Analytical Autoethnodrama

Autobiographed and Researched Experiences with Academic Writing

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This is dedicated to my family: for Paul, Alfie, Reilly and Arla, for my parents and for my Nan. Work really matters to me, but nowhere near as much as the people I love. They do well to remind me of that – please don't stop now?

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INTRODUCTION

> There's nothing you can say. You can't say anything. You're not allowed to say anything. How can I say what I feel in my heart? …All those hours in hotel rooms working at speeches, drafting, redrafting, polishing, changing every word and all you're doing is covering up for what's really gone wrong. What you know in your heart. What really happened. What really happened… (Hare, 1993, p.97)

> They [academics] started to question why university life had to be that way, why they had to be removed from their work, why only certain forms of discourse counted as knowledge, why they didn't feel more connected to those they studied, why their mind should be split from their body, why they had to keep their emotions in check, why they could not speak from the heart. (Pelias, 2004a, p.11)

The two quotations above resonate strongly with my own experiences with academic writing and in many ways encapsulate the intention driving this book: to explore the story of my writing through the head *and* through the heart, and to use autobiographical experiences to inform research that is framed by an analytical and theoretical framework and maintains the necessary rigour required at an academic level. The quote from David Hare is from the play *'The Absence of War'* (Hare, 1993) in which the central character is a politician who feels unable to speak in his own voice because he is bound by public expectation and manipulated by spin doctors to express himself in a particular way: a way that does not enable him to articulate the real feelings in his heart or to express the truth about the social and political world as he sees and experiences it. In the quote from '*A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Daily Life*' (Pelias, 2004b), Pelias challenges the notion that qualitative research that is rooted in the humanities and social sciences must remain traditional, objective, devoid of emotion or anything personal. He suggests that, similarly to the politician in the play by Hare, some academics are frustrated by the traditions of conventional academic writing that make it difficult to express what we feel in our hearts. This splintering of what I thought I should be doing, what was expected of me and how I actually wanted to be, affected my academic and personal life and I wanted to reflect and capture these experiences whilst resisting positivist-informed 'master' narratives, and instead offering a highly charged text that offers the personal experiences of myself and my peers as a form of social and cultural critique.

   This book offers a triangulation of autobiographical experiences and the research data from open-ended interviews with academics at a Higher Education Institute (HEI) in the UK to inform an autoethnodrama. This creative text seeks to explore the effect of the 'publish or perish' culture that the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs)) has arguably intensified. It examines the potential impact on individual life and institutional culture. The autoethnodrama is a critique of academic writing culture, specifically in one HEI, and scenes from the script will be offered at the beginning of each chapter. This process of merging of traditional (but personal) academic writing and script is identified as part of the resistance to conventional authoritative discourse. I use the autoethnodrama to suggest that the perceived 'publish or perish' culture, which some academics believe the Research Excellence Framework (REF) has contributed to/increased, is potentially damaging to confident writing conditions and that some academics, early career researchers in particular, might benefit from improved institutional support with academic research and writing processes.

   I propose that the sharing of lived experiences provides an opportunity for co-creation on the part of the reader and writer and that producing necessarily vulnerable and evocative texts, which offer insight into how life is (or was) for the writer, can foster empathy, understanding and meaning-making for both the writer and the reader. This utopian process makes it possible to begin to re-imagine, recover and reinvent the world as we know/knew it (Denzin, 2003) and this is potentially transformative for the reader and also the writer. Kant (1794) suggests that an enlightened reading can take place when the text empowers the reader to evolve past a self-/imposed immaturity and have confidence in their own understanding, appreciation and/or criticism without explicit guidance from another (in this case, the author). The qualitative research methodology known as autoethnography is part of the postmodern research movement that critiques conventional writing practices in qualitative research (Richardson, 2000) in which an author draws on personal experiences to extend an understanding of discipline or culture. These highly personalised accounts can encourage an enlightened reading and are potentially more democratic and inclusive, promoting civil and spiritual freedom and a resistance to dominant oppressive structures that are sometimes seen as synonymous with traditional academic work (Canagarajah, 2002). Autoethnographers strive to "draw people into evocative texts rather than making them feel distanced from what they read" (Grant, 2010b, p. 4). By employing techniques such as drama and auto/biography I aim to encourage the reader to think *with* rather than *about* the story presented (Rambo, 2005). The story in the autoethnodrama presented contains real and researched experiences with academic writing and documents the crisis and recovery I experienced as an early career academic in an emotional and evocative text. The context for this enquiry is further stated and explored in Chapter 2.

   In Chapter 3, I offer a re-reading of Barthes as a rationale for resisting authoritative discourses in qualitative research. Despite being located in the humanities and

social sciences, qualitative research is still predominantly traditional and objective and privileges the researcher over the researched. Barthes' argument that texts are fractured and messy is also useful here, as a significant function of autoethnography is to challenge and expose as socially-constructed, rather than foundational or essential, binaries such as: self/other, inner/outer, public/private, individual/society (Sparkes, 2002). "[L]iterature itself is never anything but a single text: the one text is not an access to a Model, but an entrance into a network with a thousand entrances" (Barthes, 1974, p. 12). I seek to offer the reader more than a single entrance into this text and to engage them on personal, emotional and intellectual levels, building on the work of Perselli (2004) and using Barthes as a rationale for self-study in personal and inclusive research.

A re-reading of Barthes is useful when employing autoethnography, the methodology that Ellis (2004 xix) describes as:

> …research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political. Autoethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterization, and plot. Thus, autoethnography claims the conventions of literary writing. (Ellis, 2004, p.xix)

Autoethnographers produce emotional and evocative first person accounts that use autobiographical experiences, located in the group under study, as a form of social/cultural critique. The emergence of autoethnography signifies a challenge to conventional scholarly work in the social sciences and humanities by offering one, and paving the way for other, qualitative approaches that connect analysis, cultural critique and creative texts. By challenging socially-constructed binaries, autoethnography offers a social critique and also provides a voice for vulnerable and/or hidden voices. The book is therefore a two-pronged critique of a specific academic writing culture in one HEI, offering an emotional and evocative text that seeks to resonate on a personal level with the reader and resist traditional forms of qualitative research and writing, whilst simultaneously arguing that the 'publish or perish' culture that has been maintained and perhaps heightened by the REF is not always conducive to confident academic writing conditions. I do not argue that one methodology is better or more effective than traditional approaches. I have found it useful and inspiring to identify a methodology which permits personal and emotional writing that offers an insight into historical and cultural situations and I reflect on and evaluate the process and production. I do not seek to suggest, however, that autoethnography should replace or usurp existing methodological approaches, rather I argue that inclusive and emotional writing should be valued in terms of relevance and resonance in qualitative research within the social sciences and also beyond.

Autoethnodramas exist on the borderlands of conventional qualitative research and offer spaces where rhetoric, politics, parody, pastiche, performance, ethnography and critical cultural studies come together (Conquergood, 1998). Autoethnodrama is a potentially rigorous methodology, capable of fulfilling the criteria for academic

research (including doctoral study) and can provide a space to document experiences of trauma and processes of recovery. This is an evolving methodology and my process differs from the established practice of using monologues based on the author's personal experiences to create a dramatic text (Saldana, 2003). Instead, '*Impact*' is located in my own autobiographical experiences and in the HEI where the research took place, but themes, characters and dialogue have been developed as a result of my analysis of interview data from academics in a variety of subject areas at the same HEI. Autoethnographic work identifies the experiences of the writer/ researcher as relevant to discourse on a known, or more usually lived, experience and this can be framed via an evocative text to engender meaning-making on the part of an enlightened reader and/or audience.

To capture the autobiographical experiences of my interviewees, I held open interviews with academics from different disciplines and at various stages of their careers at a university on the south coast of England, adopting an emotional stance in order to build rapport and access their lived stories with academic writing processes. This triangulation of research-autobiography-analysis presented as autoethnodrama seeks to fulfil Anderson's criteria for analytical autoethnography (Anderson, 2006), which I identify as a rigorous framework in qualitative research. I recognize Anderson's model as an effective response to criticisms of autoethnography and suggestions that it is narcissistic and navel-gazing (Coffey, 1999; Sparkes, 2002). This is despite arguments from evocative autoethnographers who consider sociological analysis to be a violation of their practice that undermines and devalues the rich and valuable stories being presented in autoethnographic work (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Denzin (2006) argues that ethnography that employs Creative Analytical Practices (CAP) has little in common with analytical autoethnography and that it is unhelpful for ethnographers to work in the framework established by Anderson (2006). I employ features of analytic autoethnography to make it explicit that I am adopting a stance that is rigorous, analytical, critical and also creative. The coding and framing of data including autobiographical experience is problematic for researchers working to further legitimise autoethnography. Equally, ethnography that employs CAP should be held to high and rigorous standards and it is wrong to assume that because a story is novel, it is automatically relevant or useful in terms of academic work (Richardson, 2005; Eisner, 2001). Creative writing in autoethnographic work must therefore fulfil a literary aesthetic, portray a coherent story and that story must be of some interest or relevance to the intended reader (Sparkes, 2009). My intention is to avoid the danger of producing autoethnographic work that is vulnerable to criticisms of it being narcissistic and self-serving, instead offering a text that will enable the reader to access a social reality (Sparkes, 2009).

Autoethnographic drama or autoethnodrama creates a text that is "an entertainingly informative experience for an audience" (Saldana, 2003, p.220) and my intention in producing '*Impact*' was to use the insights of the researcher and the researched to generate dramatic material that would engage and entertain but also help the reader and the writer to better understand one perspective on the academic writing culture

in one HEI and that this might resonate elsewhere in Higher Education (HE). I shall further explore autoethnography, and specifically autoethnodrama, as a methodology in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the methods used to obtain data and produce the autoethnodrama '*Impact*' and address objections to autoethnography that Delamont (2006) suggests is "literally and also intellectually lazy" (Delamont, 2006, p.1). I problematise my decision to work within the analytical autoethnographic paradigm as a compromise but argue that it explicitly prevents the autoethnographic work from being merely experiential (Delamont, 2006, p.1).

In Chapter 7 I use an analysis of the interview data and the process of producing the autoethnodrama to argue that the 'publish or perish' culture is not always conducive to a culture of confident writing and that this has potential consequences for academics' professional and personal lives – specifically my own. I argue that for some academics (early career lecturers and researchers in particular), explicit institutional support with academic writing may help to increase confidence and motivation to write. My autoethnodrama offers a window on a specific academic culture that is emotional and/or personal and/or intellectual, which will resist authoritative discourse as identified by Barthes (1974) and Bakhtin (1981), engage the reader on an emotional level and help them to develop an understanding of, or empathy with, the pressure to write and publish in REF-able publications.

My own experiences with academic writing and culture have been integrated within the research in order to provide the necessary self-observation (Hayano, 1979) that increases the emphasis on the researcher in autoethnographic work. It is my sincere hope that the storied lives of academics at the HEI under study will provide the reader with a form of critique of existing academic life which will go some way to shaping a kinder, more inclusive academic environment that resists the potentially and actively oppressive culture academic life can engender and which I certainly experienced as an early career academic. Although the research focuses on one HEI in particular, the implications are intended to have resonance further afield and across the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK but also internationally where a shift to a neo-liberal agenda has impacted on working (and specifically writing) conditions.

1.1 WHO AM I?

When I joined the University of Brighton in 2004 as a part-time lecturer in Creative Writing, I felt like a fraud. I kept waiting for a colleague or a student to stop, point and declare me unfit as a lecturer, as an academic, as a researcher, and as a writer. This anxiety increased and as time went on I found myself stifled by (academic) writer's block. I had a desire to write for academic publication, but when I read academic writing it seemed so alien, so unlike me and my existing style of writing, I was sure that anything I wrote would be deemed unworthy by journal editors and peers. The problem was that while I enjoyed my work, I still had no clear sense

of who I was as a lecturer. I felt as if I had to 'become' an academic and that this would involve a rigorous apprenticeship. I was waiting for the tools to begin my metamorphosis; perhaps they would be handed to me by an experienced lecturer, or perhaps I would be advised during a staff appraisal? I just kept waiting and waiting and floundering with my writing, only producing papers for internal publication and not for peer review, making such work virtually meaningless in terms of REF (the process by where academic funding bodies based in the United Kingdom (UK) assess the research outputs of academics and use this to measure the impact of specific individuals and institutions). It was evident that there was no induction programme or explicit institutional support for the academic writing process and, with so much emphasis placed on the need to publish, I was surprised at the lack of input and advice at institutional level. Eventually, I was invited to co-write a paper with a more experienced colleague which was accepted by a peer reviewed journal and we produced several spin-off papers that were also successful.

This collaborative experience helped me to better understand what was required in terms of style, content and structure and also developed my confidence when writing for academic publication. What is clear to me is that had I not been approached, the floundering and procrastinating would almost certainly persisted. My subsequent research into experiences with academic writing has been driven by an autobiographical knowing of how the pressure to publish impacts on individuals and also the wider culture in an HEI (Heikkinen, et al.). Simultaneously, the pressure of academic life and my determination to convince colleagues that I was coping with it effortlessly caused me to experience extreme anxiety that almost resulted in the collapse of my relationship with my long-time partner and was also detrimental to my health. The combination of an ailing personal life, acute back pain and a cancer scare, with the ongoing juggling act in my professional role, pushed me to the brink; as someone who has used various unhealthy strategies for dealing with stress, I decided I had to take positive action before I imploded. I engaged in a course of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which helped me confront issues around work/life balance and readjust. Slowly I began to see work as a support system for my *real* life and stopped attributing my personal value and self-belief solely to my vocational role: a role I still lacked confidence in. Feeling less consumed by and more engaged with my work ironically, and perhaps obviously, helped me perform more effectively and feel passionate about the work I was involved with. These events coincided with my work on my doctorate and several years later my perspective and my life have changed. Perhaps I do still want to be perceived in a certain way by my peers, but the reality is: I can only be me. I have started to think that this might be okay. There are still moments of crippling self-doubt, but my research into experiences with academic writing and my own parallel experiences have situated me as a complete member of the social world I'm studying, with something personal *and* analytical to say about the pressures of academic culture and the real and potential repercussions for this social group. This process has been developmental and I will reflect on how the production and content of the book have enhanced my understanding of the

specific social world I am exploring and empowered me – personally, vocationally and academically.

My previous research (Antoniou & Moriarty, 2008 Moriarty, 2007; Moriarty, 2008) enabled me to hear about the lived stories of my colleagues with their writing processes. This work, together with my own experiences, motivated this study and inspired me to devise an autoethnodrama that offers a window on real and imagined events. Grant (2010, p.5) argues that "a prism rather than a mirror is a more appropriate metaphor in capturing the cultural refraction of individuals involved in day-to-day identity work" and this is useful when contextualising my own refractions of academic life – real, researched and imagined.

My approach seeks to resist the dominant academic writing and publishing structure in a creative and constructive way and suggest an alternative structure that is "more inclusive, ethical and democratic" (Canagarajah, 2002, p.30). My research into the field of autoethnography has drawn on challenging and informative work that also moved me emotionally and personally, causing me to feel frustrated and unfulfilled both by some of the other academic writing I was reading and also in my own writing. I acknowledge that my professional work and personal life became inextricably entwined, both in my day-to-day life and on the page. While researching for the study, more and more I wanted to somehow articulate what it had been like for me, and for my experience to offer meaningful insight into academic culture, specifically at my own institution, but also with the intention that it would resonate further afield. By detailing my own experiences, I provide a critique of academic culture in one HEI that does not claim the objectivity or authority of 'grand' narratives in conventional research, but seeks an emotional connection with the reader. This is in order to suggest and facilitate changes in HE culture to align with aspirational and utopian ideals of well-being, holism, mutual respect and support. This is with the aspirational aim of engendering a future where academics who experience work-related anxiety and stress which impacts on their personal lives and well-being will not feel as vulnerable or as isolated as I did. This work is located in my experiences; it draws on my understandings and insights. It is personal. It makes no claim on absolute truth or knowledge – this is how it was for me, that is all I can be sure of.

Although personal, my approach is rooted in established theories on experiential learning which differ from empirical epistemologies and instead value experience as integral to the learning and meaning-making processes (Kolb, 1984). In experiential learning knowledge is not just taught, it is achieved through our connections with and reflections on everyday experience (Houle, 1980). Experiential learning theory defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb 1984, p.41). This process relies on reflections on experience which are then assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new ideas and experiences can be drawn by the writer and also the reader/audience. An early advocate of experiential learning was Jerome Bruner

who identified learning as a process rather than a product and believed that the dissemination of all meaning was dependent on the perspectives from which it was interpreted (1986). Therefore the voice of the writer/researcher should be privileged and this 'narrative knowing' (Bruner, 1986) could help the reader and researcher make sense of the ambiguity and complexity of human lives. Bruner recognised that storytelling was part of how humans translate their individual private experience of understanding into a public, culturally- negotiated form and this narrative mode is potentially useful in research in the social sciences.

There is, with increasing frequency, evidence of academic writing becoming 'academically creative' or 'creatively academic' (Antoniou, 2004; Antoniou and Moriarty, 2008; Clough, 2002; Ellis and Berger, 2002; Grant, 2010a; Lather, 1997; Short, Grant, and Clarke, 2007; Sparkes, 2002; Sparkes, 2007; Sparkes, 1992). 'Creatively academic' involves writing creative work with an academic underpinning (such as Joan Didion's *'The Year of Magical Thinking'* (Didion, 2005), whereas 'academically creative' writing is analytical with a creative underpinning (such as Antoniou, 2004; Grant, 2010; Sparkes, 2002). In these instances (and numerous others), researchers have recognised the important role that imaginative and creative writing can play in reconstructing reflective and evaluative experiences and personal feelings about the world (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Canagarajah, (2002, p.100) suggests that "Knowledge is writing. Knowledge is conventional. Knowledge is contingent" and that unless academics resist convention, they are in danger of excluding certain individuals and communities who have not and do not seek to construct knowledge in the traditional and conventional style. To promote inclusivity and democratic approaches to research and writing, I suggest that offering the reader a potential point of access into a text that is emotional and/or personal and/or intellectual may extend and enhance the reader's engagement with the text and offer a viewfinder through which the reader can closely examine "positive and negative spaces" (Rambo, 2005, p.571), helping them to develop a clearer understanding both of the social world they are studying and also the author of the text.

The argument that genres of creative writing can potentially enhance the research project has been identified as having cross-discipline relevance (Behar, 1996; Bolton, 1994a, 1994b; Clough, 2002; Denzin, 2003; Ellis, 1995, 1997, 2004; Grant, 2010a, 2010b; Lather, 1997; Pelias, 2005; Richardson, 2003, 2000; Sparkes, 2002; Sparkes, 2007; Sparkes, 1992; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, and Dowling, 2003; Sparkes and Templin, 1992). These arguments and examples of creative and personal writing that have fulfilled the criteria of academic publications are useful as I am seeking to resist traditional academic discourse and further legitimise personal and messy accounts as being potentially meaningful and relevant within qualitative research, specifically in the humanities and social sciences. This book is concerned with building on existing work in the field of autoethnography and using autoethnodrama to "encourage (s) readers' own experience of the text by decentring the authority of the scientific voice and avoiding privileging one true meaning or reading" (Grant, 2010b, p.2):

> The use of fiction, which should not be regarded as synonymous with falsehood, arguably facilitates telling tales in a dramatic and enjoyable way. It is also a useful way of 'writing the self', so that the researcher and the researched become one and the same. Writing the self means using fiction and other literary tools to both construct and clarify the person being written about…the researcher and the researched. (Grant, 2010b, p.1)

Resisting authoritative discourse by exploring alternative strategies for presenting qualitative research is a potentially empowering tool, which may give a valid point of access to individuals and communities who wish to contribute to knowledge in the social and human sciences without using the conventions of academic writing (Canagarajah, 2002). I seek to use both academic and creative approaches to depict a three-dimensional story of my writing processes and appeal to a curious and empathetic reader. The rationale behind this approach stems from the notion that our research writes us (Stronach and Maclure, 1997) and is in keeping with Barthes' theorization of literature where the writer approaches the craft of writing steeped in a multiple of codes and that these must be given an explicit voice within the text:

> Alongside each utterance, one might say that off-stage voices can be heard: they are codes: in their interweaving, these voices de-originate the utterance: the convergence of voices becomes writing, a stereographic space where the five codes, five voices, intersect. (Barthes, 1974, p.21)

I have tried to give voice – both my own and that of my interviewees – to academic and personal experiences in this research project, using these auto/biographical experiences both as data and as the inspiration for an autoethnodrama (Saldana, 2003). The autoethnodrama '*Impact*' seeks to offer a broader picture of academic writing culture in one HEI and "trigger further meaning creation on the part of the reader" (Grant, 2010b, p.577), shedding additional light on academic culture and the potential pressures therein. These experiences are not generalizable; they are specific to my interviewees and to me. The combination of analysis, drama and reflection offers the reader a theoretical and personal insight into experiences with academic writing that I hope will provide them with a more complete picture than *just* a research paper or *just* a piece of creative writing.

As an autoethnographer, my research practice is ideally "performative, pedagogical, and political" (Denzin, 2006, p.422), reflecting the emotional and social world of study and enacting a way of seeing and being within that world. Autoethnodrama offers a method for instructing the reader and challenging the conventional and often hegemonic ways of presenting data that are also potentially emancipatory for the writer. Via my writing I hoped to understand academic writing culture, the lived experiences of my interviewees and myself, and for that process to be necessarily messy, pedagogical and real.

My desire to use a combination of self-expression and auto/biographical experience in academic research has produced a tension between being necessarily vulnerable

in order to be creative and honest, and the self-discipline and professionalism required to ensure that the writing does not become self-indulgent (which would make it meaningless in terms of achieving doctoral status). I have identified autoethnography as a methodology that offers a voice to the researcher and the researched and potentially enhances the reader's understanding of the social group under investigation, increasing their empathy and identifying areas, in this instance a specific HEI, where change might be needed and making recommendations for how that change might take shape.

1.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have introduced my topics of enquiry and stated the research aims driving this study. I have introduced analytical autoethnography as a rigorous methodology that will provide the framework for my study. In the next chapter I provide a context for my process and discuss the triggers that prompted my enquiry.

CRITICAL, CREATIVE AND PERSONAL CONTEXT

IMPACT – Scene 1
DEBBIE is in her early thirties.

DEBBIE:
My dad ended up going with me, mum was at work and Pete said he couldn't get the time off but I think he just couldn't face it. He wouldn't have known what to say in the car and he just isn't much good when I'm having a wobble. Just wants me to get it together so he can stop worrying about me I suppose. But dad was great, made me laugh on the way there and we got parked easy enough. We had to go to the waiting room next to the STI clinic where you can have a HIV test and stuff like that which made us both laugh, 'Hope I don't see anyone I know,' he said, and then we were both giggling when we walked in which made the other women look at us like we were mental.

The chairs in the waiting area were like the ones you find in an old people's home and dad was pretending to be a geriatric, dribbling on himself and acting like he was going to call one of the nurses for help. *(Pause)* And then this young woman came out of one of the little rooms, and she must have been younger than me, and she came out and saw her friend sitting next to us and she just burst into tears. Just sat there holding her mate and sobbing. And that shut me and dad up.

And they called my name, 'Debbie Neston?' and dad gave me a kiss and squeezed my arm very tight, 'It'll be fine,' he promised and off I went. They told me to strip off below the waist and lay down in that chair with the stirrups; the one that looks like it should be in one of those horror films where they just torture people for two hours. Fancy paying to see one of those? And the first thing I noticed when I lay back is the mural on the ceiling that had this polar bear and its cub sort of nuzzling together beneath a rainbow which I thought was pretty funny as the doctor I was seeing introduced himself as Dr Panda. 'It's a like a zoo in here!' I remember thinking, 'I bet loads of other women have pointed that out,' but then I had a panic, I mean, what if I was the first and he found it raucously amusing and ended up making a mistake with the laser, burnt off the wrong bloody bit. So I left it and went back to watching his handiwork on the TV beside me. I could see everything magnified which was weird because I didn't actually feel that it was my body on the screen; it just didn't seem possible that this was actually happening to me. It was like someone was playing a big joke, maybe an ex or someone I'd really pissed off at work, and the idea that someone somewhere was laughing at me made me start to tense up and my left leg started twitching so Dr Panda couldn't see properly.