The fact that conversations lead us to better insights, that indeed thay have a transformative power…what happens to one in a conversation is really wthout an end. (Gadamer, 2001, pp. 59-60)

Conversations (such as semi-structured interviews and text from media reports) are interpreted. Interpretation leads to a new and temporal understanding which is expressed in written words in

a relationship with language. In this sense, conversations in a hermeneutic research process, are instrumental during collection of data and analysis of data.

With address, prejudice, rhetoric, and conversation as philosophical contexts, understanding becomes possible. Explorations of the hermeneutic circle, fusion of horizons, and language are also necessary to grasp an understanding of *understanding*.

Understanding: The Hermeneutic Circle, Fusion of Horizons, Language

Hermeneutically, understanding is expressed in language. Understanding, albeit temporal, is arrived at through interpretation. The hermeneutic circle and fusion of horizons might be seen as process-oriented aspects of interpretation and understanding. Language is the outcome of interpretation and understanding. Ultimately, research findings are presented using language.

The hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is both a fundamental and contentious concept in hermeneutics (Grondin, 2016) and has been the subject of multiple interpretations and critiques (Caputo, 1987; Debesay, Naden, & Slettebo, 2008; Grondin, 2003; McCaffrey, Raffin-Bouchal, & Moules, 2012; Shklar, 2004; Walsh, 1996). The hermeneutic circle is about dwelling in an interpretive understanding between the parts and the whole with the topic of this interpretation remaining acutely in focus, in the middle. Address is received and acknowledged, in the context of fore-understandings or prejudice, conversation provides traction and fuel for movement or interpretation, and ultimately a new understanding is actualized. However, this new understanding is not an end point; there is no end point in the hermeneutic circle, interpretation is continuous. Understanding is temporal and unfolding, as the process of address, interpretation, and understanding recur in the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, 1960/1975).

Gadamer recognized that prejudices are at work in understanding and in the hermeneutic circle, there is no understanding without these prejudices. The hermeneutic circle involves the

interpreter moving between the parts and the whole to understanding. Openness to the alterity of the text is required as the interpretation of the parts of the text is to a degree, guided by pre-understanding (or prejudices) regarding the whole. The understanding of the whole is constantly being revised and advanced in understanding the parts (Grondin, 2016).

Fusion of horizons. Relative to understanding, fusion of horizons is also an important concept in hermeneutics. A horizon is a particular vantage point; it is not fixed. Neither is it a singular entity. Horizons are indicative of multiple interpretations or multiple truths. A horizon is mobile and fluid, it changes with conversation and interpretation. Understanding occurs when there is a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1960/1975, 2001; Koch, 1996; Laverty, 2003). This fusion is not simply two people agreeing (such as an interviewer and a research participant) or a researcher after reading and re-reading a text saying to herself, "Yes, that fits with what I know." Fusion of horizons is the result of the process of conversations and interpretations whereby an entirely new horizon or horizons become unconcealed. "Through an encounter with the other we are lifted above the narrow confines of our own knowledge. A new horizon is disclosed that opens onto what was unknown to us" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 29). This new horizon or understanding is manifested in language.

Language. Language is integral to hermeneutics (Allen, 1995; Bonomi et al. 2006; Caputo, 1987; Gadamer, 1960/1975, 2001, 2007; Grondin, 2003; Moules, 2002; Moules et al., 2015). Language is the vehicle used to reveal the interpretation and provides rich opportunities for understanding. Gadamer believed that "…understanding does not reach out and take hold of language; it is carried out within language" (2001, p. 37). However, the importance of language in the context of hermeneutics is much bigger than this:

The language that lives in speech – which comprehends all understanding, including that of the interpreter of texts – is so much bound up with thinking and interpretation that we have too little left if we ignore the actual content of what languages hand down to us and try to consider language only as form. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 405)

Language is more than a vehicle; language is more than form. Language needs to be considered in the mulitple contexts (words, writing, texts, and dialogue/conversations both written and spoken) and then extended to thinking and interpretation. I need to acknowledge and respect the language (including the rhetoric) of violence, relationships, gender, and culture as I handle the topic of emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence with due care and attention. "…interpretation must find the right language if it really wants to make the text speak" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 398). I will be mindful of the importance of the language I use as I write and interpret texts and again, as I present and discuss interpretations and understandings at the completion of my research.

Articulating a Hermeneutic Research Design

Despite what the title of the book might lead some readers to believe, Gadamer (1960/1975) was not describing a method in his classic work, *Truth and Method.* In intricate detail he discussed, explored, and played with consciousness, prejudice, rhetoric, conversation, language, interpretation, and understanding in the context of philosophical hermeneutics. In this sense, a rich and detailed philosophy was made available to readers. However, in the time since the book was written, with the increase in hermeneutic research in fields such as education and nursing, *Truth and Method* might be considered a guidebook of sorts for those wanting to pursue research topics suited to hermeneutics. Guide as a noun is "one who shows the way" and as a verb it means "to lead, direct, conduct" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). Gadamer has

indeed been a guide and his ideas have directed studies of topics well-suited to a hermeneutic approach. A recently published book, *Conducting Hermeneutic Research: From Philosophy to Practice* (Moules et al., 2015), also provides guidance to those undertaking hermeneutic research in applied disciplines such as education and nursing. This book offers practical wisdom and draws on Gadamer's scholarly writings and work as well as that of contemporary Gadamerian scholars including John Caputo, Richard Kearney, Nicholas Davey, and Jean Grondin.

However, it is the responsibility of each individual researcher, keeping their research topic central, to mindfully and deliberately articulate the details of *how* the philosophy of hermeneutics plays out as a research method, then translated to a design. Indeed, candidacy committees, ethics applications, and funding proposals require articulation of this level of detail. Examining how emerging adults experience, describe, and understand violence in their intimate partner relationships, and looking at multiple meanings is well-suited to hermeneutic research. In the next section, specific aspects of the research design will be presented including: the theoretical lens, sample, ethical considerations, data sources and data analysis, and trustworthiness of the data.

Theoretical Lens

Some hermeneutic scholars might argue that hermeneutics as a philosophy and design for a research study also suffices as the theoretical lens. While I am not willing to argue this possibility, I have recently connected with the following quote from the adult education pioneer, Eduard Lindeman: "*Each of us*, wrote Anatole France, *must even be allowed to possess two or three philosophies at the same time,* for the purpose, I presume of saving our thought process from the deadly formality of consistency" (1961, p. xxvi). With Lindeman's (1961) quote as context, I am including a theoretical lens alongside of hermeneutics as it has been outlined to this

point. "The theoretical framework is derived from the orientation or stance that you bring to your study…" (Merriam, 2009, p. 66). Hermeneutics is the philosophy guiding the design and in this research, hermeneutics co-exists with a theoretical lens that includes adult education theory as outlined in Chapter One.

Adult education theory, specifically transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000, 2003, 2009) and a critical theoretical perspective (Freire, 1970a, 1970b, 2000; Kincheloe et al., 2012; Steinberg, 2012) informed this study. Related to transformative learning, how emerging adults come to know about intimate partner violence individually and collectively in society has implications for potential social programs and/or policy initiatives in the education and health sectors. For example, in my study presentation of research findings will occur with an awareness of realistic and actionable implications (in the areas of public education and/or social policy) related to emerging adults and prevention of intimate partner violence. Transformative learning is a potential foundation upon which social programs and policy initiatives addressing emerging adults and prevention of intimate partner violence could be built. In regard to a critical theoretical perspective, a vantage point using this lens involves not only describing what is seen but also becoming provoked and moved by these observations, descriptions, and findings (Kincheloe et al., 2012). If and when oppression is uncovered, it behooves the critical theoretical researcher to alleviate this suffering (Kincheloe et al., 2012). Understanding issues of power in all contexts is a tenet of critical theory (Freire, 1970b; Kincheloe et al, 2012). For example, during data collection, I adopted a relational stance during interviews while remaining keenly aware of the power differential between the participants and myself. A critical theoretical examination of power is crucial to all understandings related to intimate partner violence. It is

contingent, from a critical theoretical stance, once research findings have been articulated, that I ask myself, "So now what am I going to do about it?"

Sample

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 males and females from 18 to 29 years of age. This sample was a nonprobability, purposive sample. Participants were selected based on the criteria of age (18-29 years) and gender (female or male). Non-probablity sampling is commonly used in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Purposive sampling "…is based on the asummption that the investiagtor wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Emerging adults, 18-29 years of age, are in a life stage in which they are formulating their beliefs about relationships (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2011, 2015). These criteria were sufficient for this study. The participants possessed expertise around negotiating relationships as young people and they possessed the ability to comment on their relationships and those of their peers, other emerging adults navigating the world of interpersonal relationships. "The interview approach is valuable in studying emerging adults because they are often remarkably insightful in describing their experiences" (Arnett, 2004, p. 25). Choosing to interview these emerging adults also aligns with the hermeneutic research process as, "Hermeneutics seeks the best participants on purpose…" (Moules et al., 2015, p. 90). The emerging adults in this study spoke to the topic and contributed to an understanding of the topic. I did not actively recruit emerging adults experiencing violence in their intimate partner relationships as per my agreement with the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board and my intent for this hermeneutic study.

Ethical Considerations

Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board approval from the University of Calgary was earned in April 2014. Recruiting and interviewing of participants occurred following this approval. Informed consent for participation in this study was done with each of the emerging adults participating in this study. Additionally, participants completed a consent form allowing the interview to be recorded. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix A. To preserve anonymity, pseudonyms were chosen by the participants. If a participant did not choose a pseudonym, I assigned a pseudonym. Ongoing consent with participants was done as needed, at my discretion, during the interviews with the emerging adults. All data was stored on a computer that is encrypted and password protected.

Data Sources and Data Analysis

Data were collected from two sources, semi-structured, conversational interviews and media reports. Semi-structured, conversational interviews were conducted with the particpants in this study. "The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientfic explanations" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.1). Qualitative interviews are well-suited to exploration of attitudes and values, they offer flexibility in approach, especially with topics considered to be sensitive; when interviews are done with skill they have the potential to achieve a depth and complexity that is not likely possible with a standardized survey (Byrne, 2004). As such, semi-structured interviewing was a technique well-suited to the collection of data regarding youngs adults' understandings of relationship violence. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, verbatim, by the researcher.

Media reports were the second source of data in this study. A critical case sampling strategy was used in the collection of online data from media reports connected with the Claresholm Murders, an incident of intimate partner violence involving five young people in their early 20s (this incident was described in detail in Chapter One). This violent incident is a critical case. Critical cases "can make a point quite dramatically or are, for some reason, particularly important, in the scheme of things" (Patton, 1990, p. 174). Documents (e.g., articles from local, provincial, and national newspapers) and video footage (e.g., one television show and video clips of local, provincial, and national newscasts) related to this violent incident were collected to provide additional data for insight into emerging adults and their understandings of intimate partner violence.

Although it was possible that Moules et al. (2015) was referring to individual participants engaged in interviews when referring to hermeneutics choosing "the best participants on purpose" (p. 90), this critical case example includes adults in their early 20s, directly (the ex-boyfriend and ex-girlfriend) and peripherally (friends of the ex-girlfriend) involved in an incident of intimate partner violence, the Claresholm Murders. I believe the texts generated in the media from this incident are the *best participants* relative to emerging adults and intimate partner violence. Rather than amassing sheer numbers of participants and/or artifacts (such as documents or video footage) a qualitative approach and hermeneutics, in particular, favors richness of the data collected and its relevance to the topic being explored (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Ulin et al., 2004).

As indicated earlier in this chapter, data analysis in this research study with hermeneutics as a guiding philosophy for a research method did not involve setting out on a clearly delineated process from one point to the next. The process of data analysis from a hermeneutic perspective

requires that meaning will be sought through the interpretation of text (Gadamer, 1960/1975). After the completion of the interviews with emerging adults, I listened to the digital recordings and I transcribed the interviews. Data in the form of interview transcripts and media reports was read, re-read, and interpreted. In hermeneutics, understanding is expressed in language. Understanding, albeit temporal, is arrived at through interpretation. The topic remained central during the process of data analysis. Hermeneutic interpretation is reflective; it involves "…careful and detailed reading and re-reading of all the text, allowing for the bringing forth of general impressions, something that catches the regard of the reader and lingers, perturbing and distinctive resonances, familiarities, differences, newness, and echoes" (Moules, 2002, p. 29). These reflective interpretations will be situated in social, cultural, and political contexts.

A substantive discussion of data analysis must always include details as to the trustworthiness of the data. Trustworthiness answers the question: How do I know if my research findings are substantive?

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is described using a variety of terms (e.g., credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, verifiability, reliability, validity, rigor, and goodness) in a multiplicity of contexts (Creswell, 2007; Emden & Sandelowski, 1998; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Savin-Baden & Major, 2010; Ulin et al, 2004). Trustworthiness (as it is often referred to in qualitative research) is an ongoing and contentious issue among qualitative research scholars (Emden & Sandelowski, 1998; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2006). For this study, I chose the framework offered by Savin-Baden and Major (2010). Beginning with the assertion that, "No claims can be made of a truth that will remain stable" (2010, p. 31), Savin-Baden and Major offered a way of reconsidering

trustworthiness that includes: negotiated honesties, verisimilitude, and locating power for reconscientization. This version of trustworthiness in qualitative research is a logical fit with hermeneutic, critical theoretical (Freire, 1970b; Kincheloe et al 2012; Steinberg, 2012), and adult education philosophies (Freire, 2000; Mezirow, 2009).

Current discussions about trustworthiness are located in assumptions about what constitutes truth. Negotiated honesties refer to "what counts as trustworthiness and truth is a negotiated position" (Savin-Baden & Major, p. 31). This negotiation of honesties involves an interpretive process, likened to hermeneutics, in terms of the researcher moving between the parts and whole of the text. Rather than accepting current practices that lay claim to trustworthiness and truth, (such as member checks and audit trails) negotiated honesties, is a complex, messy, liminal space where the researcher might stay for a time before emerging to a new space. Verisimilitude involves examining what seems to be true in the context of considering how and why it might not be true. Verisimilitude is about the scrutiny of what may be taken for granted in terms of reality or truth; it is about seeking out contradictions. Conscientization is a word used by Paolo Freire in the context of oppressed people, their process of acquiring literacy, and having a deepening awareness in and with the world (Freire, 1970a, 1970b). Locating power for reconscientization involves the researcher acknowledging her own power and position of privilege. "Data construction is almost always done with an 'other' in mind" (Savin-Baden & Major, p. 35). As the researcher, I need to remain alert to what might contribute to a power imbalance (e.g., gender, race, class, age, religion) throughout the research process. Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) framework of trustworthiness resonates as it aligns with the qualitative approach, hermeneutic philosophy, critical theoretical, and adult education

philosophy. While determining a perspective and strategy for trustworthiness is essential, it is also important to consider the limitations and the delimitations of this research study.

Summary

As a researcher, I am ethically and academically obligated to clearly state and describe my research approach, philosophy, and design - outright and up front. Through this study, I have acquired skills and knowledge in the qualitative approach embedded in a philosophy of hermeneutics within a critical theoretical and adult learning perspective. Balancing my obligations as a researcher while honouring the complexity of my chosen research design, I remain open to the possibilities of more questions, more layers of interpretation, and deeper understanding about emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PROCESS

It is important for me to honour the contributions of the emerging adults who participated in this study. The voices of the emerging adults in this study comprise a good portion of the data collected and analyzed, without their voices there would be nothing to read, re-read, and interpret. Without the voices of the emerging adults, there would be no text generated from interviews, no findings, no conclusions, and no implications for adult education, practice, research, and policy. Emerging adulthood theory maintains that the five main features of emerging adults include their involvement in explorations of identity (especially in the areas of work and love), instability, a focus on self, feeling in-between, and possibilities for transformation (Arnett, 2004, 2015). Including some details of the participants and the interview process in this study serve as a reminder, in real life, how these attributes manifested in these emerging adults. Some of the roots of adult education are in humanism and relational practice (MacKeracher, 2004; Spencer, 2006). Inclusion of details regarding the participants in this study aligns with these beliefs systems in the context of adult education theory and practice. Critical theory examines social, political, and cultural contexts and scrutinizes how power is at play (Steinberg, 2012). Although I was required by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board to ask participants to take on a pseudonym, some balked at this suggestion stating that they wanted to use their own names. Including some context gives back some power to the participants. With this rationale as context, how the research process of this study unfolded related to recruiting, meeting, and interviewing the emerging adults in this study will be described. The media reports related to the Claresholm Murders will also be described in terms of where and how they were obtained. I will close this section with a few thoughts on interpretive writing.

Recruiting Participants

All I had ever heard about recruiting participants was that it was difficult. Although I believed that the people who spoke of their difficulties in recruitment were speaking their truth, I chose not to adopt this stance. I often thought about recruiting during my course work. I listened to my professors and graduate students in class when they spoke about recruiting. When I was doing my readings, I paid attention to anything written about recruiting. I reasoned to myself that if I did not have participants, I would not have a research study.

I began to deliberately and methodically think about recruiting when my 22 year old niece, Erin, became acutely ill about a month before I was scheduled to do my candidacy exams. We spent 24 hours in the emergency department and our day involved lots of waiting. As my (emerging adult niece) Erin slept folded in half in a recliner in the ER overflow, during the in-between times when we were waiting for the next test or investigation to occur, I watched over my niece and I thought about recruiting participants. I made two lists on my phone. On the first list, I included everyone that I knew between the ages of 18 and 29. On the second list, I included everyone that I knew that was living, working, and/or being around young people aged 18 to 29. These people were the connectors; I thought they might be able to help me recruit participants. Even though I was uncertain as to whether I might pass the candidacy exam, earn approval from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, and eventually proceed with my research, I was still thinking ahead about recruiting.

I had generated a list of 70 males and females aged 18 to 29 years. I felt optimistic. This dangerously led me to erroneous beliefs about how recruiting would unfold. There were so many young people that I knew that I felt sure that they would be overjoyed to sit with me and be interviewed about their relationships. I thought of the emerging adults on my list that were

extroverted, talkative, and had rich life experiences in terms of living, studying, and travelling abroad. I was wrong. Not one of my imagined participants ever showed the least bit of interest in being interviewed. I learned that adopting a positive stance toward recruiting is important but I also learned that it is important to be open to what will unfold. Consent and avoidance of coercion are critically important. Informed *and* ongoing consent are crucial. While I recruited three participants from this list of 70, they were certainly not the three that I had anticipated. Hermeneutics teaches me over and over again about remaining open to possibilities. While this is especially important around research findings, I believe it can be true of many of the process aspects of engaging in research, including recruiting.

In the end, my second list turned out to be invaluable but more from a theoretical rather than a practical perspective. My second list included a list of people with whom I am acquainted and have contact with on a regular basis. There were 10 people on that list who I believed could help me recruit by connecting me with the emerging adults in their lives. They would be able to refer emerging adults to me. Again, about this aspect, I was wrong. Not one of these 10 people - dynamic, connected adults - actually ended up referring a single participant. However, it was the idea of getting others to assist me by referring the emerging adults they knew and were connected with that was invaluable. This is how I recruited nine participants.

I recruited participants through word of mouth. I told everyone I knew from all aspects of my life about the study I was doing. I told colleagues, family, friends, and neighbors about my study. I made sure that everyone I knew was aware that I wanted to interview young people, male and female, aged 18 to 29 years regarding healthy, unhealthy, and violent romantic relationships.

There was no one single, clear strategy of how I initially contacted participants. I had given the recruiting document to those in my networks either via hard copy or electronically. See Appendix B for the Recruitment Script. People in my networks suggested I contact a certain emerging adult that they knew and they provided me with a cell phone number or an email address. Initial contacts were made with potential participants; I contacted them or they contacted me. The recruiting document, consent form, and potential interview questions were shared with the potential participants prior to the interview. A date, time, and location for the interview were arranged. The first eight participants seemed to come forward almost immediately. One month after receiving approval from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, I had completed eight interviews with six female and two male participants with the age range of 18 to 29 years. I felt as though I had made significant progress in a relatively short time span. Life intervened as is often the case as an adult learner in Graduate Studies; recruiting was stalled. Two months later, I reminded my networks (and myself) that I was recruiting young people aged 18 to 29 for my study and in particular, I was aiming to interview a few more males. I worked hard, followed up with all potential participants while keeping the ethics related to consent in the forefront of my mind. One month later, I had completed 12 interviews with 12 emerging adults, six females and six males.

Conversations with Emerging Adults: Observations Regarding Language Slang and Jargon

After the first few interviews, it became clear to me that in some respects, the emerging adults in this study were speaking a different language than I was. While I am familiar with the notion that some young people speak in a language designed to be foreign to adults and have experienced that in my personal and professional life, I was still surprised during the first few

interviews how much of the emerging adults' vernacular I was unfamiliar with. Slang and jargon were being used that I did not understand. Use of slang and jargon can denote membership in a certain group (Meechan, 2000). Clearly, I was not a group member. I needed to clarify some of the words and language used during the interviews; the emerging adults in this study were more than willing to do so. We were indeed both speaking English but it was as though we spoke slightly different dialects. Language evolves because young people are developmentally in a position to separate themselves from the older generations and do this through music, clothing, behaviour, and language. Thankfully, the participants in this study were patient and kind to me, the occasional explanation of the meaning of a word or phrase occurred seamlessly and did not detract from the process of the semi-structured interviews.

Filler Words and Discourse Markers

While some patterns in the language of some participants became apparent during the interviews, often there were enough other things occurring (e.g., planes flying overhead, cars driving by, babies crying, dogs barking, baristas releasing the steam from an espresso machine) that these occurrences did not really bother me. As well, I was fully engaged during the interviews with the emerging adults, I was listening with my ears and with my heart. This required commitment and I found it to be energizing.

However, this was not the case during the transcription process. While at times, transcription of the interviews was compelling and energizing, at other times I found myself feeling annoyed. This was not true for all interviews but it was somewhat true in several interviews and abundantly true in a few interviews. Filler words include both filled pauses such as "uh" and "um" and discourse markers such as "like" and "you know" (Laserna, Seih, & Pennebaker, 2014; Meechan, 2000). Young females (aged 17-22 years) tend to use more

discourse markers while filled pauses are used by consistency across age ranges and the genders

(Laserna et al., 2014). In terms of personality states, filled pauses are linked to anxiety whereas

discourse markers are used more frequently by conscientous people (Laserna et al., 2014). One

participant said "like" 287 times in a 59-minute interview. This same participant said "you

know" 107 times. I noticed this it at the time of the interview and I made of note of feeling weary

at the end of this interview. In this research, having a sense of these patterns in the language

contextualized some of the responses. In particular, certain participants seemed like at times, to

be circling toward the topic.

Circling Toward the Topic

Often, during a dialogue, in the course of an interview with an emerging adult, we

seemed to be circling toward the topic. This may have had to do with the topic. Intimate partner

violence is a sensitive topic. Speaking about intimate partner violence in the context of one's

relationships and those of one's friends is difficult – this seemed to compound the sensitivity

needed to keep the dialogue in the interviews going. Certainly, issues of sex and sexuality

occupy the outskirts of the topic of intimate partner violence so as an interviewer I needed to be

vigilant and take cues from the participants. Research on sensitive topics is necessary to extend

understanding, to add the body of knowledge, and for development of strategies to address what

is learned through the research of these sensitive topics (e.g., preventing violence). It is important

to be mindful of both the benefits as well as the risks of participation in research on sensitive

topics. "An overemphasis on risks may lead to avoidance of sensitive but important research;

underrecognition of potential harm may reduce mindfulness of the impact of sensitive research

on participants" (McClinton Appollis, Lund, de Vries, & Mathews, 2015, p. e43). So while, at

times, the emerging adults in this study danced around the topic, I kept ethical considerations in the foreground and proceeded mindfully.

The Interview Process

Providing some description of the participants and reflection as to how the interviews unfolded showcases the emerging adults in this study in the context of emerging adulthood theory. I interviewed six females and six males between the ages of 18 and 29 years of age over the time period of May 2014 to August 2014. Five participants were in the age range of 18-21 years, another five participants ranged in age from 22-25 years, and two participants were 27 years of age. Six of the emerging adults in this study lived at home with their parents. Other living arrangements included renting a dwelling and living with one or more roommates. One participant lived with her boyfriend and his father. The emerging adults in this study were involved in a range of work-life experiences including paid and volunteer work (full time, part time, and seasonal), on-line and in-person post-secondary education (full time or part time), as well as elite sports training (full time). One participant had recently completed high school. Relationship status varied. Eleven participants indicated they had been in at least one relationship. Three participants indicated they were currently in a relationship, two participants stated that they were not currently in a relationship, and the other seven participants did not make a direct statement about whether or not they were currently involved in a relationship. Initial contact was often made via a phone call or email but after that, texting was the preferred method of communication for most participants. The interviews were conducted in mutually agreed upon, convenient settings including backyards, parks, coffee shops, food courts, and a public library. The day of the week and time of day for the interview were negotiated as well and included weekdays and weekends as well as mornings, afternoons, and one evening.

The following is a description of the 12 interviews. Included are details based on field notes that I wrote immediately following each of the interviews.

Interview One

Despite two and half years of preparation including countless hours spent reading broadly, writing scholarly papers, completing coursework, attending and presenting at conferences, earning a pass in my candidacy exams, and acquiring approval from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, I was feeling inordinately unsure of myself at the outset of the first interview. My inner dialogue included: "What if all of this is just a really, really bad idea? "All of this" would include choosing my research topic to thinking I was capable of planning and completing this research study and extending to pursuing graduate studies in the first place. What if (despite my list of questions for our semi-structured interview) I have nothing to ask? What if this participant has nothing to say about my topic? What if my digital recorder doesn't work?" I calmed myself and I began the first interview by testing my digital recorder as I was forewarned repeatedly by my supervisor, several mentors, and more than a few graduate student colleagues that to get a recording of poor quality or no recording at all is disastrous.

In the first interview, it became clear, very quickly that this first participant was bright, well-read, and willing to share his perspective. He seemed to enjoy our conversational interview as he wandered off tangentially at times but always circled back to the topic with some gentle guidance from my questions and probes. This participant was a big picture thinker and indicated early on in our interview that he has not been involved in an intimate partner relationship. I assured him as a young person in the world he was well-suited to share his thoughts, feelings,

and what he knows related to young people and intimate partner relationships. He did so fully and completely from a big picture perspective of a young philosopher.

Thankfully, I was off to a good start. I was encouraged by the details this participant shared with me. His willingness to talk about intimate partner violence provided me with energy and a renewed belief in the importance of this topic. It was compelling to consider the big picture from his vantage point. However, as I anticipated my next interview, I made a note of remembering to explore the particular. It would also be important to uncover smaller facets as I worked to unpack emerging adults' understandings of violence in their intimate relationships. This participant's focus on the big picture was compelling but it also invited me to consider the significance of what might be considered the small picture.

Interview Two

The second interview was quite different from the first. I got the sense that this second participant was shy, his voice was quiet, and the cadence of his speech was measured. He thought carefully before he spoke and took frequent pauses during the interview. As we sat outside beside one another I was reminded that some of the best conversations I have ever had have taken place sitting side-by-side position (e.g., while driving in a car) rather than facing the other person. Without the instantaneous feedback of facial expressions, it seemed to me, side-by-side conversations can be less threatening and more authentic.

The second participant did not speak specifically to his own intimate partner relationships but he offered a reflective perspective as a young man with a large group of close friends, carefully observing the intimate partner relationships of his peers. His responses to questions demonstrated that he was both keenly aware of what is going on around him and also somewhat reticent. I was drawn in by the scenarios he shared with me during this interview. This young

man spoke of young people and intimate partner violence but he stopped short of speaking specifically about *his* experiences in *his* relationships. For my next interview, I thought about effective questions and gentle prompts. I reflected on the dance of participation in a conversational interview on a sensitive topic (intimate partner violence) and I reminded myself to remain vigilant of ethical research practice.

Interview Three

The third interview felt very conversational as this participant revealed her engagement and curiosity by responding to my questions and asking many questions of me. She asked about the details of the research process so we discussed qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. She indicated that she would like to know of the findings of this research study when it is completed. The third participant spoke directly about her life experiences as a result of being in relationships with several boyfriends. She willingly shared details about one particular relationship with a boyfriend who had perpetrated violence. She was articulate in her reflections regarding what she has learned in her intimate relationships. During this interview, I had a good sense that what was shared would help to shed light on understanding emerging adults and intimate partner violence. Upon reflection, following my third interview, my questions were flowing more freely, I was able to be more in the moment, and my confidence was building.

Interview Four

When I meet the next participant face-to-face, her on-line enthusiasm through our emails prior to the interview was congruent with her in-person way of being. She spoke openly in an animated manner about her relationship with her current boyfriend and boyfriends in the past. This participant spoke of close connections with a circle of friends and she also spoke of their intimate partner relationships. She spoke broadly and specifically; she used examples and also

spoke in metaphors. We laughed frequently during the interview. This was the fourth interview and I really felt like something was beginning to take shape; substance, depth, and breadth were being added with each interview. This young woman added honesty and personal experience of her own and that of her friends related to the topic of intimate partner violence.

Interview Five

Interview five was the shortest of the interviews as this participant informed me at the beginning of the interview that she needed to leave in 45 minutes as she had a previous commitment. Even though we engaged in the process of informed (and ongoing) consent to participate in this research study, at times, this participant seemed less invested in the interview. Her attention seemed to stray. At times, she elaborated on answers in an animated manner, her eyes lit up, and she smiled. At other times, she seemed to need prompts and our process felt sluggish. The fifth participant spoke directly about her experiences in relationships with boyfriends. She drew on her experiences as she shared some details of her relationships and those of a close group of her friends as they navigated the territory of intimate partner relationships.

As my conversational interview with this young woman was the fifth of twelve, at the outset, I felt reasonably self-assured with the process of asking interview questions, prompting, following where the participant led me, and re-directing as needed. This interview was a challenge. It was a reminder to not become complacent. The range of life experience of emerging adults may have revealed itself to me during this interview a she was a younger participant in this research study - her behaviour, her life experience (compared with older participants), and what she was willing or able to share with me might have reflected her youth (or any number of other factors). Participating in a conversational interview with this participant reminded me to

listen fully and attentively. I needed to remember that everyone has unique experiences and has something to offer around deepening an understanding of intimate partner violence.

Interview Six

The process of interview six stood out for me compared with other interviews because the participant was more reserved in her demeanor compared with previous participants. It was interesting to me how it seemed at times that she would run right up towards saying something and then pause and reflect. The process seemed to indicate a suddenly slow and careful choice of words or alternately, she would choose to no longer continue with the particular thread of our conversational interview. This participant seemed to filter her responses. It was another reminder to me of the importance of the topic as well as the sensitivity required to respect the conversations being conducted around the topic. This young woman spoke at length about the intimate partner relationships of her friends and a little less directly about her own relationships. This indirectness was evident in the use of plural pronouns such as we, them, they, and us. At times during the interview, this young woman seemed reticent and checked in with me asking, "Is that answering your question…at all?" We shared a few laughs during the interview, although generally, the atmosphere of this interview felt more contained. This participant was closer to the older end of the age range of emerging adults and this interview moved me to consider how life experience (and love experiences) might impact conversations about the topic of intimate partner violence.

Interview Seven

In the seventh interview, the participant stated up front that she had one boyfriend. She spoke clearly to that relationship. She also freely shared her thoughts, feelings, and what she had come to know from being alongside of her peers as they also gained life experience in the area of

dating and going out together. At times, this participant spoke in generalizations; it was as though, during our conversational interview, she was sorting out some of her beliefs about relationships and relationship violence. This participant was toward the younger end of the age range of emerging adults. She caused me to pause and consider how and when beliefs about intimate partner violence are formed and more clearly articulated. I was reminded again of identity exploration as a main feature in emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2015).

Interview Eight

The young woman in the eighth interview spoke at a rapid pace in a random abstract (rather than logical sequential) manner. At times, it was challenging to keep up with the cadence of her speech, the speed of her responses, and the many details she included. Fortunately, I was managing the digital recorder quite nicely at this point in my research study and so I actively listened. This participant spoke quickly; she moved from one thought to the next and, despite some effort on my part to attempt to focus our conversational interview, I remember at one point, after multiple attempts to explore an idea, I chose to let go. I decided to let this young woman to meander and let the interview process unfold. This young woman spoke specifically about two intimate partner relationships. This interview snapped me out of the possibility of complacency while conducting research interviews. Initially, I tried to work through the questions and prompts I had used in previous interviews but I chose to listen and to let go. This seemed like the best choice with this participant during this interview on the topic of intimate partner violence.

Interview Nine

Although I engaged the participant in interview nine in the process of informed and ongoing consent to participate in this study, while he spoke openly of healthy intimate partner relationships, he seemed uncomfortable speaking about violence in relationships. After several

gentle attempts to move toward the topic of intimate partner violence his reluctance to broach this topic was clear. We agreed to change the focus of the interview toward a discussion of bullying and bystander dynamics in the context of educational strategies to address intimate partner violence education for teenagers and young people. This young man's quiet way of being reminded me of the seriousness of the topic. I learned about the importance of flexibility in the interview process and that ethical research practice trumps everything. Near the end of the interview, this participant suggested one more question to be asked of the remaining participants in this research study: "What would you do if you were being abused?" I asked him if he would mind answering this question and so he did. I then added this question to the interview question guide.

Interview Ten

The participant in tenth interview shared his beliefs on a wide variety of topics, including intimate partner relationships. He elaborated on responses adding to the layers of the conversational interview. This young man spoke of his intimate partner relationships with girlfriends and the intimate partner relationships of his circle of friends. Regarding his friends, he spoke of both in-person and on-line intimate partner relationships. At times, it was difficult to ascertain the message being communicated. As with some of the other participants, it was possible that this young man was processing as he spoke and sorting out his beliefs about healthy, unhealthy, and violent intimate partner relationships.

Interview Eleven

The participant in the eleventh interview had a great sense of humor. Despite the seriousness of the topic, we laughed often throughout the interview. This young man also revealed a serious side as he spoke of what he has come to know and believe about violence in

intimate partner relationships. He did not specifically refer to an intimate partner relationship of his own. Primarily, he spoke in the second or third person using words such you/your and they/them. It was difficult to discern if this young man was referring to his own experiences or those of his friends. From the depth of the insights offered during this interview, I believed that it may have been both.

Interview Twelve

The final interview still makes me laugh when I think back on it. The young man being interviewed was quick to laugh, make a joke about himself, or to see if I would take the bait on a joke he was about to make at my expense. We shared many belly laughs during the interview. The twelfth participant had quite a bit to say and did so in a self-deprecating manner. He spoke directly about his own intimate partner relationships with girlfriends; he told me clearly that currently he did not have a girlfriend nor was he interested in having a girlfriend. When this young man spoke of his relationships he was quick to shoulder the blame when things did not end well. Although he joked about some of his behaviours, at times, his speech slowed a little and he seemed reflective. During a description of a relationship, he seemed perplexed at the behaviours of an ex-girlfriend. He willingly shared his experiences and insights related to the intimate relationships of his male and female friends. I felt lucky. He was the ideal participant on which to complete my interviews with emerging adults. Despite the seriousness of the topic, we laughed and I felt lighter.

Media Reports: The Claresholm Murders

The other data source for this research study was media reports. Related to these reports, a critical case sampling strategy was employed. Critical cases "can make a point quite dramatically or are, for some reason, particularly important, in the scheme of things" (Patton,

1990, p. 174). In December of 2011, a young man stalked a car with four young people in it, along the highways of southern Alberta. His ex-girlfriend was one of the occupants in the car he was following. The other three occupants in the car included one young woman and two young men in their 20s; they were travelling from Lethbridge to Calgary so that the two young men could catch a flight home to Prince Edward Island to celebrate the Christmas holidays with their families. Around 80 kilometers into the trip, in the small town of Claresholm, the young man rammed their car with his car. The young people got out of their car, he shot them all, murdering three and wounding one. He then shot and killed himself. This violent incident is a critical case. This incident is often referred to as the Claresholm Murders (and also the "Claresholm Tragedy" or the "Claresholm Shootings"). By selecting the Claresholm Murders as an exemplar or a critical case, the media reports used in this research study provide an additional data source highlighting the voice of emerging adults connected with an extreme incident of intimate partner violence.

This critical case example was chosen to be included in this research study because it involves the demographic of emerging adults. All the emerging adults involved in the Claresholm Murders were in their early 20s. Media reports related to this critical case included print and video footage from friends, in the emerging adult age range of the gunman, the deceased, and the wounded. For these reasons, the texts generated in the media as a result of the Claresholm Murders are relevant to the research topic for this study.

It is imperative to consider media reports in the context in which they are written, published, and posted online as well as aired on television. "Reading media is never easy. It is precisely the nature of media to often appear innocent, benign, yet to be incredibly complex and often insidious" (Steinberg, 2009, p. xiii). The political lens of the news agency, the extent of the

circulation of the publication its target audience, as well as the reputation and credibility of the publication are a few aspects I considered when using media reports as a data source. The mainstream media reveals its bias through its choice of topics to address, framing of the issues, choice of sources of information, and use of language (Herman, 2009). Remaining mindful context for and limitations of media reports as data sources, in this study regarding emerging adults and intimate partner violence I accessed two sources: online reports from newspapers/news stories and one television show, W5: Road to Murder.

Online Reports

All of the online media reports, including print articles and video clips were written and published on or after December 15, 2011 following the Claresholm Murders. The range of dates of publication was December 15, 2011 to December 15, 2014. Many of these reports were written and published in the immediate days and weeks following the Claresholm Murders. In mid-February of 2013, an investigative report into the Claresholm Murders was aired on the television program W5. There was increase in media activity immediately before and after the show, W5: Road to Murder. Other significant points in time where media interest was evident included the yearly anniversary dates of the murders in mid-December of 2012, 2013, and 2014.

Searches for media reports were performed using the Google search engine with the following terms: Claresholm Murders, Claresholm Tragedy, and Claresholm Shootings. Additionally, I searched using the Google search engine by individually entering each of the first and last names of all five people involved in the Claresholm Murders. Eventually, despite use of these different search terms, the results yielded the same articles. Fifty-two articles were downloaded and printed from the following 12 online news sources: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Globe and Mail, National Post, Huffington Post, Canada.com, Metro News,

Prince Edward Island (PEI) Guardian, Calgary Herald, Canadian Television (CTV) News, Claresholm News/Facebook page, Toronto Star Online, and Daily Herald Tribune Online.

W5: Road to Murder

In mid-February of 2013, around 14 months following the Claresholm Murders, CTV aired, W5: Road to Murder. This one hour television program was an in-depth investigative report on the Claresholm Murders, including the events leading up to the murders on December 15, 2011 and the aftermath in the year following the murders. Online print articles as well as video clips were collected related to the airing and content of this show. Additionally, I attempted to obtain the transcripts of this television program. This proved to be a challenging task.

Shortly after W5: Road to Murder first aired on CTV, the entire show was easily accessed online via the CTV website. Recent and archived W5 shows were available for those who wanted to re-watch episodes. I was fortunate to watch the show on television when it initially aired on February 13, 2013. I viewed the show again online on March 19, 2013. I made extensive field notes. However, I did not transcribe the content of this show verbatim.

In September 2013, I contacted CTV via emails and phone calls to obtain transcripts for W5: Road to Murder. Initially, I was informed that I could get transcripts for $49.99. Later, I was told that there was a legal challenge that was unfolding related to this show and that the transcripts were not available. A year later in October 2014, I made another effort to access W5: Road to Murder. On the CTV website, access to the show was locked. Users needed to have a Bell Media account for their cable television or cell phone to watch this show. (I did not have a Bell Media account). I called CTV and was informed that W5: Road to Murder is not in active distribution by CTV because it was a co-production with Pyramid Productions. I was given the

Pyramid Productions phone number. I called Pyramid Productions and spoke to the general manager. She stated that they do not have copies of shows and she suggested I check my local listings for re-runs. I do not give up easily. In April 2015, I emailed the contact person on the CTV website and asked for a copy of the transcripts for W5: Road to Murder. I was provided with details as to how to access these transcripts. I completed the required form, paid $30.00, and the transcripts for this program were emailed to me in less than 24 hours. These transcripts were then included in the data collection of media reports for this research study.

Interpretive Writing: The Conundrum and the Process

Interpretation is the working out, the unfolding of a pre-understanding. Hermeneutics is the recovery of a prior understanding for which we have hitherto lacked words. Hermeneutics uncovers because it recovers, brings us to stand in a place where we already are, a place of mysterious proximity. (Caputo, 1987, p. 81)

I initially approached data analysis and interpretive writing with equal parts of hope and despair. I used direct quotes from the conversational interviews as well as media reports as text. Context in the form of cadence of speech, tone, volume, pauses, and laughter were included when relevant. I revealed the paradoxes, the ambiguity, the contradictions, the beautiful, and the messiness that is emerging adults navigating intimate partner relationships. In the tradition of hermeneutics, a new understanding about intimate partner violence in the lives of emerging adults is represented in language. This understanding is temporal. A horizon is revealed with the recognition that it is quite possibly fleeting and its purpose is to continue the conversation and open up greater understanding about the topic of emerging adults and intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER FIVE: PROTECTION, PREDATORS, AND PREY

It's Never Good to Be By Yourself

Participant: I mean, it's not, it's not, it's never good to be by yourself. It's not, it's not healthy; we're social creatures. We should always be kind of, social and that's how we get protection. I mean, you look at any animal...wolves stay in packs, I mean.

Participant and Interviewer: [laughter]

Participant: Penguins they swim together; fish, even the tiniest little fish they swim in bait balls because it's safer.

Interviewer: Yeah, what is that?

Participant: A bait ball?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: Um, basically fish when they sense predators, they group together and swim in a tight ball.

Interviewer: Oh.

Participant: So that the outer ones get picked off.

Interviewer: The little ones?

Participant: Unfortunately, that doesn't work very well because all the predators come and just pick them all off.

Interviewer: But that's, that's a strategy - being together?

Participant: Exactly, yeah, and a few will survive and swim off...

Participant and Interviewer: [laughter]

Participant: ...at the end of the carnage...

Interviewer: Ok. Isn't that interesting? That's an interesting metaphor.

Participant: We've got to stick together.

Interviewer: Stick together. Ok.

Participant: Honestly, like if no one knows, it's the same thing like, if you're going to walk downtown in the dark. You phone someone and talk to them while you walk.

Interviewer: 'I'm leaving now; expect me in 10 minutes'…

Participant: Yeah and, 'If I'm not there, something's wrong'…

Interviewer: 'Come find me'…

Participant: And that's how women go missing is they don't do that. They say, 'Oh, I'm just going for a walk. It's no problem. I don't have to tell anyone.' They go out and some psycho ex-boyfriend comes and kills them.

Bait Ball

I had never heard of the term bait ball until it was mentioned in this interview. I had a recollection of scenes in the Disney film, "Finding Nemo" where small fish cleverly swam in certain shapes. As I thought of this, the reason why the fish swam in formation and the context for it escaped me. The phrase bait ball lingered in my head and the context in which it was used settled into my consciousness.

Small fish, such as sardines or herring, swim together in a bait ball to look bigger in the eyes of their predators such as tuna, dolphins, sharks or even whales. Bait balls provide some defense for small schooling fish against large predatory fish. Predators still eat some of the fish but, there is some degree of safety for the small fish as they band together to appear larger and can as a group, rapidly change the direction and the speed of their movement. Aggregation or formation of groups is universal among living things (Parrish, Viscido, & Grünbaum, 2002;

Viscido, Parrish, & Grünbaum, 2004, 2007). This point was reiterated in the phrases: *wolves stay in pack* and *penguins swim together.*

Formation of groups such as bait balls or schools of fish has been studied by scholars in detail. With small fish, the individual behaviour of each fish has an impact on the emergent properties of the entire group. Individual factors such as the proximity of one fish alongside of another, the speed and direction of their swimming lead to emergent properties such as the density and speed of the entire group of fish. While there is some tentativeness in the conclusions of these studies, it is reasonable to assert that individual behaviours lead to more positive or preferred collective outcomes and that being a part of a group provides some defense against predators (Parrish et al., 2002; Viscido et al., 2004, 2007).

The metaphor of a bait ball addressed a prejudice around what I have learned about isolation as a technique used by abusive people to control their partner (Kelly et al., 2011; Lipsky & Caetano, 2009; Walker, 2009). This learning was reinforced many times over in my counselling practice in a shelter for women who had experienced abuse and in my nursing practice as I visited mothers and fathers with new babies in their homes. Many women spoke of having little or no support. Women spoke of immigrating to Canada to start a new life with their husbands and children; they no longer had extended family members or good friends living nearby. Other women spoke of the erosion of their support network, slowly and gradually, over time, until one day, there was a realization that she had little or nothing to do with family, friends, acquaintances, or members of her communities at work or in her neighborhood. These women no longer had a bait ball. They were swimming around alone and unprotected. These women seemed to know they were vulnerable to intimate partner violence.

Hermeneutic analysis is both deconstructive and reconstructive (Moules et al., 2015). Reconstructing the bait ball metaphor, I see potential in terms of emerging adults being cognizant of personal protection as a strategy around prevention of intimate partner violence. There is safety in banding together and travelling in groups. Calling someone and talking to them while walking alone in the dark as a young woman in the downtown core of our city is a strategy to protect oneself. At the very least, it was strongly suggested that someone needs to know where you are going, as a young woman walking alone at night. If you do not inform at least one other person of your whereabouts, the consequences could be dire, *they go out and some psycho ex-boyfriend comes and kills them.* The importance of being in a group or of at a minimum, even telling just one other person where you are now and where you are going, is evident.

Predators, Prey, and Violence

It is compelling to consider the bait ball metaphor involving predators and prey in relation to emerging adults and intimate partner violence. Are young men predators? Are young women prey? Do young women as prey need to band together like sardines in a bait ball to protect themselves from young men as predators? These questions may seem extreme but, examination is warranted.

The word predator dates back to 1862 and originates from the Latin word, *praedator* or "plunderer," from the word *praedari* meaning "to rob." Predation originated in the late 15th century; it meant an "act of plundering or pillaging," and *praedationem* is "a plundering, act of taking booty," from *praedari* means "to rob, to plunder," from *praeda* "plunder, booty, prey" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015).

The word *prey* when used as a verb dates back to 1300 and it means "to plunder, pillage, ravage" and "to kill and devour." This word has roots in the languages of Latin and French. As a

noun, *prey* has several meanings also rooted in Latin and French. Prey can be an "animal hunted for food;" "that which is taken in war;" "booty, animal taken in the chase;" "booty, plunder, game hunted." Literally, *praeheda* is "something seized before" and *prehendere* is "to grasp, seize" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015).

The violence in the roots of the words predator, predation, and prey and the connections to plundering, ravaging, and killing present no small coincidence. Canadian women experience more serious violence than Canadian men in intimate relationships; this violence includes sexual assault, being beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or knife. Younger Canadians, those aged 25 to 34 years, are at a higher risk for these types of violence (Statistics Canada, 2011). The possibility of homicide, the most extreme type of intimate partner violence is real:

> *And that's how women go missing is they don't do that. They say, 'Oh, I'm just going for a walk. It's no problem. I don't have to tell anyone.' They go out and some psycho ex-boyfriend comes and kills them.*

Women are killed by their intimate partners at a higher rate than men. In Canada in 2011, the rate of intimate partner homicide committed against females increased by 19%; this increase was the third increase since 2008. The rate of intimate partner homicide for male victims in 2011 was the lowest since this data began being collected in 1961 (Perreault, 2012).

Emerging adults, associated with both the victims and the gunman, in the Claresholm Murders add to this understanding. In reference to the gunman, an ex-boyfriend of one of the victims, predation is implied in the words stalked and hunted. In reference to the victims, the word prey was used.

> *This is a guy who, who stalked his prey, if you will. Um, it wasn't some random act of violence* (Day, 2013, p. 22).

I know he just hunted down and killed three people and tried to kill a fourth.

(Day, 2013, p. 6)

The gunman in the Claresholm Murders participated in hunting as one of his pastimes. This is not a coincidence. Access to weapons is a risk factor for perpetration of intimate partner violence (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Stith & McMonigle, 2009; Walker, 2009). Hermeneutic analysis also offers counter-exemplars (Moules et al., 2015). The victims in the Claresholm Murders were in a bait ball; this should have afforded them some protection. They were together, all four emerging adults in one car, listening to music, talking, and laughing as they drove from Lethbridge to Calgary. Sometimes even a good bait ball does not provide enough protection.

Booty and Booty Calls

While the violence in the roots of the words predator, predation, and prey is compelling, of particular interest is the word *booty* in the etymological roots of predator and prey. *Booty* is a slang term referring to buttocks, typically those of a female. Booty is commonly used in the popular music. Meghan Trainor (2014) has recently been on the top of the charts with her hit single, *All About that Bass*:

> *Yeah, my momma she told me don't worry about your size*
>
> *She says, boys like a little more booty to hold at night*
>
> *(that booty, uh, that booty, booty)*

Trainor (2014) used the term booty and framed it in such a way to encourage young women to be satisfied with their body size. However, booty is also used in the context of what men (or boys) want. The positioning of these messages is notable. The positioning of these messages cultivates confusion in terms of young women feeling good about their bodies only in the context of what young men desire. This positioning suggests a liminal space where a healthy intimate partner

relationship in which a young woman feels good about her size and shape occurs only in the context of what her male partner wants which might then shift their relationship to at least unhealthy or possibly, violent.

Jennifer Lopez (2014) accompanied by the rapper Pitbull, in the song, *Booty* expand this interpretation with lyrics that leave little to the imagination:

> *Big, big booty*
>
> *What you got a big booty*
>
> *My baby*
>
> *You're gorgeous,*
>
> *I mean you're fine*
>
> *You're sexy*
>
> *But most of all you are just absolutely booty-full*

At the beginning of the song, the focus seems to be the woman's booty, its size, its beauty. As the song progresses, the lyrics increase in sexual innuendo. As with the wildly popular, *All About that Bass* (Trainor, 2014), there is an almost insidious shift to the man and his needs and desires. Pitbull sings about needing to demand, take, pick up, or be given the booty. The woman's booty is almost removed from the rest of her body. Her objectification begins. The etymological roots of predator and prey have manifested in grasping, seizing, and ravaging the booty. The onus also shifts to the woman and how she is dancing and how that is not fair to the man.

> *Booty, booty, booty*
>
> *Booty everywhere*
>
> *Look at her booty, stop, stare*

They love her booty

Hell yeah

The way she twerking, not fair

She got a booty, and a swollen thong

And if you do it better, do it dirty all night long

Booty, tooty, booty, you know the plan

So much booty, shakes us the plan to demand

I wanna take that big ol booty shopping at the mall

I wanna pick it up and put that booty in my car

Baby your booty is a movie star

Oscar award winning of them all

Now give me that

This music reflects (among other things) the language of emerging adults in the form of the lyrics in popular music, "…all understanding is interpretation and that interpretation is inextricably bound up with language" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 51). A closer exploration of these lyrics reinforces the discourse of male dominance over women; women's body parts (for example, her booty) as separate and discrete entities rather than connected to the body, mind, and soul of an individual woman; and the onus of the woman as to the part she plays (for example, twerking) in the provocation of a man. The songs and the discourses are at the very least, confusing. The etymological roots of violence in the words commonly used centuries ago has remained, endured, and is currently manifested in the music catering to the culture of emerging adults.

Not only have the roots of violence in the words endured, it has expanded into a phrase. The word booty is commonly used in the phrase *booty call* which is a slang term for a request for casual sex. Although research specifically in the area of booty calls and emerging adults is relatively recent, with published reports of studies appearing in the past five years (Claxton & van Dulmen, 2013), scholars have made some determinations. In the spectrum of casual sexual encounters, a booty call occurs when one person contacts another person by phone call or text message, typically late at night, for the sole purpose of arranging a sexual encounter (Jonason, Li, & Cason, 2009; Nelson, Morrison-Beedy, Kearney, & Dozier, 2011; Wentland & Reissing, 2014). In the range of casual sexual relationships, although booty calls may recur, typically they are short-term and do not involve closeness in the relationship between the two people (Claxton & van Dulmen, 2013). Often one of the people is under the influence of alcohol; the main objective of a booty call is to satisfy sexual desire (Wentland & Reissing, 2014).

Delineations in the spectrum and taxonomy of short-term sexual relationships among young people are being defined and described in the research literature. Intimate partner violence is strangely absent in this emerging discourse. Perhaps as the body of scholarly literature related to booty calls grows, voices echoing violence will be heard. At present, these voices are silent.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

In this chapter, the initial metaphor of a bait ball led to a circuitous path exploring protection, predators, and prey as well as booty and booty calls in the context of emerging adults and intimate partner violence. In hermeneutic analysis, judicious use of metaphors provides rich and relatable ways of conveying interpretations (Moules et al., 2015). While a bait ball in the form of one or more friends provides some protection from violence in relationships, it may not always do so. The roots of the meanings of the words of predator and prey have a history of

violence including hunting, grabbing, and plundering often in the context of seizing booty. Booty is currently used in the language of lyrics of popular music consumed by young people. Critical theory involves an examination of what is at play including issues of gender and power. Certainly themes of male dominance and objectification of women are carried in the language of the lyrics involving booty. However, any direction connections between this music, sexual behaviour such as booty calls, and violence in the intimate relationships of emerging adults have yet to be claimed or supported.

CHAPTER SIX: AMBIGUITY AND CONSENT

In the program W5: Road to Murder, Dianne MacLean, mother of one of the young men who was shot and killed in the Claresholm Murders reiterated Arnett's (2000, 2004, 2015) assertions around emerging adults forming beliefs about relationships.

> *I know a lot of girls in their first relationship, they have nothing to compare it to, and, I just hope that they see this and say, wait a minute, this controlling aspect of this relationship, that's not a normal thing. And if, you know, if they just be aware of, that they deserve to be treated with respect.* (Day, 2013, p. 23)

In the arena of love and relationships, emerging adults are legitimately looking for a life partner (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2015). They are trying out different possibilities in their intimate relationships. This is in contrast to the teenage years when adolescents are dating for fun rather than with the notion that their current partner could be a potential spouse. The flipside of navigating these intimate relationships in emerging adulthood is that young people often have little or no relationship experience. They are unable to compare one relationship with another because for some, it is their first intimate relationship. It is difficult to know what behaviours may be healthy or unhealthy, acceptable or unacceptable, safe or unsafe. Indeed, a hallmark of Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood is that young people are forming their beliefs about relationships (2000, 2004, 2015). The formation, development, and emergence of beliefs about what is or is not acceptable in an intimate relationship are happening in the here and now for emerging adults.

He Was Just Sort of Pressurey About It

The details of a scenario with this young woman's *sort of, first real boyfriend* shows that it is difficult to determine boundaries with little or no relationship experience. The seeds of the

formation of her beliefs around consent to sexual activities with her boyfriend as well as what

may or may not be violence reveal ambiguity and uncertainty.

Participant: I guess sort of once you feel threatened then it's violent. Once it's not just like, it's like, like, I don't know. [An] *unhealthy* [relationship] *would be if you trust the person enough that you know you're not threatened but, they're still yelling at you then, I would say that's unhealthy but once you feel threatened then that would start to be violent.*

Interviewer: So it's more kind of, on the receiving end, you know how you feel and that's what influences it? That's where the line would be, you'd know because of how you feel?

Participant: I guess so. Well, I sort of felt like I was in a violent relationship but, it wasn't like physically violent. It was yelling and it didn't start [out like that]*, I didn't know that until the end. I didn't know. I didn't really realize like… It started out fine. He was nice. But then it got like, I could see the signs now in my head but, I know, he didn't always yell at me. There's just like a couple of occurrences where I felt like, sort of, threatened.*

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about that, how did it unfold? You said, 'It started out fine. He was nice.'

Participant: Yeah, well, when I first started dating him, like one friend told me that I should feel kind of cautious because she dated him and he like, kind of [pause] *forced himself on her, like not super sexually, just, she didn't even want a kiss really then he just started making out with her. So that was kind of weird, and I was like, 'Well, he's not going to be like that with me.' But he did. I had that… he was, sort of, my first real boyfriend so I didn't really know what to do. And then, then, he never said like, like he*

never really [pause] *said, 'We're going to have sex' but he was just, sort of, pressurey about it. So then I told my mom that I wanted to go birth control because I felt like that's, like that's a sign, I felt sort of uncomfortable* [nervous laughter]. *I didn't want to but, I was going on birth control, just in case.*

The ambiguity of consent is revealed in the phrase *just, sort of, pressurey.* Part of this could simply be the manner of speaking of this young woman although I clearly remember the atmosphere of this interview. It was as though the participant had much to say. She reeled me in, I would lean forward listening with my ears and my heart, and then she would look away, and trail off with an incomplete thought. No amount of gentle conversational interview prompts would bring her back. She was a talking paradox; she so close and so far away. It is never easy to talk about violence in relationships.

Pressure, as a noun, has its meanings rooted in the French and Latin languages. Suffering, anguish, and torture figure into the range of meanings of this word. However, the intensity and depth of pressure may be more fully understood from the 14th century as an "act or fact of pressing on the mind and heart" to "moral or mental coercing force" in the 1620s (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). This participant's boyfriend was being pressurey about sexual activities. She spoke of this to me and then following this disclosure, she seemed to shut down. Perhaps recalling this situation in our conversational interview resulted in some pressing on this young woman's mind and her heart. It is possible that she was remembering her boyfriend at the time as a morally and mentally coercing force. Maybe both of these meanings were present and ultimately enveloping our conversational interview. "Understanding must be conceived as part of the event in which meaning occurs, the event in which the meaning of all statements…is formed and actualized" (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 157).

What is Consent?

If pressurey occupies a liminal place - what is that space and place? Is that place not-quite-consent? The text of the interview reveals intuition, feelings of being threatened, and a clear plan to start using contraception by taking the birth control pill based on this intuition and insight. The conversation involving consent and consensual sex in the context of intimate relationships among emerging adults is an individual conversation seen in this interview but it is also a collective conversation currently taking place on of university campuses. In the first few weeks of every September as students flock to campuses across the country, no longer under the watchful gaze of their parents, this conversation emerges. Alcohol and drunkenness figure into this discourse as well as the ability to consent, particularly from a legal perspective, when a young person's decision-making abilities are influenced or impaired by alcohol and drugs.

My son is an emerging adult at 18 years of age. He began university in September of 2014. Near the end of October, close to Halloween, and the ensuing Halloween parties, he showed me a bookmark that received from the Consent Awareness and Sexual Education (CASE) Club on his campus. The bookmark has a picture of a zombie on it and the following messages:

> *Zombie Sex Tips: Slurred words? Walking in a shuffle? Mindless craving for one*
>
> *substance? If the answer is 'yes' then your partner is either: Too intoxicated to consent*
>
> *to sexual activity, or a zombie. Warning: Sex without consent is sexual assault.*

On the flip side of the bookmark are five *"Sexual Assault Prevention Tips."* Interestingly, the wording of these tips places the onus on the potential perpetrators of sexual violence rather than on potential victims. This is an interesting shift. Suggestions include not putting drugs into other people's drinks in order to assault them; if you see someone walking by themselves, don't assault

them; remembering that people who are asleep cannot consent, don't assault them. This

campaign occurring on a campus seems like a reasonable strategy. The shift from focusing on the

behaviour of the potential perpetrator of sexual assault is certainly a change in the victim

blaming discourse in the past. Often, questions are posed of the woman who was assaulted: What

was she wearing? Why was she walking alone? Why was she walking alone at night? Was she

drinking? Was she drunk?

The details on my son's bookmark seemed to address situations such as the one described

by the young woman. The tips offered on my son's bookmark might address the statement about

her friend,

He like, kind of [pause] *forced himself on her, like not super sexually, just, she didn't*

even want a kiss really then he just started making out with her.

and about herself,

He never said like, like he never really [pause] *said, 'We're going to have sex' but he was*

just sort of, pressurey about it.

There are grey areas. It is these grey areas, the spaces and places in between that

confound emerging adults. Arnett (2000) stated that emerging adulthood is the time for young

people who wish to have a variety of love and sexual experiences to do so with the proviso that

"…these explorations are not always enjoyable. Explorations in love sometimes result in

disappointment, disillusionment, or rejection" (p. 474). The participant in this interview did not

indicate that she believed she had been sexually assaulted. Arnett (2000) stated that explorations

in love and sexual may lead to disillusionment. Was she sexually assaulted? Was she

disillusioned? Neither? Both? For emerging adults, coming to understand this distinction while

in the process of forming their beliefs about intimate relationships is complicated and occurring

in the life world. There are so many potential influences. The discourse of intimate partner violence in general, and consent in particular, are thriving in popular culture. The messages being sent to and received by emerging adults are mixed. In so many ways, the waters are muddied, regarding emerging adults and consent.

Shades of Grey

The popularity of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* book series played hard with consent in the context of an emerging adult developing a belief system about what is and is not acceptable intimate partner relationships (James, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). The main characters in this series are emerging adults, Anastasia Steele is a college student at 21 years of age and her entrepreneurial boyfriend, Christian Grey is 27 years old. The older, more powerful, and successful Christian and the younger, less powerful, just getting started in adult life, Anastasia are involved in a BDSM (bondage-dominant, dominant-submissive, sadist-masochist) relationship. Christian and Ana's relationship is fraught with and fueled by anger, anxiety, and self-doubt. A movie of *Fifty Shades of Grey* opened in theaters not coincidentally on Valentine's Day in 2015. A movie showcasing violent sexual acts in the context of an intimate partner relationship between emerging adults was released on a day meant to celebrate affection and romance between intimate partners. This exponentially multiplies confusion as to what might be or not be consensual or violent in intimate relationships. Was Christian *pressurrey* with the younger, less experienced Ana? *Fifty Shades of Grey* painted an ambiguous picture of what consent looks like in an intimate partner relationship between emerging adults.

The following passage from *Fifty Shades of Grey* illustrates how Ana goes from questioning and wary of the fact that Christian "likes to hurt women" to a revelation that she

wants to "please him" regardless of what this might entail. This happens in an inordinately brief period of time.

"Do you do this to people or do they do it to you?"

His mouth quirks up, either amused or relieved.

"People?" He blinks a couple of times as he considers his answer. "I do this to women who want me to."

I don't understand.

"If you have willing volunteers, why am I here?"

"Because I want to do this with you, very much."

"Oh," I gasp. Why?

I wander to the far corner of the room and pat the waist-high padded bench and run my fingers over the leather. He likes to hurt women. The thought depresses me.

"You're a sadist?"

"I'm a Dominant." His eyes are a scorching gray, intense.

"What does that mean?" I whisper.

"It means I want you to willingly surrender yourself to me, in all things."

I frown as I try to assimilate this idea.

"Why would I do that?"

"To please me," he whispers as he cocks his head to one side, and I see a ghost of a smile.

Please him! He wants me to please him! I think my mouth drops open. Please Christian Grey. And I realize, in that moment, that yes, that's exactly what I want to do. I want him to be damned delighted with me. It's a revelation. (James, 2011a, pp. 99-100)

This text revealed consent occurring in a moment of revelation and in the context of the man's pleasure. It is difficult to recognize Anastasia's agency in this exchange. The possibility that she was consenting related to her own choice and a focus on herself is not apparent. This fictional account runs alongside the actual account in the interview of the young woman talking about her pressurey boyfriend. *The Fifty Shades of Grey* series of books eroticizes intimate partner violence in the context of a relationship between emerging adults (Bonomi, Altenburger, & Walton, 2013; Bonomi et al., 2014). One study reported that young women aged 18 to 25 years who read *Fifty Shades of Grey* were more likely to experience health risks including relationship violence and victimization (Bonomi et al., 2014). While the connection between intimate partner violence portrayed in popular culture and the behaviours of emerging adults in their intimate partner relationships likely requires a closer examination, countless examples exist in real life, outside of movies or television. Jian Ghomeshi, former host of the wildly popular CBC radio program Q, provides an exemplar.

Q with Jian Ghomeshi

The media coverage regarding Jian Ghomeshi, former popular host of the CBC radio program Q, also run parallel to this deconstruction of ambiguity and consent. Ghomeshi has maintained his innocence stating that he has sexual tastes that are not necessarily in the mainstream (e.g., BDSM) while, at last count, nine women have reported that Ghomeshi sexually assaulted them. Although at 46 years of age Ghomeshi is not an emerging adult, some of the women he assaulted were in their 20s at the time of the alleged assaults. Charges of sexual assault have been laid which would indicate there is potentially enough evidence for Ghomeshi to be convicted.

When the story of Ghomeshi first broke, there was one allegation from one woman. My immediate and not terribly reflective thought was that it must be a "He said, she said" scenario. I felt indifferent. I had never listened to the program Q although I knew many people who enjoyed the show. Several more women came forward with accusations of sexual violence over the course of several days. My thoughts changed, it was now: "He said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, and she said." My opinion had been swayed. Why did it take me more than one report of sexual assault from more than one woman for me to believe *her* instead of *him*?

I have read, studied, and worked in the area of intimate partner violence for over 20 years and it took *more than one allegation from more than one woman*, for my mind to be changed to the possibility that Jian Ghomeshi might be guilty of sexually assaulting a young woman. One of my prejudices has been unearthed, "…if one goes on from this to draw the conclusion that one can become transparent to oneself, that one can become sovereign in one's thinking and action, then one is mistaken. No one knows himself or herself" (Gadamer, 2001, p.43). I am continuing the process of knowing myself as I research the topic of intimate partner violence.

Part of what is also at play is cultural embeddedness of beliefs and assumptions of dichotomies such as male/female gender roles, victim/perpetrator archetypes, and what is right/wrong. My gender, age, and my religious upbringing in my family of origin immediately come to mind as to what has influenced me. These all occurred prior to my education and socialization as an RN, a graduate student, and a counsellor of men and women living in, trying to change, or leaving violent intimate partner relationships.

History does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through a process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in

the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting

mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of

historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgements,

constitute the historical reality of his being. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 278)

Prejudice is unavoidable; as a hermeneutic researcher, I must reflect on my prejudices. Most

importantly, I need to remember that the wolf is always at the door; the prejudices that I am least

aware or completely unaware of are influencing my interpretations of these texts of emerging

adults and intimate partner violence.

We do not however, know all of our prejudices, for there are intricately woven into the

fabric of our lives, our beliefs, and our behaviours. In hermeneutic research, we need to

keep our prejudices within view, but I also submit that we are most influenced by the

ones we have no idea we possess. (Moules, 2002, p. 25)

I have unearthed a prejudice; it is a painful realization. Hermeneutics, at work in data analysis,

has the power to create openings leading to new understandings. The weight of unearthing a

prejudice serves to reinforce my connection to the topic. In spite of, and because of, my

prejudices, I am well-suited to interpret text related to emerging adults and intimate partner

violence. My prejudices, known and unknown, provide me with access to this topic ultimately

leading to a new and temporal understanding.

Recognizing Consent

Participant: Have you ever seen those signs, up above, on the top of the bus?

Interviewer: No, what does it say?

Participant: Oh, there's one that has this picture of a woman passed out…and it

says…even if she doesn't say no it doesn't mean yes, that kind of thing. Those are good. I

mean, those are impactful. Because you can see what the message is, really clear and

even though it's displayed in a public place it's not graphic or anything but... I've heard

guys quote it, too.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Participant: Like...Yeah, so they know it too, they're paying attention. That it's even

catching their eye.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant: Probably because it has a half-naked girl on it but...You know it's working.

Interviewer and Participant: [laughter]

The graphic of the young woman passed out in the advertisement on the bus is revealing a message about consent, in its absence. This is a compelling strategy to convey an important message. To a young person looking at this advertisement, initially the message might be perceived as ambiguous. The message disrupts and plays with the clear "yes" or "no" dichotomy in terms of consent to sexual activity. The delivery of this message about consent is hermeneutic; it requires some thought, some interpretation on the part of the young person receiving the message. Hermes was the messenger of the gods (Gadamer, 1960/1975; Walsh, 1996). He was a trickster (Caputo, 1987). Hermes delivered messages from gods to humans while speaking out of both sides of his mouth; his messages required interpretation. Delivery of an ambiguous message that requires interpretation such as a sign in a bus in the form of a compelling graphic with minimal text is a strategy to help emerging adults understand what might be and might not be consent. Hermes is hard at work in advertisements on public transportation.

Summary

Issues surrounding consent and what constitutes sexual assault are not clear. Emerging adults are not alone in their ambiguity as to what might constitute consent. Emerging adults are not alone in figuring out what does or does not constitute sexual assault. The manifestation of *pressurey* in an intimate partner relationship is problematic; it is hard to know what *pressurey* looks like. However, it is important for an emerging adult to recognize *pressurey* words or *pressurey* behaviours in their intimate partner relationship. The uncertainty of emerging adults mirrors that of adults much older than themselves and with considerably more life experience. If an emerging adult has difficulty recognizing consent, it follows that recognizing violence, is equally, if not more difficult.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOGNITION, STIGMA, AND REALIZATION

The joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing more than is already familiar. In recognition what we know emerges, as if illuminated, from all the contingent and variable circumstances that condition it; it is grasped in its essence. It is known as something. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 113)

Joy. Illumination. I am at odds with Hans-Georg Gadamer. I am puzzled regarding the recognition of intimate partner violence. Although, I believe quite possibly its essence may be able to be grasped, I am not quite knowing it as something.

We are bombarded daily by text and images of violence. "Humankind may have had more bloodthirsty eras but none as filled with images of violence as the present" (Gerbner, 2009, p. 103). How can violence go unrecognized? There is a collective numbness to text and images of violence. The saturation of text and images of violence has caused something so familiar and so recognizable to become unfamilar and unrecognizable. Violence in the form of civil war is shown on news clips of images of bombs being launched, exploding, and civilians screaming and crying as they carry the body of a child covered in blood to the open back doors of a waiting ambulance. What about relationship violence? Is it that obvious? Is it recognizable? Intimate partner violence is often seen more clearly in hindsight, looking backwards. When intimate partner violence is unfolding in a relationship, it goes unrecognized, unrealized, and unnamed.

He Threw a Rock Through My Window

Participant: Well … my first relationship was not the most wonderful. He was depressed and manipulative and suicidal. And so while I was in the relationship for like, until I kind of realized what was going on, it was hard to tell that this was an unhealthy relationship.

I took it upon my own shoulders that his happiness was because of me and I needed to work harder to make him happy and yeah, that it was, it came back to me - and not that he needed to figure his own stuff out.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Participant: So, yeah, I forgot where I was going with that.

Interviewer: It sounds a little bit like it was hard to recognize it, when you're in it.

Participant: Yeah, it was hard to recognize when I was in it and oh, how I realized that it was an unhealthy relationship was my parents and friends and yeah and just that he didn't want me to be hanging around with my friends. He didn't, he tried to pull me away from my parents and I ended up like, lying to my parents and my friends for like a year. Probably because I knew that no one liked him and that it wasn't a good relationship but, I guess... I wasn't... I didn't really know what to do... Yeah. Yes, [so] *that's why my mom got me to go talk to a counsellor and that helped a lot actually. Just talking it out and kind of making lists or ideas of what a healthy relationship would be, um, but, yeah, it was still hard to distance myself from him because I felt responsible for his well-being.*

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. That's a big responsibility.

Participant: Yeah. [laughter] *And then he threw a rock through my window and that was, then I was like, 'No, this is it.'*

Interviewer: That was the line.

Participant: Yup.

Interviewer: It was crossed, eh?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, a house window or a car window?

Participant: Yeah, a house window. So, I was living with my parents and my cousin was with me which was nice but, we'd been on and off for a year in secret so my parents didn't know that [boyfriend's name] *was still in my life and then this rock comes through my window and I'm, 'Well it's my family's window and now I have to explain to my family that, what's been going on for the past year.' So that was, that's also why it ended so abruptly is because my parents were involved again, in the relationship. Yeah.*

Interviewer: That's a fairly clear sign...

Participant: [Laughter]. *Yeah.*

The relationship is being referred to as unhealthy (not violent). Yet, her boyfriend threw a rock through the front window of the family home. It was a vivid reminder to me of a conversation I had years ago, with a woman who lived with her abusive husband. I was her counsellor and we were discussing strategies she might try to keep herself safe while living with an abusive partner. As we discussed the specifics of her situation with the potential goal of creating a safety plan, she told me in a matter-of-fact way that her husband periodically pointed a gun to her head. When I asked her if she felt unsafe, she replied, "No, because I know the gun is not loaded."

There is a powerful stigma associated with admitting being in a violent intimate partner relationship. The label "abused woman" is so unpalatable that the context of an intimate relationship, it must be downgraded or downplayed to simply "unhealthy" in an effort to preserve one's dignity and salvage one's identity. Stigma is playing a role in the conversation of intimate partner violence when a relationship is referred to as unhealthy rather than violent. There are significant costs, in terms of personal identity, associated with being labelled an abused woman.

Stigma

In an undergraduate course in psychology, I remember reading Erving Goffman's (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. I was fascinated by the ideas in this book; much of what Goffman wrote had never occurred to me. Like a good portion of my undergraduate studies though, I forgot about Goffman or maybe I just filed him away for a decade. I heard about Goffman and *Stigma* again while completing coursework in my MN degree. A student colleague spoke of Goffman's ideas in the context of her field of work and study which was sexuality and mentally and physically challenged adults. I remember asking myself, "Why would she choose to study the topic of sexuality and mentally and physically challenged adults?" The answer was in my question. In asking the question, even if it was just an initial reaction and even though I kept it to myself, the connection to stigma was self-evident. As I listened to my student colleague, I was drawn in and open enough about what she was saying and the potential importance of the topic, that I re-bought *Stigma* (Goffman, 1963) at the used bookstore. The copy I had as an undergraduate was long gone and quite possibly re-sold at the same used bookstore on campus. I re-read *Stigma* (Goffman, 1963) as I considered my student colleague's topic for her proposed research; I thought about the power of a stigma. However, as with my undergraduate studies, I put this book away following my MN studies.

When reading and re-reading interview transcripts, I remembered *Stigma*, for the third time. Goffman (1963) has something to add to the conversation about intimate partner violence. Texts are

> enduringly fixed expressions of life' that are to be understood; and that means that one partner in the hermeneutical conversation, the text, speaks only through the other partner, the interpreter. Only through him are the written marks changed back into meaning.

Nevertheless, in being changed back by understanding, the subject matter of which the

text speaks itself finds expression. It is like a real conversation in that the common

subject matter is what binds the two partners, the text and the interpreter to each other.

(Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 389)

The sections of text of our interview, sections of the text of *Stigma*, and me, as an interpreter in

conversation with these texts move toward understanding of intimate partner violence and

emerging adults in the context of stigma and stigmatization.

A stigma is "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). Goffman

differentiates between several kinds of stigma. Some stigmas are visible and manifested in the

body such as physical deformities. Tribal stigmas are transmitted from one generation to the next

such as race and religion. When I think of stigma in the context of intimate partner violence,

labels such as "abused woman" and "victim" or "abuser" or "perpetrator" come to mind as does

Goffman's notion of perceived "blemishes of individual character" (1963, p. 4). The societal

assumptions connected with these words and phrases are staggering.

I remember clearly when I worked as a counsellor for both men's and women's groups.

In men's groups, although everyone in the group was mandated to counselling for physical

violence toward their partner, girlfriend, or wife, there was not a single man in the room who

would have labelled himself as an abuser or a perpetrator. In our groups, there would not be a

single guy who would have stated that is was acceptable for a man to hit a woman. Yet, everyone

in the room had been mandated to counselling for an act of physical violence against at least one

woman and sometimes children as well. Similarly, in a group of women the same dynamic

occurred. I recall countless times where a woman would describe her story of horrendous abuse

over the course of her relationship and end with: "But, it was not like I was an abused woman or

anything." There is a fundamental need to distance oneself from the labels connected with giving or receiving violence in an intimate partner relationship. This is the manifestation of stigma.

What is our societal impression of an abusive man? He is a jerk. He is strong and he uses his strength to overpower someone who is not as strong as he is. He is filled with rage. He has a temper and he "goes off" unpredictably. He is scary. He could be a criminal. In reality, in the group of men that I counselled, there was some truth in these statements. In reality, in group, which is a microcosm of life, these men who had perpetrated violence, were also partners, boyfriends, husbands, and proud fathers of babies, children, and teens. They were employed, self-employed, seasonally employed, and unemployed. They worked on the oil rigs and drove trucks. They lived in our neighborhoods. They were accountants and police officers. In group, some men lost their temper and lashed out. If and when they did so, they were asked to leave and they did so. Some men showed up to group with alcohol on their breath; they were asked to leave and they did so. Others were empathic and offered support to other men in the group. A few men openly cried. One man baked cookies and brought them for everyone to enjoy. Some men shut down. Several men accepted full responsibility for the violence they had perpetrated. Nobody is ever all one thing. It is all at once, complicated and messy.

What is our societal impression of an abused woman? She's is weak, dependent, and scared. She is helpless, hopeless, and indecisive. She is poor. She is a victim. In reality, in group, which is a microcosm of life, these women who had experienced abuse were also partners, girlfriends, wives, and proud mothers of babies, children, and teens. They were employed, self-employed, seasonally employed, and unemployed. They worked in schools and did landscaping. They were nurses and administrators of oil companies. In group, some women cried. Some

women showed up to group with alcohol on their breath; they were asked to leave and they did so. Other women were empathic and offered support. Some women zoned out. Nobody is ever all one thing. As with the men in the men's groups, the women in the women's groups were not easily labelled and boxed into discrete, tidy containers.

A label helps to categorize, contain, and ultimately, stigmatize this human messiness. A stigma serves to discredit a person or a group of people. It provides an individual with a discrete social identity.

> While a stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind - in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive; sometimes it is also called a failing, a shortcoming, a handicap.
>
> (Goffman, 1963, pp. 2-3)

Goffman's explanation of stigma underscores the naming of the intimate partner relationship as merely unhealthy even when an on-again, off-again boyfriend threw a rock through the window. Gadamer (1960/1975) extended the notion of names and naming:

> In the earliest times the intimate unity of word and thing was so obvious that the true name was considered to be part of the bearer of the name, if not indeed to substitute for him. In Greek, the expression for 'word' onoma, also means 'name' and especially 'proper name' i.e. the name by which something is called. (p. 406)

Nobody ever wants to be called an abused woman. Nobody ever wants to be labelled an abusive man.

I Would Embarrass Her in Front of People

Participant: I was really putting this person [his girlfriend] *down. I didn't realize it at the time because, like I said, there was no communication. But anyways, we ended up breaking up because I made her feel really, really bad about herself and stuff. I didn't realize it at the time and I felt bad about it after but, I kind of thought what that was like to her that was kind of, an abusive relationship. I would embarrass her in front of people and stuff. I thought she was a light-hearted, sense of humor kind of person but, I got carried away. That lack of communication... I didn't know that she... I didn't realize that she was, kind of the person that couldn't laugh at herself, as much as I could, I don't think anybody can.…*

We'd broken up but, we had a pretty long talk about why we were breaking up and she really went into about like how I was just being a jerk to her. It was a tall list, yeah, I was like, 'Wow, I didn't even know.' I'm not going to say it wasn't my fault because it was definitely my fault but, like, I had no idea.

In the previous instance, while the violence in the relationship was not actually named until the day when her boyfriend threw a rock through the window of her family's home, in this scenario, the young man also did not recognize the violence in his relationship. The full impact of the jokes he made at his girlfriend's expense and the damage it was causing in their relationship was not recognized until after the relationship ended. "The known enters into its true being and manifests itself as what it is only when it is recognized. As recognized, it is grasped in its essence, detached from its accidental aspects" (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 114). The violence in his intimate partner relationship was seen more clearly in hindsight, in the aftermath of the relationship. When the violence was unfolding, it remained unrecognized and unnamed. I

remember the interview with this young man; he seemed a little unsure as we spoke. He did not have a sense that his ex-girlfriend would see his behaviour as emotional abuse until she recounted the *tall list* regarding how he *was just being a jerk to her.* He seemed genuinely sorry and deeply remorseful regarding his oversight. It is difficult to recognize violence from the inside of a relationship. What does intimate partner violence look like from the outside of a relationship? How do the friends of emerging adults in intimate partner relationships sense what is going on inside of these relationships? How do they make sense of what they hear and what they see?

Hearing Stories about Rape

Interviewer: Yeah, ok. [laughter] *Ok, ok. You've said a little bit about healthy and unhealthy* [relationships], *it's really hard to draw a line or delineate but, um, what do you think about violence* [in relationships]*? What would that look like if you were on the outside looking in? You talked about how some of this stuff feels. How would you know?*

Participant: Honestly, I think it's pretty hard. College, I know for sure, that like, because I'd hear stories…some of the guys you know… you hear, about like, rape or whatever, the serious stuff. But when you see the couples, you don't even really, it doesn't seem like it would be violent. It seems like maybe it's unhealthy. There's no clue to say, "Oh, there's probably violence involved". So it's kind of hard for me to like…yeah.

Interviewer: You can kind of see the unhealthy [relationship] *in public but, you probably can't see the violence in public?*

Participant: Yeah. Because, like, part of it is the guy's going to act a lot better in public and the girl's going to do her best to cover up that there's anything that seriously wrong.

So you just don't see it. You only hear about it. Even then, you might not even hear about

it either.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's hard to see.

Participant: Yeah, I would say that.

Interviewer: But, you might hear about it?

Participant: Yeah and like, I don't have any close friends that have been in it…

This young man indicated that it is hard to see a violent relationship from the outside,

looking in. Couples behave differently in public, around their friends compared with when they

are alone together. The male partner behaves reasonably well and the female partner is going to

do her best to cover up anything that might look wrong. This young man said …*I know for sure,*

that like, because I'd hear stories…some of the guys you know… you hear, about like, rape or

whatever, the serious stuff. If you look to the words, the word rape was surrounded by other

words, both before, *like, rape* and after, rape *or whatever.* In doing this, perhaps the impact of

the word rape was lessened.

Stigma also re-emerges at the end of this exchange as this young man distances himself

and his friends from what he has shared with me during the interview by saying, *I don't have any*

close friends that have been in it. It is important to create distance, time and space between

sexually violent acts such as rape, particularly in the discourse of intimate partner violence. This

text is overlapping with the previous texts regarding ambiguity and consent. These layers of

interpretation are inseparable.

This text also brings the senses into the dialogue regarding recognition of intimate partner

violence, *So you just don't see it. You only hear about it. Even then, you might not even hear*

about it either. We experience the world through our senses – seeing, hearing, touching,

smelling, tasting. We recognize phenomena through our senses. Significant learning occurs through our sensory experiences. So, while seeing is one way violence in relationships might be recognized, it is not seen, *So you just don't see it.* Hearing violence or hearing about violence in intimate partner relationships is also how it is recognized though, Even *then, you might not even hear about it either.* This text moves to and fro – seeing and not seeing, hearing and not hearing. It is prudent to interpret emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence through the senses of seeing and hearing.

Love is Blind and Violence is Silent

Participant: Well, as I say, I think it's really hard for them to recognize it [intimate partner violence] *because they... There's a saying 'Love is blind'…Um, and that's... That really plays into it because you just... You don't want to see it. You want to see them as the person you thought they were, even if they're not.*

The movement among pronouns and use of singular and plural in this text is compelling – *I, them, they, you.* It is as though this young woman is talking about herself at the same time that she is talking about her friends. Is this text referring to her own blindness to the shortcomings of a partner or that of her friends? The phrase *love is blind* was coined in 1405 in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale.* This phrase gained popularity when Shakespeare took it up; l*ove is blind* appeared in several of his plays (Martin, n.d.). The word blind has meanings rooted in dark and darkness also can mean unintelligent, lacking mental perception, to make cloudy, deceive. The original meaning of the word blind is not sightless; it is akin to confused (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). Deceiving or self-deception is apparent in this text: *You don't want to see it. You want to see them as the person you thought they were, even if they're not.* It is difficult for emerging adults to see intimate partner violence for themselves in their own relationships and in

the relationships of their friends. Rather than darkness or sightlessness, this type of blindness seems more like confusion. Maybe it is not blindness rather; it is more about putting on blinders and not wanting to see.

We experience the world through our senses. Our senses inform us. While vision is important, hearing is also providing us with details. During one interview, a participant spoke about her younger brother's intimate partner relationship with his ex-girlfriend rather than her own relationship. She spoke of beginning to trust her current boyfriend and as she did, she opened up to him regarding the serious physical and emotional violence her brother perpetrated toward his ex-girlfriend. She described the details of her younger brother's violent relationship with his girlfriend of three years. Initially, the couple was *head over heels for each other* but soon, the fighting began. She heard her brother *screaming at the top of his lungs* in a *very powerful voice on the phone every night.* He would curse and swear, put her down, and *he was wishing her dead.* She referred to their relationship as *a very emotionally plagued and raged relationship.* At the end of the story of her brother's relationship with his ex-girlfriend, she said very quietly, "*Violence is very silent.*"

When she uttered those words, I experienced a physical reaction, a shudder in my entire body. There was something about this brief, simple statement that shook me to the core. This statement of violence being silent was in stark contrast to what she described between her brother and his ex-girlfriend. Her statement drew me in into the paradox of what was she had just shared with me. Violence was anything but silent in the recounting of her brother's relationship with his girlfriend including yelling, put-downs, and crying.

How can violence be silent? Violence is noisy. Wolf whistles. Shouting. Gun shots. Swearing. Cries for help. Loud voices directed at the federal government demanding answers

and action for the up to 1200 missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada over the past 30 years. The media bleating about Jian Ghomeshi, popular host of the CBC radio program Q and his alleged sexual assaults of up to nine former women with whom he was professionally and personally associated. Just prior to that, the media shouted in outrage at the National Football League, in general and Ray Rice, in particular, a star player for the Baltimore Ravens. A TMZ video taken in an elevator in an Atlantic City casino showed Ray Rice hitting his then fiancée, now wife so hard that she was lying flat on the floor of the elevator. Rice then dragged her limp body, skirt shrugged up around her waist, out of the elevator, into the hallway and toward their hotel room.

When considering whether or not violence is silent, I think of media coverage of incidents of intimate partner violence over the past 20 years. How far back in recent history should I venture and in what direction? I remember in 1995 hearing of the "Not Guilty" verdict in the initial, criminal trial of O.J. Simpson for the brutal murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend, Ron Goldman. There is coverage in local, provincial, national or international media in print, on-line, and on television. At first glance, this does not seem like silence to me. There is media coverage of celebrities, athletes, and regular folk. Internationally, South African Olympic runner Oscar Pistorius allegedly shot a gun multiple times through a bathroom door killing his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, where she cowered in fear. His story indicated he thought she was an intruder. In 2009, rapper Chris Brown beat his girlfriend pop star, Rihanna, beyond recognition prior to the Grammy awards. Locally, a former Calgary Stampeder football player scaled a balcony, broke into his ex-girlfriend's condominium, and choked her. In his defense, this 220 pound ex-football player alluded to bi-directional violence

considering his ex-girlfriend's considerable height. Media coverage of intimate partner violence, locally, nationally, and internationally is anything but silent. It is loud and constant.

The word *silent* has meaning traced back to the 1500s and it means without speech, not speaking and it originated from the Latin word, *silentem,* meaning still, calm, or quiet and also free from noise or sound (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). The phrase *silent majority* more recently, in 1955 in Britain, referred to a mass of people whose moderate views are not publicly expressed and thus overlooked. This phrase was used by John F. Kennedy but is also associated with the political administration of Richard Nixon who implored for the silent majority to stand up for its rights in contrast to the vocal protestors rallying against the war in Vietnam (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). Maybe violence is not silent. Maybe the collective response to intimate partner violence involves a silent majority. Maybe it is the collective response to intimate partner violence that needs more voices, louder voices.

Recognition and Realization

Participant: But then emotional violence, I think is really important and not a lot of people can recognize that. I had one friend who um, [pause] *every time she did anything, he would blame it on her. Or every time he did anything, he would blame it on her...and that, I think is a form of emotional violence, like, guilt tripping. If that occurs to a greater extent that's emotional abuse. Really, you're making the person to feel awful, all the time. You're making them take all the blame when it should be about half and half* [laughter] *most of the time. It takes two to tango!*

Interviewer: It's kind of interesting where you said, 'all the time'...

Participant: Yeah, well, I mean, there's ah, there is definitely a point where it becomes abuse. If it happens once in a while it's probably an unhealthy relationship, not the

greatest. But when it happens on a regular basis, you feel awful all the time, you feel like you're burning up in like shame and guilt. …and that's abusive because no one should be made to feel that, especially by their partner. You're supposed to make each other feel better, not worse.

Interviewer: You said 'burning with shame' and 'feeling awful' - then it's not actually [something] *someone would see on the outside.*

Participant: Yeah, like, physical violence you can see on the outside but, emotional violence you can't. That's why it's not, that's why it's not recognized. I think is, because it's all – you have to recognize it - and I know with my friend, I mean, we could see that she was upset, she was crying, like, she wasn't feeling good. She told us some of the stories about what had happened, what he had said and I could personally relate to that because I've had relationships like that. But, I knew it wasn't beneficial and I tried to get out. Whereas she didn't seem to realize it, I guess, I mean, we tried to tell her, 'This isn't healthy,' like, 'It's not a good thing'… But, it's something you gotta realize in here and here [pointing to her head and to her heart] ... *No one can tell you. Well, they can tell you but, you're not gonna listen.… They're not gonna accept it.…*

This participant refers to seeing emotional violence in the relationship of a friend but not being able to tell her in a way that she can listen, recognize, and understand. She is on the outside of the relationship, seeing the emotional abuse in her friend's relationship and yet the ability to communicate this to her friend seems impossible. A re-read of transcripts lead me to a fine distinction. In the interviews with emerging adults, while I often used the word *recognize,* the emerging adults used the word *realize* in relation to coming to know intimate partner violence in their relationships and those of their friends.

There is a difference between the words realize and recognize. To realize is to "make real" and to "understand clearly, make real in the mind" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). To recognize is to "know again, recall, or recover the knowledge of, perceive an identity with something formerly known or felt" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). In order to know again, recall, or recover knowledge, a person would have to have known it previously; the meaning of recognize assumes some prior knowledge. Realize is making real in the mind. Realization precedes recognition. Emerging adults are forming their ideas about relationships. First, an emerging adult would need to realize and second, perhaps some time later, in a subsequent relationship, an emerging adult would recognize. The language in the text of interviews with emerging adults reflected this subtle difference.

In the previous interview, there was movement - the participant spoke of her friend failing to recognize violence because she was in the relationship - while she could see the violence as an observer, essentially on the outside of the relationship. This next text shows a young man observing the intimate relationships of his peers; essentially he was person on the outside of his friends' intimate partner relationships. The ambiguous movement between concealment and possible recognition of violence in the context of group dynamics is tricky:

> *Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit more about time? Because you even spoke to it*
> *when you said, 'it's almost like you're taking someone for granted or you just keep*
> *asking them for more or getting less considerate.'*
> *Participant: I think, I don't know if it's, I guess part of it, I think is that, um, it might be*
> *like maybe the, like your other friends and stuff, and how they treat their partners.*
> *Because it just becomes more normal that if, uh, they all kind of take advantage of their*
> *partners or whatever, then the partner themself might think that it's normal because*

they're all around the same, the same group. So, I guess, they kind of adapt the way they

interact over time. So that, if they can still like, they can still handle their life but they

don't notice that, I don't know, stuff is kind of…

Interviewer: So it [your notion of a healthy or unhealthy relationship] *is kind of based on*

the group that you're in, a little bit, too?

Participant: Yeah, I think that's actually…I noticed that in college and I guess university,

too, but yeah, in college for sure. You know, it's that, it's like, each group definitely they

all just kind of conform to like, how that dynamic is… And I mean, I know it's probably

stereotypical but I definitely notice that a lot of the groups were…the guys would just

totally, kind of, abuse the girls. The girls just took it because they figure that's how it is…

But, as an outsider to the group, you kind of see that, that's pretty unfair but, it seems like

they [the young women] *were ok with it. Like, that's what I mean by over time, I guess,*

they get used to it because like some of them would be in a relationship for one or two

years and that's pretty, that seems pretty long. But, uh, the kind of relationship that it was

didn't seem very healthy. But they just…

[long pause]

Interviewer: …stayed there… people have talked about the business of trying to leave

unhealthy relationships.

Participant: Right. Well, from what I noticed, like, a lot of it is, they kind of talk behind

their back even when they're around…But, the girls pretend like they don't hear it. But,

you're kind of watching them…Yeah, you're kind of watching like, you know they heard it

but they pretend like they don't. Or they'll like, they'll make fun of them but, it's, it's in a

way that it's ambiguous. It's like, 'Are you joking or are you really not?' So they kind of

get away with it, kind of thing. And then you can tell like, if the girl did get offended she

can't really do anything because then it'll seem like she's over-reacting. And yet, this

could be her boyfriend, too. It's not just friends. Right?

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant: So I think that's where it starts because then, it seems like, it seems like she

almost gets confused as to like, whether she's being abused or not and so she just lets it

go…Yeah. Right. Yeah. Because yeah, even you might think, 'I'm not a part of that group

maybe I just don't get it.' But at the same time you're kind of like, 'No, I wouldn't do

that' so…

Group dynamics and norms determine what may or may not be recognized as intimate partner violence. With group behaviour as context though, the ambiguity of what is actually abuse remains unclear to this participant. Is there an acceptable level of violence that is acceptable in an intimate partner relationship? I understand that this question may seem audacious. The first and most immediate answer would be, "No. No way. Not ever." Yet men and women engage in relationships over long periods of time, months and years, as indicated in this text, in which acts of violence are occurring. This reveals a profound disconnection. There could be a certain amount of tolerance to violence in some intimate partner relationships. There may be certain kinds of violence (e.g., jokes at a partner's expense) that are acceptable at certain points in time. How much of this behaviour is too much? When does the line get crossed going from telling a joke at a partner's expense to emotional violence? In part, peer group norms or the indivudals in a couple might determine this line.

Summary

If recognition of intimate partner violence was as obvious as a rock coming through the front window of one's home then understanding this phenomena would also be clear cut. But, it is not. The violence is veiled, it is difficult to recognize, and with that dynamic, stigma comes in to play. Nobody wants their identity to be tangled up in the rhetoric of being in an abusive realtionship. Senses and sensing hold keys to understanding intimate partner violence in the relationships of emerging adults. Seeing and hearing lead to realization; realization leads to recognition. This path of understanding is in no way straight and sequential and the senses do not always clearly guide emerging adults. Along the path, close friends, friends of friends, and acquaintances are travelling this same path and figuring out this same thing for themselves and it looks different to them. Despite these individual differences, the unspoken norms of a group or groups of friends are being observed. The observations colour recognition of intimate partner violence; what is acceptable in one group or context may be unacceptable in another group or context. Violence is variable. Violence reveals and conceals. Violence shows up differently. Like the trillions of snowflakes in a snowstorm, each snowflake is just a little bit different. Violence from one relationship to the next is just a little bit different.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A NICE GUY

The Beginning: The Claresholm Murders

The Claresholm Murders occurred on a cold, dark night on December 15th, 2011. At the time, it was one of the worst mass murders in the history of province of Alberta. This incident involved an extreme example of intimate partner violence involving emerging adults. Briefly, a young man stalked his ex-girlfriend and her three friends by driving his car behind the car she was travelling in; he rammed their car with his car in the town of Claresholm. This young man shot all four young people, killing three, wounding one, and then he killed himself.

Local, provincial, and national media reported details of this incident over the next week. In the hours and days following the Claresholm Murders, descriptions from those who knew the shooter included that he was a nice guy and that these murders were utterly unexpected. In reference to the gunman, the media pumped out variations of the rhetoric, *he seemed like such a nice guy*. This rhetoric was so powerful that it drew me away from my original proposed topic for research (exploration of nurses and exemplary screening for intimate partner violence). The impact of this rhetoric hit me hard. I changed my research topic to emerging adults' understandings of intimate partner violence. Rhetoric is not considered a pillar in the philosophy of Gadamerian hermeneutics; it does not take up much time or space in *Truth and Method.* However, I believe rhetoric lurks in the shadows of Gadamer's hermeneutics. Interestingly, when Gadamer was 96 years of age, in a dialogue with hermeneutic scholar Jean Grondin, he was asked what he would now like to work on he responded, "Could we also perhaps bring back to life the ancient meaning of rhetoric?" (2007, p. 427).

Rhetoric is at work in the performance of language (Grondin, 2003). Language is performing in texts such as the following media reports associated with the Claresholm Murders. I believe interpretation of media texts through the lens of rhetoric will expand understanding of

emerging adults and intimate partner violence. "Hermeneutics may be precisely defined as the art of bringing what is said and written to speak again. What kind of an art hermeneutics is, then, we can learn from rhetoric" (Gadamer, 2007, p. 251). Rhetoric will reveal its duplicitous nature in *he seemed like such a nice guy;* the rhetoric of intimate partner violence will be interpreted in the context of rhetoric in this hermeneutic research study.

"Rhetoric is the ancient Greek art of persuasion, the art of an argument well presented, the tradition of persuasive presentation that invites the listener or reader to participate" (Moules et al., 2015, p. 173). Rhetoric in hermeneutics is an exemplar of the dialectic; it showcases the alterity of a text.

> *He was a quiet Mormon man, just out of his teens and on the verge of working in a life-saving role as a paramedic, his friends say.*
>
> *And while more details emerge about the frightening events leading up to the murderous roadside rampage carried out south of Calgary, friends of the killer, identified as Derek Jensen, are reeling from the shock.*
>
> *They say they are heartbroken and confused. "This is not the Derek we knew," said Travis Fay of Lethbridge, Alta., who was close friends with Jensen for about seven years.*
>
> *On Friday night, Fay and more than a dozen of Jensen's friends gathered in Lethbridge to console and support one another, and reflect on what RCMP are calling a triple murder-suicide.*
>
> *"This is hard for us because Derek will be missed, but we feel so much grief for all those families, too," said Fay, 20.*
>
> *"So, tonight we are trying to enjoy and remember Derek for the guy he was and not how he went, because we don't know that guy."*

The Jensen that Fay and his friends remember grew up in Lethbridge and was smart,

responsible, resourceful, caring and dependable. (Tetley, 2011, para 5-8)

One of the gunman's close friends, a young man in his 20s, separated who he believed

the gunman was from what the gunman did by saying, *"This is not the Derek we knew," and "…*

we are trying to enjoy and remember Derek for the guy he was and not how he went, because we

don't know that guy." The writer of this article described the gunman as a *quiet Mormon man;*

on the verge of working in a life-saving role as a paramedic; and smart, responsible,

resourceful, caring and dependable. This does not sound like someone who would stalk, shoot,

and murder four of his peers and then kill himself.

He could finish your basement, then tune your car up and act as your hunting tour

guide… He knew how to do everything and would do anything he could for anyone at any

time. A shirt-off-his-back kind of guy. That's why none of this makes sense to us.

(Tetley, 2011, para 9)

It is curious to relate the ability to finish a basement, tune a car, or guide during a hunting

trip is with making sense of the motivation for these murders in the context of intimate partner

violence. It is interesting that the friend of the gunman spoke of tasks associated with traditional

masculinity (finishing a basement, tuning a car, and being a hunting guide). The text is at work

reinforcing a gender stereotype of masculinity while distancing itself from the violence. Scholars

studying intimate partner violence would disagree with this distancing; men who hold rigid

beliefs about gender roles are at a higher risk to commit intimate partner violence (Jenkins, 1990;

Kelly et al., 2011; Woodin & O'Leary, 2009; WHO, 2010). Rhetoric is at play. A horizon is

revealed. While the media on the surface was presenting a nice guy who would give you the

shirt-off-his-back, at the same time, traditional masculine roles which can be a precursor to intimate partner violence were very much at play.

The gunman was described by another friend, a man in his 20s, shortly after the Claresholm Murders.

> *Gathered in the living room of a friend's house on Friday night, Jensen's friends agonized as they tried to piece together the details, struggling to understand what could have caused their good friend — a scout leader, dedicated uncle, honours student, and avid outdoorsman — to snap.* (Ho, 2011, p. 5)

While an *honours student* could be male or female, *scout leaders* are overwhelmingly male; a *dedicated uncle* and an *avid outdoorsman* are most definitely male. This text again represents a strong affiliation with traditional male gender roles. The duplicity of the text is evident. Does this description lead to the gunman being a smart (honours student), trustworthy (scout leader), family-oriented (dedicated uncle), and adventurous (avid outdoorsman) young man? If so, his actions become utterly incomprehensible. On the other hand, does the *honours student* use his intellect to craft a detailed and murderous plan? Does the *scout leader* and *avid outdoorsman* use his skills and expertise with weapons to hunt down and shoot his peers? Is the *dedicated uncle* hemmed in by the expectations and obligations of his extended family? The parts and the whole are in motion in the hermeneutic circle. Several horizons manifest in these texts.

Things are not always as they initially appear. Things have a way of changing. Feelings change, too.

> *To his friends, Mr. Jensen was a quiet, Mormon-raised young man who loved the outdoors and cared for his guns religiously. Police confirmed his weapons were properly registered.*

Ms. McFarland saw a different side. 'I loved him when I first met him, but after [he and Ms. Stepple] moved in together he really changed,' she said.

He became jealous and controlling, texting and phoning constantly to find out what Ms. Stepple was doing. He soon began to resent Ms. McFarland and her close relationship with Ms. Stepple, frequently yelling at them for going out too much and calling Ms. Stepple vulgar names. 'He put his fist through their window, punched a huge dent in the rear driver's side of his car, told her he killed her dog,' Ms. McFarland added.

(Waldie & Moore, 2011, para 12-14)

A friend of the both gunman and the young woman who was murdered indicated, *I loved him when I first met him, but after [he and Ms. Stepple] moved in together he really changed.* The gunman changed and his violent behaviours were described.

…transformation means that something is suddenly and as a whole something else, that this other transformed thing that it has become it its true being, in comparison with which its earlier being is nil. When we find someone transformed we mean precisely this, that he has become another person as it were. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 111)

The friend was describing the transformation of a nice guy changing into a jealous and controlling guy. Perspective is in the eye of the beholder, *depending on whom you talk to:*

Depending on whom you talk to, Derek Jensen was either a great friend or an angry, violent man. But nobody – not even those who saw both sides of him – would have predicted the 21-year-old who had recently been through paramedic training to start a career saving lives would end three of them, and almost take a fourth, before killing himself last week on a darkened stretch of Alberta highway. (Walton & Waldie, 2011, para.1)

A retrospective look at the nice guy rhetoric was provided in W5: Road to Murder by Cait McFarland, a friend of the gunman as well as the murdered emerging adults.

> *I thought they were just that couple that found each other and they were just perfect for each other. I met him in April and adored him. I thought he was the greatest human being ever. I used to say to her, um, 'If you and Derek ever don't work out, like, you give me his phone number, because he is cute.' And he was so good-looking and so charming and nice and funny, and then he wasn't.*
>
> *Then they moved in together and he just was like a whole different person, always wondering where she was and who she was with? When was she going to be home? You haven't replied to my text in 20 minutes. What are you doing? Who are you with? Stuff like that.* (Day, 2013, p. 7)

McFarland noted the transition from *greatest human being ever* to a *whole different person* when her friend moved in with this boyfriend. If ratings of humans were on a continuum, the gap between these two extremes would be enormous. This is experience in a relationship being playing out. If little or no relationship experience is the starting place, it is not inconceivable to see the pendulum swing from one extreme (*greatest human being ever*) to the next (*whole different person*). Unfortunately, McFarland gained relationship experience observing her friend in an abusive relationship culminating in murder. This learning was evident as she spoke watching and reading media reports. It is as though she was having a dialogue with the news reports.

> *I remember sitting at home watching the news and reading news stories. And I would read quotes from his friends saying, 'he was such a good guy,' like, 'he was so nice,' he was this and he was that. And, oh, that made me so mad. I was like how, how can you say*

that? How can you possibly say, 'My friend Derek was a good guy?' I know he just

hunted down and killed three people and tried to kill a fourth and devastated her life

forever, but 'he was a pretty solid dude?' (Day, 2013, p. 6)

McFarland is both consuming and consumed by the media reports. She notices the good guy

rhetoric. The disconnection between what has been written in the media and what has happened

played out in her life. Such is the duplicity of rhetoric. The duplicitous nature of media reports of

intimate partner violence hinders its recognition and stands in the way of understanding. Rhetoric

is hard at work in text in media reports which reinforce stereotypes, and serve to close any

potential openings to the conversation to help us understand intimate partner violence.

Prevention efforts are inordinately challenging with this as context.

Responses and Resonance

I had no idea that the title of my research study would resonate with so many people. I

have used this line *he seemed like such a nice guy*, in the public domain, outside of classes at

university - in a poster presentation, a roundtable discussion at a conference, and in three

interviews after which short articles were written. Afterward, in all of these circumstances,

people have approached me in-person or on-line and said, "I know *that guy.* I know that *nice*

guy."

In hermeneutic interpretation, we do not seek consensus or even absolute agreement;

difference is not something to be overcome in hermeneutics. We hope for the newness

that comes to meet it, the invocation for different interpretations. We hope for responses,

and that the writing evokes something in the reader, that the reader's interpretation might

make it better. (Moules et al., 2015, p. 136)

Although, I am not seeking agreement with the title of my research, I have most certainly received responses indicating resonance. A brief article about my research titled, "Helping young people know when it is time to get out" in the Winter 2014 issue of Caring for the Future, a newsletter from the Faculty of Health Disciplines at Athabasca University resulted in around a dozen responses from students, alumni, and colleagues. The piece began with, "You see the words in almost every news story about partner violence: 'He seemed like such a nice guy.' In truth, he wasn't a nice guy at all - and it too often comes to light after a tragic incident" (Athabasca University, 2014, p. 9). A one-page description of my research followed. This was one of the responses:

> *I scanned the article real quick about your study, it's a good one.*
>
> *I remember leaving what turned into an abusive situation with my first serious boyfriend. I was 23 and he called the cops to "get me out," I could not believe how low I felt being in a "domestic situation." I remember he threw me up against the wall and was ready to hit me in the face, it was unbelievable, I started packing my stuff, it was Jan*[uary] *and I had just moved back from Calgary to Edmonton into his place, his idea. When the police showed up, he was so charming to them and they seemed to be like an "old boys club," I felt like the cops were saying, "here we go again another one of these".....*
>
> *What happened next was life changing for me....the one officer who had been chatting especially with my ex-boyfriend turned on him when he made a comment about me and he let him have it, he went up one side of him then the other about seeing what was going on and how all my things were out in the snow... it was so worth seeing the smug look come off my ex's face.*

This constable took me out to his car and interviewed me, didn't even ask what happened just wanted to see the bruises. I was shocked. I asked him what bruises and he said it was probably a given that I had been hit and had no marks on my face so where were they---I showed him my arms where I had been grabbed and he was so incredibly kind but real. Told me I had a choice to make, did I deserve a guy like this and such, he really made me feel that not all guys were like my ex. I phoned the city police the next day to thank the officer and let his supervisor know that he actually did make a difference. Just having that support other than my family made all the difference in the world for me.

Other responses from men and women were supportive and most mentioned a connection to the *nice guy.* While this is affirming, hermeneutics is not about replication. It is always important to consider divergent responses. I received one response that was completely unanticipated.

I read with interest the AU online article regarding your research.

While I am in complete agreement with your objectives (this is long overdue), I take issue with one statement: "But I could see the warning signs in the news reports. The young man was a hunter and had access to weapons."

My husband is a hunter and has been since about age 11, when he joined his father shooting ducks and geese to supplement the family's food supply. He is the most gentle and loving man that I have ever met and the majority of his hunting buddies are the same. We all have access to weapons. Watch a few British mysteries and you may be surprised at the weapon of choice in many of these "whodunits." Last evening the mystery involved a victim killed by a cheese wheel.

There is no cause and effect when it comes to hunting and violence against people. I

would not be surprised to find that by far the majority of murderers are not hunters.

I am very disappointed that you would make such an inflammatory statement.

I was taken aback by this response. While I initially laughed about the whodunit in which someone was killed by a cheese wheel, I also paused and gathered myself. I was reminded of keeping my topic in the foreground and being mindful of how my topic might elicit a passionate response and strong feelings. This feedback reinforced to me, the importance of language, the power of words, and how the reader of the article (the person who emailed me) unpacked and understood the meaning of my research on the topic of emerging adults and intimate partner violence.

> A word is not a sign that one selects, nor is it that one makes or gives to another; it is not an existent thing that one picks up and gives an ideality of meaning in order to make another being visible through it. This is mistaken on both counts. Rather, the ideality of the meaning lies in the word itself. It is meaningful already. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 417)

The woman who emailed me reacted to the text, to what was written (which was changed from what I said when I was interviewed prior to the writing of this piece) about hunters and access to weapons. While access to weapons is one risk factor among many when carrying out an assessment of someone who might be predisposed to commit a violent act, the woman who responded to this article may have felt as though I was singling out hunters as murderers simply because they have access to weapons. It reminded me of the dichotomous, black-and-white thinking of the scientific paradigm, the dominant paradigm. For example, if access to weapons leads to commission of acts of violence, and hunters have access to weapons, then all hunters will commit acts of violence. This meaning, of course, was not my intent but this is possibly was

how it was unpacked, "Words carry a heavy burden of meaning and association, which can be difficult to set aside" (Davey, 2006, p. 149). This response from this woman reminded me again of the possibility of multiple interpretations of text. I remain open, heeding Davey, "(c)losing the play of language implies the death of understanding" (2006, p. 200).

In June 2013, I attended the Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences in Victoria, British Columbia. Prior to the conference, I was interviewed for a media release. While the man who interviewed me for this media release was obviously trying to get *my* story, we also spent a considerable amount of time during the interview talking about *his* story. "Conversation is a natural, social form of the open dialectic that lets new understanding appear as each one speaks – and more importantly, listens – to the other (Moules et al., 2015, p. 41). He knew that *nice guy* and he spoke to me about him in great detail. My interviewer indicated that he was an adult with grown children and he and his wife often socialized with a couple who were also parents of children in their early 20s. My interviewer met the boyfriend of his friend's daughter on various occasions over the course of several years. My interviewer spoke fondly of his friend's daughter, he watched her grow up, and they were close family friends. His friend's daughter's boyfriend seemed to be a *nice guy*. He was polite, motivated in his studies, and he treated his friend's daughter well, until it was discovered that he did not. The precise details of the violence were unclear but, the deception was recounted to me in exquisite detail. My interviewer felt tricked and deceived. I wonder how his friend's daughter felt both during her relationship with the nice guy and afterwards, when it was revealed that she had been abused.

On the appointed day and time of my roundtable discussion at the Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences titled, *He seemed like such a nice guy: Young adults' understandings of intimate partner violence,* a half dozen women showed up for our discussion.

This was about what I had expected. All of the women had stories to tell. The common denominator was that they all knew at least one *nice guy*. We sat together, leaned in, and listened as each woman spoke about her experience with the *nice guy* - we had all met him, some of us had dated him, and now, in one form or another, as graduate students, we were studying something connected with him. All of the graduate students that attended the roundtable discussion were invested in exploring topics related to violence against women, gender issues, and women's studies and everyone was at different places in their graduate studies. The complexity of my topic was manifested in the perspectives of these women.

My Personal Discovery

I cannot remember his name but the picture in my mind is crystal clear. For five years, I worked in psycho-educational groups, counselling men who had abused their intimate partners. Of all the paid work I have done as an adult, this by far was my favorite position. The pay was marginal but the work was fascinating. In the first year of doing this work, I was drawn in by the stories and the circumstances that culminated in the arrival of each individual man into our group counselling sessions. Personal histories of abuse in families of origin, at the hands of teachers in residential schools, and as a result of growing up in countries ravaged by civil war were common threads. After a year or two, these stories mattered less and less to me. I reasoned that group was the place where responsibility was meant to be accepted, behaviours were meant to be changed, and that men were meant to move forward. My close colleague and co-facilitator in the men's groups, Jason, often remarked, "Lynn, it's the same five stories over and over again." He was not entirely right or entirely wrong in saying so. The fabric of each man's life that arrived at group, seeking help, possibly wanting to change, was similar but I always believed there are individual differences and these differences are rich, powerful, and important.

He arrived one evening on a Tuesday, just like all the others. He was in for the long haul having been mandated to 16 weeks of counselling. Over the course of the weeks he was a model group member – respectful, listening to others, empathic, not talking too much or too little. He was inordinately polite. While many men were what might be described as "rough around the edges" frequently using swear words to express themselves, he never did so. After a few weeks, he brought home-baked cookies for all group members to enjoy. They were fresh and delicious. The chocolate chunk cookies were made with fine, premium chocolate. Once he began bringing these cookies, he did so, every single week. *He seemed like such a nice guy* – polite, reliable, and considerate of others. I was having a hard time believing that he was mandated to group counselling for violence against his wife. I was curious so I accessed his intake file (which we were permitted to do but I had stopped doing years ago because maybe I was starting to believe in Jason's statement of "It's the same five stories over and over again"). The details of his violent incident included him ripping the screen door off the hinges of their estate home and using this same door to hit his wife on the side of her head. Unbelievable. For all my work and study in the area of violence against women, even I did not recognize the *nice guy*, even when he has been mandated to group counselling for violent men and was sitting right alongside of me. Maybe it is because the *nice guy* is hard for everyone to recognize, even an experienced counsellor in a group for men mandated to therapy for prevention of intimate partner violence.

Summary

Nobody is ever all one thing, good or bad. It is possible to be a Mormon man, paramedic, dedicated uncle, and avid outdoorsman as well as a jealous, enraged, and controlling ex-boyfriend. Sometimes the nice guy is nice; sometimes the nice guy is not nice. Maybe this is one of the reasons why it is hard to leave a relationship with a nice guy. His identity is alternately

revealed and concealed. The presentation of the nice guy in the life world is insidious. Yet, when we talk about the nice guy, many people seem to know or have met him, at least once. Maybe this is why it is a challenge to devise an effective educational strategy for emerging adults (or adults of any age) related to prevention of violence in intimate partner relationships. The progressive revelation of the nice guy is idiosyncratic; he looks different every single time that you meet him. It had never occurred to me that I had met him like so many other women before me. This remembrance shifts me again and in doing so, connects me again, grounds me again, with this study, this work.

CHAPTER NINE: CURRENT TECHNOLOGY, SAME OLD FEELINGS

Text and Text Messages

Hans-Georg Gadamer (2007) was certainly not addressing text messages in his essay, *Text and Interpretation* but his ideas regarding what constitutes a genuine text are compelling. Gadamer identified three types of texts that do not provide good interpretation: antitexts, pseudotexts, and pretexts (2007). Antitexts are situational and carried out only in communication. For example, a joke or an ironic remark occurs in a specific place and time under certain circumstances so it does not provide a substantive opportunity for interpretation. Pseudotexts are filler material that connects the flow of speaking. It is empty language and does not warrant interpretation. Pretexts show apparent meanings as a pretense to conceal hidden meaning. An example would be the psychoanalysis of a dream. Texts that are ultimately interpretable are eminent texts. Literary texts such poetry are eminent text because these texts are where "language reaches its greatest compression, resonance, and power" (Gadamer, 2007, p. 156).

The fit between text messages sent from one person to another on cell phones and Gadamer's discussion of texts is worthy of examination. Text messages are not antitexts as these occur only in verbal communication. Pseudotexts could be part of a text message as texts can and do include filler words bridging thoughts and ideas. Text messages as pretexts consisting of layers of veiled meaning seem less likely (although not entirely impossible). It is possible that text messages could be eminent texts where language is resonating and powerful; if so, text messages are worthy of hermeneutic interpretation. However, labelling text messages as eminent texts and putting them in a category of poetry would be pushing a methodological boundary. In the context of this hermeneutic research, I am offering that text messages fall into a liminal

space. As one form of communication, text messages are an integral part of the life world of emerging adults' in their intimate partner relationships. "Texting… is the most important media form in the lives of emerging adults, because it keeps them constantly connected to the people most important to them " (Arnett, 2015, p. 198). Emerging adults spend around 45 minutes per day texting; they send more texts comparatively than any other age group aged 18 years or older (Arnett, 2015). The transcripts from interviews and W5: Road to Murder included details of text messages. It is important to interpret both text messages sent from one emerging adult to another in intimate relationships as well as text (in the form of interview transcripts) about text messages. Based on Arnett (2015) and Gadamer (2007), I offer that doing this is theoretically important and methodologically acceptable.

Texting and Talking

Participant: Yeah. I think the only way to do it [communication] *is face-to-face. You can't just do it through text messages and stuff. I hate that. When you talk through texts* [there is no] *body posture and stuff. That also plays a part when you're having a conversation with somebody. Um, when you're talking through a text, sometimes… you don't understand sarcasm through a text, you can't hear the tone of their voice. So I think you hear more when you're face-to-face.*

Much of what is said and done within intimate partner relationships is interpretable. A relationship involves interpreting a partner's speech and body language and these cues assume extraordinary importance related to issues such as boundaries and consent. One form of communication used by emerging adults in intimate partner relationships is texting. Text messages can be difficult to interpret. Verbal cues such as tone of voice indicating sarcasm are absent. Non-verbal cues for example, body posture, are not seen, and this removes additional context. *I think you hear more when you're face-to-face;* seeing enhances listening. The adage

seeing is believing comes to mind. It is as though seeing provides evidence to make something more convincing. If something is not easily understood in a text message, seeing a person while they are delivering the same message verbally, face-to-face changes the message from strange, surprising, or unclear to understandable and clear. The same message is interpreted and understood differently in-person.

Text messages can be taken up in many different ways in the lives of emerging adults. It is a challenge to interpret the signs and signals occurring outside of a text message. While the interpretation of text messages is problematic related to the absence of verbal and nonverbal cues, adding to this is the idea that people say things online that they would not otherwise say to a person face-to-face, this is part of the Online Disinhibition Effect (Suler, 2004). Some of the factors related to this effect are anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, introjection, imagination, and minimization (Suler, 2004). At the time this article was published, Suler was referring to online behaviour (not necessarily text messaging) but his ideas regarding invisibility, asynchronicity, and introjection are worthy of consideration related to emerging adults in intimate partner relationships. People are invisible in text messages; this gives them courage to say things they would not otherwise say. Text messages can be asynchronous; people are not necessarily interacting in real time. A delay in feedback and not having to deal with a partner's immediate reaction disinhibits a person. Introjection can occur when absence of face-to-face communication combines with the text message and people project a voice in their head (Suler, 2004).

Some things are hard to say and do face-to-face in an intimate partner relationship. Breaking up with someone is never easy.

Participant: I get a text, no, not New Year's Eve! Boxing Day, pretty much, six or seven full length texts and that was pretty much him breaking up with me. So he broke up with me through a text. Definitely, unhealthy, right there, because I read all of that and I was like, 'I can't even read any of this'… Like, I was upset, but at the same time, I was like, 'Yeah, ok, it's done' like, but, we need to end somehow because this is definitely not ending.

Interviewer: With the texts, then?

Participant: Yeah. So I… Oh yeah, with the texts, I definitely think like, that is a huge unhealthy [relationship] *sign from a guy who apparently is so accomplished to break up with a girl through texts, right?* [laughter] *So, I…told him that I was in his building and 'You are going to come and talk to me', I don't care if it takes five minutes but, I had to tell him my feelings towards that….He came down and I told him everything for what it was. But I, I'm like, 'We need to end this' and I'm like, 'If you date your next girlfriend, do not ever break up with her through a text' because that is definitely low* [laughter].

Breaking up through a text was not acceptable to this young woman; she described it as being unhealthy. The Online Disinhibition Effect in terms of invisibility was at play in the process of this young couple's break up. The young woman's (soon to be) ex-boyfriend was choosing invisibility by breaking up using text messages. If seeing is believing, it follows that not seeing is not believing. It is difficult to comprehend the breakup of a relationship under any circumstances. It is even more so in the context of the invisibility of a text message, devoid of facial expression, tone of voice, and body posture. This young woman was having no part of this invisibility. She promptly went to meet her now ex-boyfriend, face-to-face. Despite receiving the message that he was breaking up with her via *six or seven full length texts*, she responded by

delivering her message to him in-person. This young woman expressed strong feelings; it was as though a boundary had been violated when he broke up with her via text. Alternately, the boundaries regarding virtual and face-to-face communication were unclear. He thought it was acceptable to break up via text; she did not. He chose invisibility; she did not. She asserted her position by meeting him face-to-face to clarify how the breakup should have unfolded. She was compelled to reveal her ex-boyfriend in real time in the here-and-now of their break up.

Miscommunication and misinterpretation via text messages happens and invisibility is at play in this dynamic. Given the amount of time emerging adults spend on texting these problems extend to their intimate partner relationships. Choosing invisibility in an intimate partner relationship reflects the choice made about the form of communication for the specific message being relayed (e.g., Is it acceptable or not acceptable to break to using a text message?) The guidelines and boundaries regarding sending and responding to text messages as intimate partners are unclear. There is tension between what might constitute showing interest, being protective, being over-protective, stalking, or threatening in text messages.

Texting and Stalking

Participant: Yeah, or you know, you text, 'Good night, I love you' but when it becomes, 'Why didn't you phone me?' 'Where are you?' 'What are you doing?' It becomes over-protective and that's a sign obviously of an unhealthy relationship, too. Because you've got to, that's a sign of, I think, of suspicion …and mistrust.

Text messages can be sent and received 24 hours per day, seven days per week. From "Good Morning" to "Good Night" during the waking hours and potentially, text messages can be sent when most of the people, most of time, are sleeping. The questioning of - *'Why didn't you phone me?' 'Where are you?' 'What are you doing?'* - is described as unhealthy by this young

woman. Depending on the timing and frequency of these questions, this could be stalking and if so, it would be considered violent (rather than simply unhealthy) in an intimate partner relationship.

To stalk in Old English means to "pursue stealthily"; the first recorded meaning of stalk as "harass obsessively" was noted 1991 (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). The advent of the World Wide Web and the second generation of cell phone also appeared around this time in recent history. It is no small coincidence that the usage of the word stalk occurred almost simultaneously with widespread use of the internet and cellular phone. It is as though the emergence of the meaning of this word coincided with new (electronic) strategies for carrying out this behaviour.

It was documented that the gunman in the Claresholm Murders was an experienced guide and hunter; he may have been a skilled stalker of prey. The gunman may have transferred these skills from the wilderness to his intimate partner relationship. Interestingly, he was electronically stalking via obsessive text messaging as well as physically stalking as he pursued his ex-girlfriend and her friends in a car along a highway.

This 24/7 context of text messaging can support stalking behaviours. Men who abuse women are emotionally dependent on the woman; he needs her to feel good about himself (Walker, 2009). Instant feedback, gratification, and reinforcement through text messages are potentially available 24/7. The receiver of 24/7 text messages is in an unenviable position, this person needs to be the one to set and re-set boundaries in a relationship. Stalking behaviour has now been not only made possible but also normalized and supported due to the technology of cellular phones and text messaging. Stalking is a highly dangerous form of behaviour; women

who are being stalked are at risk for escalation of intimate partner violence (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Stith & McMonigle, 2009).

W5: Road to Murder showed a series of text messages and replies between the gunman and his ex-girlfriend on the night of the Claresholm Murders. This exchange mirrors what the young woman in the text above believed indicated that *suspicion* and *mistrust* had joined in the relationship in the context of, *Where are you? and What are you doing?* This exchange of texts took place on the night of the murders.

> *Text message: Where the f-—- are you?*
>
> *Text Reply: Tanner's friend. They're flying back to PEI.*
>
> *Text message: Answer.*
>
> *Text Reply: Like why don't you believe me? You would do the same for any friend of yours. It was his birthday tonight, Derek, and I swear to God, don't do anything to mess that house up.*
>
> *Text message: The house will be fine.*
>
> *Text Reply: And my stuff in it.*
>
> *Text message: Your sh—will be fine, too.*
>
> (Day, 2013, p. 21)

The ex-girlfriend picks up on the gunman's suspicion and mistrust: *Like why don't you believe me?* The tone of the sequence of this next exchange is certainly uncivil but, that the gunman shot four people and then himself not long after this exchange seems difficult to comprehend. However, a look at another text prior to this exchange indicates a serious threat.

> *God I hate. This is the last time we speak. Ditched again. Have fun you piece of sh--. Like wtf? Honestly, just go. I don't want to see you anymore. You've known her how long? And*

it's not even for her. It's for her boyfriend, like omg, I'm so rattled. I can't see you tonight

anymore. I think I would kill you.

(Day, 2013, p. 20)

The gunman threatened to kill his ex-girlfriend; *I think I would kill you.* This is a clear sign.

Threats of homicide or suicide indicate a high degree of dangerousness in an intimate

relationship (Jaffe & Schub, 2013; Stith & McMonigle, 2009). This young man followed through

on his threat.

Context remains important. Considering emerging adults in an intimate relationship send

and receive countless text messages over the course of a week, the importance of one or two

threatening texts may not be seen as a significant or dangerous. In combination with the Online

Disinhibition Effect (Suler, 2004), people say and do things in a text that they would not say and

do in person, as emerging adults have no or little no basis for comparison of acceptable or non-

acceptable behaviour due to little or no relationship experience, it is difficult to recognize one or

two texts as significant. Asynchronous communication (a feature of the Online Disinhibition

Effect) via text messages means that young people in relationships are not necessarily interacting

in real time; there could be a delay in feedback. The pendulum can swing from a hastily sent

angry text to an apologetic text.

Damnit… you were everything to me. I feel like I have nothing without you. This will be a

tough one to recover from. I'm an emotional wreck right now. Why don't you just shoot

me in the heart while you are at it?

(Day, 2013, p. 19)

Baby, I love you. This sucks for both of us, but I promise it is for the best and what we

need from this is to finally appreciate and love each other the way we should. And I need

you to know that I really do trust you, with all my heart and that you can trust me and have nothing to worry about. Everything will work out how we want it to, which will be me and you married with the cutest, happiest little family together ever.

(Day, 2013, p. 20)

Which text is the real text? The gap between - *Why don't you just shoot me in the heart while you are at it* - and - *me and you married with the cutest, happiest little family together ever* is enormous – emotionally and pragmatically. This gap indicates dissonance of both the sender (the gunman) and the receiver (his ex-girlfriend). What is evident are the strong feelings implicit in these text messages (anger, hatred, and jealousy). What is not evident is how these text messages translated into violent behaviour.

Jealousy: When Cool People Do Crazy Things

Some text messages can be unclear; however, some text messages are abundantly clear. The overwhelming tone of these text messages represents feelings of anger, hatred, and in particular, jealousy.

Well, it drives me f---ing mental that you go out to the bar all the time and never ever consider inviting me. Like I'm supposed to be the person you would want to do EVERYTHING with, yet we hardly do anything together. It sucks and hurts.

(Day, 2013, p. 2)

What the f--- is with these Calgary trips. Tell me the truth god damnit. God help me if you're f---ing some other dude. ---k this. I'm done with you. You can burn in hell. I hate you and don't want to be with you anymore.

(Day, 2013, p. 7)

While rage is evident in the content, tone, and choice of words (e.g., swearing) in these texts, jealousy appears to the strongest emotion conveyed in these messages. Jealousy and sexual jealousy are hallmarks of intimate partner violence (Kelly et al., 2011; Sinha, 2013; Stith & McMonigle, 2009; Walker, 2009). The potential for misinterpretation of text messages, the possibility of being in contact 24/7, the cloak of invisibility as well as asynchronicity have led to complexity in navigation of intimate partner relationships for emerging adults. As in generations in the past, emerging adults have little or no relationship experience upon which to make decisions about their behaviours. However, with recent generations of emerging adults, everyday ethics and guidelines regarding text messaging and online behaviour are unclear and will remain unclear. Platforms and applications (such as Tumblr, Tinder, Grindr, and Cuddlr) are being developed at an alarming rate of speed and the guidelines governing behaviour, what might or might not be acceptable lag behind. Regardless, the current conditions provide fertile ground to cultivate jealousy and potentially violence in intimate partner relationships.

Facebook is one of the most well-established, well-known, and widely used social networking sites (Bowe, 2010; Elphinston & Noller, 2011; Muise, Christofides, & Desmaris, 2009). Social media, including Facebook, is used at the highest rate by the youngest age group of adults - emerging adults aged 18-29 (Arnett, 2015). Facebook enables 24/7 access to postings of pictures enabling surveillance (and potentially electronic stalking) of a romantic partner or ex-partner's activities and communications. This has implications for emerging adults as users of Facebook. In many ways, Facebook has expanded the opportunities for cultivation of jealousy in intimate partner relationships (Bowe, 2010; Elphinston & Noller, 2011; Muise et al., 2009; Papp, Danielewicz, & Cayember, 2012), stalking (Tong, 2013) and potentially intimate partner violence (Brem, Spiller, & Vandehey, 2015). On Facebook, relationship status (single, in a

relationship, engaged, married, it's complicated, in an open relationship widowed, separated, divorced, in a civil union, in a domestic partnership) and changes in relationship status are posted. Disagreements about Facebook relationship status have a negative impact on relationship satisfaction (Papp et al., 2012).

Facebook is both visible and invisible. Pictures of parties (that you may or may not have been invited to) and postings about fun times with friends (from which you were included or excluded) are posted, updated on a continuous basis, and ready for all to see. That these can be viewed anonymously, invisibly, and repeatedly is the other side of the coin. Stalking begets jealousy.

> *Participant: I think like, another thing with violence that you see is like the jealousy thing that happens. That's the problem for a lot of couples with the Internet and Instagram and all that, it provides a bad, um, way for jealousy to happen or like, uh…Yeah! Do you know what I'm saying? There's so many ways for girls and guys to just get themselves into trouble* [laughter].
>
> *Interviewer: Pull apart jealousy a little bit…*
>
> *Participant: It makes people do crazy things. I feel like it makes them do things that are not necessarily characteristic of them.…it's hard to differentiate.*
>
> *I see it in my friends' relationships…I see it in the news a lot.*
>
> *You hear about couples and there's always this like, speculation like, she had just broken up with him, they just broke up and… Things that happen in bars and um…At the bar, hey, people make bad mistakes, or just bad decisions. I guess it's usually like, one partner, you know sometimes it's not even anything. But, like again it's that trust issue.*

It's like the controlling and it can create this jealousy that may not even be real. But then people get it built up in their heads and they go crazy.

Some of my friends, I think they're pretty cool, level-headed people but they get jealous and they just, they do like, they're stalking their boyfriend, they like, look on their Facebook accounts and they'll like, look at their texts which like, they've never done before, you know what I mean? They start doing things that are going to get them in trouble [laughter].

The roots of the meaning of the word jealous date back to the 12th through to the 14th century. Jealous meant *possessive* and *suspicious* in sexual or romantic contexts; this meaning aligns with what many would consider this word to mean today. However, jealous could also mean *fond, amorous,* and *ardent* and these meanings do not conjure thoughts of power and control. In French *(jalos)*, Latin *(zelosus, zelus),* and Greek *(zelos)* the word jealous was connected with zealous meaning anything from *keen*, *emulation*, and *rivalry* in a good sense to *avaricious* with its negative connotations. The word zeal in Biblical language meant *tolerating no unfaithfulness* (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015).

In light of the range of possible meanings of the word jealous with connotations of love (fond, amorous, keen) to undertones of control (possessive, suspicious, avaricious) it follows that emerging adults have difficulty sorting out this complex feeling in their intimate relationships. Add into the mix, the possibilities of surveillance on social media sites, *the Internet and Instagram provide a bad way for jealousy to happen.* Partners (and ex-partners) have access to details of where a person is, what they are doing, and who they are with through postings of text and pictures. Pictures evoke the strongest feelings of jealousy on Facebook (Bowe, 2010). A feedback loop exists where exposure to jealousy-provoking information about a partner on

Facebook increases jealous feelings which lead to increased surveillance of the partner's Facebook page (Muise et al., 2009). *It* [jealousy] *makes people do crazy things. I feel like it makes them do things that are not necessarily characteristic of them;* this is the manifestation of the increased jealousy, increased surveillance feedback loop. *I think they're pretty cool, level-headed people but, they get jealous and they're stalking their boyfriend, look*[ing] *on their Facebook accounts, look*[ing] *at their texts.* The increases in surveillance and jealousy can culminate in addictive checking of Facebook regarding a partner's activities and whereabouts; this online behaviour is ultimately correlated with aggression, arguments, and intimate partner violence in real life, face-to-face (Brem et al., 2015; Muise et al., 2009; Papp et al., 2012).

Stigma shows itself once again. *I see it in my friends' relationships…I see it in the news a lot. You hear about couples and there's always this like, speculation like, she had just broken up with him, they just broke up and…* This young woman is putting distance between jealousy and jealous behaviours when she speaks of her friends' relationships and she steps even further away to theoretical examples such as what is reported in the news. The dangerousness of the period of when a woman opts to leave the relationship seems to be realized by this young woman. When a woman leaves a violent intimate partner relationship, this is by far the time when she is most at risk for violence – especially homicide (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Stith & McMonigle, 2009).

Alcohol use enters the dialogue. It is as though this young woman had a sense of risk factors and was reviewing them. *Things that happen in bars and um…At the bar, hey, people make bad mistakes, or just bad decisions.* This is interesting because blame is not being placed on one partner or another or even on the consumption of alcohol; rather it is the location, the bar that seems to be the culprit.

He's like, "great, fine, go out, have fun at the bars with all your friends, go out and slut it

up, because I know that's what you always do."

(Day, 2013, p. 18)

People making bad mistakes or *bad decisions* in the bar seems to be clarified in this text as the conversation moves to what might be done in a bar in terms of *have fun* and *slut it up*. This is sexual jealousy.

The texts of the interview transcripts and the text of the transcript from W5: Road to Murder merged in the culmination of jealousy that looked like *crazy.*

It was, like, it was, I hate, I hate to say he had a crazy look in his eyes, because it sounds

so cliché, but I was actually like, 'uh-oh.' Like, that was scary. Yeah. I actually said to

her, 'One of those days, he's going to come out of that room with one of those guns, and it

is going to be it.'

(Day, 2013, pp. 18-19)

Pathological jealousy is a cornerstone of intimate partner violence; it is a leading motive for escalating violence and homicidal rage (Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Stith & McMonigle, 2009; Walker, 2009). Realization, the precursor to recognition, appears again - *it can create this jealousy that may not even be real…. people get it built up in their heads and they go crazy.* Sexual jealousy is often unfounded (Walker, 2009). In other words, jealousy is not even real; it is built up in the mind.

I have a clear and repeated memory from when I was working as a counsellor with men who had been mandated to group therapy as a result of perpetrating acts of violence against their partners, wives, or girlfriends. Many times over, a man would recount the story his abuse, the time when he lost his temper, the violence incident that lead to him being charged, convicted,

and mandated to counselling for anger management. At the end of a long and often excruciatingly painful story, he would say regretfully, "I wish I could have that five minutes back" in reference to his emotional and physical explosion and the subsequent damage he caused to the person he loved and to the person who had once loved him back. *I hate to say he had a crazy look in his eyes, because it sounds so cliché.* His anger was so big, his level of physiological arousal was so high, he was in a state of fight or flight, and he was not thinking rationally. When I think back on this, I wonder if these men, at the time of their violent incidents looked crazy; I wonder if these men had a crazy look in their eyes. Media reports from the Claresholm Murders seem to point to this possibility.

> *He lost his mind and pushed her out of a chair and he was yelling. Then we left, he was phoning her, phoning her, phoning her and said to her, 'This night's not going to end well for you, I hope you know that,' Cait McFarland told CTV News.*
>
> (Ho, 2011, p. 2)
>
> *'There has to be more to the story,' said Fry. 'He was too smart and driven for this to have happened for no reason.' 'It had to be a mix of booze and rage or something else that happened to him. But we may never know.'*
>
> (Tetley, 2011, para 19)
>
> *'This is not the Derek we knew,' said Travis Fay of Lethbridge, Alta., who was close friends with Jensen for about seven years.*
>
> (Tetley, 2011, para 4)

Summary

Emerging adults have access to technology in ways previous generations could not have imagined. They have embraced these technologies and it has profoundly affected the way they

communicate with one another. Texting in many instances has replaced talking and it enables people 24/7 access to one another. Misunderstandings in text message communication can occur related to an absence of verbal and on-verbal cues. Texting has had a significant impact on intimate partner relationships of emerging adults. While technology has enabled emerging adults to keep in close contact with one another, the other facet to this is the ease with which a partner or ex-partner can be stalked. Social media platforms and applications such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat increase the opportunities for stalking and use of these is both tempting and addictive. Despite these technologies, emerging adults' feelings of suspicion, mistrust, and jealousy in their intimate partner relationships exist, just as they did in previous generations. However, advances in and use of technology has led jealousy and sexual jealousy in ways unique to the current generation of emerging adults.

How do emerging adults understand and navigate their intimate partner relationships in the context of current and emerging technologies? Family, especially parents, matter and play significant roles. Friends of all kinds – best friends, good friends, and acquaintances – provide support. Emerging adults, their families, and their friends, live and love in to the shelter of each other.

CHAPTER TEN: IN THE SHELTER OF EACH OTHER

It is in the shelter of each other that people live.

~ Irish Proverb

Family and friends are important in the lives of emerging adults. Family and friends provide shelter for emerging adults with their support, advice, and love. Adults and parents in particular, are relationship role models. Children and teenagers are watching the adults in their lives and as emerging adults they are processing what they saw at a young age and what they are currently seeing. This keen observation of intimate partner relationships is not confined to adults and parents. Emerging adults are not only watching their friends in their intimate partner relationships but they are also actively involved in supporting and advising these same friends.

Loving Parents, Divorced Parents, Many Parents

Participant: You know when you are in a [family] *relationship with two very loving parents, you know, who don't really fight very much, and might have the occasional argument but, that's fine but, they otherwise treat each other with a great deal of love and respect you also begin to understand that a relationship is like that. This is what a normal, healthy relationship looks like.*

The very first relationship is the relationship children have with their parents. Parents are in a relationship with each other and their children are closely watching this relationship. Parents show children what an intimate partner relationship *looks like* before children have words to identify or describe this type of relationship. Modelling is the strongest form of reinforcement. If parents *don't really fight very much* and *treat each other with a great deal of love and respect,* an understanding of this as a *normal, healthy relationship* is translated to children. Seeds for the understanding of what an intimate partner relationship looks like are sown by parents. "For better

or for worse, their parents have contributed mightily toward shaping the persons they have become in emerging adulthood" (Arnett, 2015, p. 82). Arnett (2015) used the phrase *for better or for worse*; this phrase is often used in the context of marriage where the partners stay together despite positive or negative circumstances.

> *Participant: I find it really interesting that the people, where their parents divorced, don't want to get married strictly for that reason. Because it was so bad….when you see a really bad divorce …then it almost scares you because when you see really bad relationships all the time that's all you know, it scares you to even have one. That's why people that grow up with their parents that are really, really* [in a] *healthy relationship, all the time, they don't really fight, they love each other a lot, they tend to have more successful relationships. I know a lot of people that their parents are divorced and they had really unsuccessful relationships. It's what you grew up seeing. You saw it. You see healthy, you'll be healthy. You see unhealthy, you'll be unhealthy. It's monkey see, monkey do.*

Parents are the original role models for their children. *Monkey see, monkey do* is alluding to imitation or copying behaviour. It seems like a simplistic conclusion, but is it? In Canada, 40% of marriages end in divorce (Milan, 2013). *It's what you grew up seeing. You saw it.* Canadian children and ultimately, emerging adults are witnessing a significant number of marriages ending in divorce. Aside from parents, divorce may be witnessed in the in the relationships of extended family members and close friends. Children, teenagers, and emerging adults are seeing divorce; this has an impact on their view of intimate partner relationships.

This young man was referred to *successful* and *unsuccessful* relationships, *healthy* and *unhealthy* relationships. This is a dichotomous way expressing beliefs; it is clear, direct, and

simple. However, the context of a divorce is never simple. What led up to the divorce, what happened after the divorce, and what was witnessed in the parents' relationship in the time (months, years) prior to the divorce are variables that have likely had a great impact. These diverse and individual experiences are what leave a mark on the hearts and minds of emerging adults. Divorce has the impact of a range of potential legacies for emerging adults including emotional pain, a diminished role of the father, feelings of relief, or ambivalence (Arnett, 2015). Based on the range of conditions under which a divorce might occur, the potential impact on emerging adults is variable. It is possible that the dissolution of a marriage (and subsequent remarriages) results in an increased support network involving more than just two parents for emerging adults.

> *Participant: I have so many parents that…it's too many examples…My mom and* [her partner] *and then my dad remarried. So, I have those two and then um,* [step sister's name]*, her father…I see him as a parent and now, I mean recently, I moved in with my boyfriend…For almost a year and so, his dad has been kind of like a* [parent]…
> *Interviewer: So you have lots of parents.*
> *Participant: Yeah, so many examples to follow and I think my role* [models] *have been quite spectacular … I've been exposed to so many different types of relationships and um, they're all very different but they're all pretty healthy. And so it's, that's allowed me kind of see what a relationship should be like and base my expectations off of that. Whereas some of my friends, their parents are fighting all the time and divorced when they were older so they remember. And they, they see that contempt between their parents and that's not good because they see a role model for what relationships should be in their mind but um, and that's what they form their relationships on after.*

This emerging adult counted at least six adults as her parents. I had a sense that she was open to acquiring additional parents, should the opportunity present itself. She has *so many examples to follow* and these role models in relationships *have been quite spectacular.* The legacy of divorce has worked in this young woman's favour. She has witnessed a constellation of examples of adult intimate partner relationships. She has been *exposed to so many different types of relationships* and like a buffet she can pick and choose from these examples of what might work for her in her intimate partner relationships. Clearly, for this young woman, the dissolution of her parents' marriage resulted in the expansion of her view of what might be possible and what is healthy in intimate partner relationships. The legacy of the divorce of her biological parents has led to a reconfiguration of relationships in which she feels she comes out as the clear winner, with six parents.

While parents have a significant influence on emerging adults related to intimate partner relationships, other family members are a part of the mix. Extended family, including uncles and sisters, also play roles in the lives of emerging adults.

Two Uncles and a Sister

Participant: They didn't like him [her ex-boyfriend] - *my uncles especially. Man, they weed out the bad ones... Oh man, my uncles, they weed out the bad ones.*

Participant and Interviewer: [laughter]

Participant: They were so rude.

Interviewer: To him?

Participant: Uh, huh and he took it bad. That should've been my first sign. Because my boyfriend that I have now, he cracked a joke right back, that was just equally as rude [laughter] *and then it was awful - and now they're buddies.*

Uncles occupy a unique place in an extended family. They are not as old as Grandpa, they are definitely not Dad but they are adults usually around Dad's age. Some uncles may be role models offering different perspectives based on different life experiences. Uncles often have grown up in the same family of origin as Dad or Mom so there may be some shared experience with that; there is the possibility of some shared values obtained from the extended family. Uncles do not shoulder the burden of being a parent and setting limits; they may have latitude to be playful, caring, and edgy. Uncles *weed out the bad ones; they were so rude*. Like unwanted dandelions in a garden, bad boyfriends may be weeded out by uncles first, by being identified as such and second, by being removed so an emerging adult can grow and flourish. It is important to rid the emerging adult's life of the bad boyfriend by the roots. When a weed is pulled up and out by the roots this results in no re-seeding. There are no longer any seeds for the weeds; there is no ability to take hold.

This young woman also noted how her ex-boyfriend responded to her uncle's rude comment - *that should've been my first sign* - she realized that she missed something; she missed a sign. The purpose of a sign is to point away from itself; to do this, it must first draw attention, be striking, and show itself as an indicator (Gadamer, 1960/1975). She missed a sign but her uncles saw a sign from her ex-boyfriend. A sign

> should not attract attention to itself in such a way that one lingers over it, for it is there
> only to make present something that is absent and to do so in such a way that the absent
> thing, and that alone, comes to mind. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. 145)

A sign is an indicator of an absent thing; a sign makes present something that is absent. The uncles were seeing an indicator; they were seeing something that their niece was not seeing – she was missing both the sign and what it might represent. Intimate partner violence is often unseen

and unheard. Signs are missed. Family members help emerging adults come around to see the signs. Interestingly, the reverse may also be true. While an uncle may see the signs of a bad boyfriend on behalf of his niece, in this next instance, a nephew was seeing signs of a bad girlfriend and letting his uncle know of these observations.

Participant: …One of my uncles isn't married and he's always had bad girlfriends.

Participant and Interviewer: [laughter]

Participant: So that's, yeah, um, yeah, it's just mostly friends and stuff but, um, yeah, I don't know. I'm trying to say something that isn't super obvious, here…

Interviewer: How did you know that your uncle had bad girlfriends?

Participant: Oh. [long pause]

Interviewer: Were you a little boy?

Participant: Yeah, I was younger and I don't know, I just, 'cause she would always ah, her, he would always manage to get girls, well, women, I suppose, that would um, act completely differently, behind his back, than to his face. Um, and yeah, I would always try to tell him, 'Hey, hey uncle, uh, you know, your girlfriend isn't actually as nice as she seems …and he'd always just brush it off, kind of, 'You don't know anything you're just a kid'. Uh, well, then, he'd be like, 'Sorry, you were right'. Um, but, yeah, it…

Interviewer: It sounds like it happened more than once.

Participant: Oh, yeah, it happened three or four times in ah, the same amount of years, I suppose, um, yeah, it, I suppose, yeah, like that's the thing, people would always, not always, but people often end up in relationships with the same sort of people. So, like you know… I guess they're kind of high risk people for those sorts of relationships and I guess yeah, the problem isn't just getting rid of one problem relationship and hoping the

next one isn't as bad because well, if people are attracted to that specific type of person

and that specific type of person is a problem person then they'll just be jumping from one

bad relationship into the next and that's not really an answer, is it?

As a child, this emerging adult told his uncle that his girlfriend would *act completely*

differently, behind his back, than to his face. This incongruence was picked up by the young boy

while his uncle was seemingly oblivious. Something that occurs behind one's back is obviously

difficult to see, from a pragmatic point of view. More than that though, it is typically something

that is secret, covert, or difficult to know. When something is occurring face-to-face it is clearly

seen and likely also more easily heard. Facing up to something involves coming to accept it and

deal with the consequences that are connected with it. Families (e.g., a nephew) see things that a

person (e.g., uncle) in an intimate relationship may not see in their partner. As an extension,

family members can be a spare pair of eyes and possibly ears.

This young man also laid out recognition of a pattern of behaviour, *people often end up in*

relationships with the same sort of people and further, *they're kind of high risk people for those*

sorts of relationships. His uncle had three or four of these relationships with bad girlfriends in as

many years and he witnessed these relationships as well as this pattern. The movement away

from speaking specifically about his uncle to use of pronoun *they* indicates some application to

relationships other than that of his uncle, possibly his peers - other emerging adults – as in *they'll*

just be jumping from one bad relationship into the next. If a pattern of behaviour is being

noticed, family members can indeed provide a protective factor seeing with their eyes and

hearing with their ears signals that are being missed by the person in the relationship. Family

members may have a special closeness and established longer-term relationships with emerging

adults that others, such as friends, may not. This closeness and these relationships enable family to detect patterns of behaviour.

Sometimes a sibling, such as a sister, offers guidance:

Participant: He [her younger brother] *was at the C-Train station and trying to knock the glass out with his bare hands, too. Before, when we were still on talking terms, he would be screaming at the top of his lungs in a public place saying you know like, 'I do everything for her, it's because I love her so much' and I'm like, 'No you don't' and I was like, 'This is not what people in love do to each other, they don't hurt public property' and better yet, 'They don't hurt each other.'*

The importance of closeness and a relationship was emphasized, *before, when we were still on talking terms.* As his sister, she occupied a special position to be able communicate with her brother about his abusive behaviour with his girlfriend. The tenuous nature of this close relationship was also revealed with her use of the word, *before.* At the time of the interview, this young woman had become estranged from her brother as a result of his abusive behaviour, first with his girlfriend, and later with their mother and father. *Before* implies something occurring previously; it was indiscernible as to whether before meant before the culmination of many abusive incidents over time or before one major abusive incident. Regardless, this young woman provided clear messages to her brother when he indicated his angry outbursts were related to his unbridled love for girlfriend. She corrected his perception; *this is not what people in love do to each other, they don't hurt public property and better yet, they don't hurt each other.* It is interesting to see the word *hurt* used in terms of people and public property such as the glass on the C-train station. The young woman's brother was trying to smash a window pane with his

bare hands. Usually the word damage is used related to property and the word hurt is a feeling and so it is used more commonly where people are concerned.

Hurt is rooted in meanings dating back to the 12th century. As a noun it means both "a wound, an injury" as well as "sorrow, lovesickness"; these meanings represent physical and emotional pain. As a verb, it also contains two meanings in terms of injuring or wounding the body, feelings, or reputation and to stumble, bump, charge, or crash into something (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015). The double meanings inherent in the etymology of the word hurt are manifested in the text as this young woman advises her brother not to hurt public property such as the C-Train glass as well as people such as his girlfriend.

I am a guest lecturer at a local university and I speak to nursing students on the topic of screening for intimate partner violence. One of the learning strategies I use is showing the video *Love the Way You Lie* by Eminem and Rihanna (Mathers, Grant, & Haferman, 2010). The lyrics of this song and graphics in this video effectively demonstrate Walker's (1979, 2009) Cycle of Violence and many of the contextual factors (alcohol use, jealousy, make up sex) that surround how this cycle plays out over the course an intimate partner relationship between two emerging adults. Violence is portrayed throughout this video as Eminem puts his fist through the drywall and breaks a mirror in the apartment he shares with his intimate partner, played by Megan Fox. He also shakes, pins down, and slaps Megan Fox in addition to brutally beating up a man he believes may be flirting with his partner. Essentially, Eminem *hurts* both property and people just like the brother of this young woman that I interviewed. The text from the interview with the young woman, etymological roots of the word hurt, and a song/video in popular culture suggest that property and people really are hurt as violence plays out in intimate relationships. Family

offers shelter in terms of gentle guidance away from hurting and being hurt. Support is also found in *adults who aren't your parents*.

Adults Who Aren't Your Parents

> *Participant: I know I have lots of people who would be supportive of me. So, I think that's really important. Yeah, well, friends and adults, I think both. Adults who aren't your parents, I think, even if your parents are good parents, but my parents are also parents but, it's still nice to have support from an adult like* [supportive adult's name]. *It's like* [she] *can give me an adult perspective but I don't feel like she's my parent.*

> *Interviewer: You're not being judged or pressured or she's not going to discipline you?*

> *Participant: Yeah. Exactly. I think that's important.*

Even if your parents are good parents, there is something significant about getting support from someone other than your parents. Parental support is acknowledged; it is almost taken for granted. Support from adults who *aren't your parents* occupied a unique place for this young woman. There is a notion of being at arm's length, *[she] can give me an adult perspective but I don't feel like she's my parent.* While the utility of support from parents was consistently acknowledged by the emerging adults in this study, there is some freedom associated with an adult offering a fresh perspective with no strings attached. There are other adults, in the lives of emerging adults, who are not parents and whose job it is to support them.

> *Participant: Then I got another message from him saying if you don't… What did it say? If you don't leave us alone or something like that um, I'm going to beat you with a baseball bat and that* [long pause] *scared me. Because…*[long pause]

> *Interviewer: That's obvious physical violence. That's a threat.*

Participant: …so I went to my counsellor, I alerted her, I alerted my parents, and um, all my friends, so they knew, they were watching.

This young woman received a threat on Facebook from her ex-boyfriend. She had been corresponding on Facebook with his current girlfriend and he reacted to this correspondence with the threat. What was once invisible, occurring solely in the digital world, shifted for this young woman after the threat was posed. The threat of being beaten with a baseball bat was real and powerful enough to move this young woman to take action. She *alerted* her counsellor, her parents, and her friends and they went from not knowing and not watching to knowing and watching. Being alert involves closely watching out for someone, being vigilant and aware for that other person. This participant sought shelter in her counsellor, her parents, and her friends. Their job was watching out for this young woman and remaining vigilant on her behalf. Parents, other family members, and adults such as family friends and counsellors provide shelter for emerging adults as they navigate the fair weather and foul weather of intimate partner relationships. Friends also play a significant role in sheltering emerging adults from violence.

Best Friends, Good Friends, and Acquaintances

Participant: I'm a very up-front guy, I would just be like, 'Yo, I think you need to reassess this whole thing because it does not look good'… I couldn't just sit there. Even if it wasn't somebody who I was like, best friends with, just a good friend. I probably wouldn't really say much to somebody directly if I was just acquainted to them but, I'd bring it up with a friend of theirs …or something. Because it's not, I feel like if it's not really as much my business but, I mean. That being said, also, if I saw some guy hitting his girlfriend in front of a Tim Horton's, I wouldn't just let that go either.

The nimble movement in this text from best friend to good friend to acquaintance and even stranger (e.g., *some guy*) is compelling. It is not surprising that this young man self-identifies as an *up-front guy*. He would absolutely do something if he thought one of his best friends or good friends was in a violent relationship. In a circular manner, if the person were an acquaintance, he would take it up with a friend of a friend. At the other end of the range, if it were a total stranger, in public, he would also address it. Up-front is conjures up a clear image of something being seen. It is the opposite of being behind the back. Up-front is visible, out in the open, and there are connotations of honesty. Having a friend who is an up-front guy is a protective factor related to intimate partner violence. He is alert and watching as well as ready to take action if something *does not look good.*

> *Participant: That is one thing, another thing I learned about myself is like, you can judge people for being in these unhealthy relationships and then like, you can be in one, and you still go through those bad habits yourself and then you look at yourself and you're like, 'That's me I'm doing that exact thing that I tell those people* [not to]*'.*
> *Interviewer: It's hard to recognize yourself in it?*
> *Participant: It's hard – yeah, exactly. That probably is another thing you'd tell somebody – it's not always that obvious and it's not so black and white like, you know. I had like two friends say something* [laughter]. *Like, I knew it, obviously, but, when other people are like… 'Wake up'…*
> *Interviewer and Participant:* [laughter]
> *Participant: ...But like, they, um, it's hard because they, like…He was their friend too, they know he's a good guy. They just don't… You know, you don't like to see your friends…being mistreated.*

Although we were specifically discussing intimate partner violence during this part of the interview, it was as though the participant needed to remain arm's length from this topic. There was a sense that violence was in the conversation but *unhealthy relationships* and *bad habits* were the phrases used to name what was going on. She identified though that recognizing a violent relationship is *not so black and white* and the dance of her choice of words around this distinction mirrored this meaning. *Black and white* indicates that there is a clear distinction; it either is or it is not. She chose grey words (e.g., *unhealthy relationships, bad habits*) to show that the distinction is not clear between and what is an unhealthy and a violent intimate partner relationship. Friends are alert and when two friends told her to, *wake up,* even though she *knew it, obviously,* some recognition occurred. Friends *wake up* friends to what they are seeing their relationships, they are hastening recognition of violence.

The switching of pronouns throughout this text, from *I* to *you* to *they* made it difficult to identify who this young woman was talking about; she moved from herself to her friends and back to herself again. This is not distinct; the text is moving into another grey area in terms of who is involved and what their behaviour might be. This young woman concluded with, *it's hard because they, like…He was their friend too, they know he's a good guy. They just don't… You know, you don't like to see your friends…being mistreated.* At this point, it was hard to discern if she was talking about herself, her friends, or the *good guy* who was being violent. Friends can see the black and white of a violent relationship of their friend and they make it known.

> Participant: I mean it's so important to have friends to bounce your ideas off because friends are on the outside and love is blind - so friends can see what you can't. And there have been times when my friends are saying, like with that one dude, none of my friends liked him. And I was like, 'Why don't you like him? He's a great guy.' I was missing

something. And they caught on and I didn't listen to them in time. So…friends are a big thing in communicating that…

The phrase *love is blind* was unpacked earlier in this dissertation in a sub-section exploring senses and sensing; this was part of a larger section on recognition, stigma, and realization of violence in intimate partner relationships. Friends are a protective factor in the blindness brought on by love because *friends can see what you can't.* Not only do the friends see things, they offer their opinions; in this case, they told this young woman that they did not like her boyfriend. Friends of emerging adults lend their senses and share their sensibility with one another.

The rhetoric of *he's a great guy* circles back to the chapter, 'He Seemed like Such a Nice Guy' found earlier in this dissertation and ultimately, to the topic of this research study. This young woman recognized that her friends were occupying a special position *on the outside* of her intimate partner relationship. With the benefit of this objective position on the outside, her friends *caught on* while she was still *missing something.* Her friends figured it out; they realized and recognized before she did, that her boyfriend was not necessarily a great guy. While this realization and recognition by friends of an emerging adult is important, the critical next step is communication. The significant role friends' play was acknowledged by this young woman; *friends are a big thing in communicating that.* Friends of emerging adults shelter one another from the storms in relationships by lending their senses and sharing their insights.

Summary

Navigating the maze that is intimate partner relationships requires deftness and competence of emerging adults; they are acquiring attributes and building skills along the way. Family and friends provide guidance and support enabling emerging adults to maneuver the

twists and turns of these relationships. Parents are particularly important in terms of being the original relationship role models. Other family members such as uncles and siblings are also significant. Adults who are not parents or family members advise and guide emerging adults; they may also unknowingly be acting as role models under the watchful eye of children and teenagers who eventually grow into emerging adults who look back on what they observed and draw their own conclusions. Friends - whether they are best friends, good friends, or acquaintances - are important. Friends provide a sounding board, advice, support, and reality checks. Good friends are up-front and will tell you to 'Wake up,' they will tell you what they really think and what you really need to hear. People, including family and friends, in the lives of emerging adults provide shelter. There is a dynamic of mutuality; we live in the shelter of each other.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: ONWARD

Emerging adults are in a life stage where they are forming their identity. One of the areas in which they are settling into their beliefs and values is love and relationships. They do this in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them, including their friends and families. One of the sites of adult education is informal learning. Informal learning is incidental, often non-intentional, and occurs in the activities of everyday life. Although adult education occurs over the span of the life of an adult, emerging adults, those aged 18 to 29 are in a life stage where they are working on and working out their beliefs about intimate relationships. Relationships are the activities of everyday life for emerging adults. This is a critical time for emerging adults to informally learn about what might be acceptable or not acceptable in relationships. This is a critical time for emerging adults to informally learn about what might constitute a healthy, unhealthy, and or violent relationship. When I worked as a counsellor in groups of men or women some of whom who had been mandated to psychoeducational group therapy and others who attended voluntarily, for intimate partner violence prevention, I heard this statement: "I wish I had learned all of this before now." The men and women attending the group counselling were typically aged 30 to 70 years. These men and women had wished they had learned about healthy and non-violent intimate partner relationships when they were younger, possibly when they were emerging adults.

Emerging adulthood is a time that is ripe for informal learning; it is the time the men and women in my group therapy sessions may have been referring to as "before now." While it is adequate to acquire this learning in a psychoeducational group after being involved in a violent relationship – any time is a good time to learn about healthy relationships – learning this before such a relationship and the fallout that comes from this is even better timing. Emerging

adulthood is the time to learn and learn well about intimate partner relationships. It is the time to recognize, realize, and remember what not only violence looks like but also what coping with strong emotions such as jealousy, disrespect, disappointment and of course, anger involves. It is these big feelings that often lead to violence. The repercussions of violent behaviour stemming from strong emotions includes failed relationships, profound unhappiness, depression, suicide, homicide, drug addiction, alcohol addiction, and the legacy of passing all of this on the children witnessing this human tragedy. It is critical to learn about healthy relationships as an emerging adult. Adult education and adult learning are potentially powerful forces. Prior to exploring implications for this study, I will identify several limitations.

Limitations

Limitations are conditions that restrict the scope or affect the outcome of a study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). At this point, several limitations immediately come to mind: using a qualitative approach with a hermeneutic design, the interview process, using two sources of data, and working a sole researcher. One limitation of hermeneutics is that findings from this study will not be generalizable. Indeed, this is not the point of a study of this nature. Rather, the findings are meant to add to and expand the understanding and discourse of intimate partner violence. In particular, with hermeneutics, the interpretations (or findings) are meant to keep the topic in the process of being interpreted. This limitation is paradoxical. While as the researcher, I am meant to present what I have found in writing and verbally, the point of doing so is to extend interpretations. It is a fluid process rendering generalizability to be almost irrelevant. "Interpretation does not simply end; it offers a plausible and prudent response to something, but it does not offer a final answer" (Moules et al., p. 135).

The limitation of interviews as a method of data collection also requires scrutiny. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) contextualized the limitations of interviewing in the context of power asymmetry. The interviewer asks the questions, the interviewee responds; the interviewer guides the interview process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To a degree, these assertions held true for my study. Certainly, I initiated the first questions in the interview process. However, the interviews were semi-structured, as they unfolded I took cues from participants and followed up with questions and comments based on what the participants were saying. My grounding in adult education including remaining cognizant of relational practice, a humanistic way of being, and a critical theoretical lens counter-balanced some of the power asymmetry. However, nothing could change the fact that I am older than my participants. I have completed 11 years of post-secondary education at a university. Generally, I was making the decisions about the interview including, when it began and ended, as well as the questions that were being posed.

Two data sources were used in this research study, interviews and documents including media reports from the Claresholm Murders. Interviews are commonly used as a data source in hermeneutic research (Moules et al., 2015). Written documents, including news reports in print and online are also legitimate data sources in qualitative studies. They tend to be easily accessible, provide historical and contextual dimensions, and enrich understanding (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Using multiple methods of data collection strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings (Ulin et al., 2005). However, in this study, I needed to continuously remain cognizant of the two data sources during the interpretive process. The interview data lent itself seamlessly to interpretation. The data from media reports contained hidden gems but, much of it was repetitive. In particular, in the days following the Claresholm Murders it was as though stories in the media were repeated and built on as one or two fresh

details emerged. In this research study, I focused almost exclusively on the voices of the emerging adults in the media reports. While I appreciate the journalistic ethics and integrity of most of the reporters most of the time, I wondered about the accuracy of what was being reported. I needed to view the media reports with scrutiny and vigilance. With the interview data, I was there, I transcribed the interviews, I read and re-read transcripts, and I re-listened to the interviews later in the data analysis phase to enliven my interpretations. With the media reports, I was not there. I was relying on a reporter's version of emerging adults' understandings of the events of the Claresholm Murders. There was at least one person (a reporter) and maybe more (an editor) in between myself and the emerging adults quoted in the stories in the media. I acutely felt this distance as I read and re-read the data from media reports. While I could still *touch* the text as I was meant to be doing in hermeneutic data generation, I could not *feel* the text in the same way in the media reports as I could in the interviews I conducted. Simply put, the limitation was that I was not nearly as close to the media reports as I was to the interviews.

As a doctoral student, I am required to work by myself (with the supportive guidance of a supervisor). Research is often conducted in groups. I shared pieces of my initial interpretive writing with three people in the process of data generation. I discussed some of my interpretations with these three people. This process of being a sole researcher was necessary for the completion of this study and this graduate degree but it was limited (and lonely, at times). I would have appreciated and been enriched by colleagues' instrumental help, research experience, insights, and interpretations throughout this study.

Implications

Adult education has a tradition that is rooted in socialism and humanism. A study situated in the field of adult education demands that there are implications in the real world, right here,

and right now. Critical theory demands that injustices such as intimate partner violence be examined, scrutinized, and named. Inherent in this is that something will be done to address what has been named and uncovered. There is a social justice aspect to research involving adult education and critical theory. Implications for education, practice, policy, and research will be offered. I believe it is important to approach these implications with optimism and hope that change will come about. "Yes, I am very skeptical of every kind of pessimism, I find in all pessimism a certain lack of sincerity. …Because no one can live without hope" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 83).

Implications for Adult Education

The participants in this study shared a great deal with me including their unfolding beliefs about intimate partner relationships, their challenges in recognizing unhealthy and violent behaviours in relationships, and the fluidity of movement between healthy, unhealthy, and violent relationships in emerging adulthood. Not surprisingly, I learned valuable lessons in the process of this research. However, I am less sure now about what I thought I knew about intimate partner violence. While the literature on the topic of intimate partner violence is informative, there is no substitute for sitting alongside an emerging adult and discussing their experiences of intimate relationships in the context of their lives and the lives of their peers. The complexity of what was shared with me, at times, was difficult to put into words. It was as though, at times, during the interview, I was witness to some participants grappling with their beliefs as they circled toward what they had said at one moment and later seemingly contradicted or simply provided an update on a previously articulated belief. Perhaps these were examples of identity exploration, in process. With this is the background, I consider a provocative question regarding implications for adult education as a result of this research study. What if adult

education strategies aimed at identifying and ultimately preventing intimate partner violence reflected emerging adults' ambiguity regarding beliefs, difficulty with recognizing violence, and fluid movement among healthy, unhealthy, and violent relationships?

Educational materials regarding intimate partner violence are often text-based and tend to categorize violence into distinct categories (such as psychological, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse). There are clearly outlined boxes so people can easily identify if they are or are not being abused and if they are or are not in a healthy relationship. Tips are listed to help people know if they are in a violent relationship; additional tips are presented regarding seeking help to get out of the relationship (Government of Alberta, 2008, 2011, 2013; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014a, 2014b). While these educational materials are a reasonable start much more could be done.

The findings in this research study do not reflect clarity of these educational resources. The findings reflected that intimate relationships among emerging adults can be messy, confusing, troubling, fun, and complex and that the movement between these states is fluid and dynamic. I believe strategies to address intimate partner violence in the lives of emerging adults needs to mirror the mess, confusion, trouble, fun, and complicated nature of these relationships. The findings in this study did not clearly delineate intimate partner violence into discrete categories. I assert that, based on this study, there is quite a bit occurring outside the categories and between the lines of boxes indicating what is and is not violence.

One participant immediately comes to mind. This young woman spoke to going on the birth control pill, even though she did not really want to because her friend had warned her about the possibility of this young man forcing himself on her sexually and she experienced her boyfriend as being pressurey. Is this psychological and/or potential sexual abuse? Is this a young

woman grappling with the decision to become sexually active with her boyfriend? Who knows the answer to these contrasting questions? Who gets to decide what the answer is to these questions? What is it about this that really matters in the context of informing educational strategies to address emerging adults and intimate partner violence?

Meeting this mess in all its uncertainty and ambiguity could be an alternative strategy. What would it look like if the educational strategies were uncertain and ambiguous? What if the educational strategies were open and fluid? What if the educational strategies involved the young person experiencing the strategy to interpret and critically reflect on what was being offered? What if the educational strategies involved pictures, graphics and art, instead of text and words?

Educational strategies involving pictures, graphics, and art would be situated in adult learning. These strategies would look like Mezirow's transformative learning theory (2000, 2009). A provocative graphic would be a stimulus for a disorientating dilemma and the accompanying requisite stew of feelings (fear, anger, guilt, shame), followed by critical reflection, trying out new roles and actions, and then building these to the point of re-integration. These strategies would reflect Paolo Freire's (1970a, 1970b, 2000) ideas of conscientization and would be designed to develop awareness among emerging adults with the possibility of collective social action. It would reflect hermeneutics, a horizon might be seen, and an opening to a new and temporal understanding could emerge. Resulting conversations would extend what it means to be in an intimate partner relationship as an emerging adult.

The voices of emerging adults are not particularly loud and clear in the literature regarding media campaigns and intervention strategies regarding intimate partner violence (Cismaru, Jensen, & Lavack, 2010; Cismaru & Lavack, 2011; West, 2013; WHO, 2010; WHO, United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, United Nations Development Program, 2014). This

study could represent a beginning for hearing and heeding the the voices of young people. I believe this effect could be multiplied. An advertising campaign featuring a picture and a brief piece of text in the actual voices of each one of the emerging adults in this study might be compelling. A poster online or in print could be created using a provocative graphic accompanied by one brief key phrase from each participant as follows:

- *It's ok to be single*

- *It's never good to be by yourself*

- *He was just sort of pressurey*

- *Jealousy, it makes cool people do crazy things*

- *Snapchat is just a really bad idea*

- *Violence is silent*

- *Love is blind*

- *He threw a rock through my window*

- *I've heard stories about rape and stuff*

Several key phrases from media documents could also be used, as follows:

- *He seemed like such a nice guy*

- *We didn't see it coming*

- *This is not the* [fill in a name] *we knew*

Graphics accompanying this text would purposefully be ambiguous, less clear, and laced with innuendo; the person taking in the advertisement would have to think. This would represent a push against the tide of the media rhetoric. The underlying philosophy of an ad campaign would reflect adult learning in terms of facilitating transformative learning (Mezirow 2003, 2009) and conscientization (Freire, 1970a, 1970b, 2000).

Implications for Practice

Dissemination and sharing of the findings of this research with practitioners in the practice of education, nursing, social work, counselling, and psychology is an important first step when considering implications for practice. The practitioners can then make decisions about what they might do and what they might change in their practice as a result of knowing and considering the findings in the context of their practice.

My initial application to graduate studies involved a proposed study about nurses and screening practices related to for intimate partner violence. I have used these practices and taught nurses and nursing students about screening practices. A universal screening practice involves asking standardized questions. An example of what is currently being used across practice settings in the health region is:

> Violence and the threat of violence in the home is a problem for many and can affect
> their health. Abuse has many forms: physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, financial and
> neglect. We ask all patients and families about maltreatment and violence in their lives. Is
> this a concern for you or your children? (Alberta Health Services, 2013, p. 13)

As a result of this research study, I am considering screening practices grounded in ambiguity. This is absolutely counter-intuitive to what is traditionally done. The utility of a broad-based assessment of mental health with integration of choice(s) around the specific question(s) that might be asked of a patient or client regarding relationship violence could be warranted based on the findings of this study. The practitioner whether he or she was an educator, nurse, or social worker would need to be nimble and interpretive in their practice. In essence, a hermeneutic approach grounded in relational practice to screening for relationship violence could be trialed. A project such as this would absolutely be done in a collaborative, mindful, and deliberate manner

with input from all parties invested in the processes and the outcomes. This implication for practice represents the seed of a possible idea.

Implications for Policy

Policy and funding would need to be in place to develop, plan, roll out, and evaluate creative and provocative strategies in the areas of adult education and practice in the disciplines such as education, nursing, and social work. Support from provincial and federal governments would be an asset. A more realistic starting place would be support from local agencies already establishing in the violence community such as the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective. For the future, support from boards of education such as the Calgary Catholic School District and the Calgary Board of Education would be an asset. This would represent upstream thinking as the age group prior to emerging adulthood could become part of a coordinated strategy involving intervention prior to involvement in an intimate partner relationship. Ultimately, a person or a group of people in positions of power and influence need to have the will to disrupt the discourse. Identifying this person or these groups of people, essentially stakeholders with a vested interest in violence prevention, occupying powerful positions would be an initial step in this process.

Implications for Research

Based on the literature review of this study, more qualitative research studies in the area of emerging adults and intimate partner relationships and violence in particular is warranted. It will be important to begin to categorize intimate relationships. There are no longer a few simple categories such as short term (one night stand) and longer term (dating, living together, marriage). Rather there exists a range of shorter-term intimate relationships including one night stands, booty calls, friends with benefits, and other emerging casual sexual relationships. The

literature reflects description and some definition of these but next steps might include

delineations between intimate and sexual relationships. Additionally, I was unable to locate

studies exploring violence between partners in these relationships. Investigating healthy,

unhealthy, and violent behaviours in the context of these short term casual sexual relationships is

warranted. The spectrum of casual sexual relationships is expanding so research into harm and

risks (such as violence) as well as benefits attached with being involved in these relationships

would be illuminating. Is there such a thing as a healthy booty call or friends with benefits

relationship? What are the differences between and intimate partner relationships and casual

sexual relationships? Are casual sexual relationships between emerging adults more apt to

involve jealousy and/or violence? Are there gender differences related to involvement in and

beliefs regarding casual sexual relationships and intimate partner relationship? How do emerging

adults understand casual sexual relationships? What informal learning strategies are instrumental

in educating emerging adults about the differences and/or similarities between casual sexual

relationships and intimate partner relationships? What adult education strategies might be

facilitated to educate emerging adults regarding the risks and benefits of these relationships?

As a related but separate topic, consent to sexual activities needs to be deconstructed. The

findings of studies regarding the meaning(s) of consent need to be shared and disseminated with

emerging adults, parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, sexual health educators, teachers,

public health nurses, social workers, family doctors, government/policy makers, and counsellors.

In summary, the voices of emerging adults need to become louder in the research

literature regarding intimate partner violence. Strategies to address relationship violence need to

be based, at least in part, based on these voices, their words, and their meanings - all the possible

meanings. Multiple strategies designed to meet the diverse needs of adult learners should be

developed and evaluated. This could involve formal or informal learning. Formal learning such as curriculum designed to meet the needs of emerging adults in post-secondary for their personal and professional development related to the discipline they are learning. Informal learning might occur as a result of the strategy around an ambiguous advertising campaign in the previous section "Implications for Adult Education." A provocative advertising campaign could mimic gaining valuable life experience as a simulation – if and when the advertisement makes an impact not just a cognitive but an emotional level.

Insights and Understandings

What man needs is not just the persistent posing of ultimate questions, but the sense of what is feasible, what is possible, what is correct, here and now. The philosopher, of all people, must, I think, be aware of the tension between what he claims to achieve and the reality in which he finds himself. (Gadamer, 1960/1975, p. xxxiv)

While I consider myself, in the context of this work, a researcher perhaps rather than the philosopher that Gadamer is referring to, I am acutely aware of *the reality in which I find myself.* The emerging adults in this study taught me a great deal. The texts generated from interviews with these vibrant, engaging, ambiguous, generous, funny, reflective, serious, and intense young people caused me a depth of reflection, consideration, interpretation, and ultimately understanding that I never could have imagined at the outset of this research study. This temporal understanding, situated in a sliver of time, is as changeable as the responses of the emerging adults were to my questions and prompts during the interview process. The range of media reports from short sound bites to longer in-depth pieces added colour and details but needed to be considered with a jaundiced eye. Although I could continue to pose questions about intimate partner violence, I am more interested *in what is feasible, what is possible, what is correct, here*

and now. "Learning is not confined, nor does it reside, within the boundaries of formal education environments. Indeed, although these can be tremendous sites of learning, lifelong experiences and the opportunities for learning from our experiences are often our greatest teachers" (Groen & Kawalilak, 2014, p. 5). I believe adult learning in the context of the everyday life experiences and love experiences of emerging adults holds the key to what is possible, here and now.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Lynn Corcoran RN, PhD (Candidate)
Faculty of Education
Graduate Division of Educational Research

Supervisor:

Colleen Kawalilak PhD
Faculty of Education

Title of Project: He Seemed Like Such a Nice Guy: Young Adults' Understandings of Intimate Partner Violence

Sponsor: Not applicable

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

Young adults aged 18 to 29 years are in a stage of life where they are figuring out their beliefs about close relationships. Sometimes, it is difficult to recognize when a relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend goes from healthy to unhealthy or unhealthy to violent. In order to prevent violence, it is important for young adults to recognize shifts, in their own relationships and those of their friends. The purpose of this study is to explore young adults' understandings of violence in romantic relationships.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed by the researcher about your

understandings of health, unhealthy, and violent romantic relationships. Questions will be asked such as: In your opinion, what does a healthy/unhealthy/violent relationship look like? How would you know if you or one of your friends was in a healthy/unhealthy/violent relationship? The interview will take 30-60 minutes. The interview will be audiotaped so that the researcher will be able to listen to the interview at a later time and so that she can write out a transcript of the interview.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate altogether, you may refuse to participate in parts of the study, you may decline to answer any and all questions, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of incentive for participation in this study.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your gender and your age. The interview will be audiotaped and the researcher will be the only person that has access to the recordings. These recordings will not be heard by anyone other than the researcher.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

It is possible that in talking about romantic relationships, a participant may become distressed. Participants have the right to withdraw from this study at any point in time. Referral cards will be provided to participants (e.g. Connect Calgary) as needed. Connect Calgary has a toll free phone number that people can call for free support, information, and referral to services (e.g. Alberta Health Services, Calgary area women's shelters, Calgary Communities Against Sexual Assault, Calgary Police Service, Distress Centre, Homefront) related to relationship violence.

Participants will receive a gift card in the amount of $50 for participating in this study.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

The researcher and her supervisor will have access to the information collected.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You will be identified by a pseudonym. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. If you decide

to withdraw all data the participant contributed to the study will be destroyed. No one except the researcher and her supervisor will be allowed to see or hear the interview tape or view the transcripts. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. The audio files will be kept on a password protected encrypted computer accessible only by the researcher and her supervisor.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____Date:_____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____Date:_____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Lynn Corcoran
Graduate Division of Educational Research, Faculty of Education

Colleen Kawalilak, Faculty of Education

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact an Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix B: Recruitment Script

He Seemed Like Such a Nice Guy:

Young Adults' Understandings of Intimate Partner Violence

Volunteers are needed to take part in a research study:
- **Male or female**
- **Aged 18 to 29 years**
- **Willing to talk about your understanding of healthy, unhealthy, and violent intimate partner relationships**

Volunteers will take part in conversational interviews with the researcher lasting 30-60 minutes. The researcher is not specifically looking for volunteers to share their personal experiences of intimate partner violence.

If you are interested in participating in this study, the interview questions and a copy of the consent form will be emailed to you. Interested and eligible volunteers will be contacted to set up a date and time for an interview.

For more information or to volunteer for the study please text, email, or call:

Lynn

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Interviews will be audio-recorded.

Participants will be offered a $50 gift card for their participation.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

He Seemed Like Such a Nice Guy:

Young Adults' Understandings of Intimate Partner Violence

This information is a guide for the semi-structured interviews. I will begin by introducing myself as a doctoral student who is interested in learning more about young adults' understandings' of healthy, unhealthy, and violent romantic/intimate relationships. I will make the point that there are no right or wrong answers and that this interview will be more like a conversation about their ideas, their beliefs, and if they feel comfortable, their experiences.

1. Young adults are in a life stage where they are forming their ideas about intimate relationships. What has this been like for you?

2. What influences your ideas about intimate relationships?

3. What have you learned about being in an intimate relationship from observing/talking to/hanging around with your friends?

4. Describe a healthy intimate relationship. How do you know that a relationship is healthy?

5. Describe an unhealthy intimate relationship. How do you know that a relationship is unhealthy?

6. Describe a violent intimate relationship. How do you know that a relationship is violent?

7. Intimate relationships can change over time. Have you ever noticed this change, for yourself or for any of your friends? What was this like for you or for your friend(s)?

8. Where is the line between healthy and unhealthy intimate relationships? How or when might you recognize this line?

9. Where is the line between unhealthy and violent intimate relationships? How or when might you recognize this line?

10.   If someone you knew was in an unhealthy or violent intimate relationship, what would you say to them?

11.   (If applicable).What have you learned about being in an intimate relationship that you couldn't have learned anywhere else?

12.   What is the most important thing that young adults need to know about intimate relationships? What is the best way to communicate this information to young adults?

13.   Are there any other stories or issues that you can tell me about related to what we've been discussing so far?

14.   Are there any questions that I haven't asked that you think would be important for me to ask?

15.   Do you have any other questions?

At the end of the interview, I will ask the participants how they are feeling. I will offer resources (e.g. "24 Hour Help for Everyone", Connect Family and Sexual Abuse Network) if needed/if I haven't already done so. I will let participants know that I will be following up with a phone call within the one week. I will ask participants if they would like to be informed about the study when it is completed.