In this revisitation of “That Baby,” I use a pleated text (Richardson, 1997) to juxtapose the original article (Faulkner, 2012) with some of my subsequent writings and reflections about motherhood and the reactions I have received from students, colleagues, and others when publicly sharing my ambivalence about pregnancy and parenting. I find Keith Berry’s (2013) idea of reflexivity as a process like spinning a spot-on metaphor; the idea of spinning reflexivity means we can’t go back to the same place where we began, because we are always arriving at spaces with an altered sense of identity. This is shown in the “That Baby” redux that I present here; my reflection on pregnancy and motherhood ten years after the birth of my daughter has been a continual adjustment and negotiation process based on my history, identities, relationships, and positionalities. The focus on my personal story of an ambivalent (and intended) pregnancy and ambivalence toward the mother role acts as an interrogation into the expectations of white middle-class motherhood and the concomitant disappointments of never being good enough. I argue that the engagement with the embodied experiences of mothering can alter attitudes and create social change through the visibility of stigmatized identities (e.g., bisexual feminist, ambivalent mother) and the refusal to create false separations between the domestic and the public (Faulkner, 2017a, p. 106).

I admit this story and the retelling contain secrets (Poulos, 2008) and omissions, places where I can’t remember, places that are still in shadow, places that ethically need to stay closed (Rappert, 2010). Nevertheless, I bare what I can to show the dark, and often unspoken, parts of middle-class white motherhood.

COST: 18 ACADEMIC ARTICLES (2009)

It is visible. The fashionable princess seam top strewn with red and yellow poppies doesn’t cover enough. I must talk about being knocked up every time I shake someone’s hand or lean in for a hug. “Babies cost an article a year.” Mitch tells me this when we sit down behind the book display table wedged into one end of the registration room. The typical conference smell of freshly inked paper and stale coffee dispel some anxiety about whether my manuscript on poetry as method, which he will publish, is good enough.

“Yeah, I’m pregnant.” I pat my stylish fetus mound with the expected gesture. His flat statement about the cost of what I named the Faulkner Fetus (to the horror or amusement of a few) pops my bravado. Others are just now noticing the 6.5-month lump, which I have carried to her first academic conference. I grip a fully caffeinated latte from the student union and wonder if he thinks anything of my beverage choice? I did say no to an extra shot of espresso. And this is only cup two, the last of my self-imposed daily allotment.

This thought and all of the questions I have been asking myself about my pregnancy, and those I have been imagining others will ask me, annoy me. The truth is I have never fully wanted to be pregnant or have children. Not in that 100% way I thought pregnant women should feel. Would feel. In fact, I had attended a few childfree meetings by choice support group meetings at my university the previous year. Though, the truth is also this: I felt like a childfree fraud sitting in a circle with the other attendees who enacted an absolute certainty. I confessed disinterest in children because of the environmental impact,
gendered expectations, love for solitude and work. However, immediately after getting married I spent four solo months teaching in Madrid, manufacturing a mental picture of a child. A child built with the most attractive features of Josh and myself, of course. “Just missing mi esposa,” I reasoned as I traveled with students and other professors while Josh remained at home to care for the house and our pet rat. I can’t remember if I ever told Josh about the two childfree meetings I had attended before getting pregnant the following month.

I have abhorred every second, minute, and hour of being pregnant. My imaginings of the annoyances I would experience are being born out in precise detail like some kind of bas-relief. And now, in one of the arenas where I have learned to feel competent, my book publisher affirms this antipathy with an explicit cost analysis. “This kid will not cost me articles!” I think as I watch conference attendees browse the current and classic releases of everything research method. Then, as is usual lately, conflicting thoughts ruin my concentration. I ask myself whether I really do care or only feel I should care as I feel Baby Girl kick my ribcage with great enthusiasm.

As Mitch and I talk, I will Baby Girl to allow my mind the front seat. Please, do not make my shirt move! I think to her, though evidently you are supposed to talk to your “unborn baby.” All of the patronizing pregnancy instruction manuals insist you narrate your daily routine to make a baby Einstein in-utero. I just can’t speak out loud to a fetus what I do all day: And now I am cracking an egg. Wow, I just wrote a 7-page syllabus in an hour. What kind of cookies do you want me to order from the Cookie Jar?

COST: NEVER GETTING TO PEE IN PEACE (FAULKNER, 2014)

The secret I couldn’t speak during Mimi’s infancy is how strange, odd, and queer I felt—not a good mother because of my will to skip over the difficult part (which almost 4 years in, I understand to mean all of it). My thoughts about infants as gaping holes of un-fillable need were not even as bad as my refusal to list mom first and last in the string of important identities. I could have been the “bisexual mom,” but I wasn’t sure what that meant except a refusal to dream the dream of being Mommy as the heterosexual feminine fulfillment of a good breeder (Elia, 2003). I hate being a breeder. In middle-class circles, being “mommy” means everything. The role is the person; instead of overlapping Venn circles, the middle-class mommy must overschedule her child into a moneyminded genius. She must rope herself to the child to be an (over)involved parent, a good mother (Hays, 1996). The trouble is we can’t let go, can’t unattach ourselves from these mommy myths of intensive parenting (Baxter, Scharp, Asbury, Jannusch, & Norwood, 2012).

Because I did not pump breast milk for Mimi until she was six weeks old, I was tethered to her from nipples to mouth around the clock. This attachment chafed in the August heat as I feed Mimi in public bathroom stalls, on park benches, downstairs, upstairs, on the couch, around the block, and in the bank manager’s office while signing mortgage refinance papers. At least the banker didn’t flinch when I signed my name on multiple paper copies as Mimi slurped a snack at the table. I couldn’t even go to the bathroom alone to be off duty. Perhaps I’m really an ambivalently attached mommy.

COST: MY SYNAPSES (2009)

“Faulkner, you should write about this.” My friend and coauthor, Pam, snorts as we talk on the phone, presumably about a research project, but really she is listening to my litany of pregnancy maladies, urging me to take field notes.

“Baby brain may be the worst at this point. I can’t remember the names of objects like that round ball that opens the door.”

I’m lounging in my office, during office hours, waiting for no-show students, wondering if the few hours I spend in the building each week are suffocating the fetus. After a colleague complained loud enough about our sick building, the Ohio OSHA determined there was indeed mold proliferating in the ceilings and walls, but the colonization was not enough to kill us. This was supposed to be comforting?

I should be writing, doing research, working on my tenure portfolio, prepping teaching—all of the activities I am compensated for under the title assistant professor. What I do with this time lately, though, is obsessively search online for ambivalent pregnant ladies and instant message friends about my bodily annoyances. I can’t focus on much except this. Mostly, I find blogs devoted to pregnancy complaints, and the “but it’s worth it” qualifier is usually explicitly stated. I have heartburn so bad it’s like a rotten lab experiment, but it will be worth it when she/he arrives.

“If I write about this, I will have to add more money to the kid’s therapy fund,” I say. Pam’s laughter makes me snort as I tally up all of the things I am doing wrong, will do wrong, could do wrong: Daily cookies, bike riding, hand-me-downs, day-care, refusal to allow the kid to wear pink or to be a cheerleader.
COST: PERSONA (2009)

It is the last two weeks of spring semester. My interpersonal communication students and I are talking about aging and friendship, whether this influences the longevity of high school and college relationships. I have a terrible teaching schedule—Monday Tuesday Wednesday night—that feels more than unlucky given my desire to be in bed by 5 p.m. Growing a fetus takes energy, more energy than I’ve ever needed. Forget recovering from the worst hangover or running a marathon energy.

They ask me if I keep in touch with anyone from high school. I tell them I live too many states and moves away. High school was so long ago I even forget to get to be nostalgic. “In fact, I’m not going to my 20-year high-school reunion in June.”

“Why?” more than one student asks.

I have just set myself up for the revelation I avoided all semester. I did not want to be the knocked up professor, to talk about everything baby, to risk being seen as a walking womb, to have my every statement about relationships scrutinized (see Aubrey et al., 2008). These were the reasons I did not want to tell my colleagues, either. I hesitate because I know what is going to happen next. But I respond. “I will be seven and a half months pregnant.”

The female students burst with questions. “When are you due?” “Why didn’t you tell us?” “Are you excited?” I still do not wear maternity clothes at 5.5 months, but I thought some of them surely had noticed the looser shirts not tucked in and skirts with stretchy waistbands, the fact that I often sit on the table in the front of the room to teach.

“I am a grumpy pregnant lady. I don’t really want to talk about it.” But the students need more explanation and won’t let me move on. I try to explain my ambivalence, how I never wanted to be pregnant.

“What does the word ambivalent mean?” I don’t answer and start talking about the next exam.

COST: STAYING UP TOO LATE FOR PEARL JAM’S WRIGLEY FIELD DEBUT (2013)

This is the first night Josh and I are alone together out of town without our kid since before she popped out almost FOUR YEARS! ago. As we weave around the pre-concert stadium looking for Aisle 4, Row 11, Seats 11 & 12, we pass a woman bouncing an infant with hot pink noise cancelling headphones. I can’t stop my bad mom evaluation—Who brings an infant to a rock concert? And who the hell has infant-sized hot pink headphones?—We had left Mimi in Ohio with some family friends for a sleepover. I’m envious, because I would like to rock out with my kid at a Pearl Jam concert and especially a historic outdoor one. I played her the lullaby-like songs about gender and disappointment—Just Breathe, Betterman, Release, and Lowlight—when she was in utero, so she has been a long-time fan, too. But, I’m also anxious that Mimi is a state away from me with friends, as we do not live near our families. Maybe a good mother would bring her kid to the concert. A good mother would most certainly live near her biological family.

The show is interrupted by a thunderstorm. Pearl Jam played seven songs before Eddie Vedder announced impending poor weather. “Please be safe. We’ll come back hard. Will you trust me on this?” Josh and I reluctantly get up from our vulnerable uncovered seats and wait with other fans under the bleachers not drinking the eight-dollar “cheap” beer from the concession stand, though my shoes and shins get a taste as other concertgoers push past us. We do not talk as we lean against some trash bin by a support post watching the snaking lines of fans stuck in the Friendly Confines, which cements our acceptance of the sine qua non of parenting: disappointment and thwarted plans. He rubs my back a bit, and I wonder how Mimi is doing as we sweat in the July thunderstorm enduring what will be an almost three-hour rain delay.

Josh and I manage to internalize the consequences of the heat and impatience while many others seem to externalize it. We react like a good mother: stand with stoicism only because we are too tired to lose our shit and too tired to order any alcohol and too responsible to start a fight. The rumors begin about an hour into the wait. They are cancelling the show. The show will be played on Sunday. The show will start in ten minutes. You can return to your seats!

We move up to one of the cinder-block entrances that lead back to our seats when it seems as if the storm is over, just missing a fight on the stairs. All of that waiting and the beer and the humidity pattern the right conditions. A thirtyish man in a white Cuban cabana shirt shoves his way up the stairs packed in with people like unctuous sardines. As he swims through the human school, some beer spills, elbows poke ribs and shoulders. One irritated fan said, “Hey man, stop. Where are you going to go?” The Guy in the white shirt continues his upward trajectory and yells a semi-arc of slurred insults at those around as the woman he is with claps her hand over his mouth. His muffled voice still creates annoyance. I get ready to turn and run back into the concession area, in case the scene turns physically violent with sharper and more deliberate elbows.
I think about how I could teach Mimi to evaluate such a situation, how to know when and how to react given that the world is always less safe for women, gender non-conforming, and non-binary folk. *How do I encourage her joy for experience in such a world without being a helicopter mother?* At my high school when gang activity became a norm, we could get suspended just witnessing a fight on school grounds. I remember turning away as blood sprayed on the pavement or sidewalk outside between classes, before or after school when hand and fist and elbow met a face or a nose in a pinwheel of adolescent rage.

I think of Mimi’s sometimes declaration—“You are not the parent!”—parroting back my words when she wants me to stop disciplining her. When she turned two, I realized that I *cannot not* be a parent, even when she mimics the adult phrases from preschool with her own spin: “You are not in charge of me. I am in charge of me.” I am spinning into a new person with a new identity, something I never thought to be, a mother.

**COST: CERTAINTY; MEDICALIZATION (2009)**

Ambivalence about pregnancy is a common, though understudied experience. In part, this may be because the further away from the pregnancy, the more likely a woman will alter her story (see Duck, 2011). Being seen as ambivalent marks one as a bad mother, so it makes sense that women may tell a different, more culturally acceptable story about an ambivalent pregnancy. Typically, ambivalent women are older, non-white, and opposed to abortion (Bouchard, 2005). Medical researchers ask pregnant women the question I wrestle with hourly: “How do you feel about having a baby now?” The ambivalent are characterized as those who accept being pregnant without any enthusiasm, those who change their negative assessment to be positive or accepting, and those with contradictory feelings. Doesn’t this typify most pregnant women? Doesn’t being pregnant mean you have negative and positive feelings pulling you like a field day tug-of-war contest? Is one really enthusiastic about funky smells, hemorrhoids, and joints that ache when you breathe? What about the gaping vortex of need, aka an infant (and toddler and tween and teenager)?

I get the concern for attitudes given demonstrable research that negativity and ambivalence may be related to undesirable outcomes for mothers and children, such as low birth rate, prenatal accidents, and pregnancy complications (see Laukaran & van den Berg, 1980; Matthias, 2010; Mohllajee, Curtis, Morrow, & Marchbanks, 2007). Chandra, Martinez, Mosher, Abma, and Jones (2005) estimated that about 50% of pregnancies in the United States during 2001 were unintended because of mistiming or being unwanted, and the rate of unintended pregnancy continues to be high (e.g., see www.TheNationalCampaign.org). My question after reading the clinical list of problems and the high rate of unwanted and unintended pregnancies is: What about the process of being pregnant? Why all of this need for a nice resolution? What is missing from all of the popular and clinical pregnancy talk is a more sophisticated understanding of ambivalence toward pregnancy than the dichotomous “planned, wanted, or intended” versus “unwanted or accidental” (Peterson, 1987; Trad, 1991). At least, I discover there is a field of study devoted to unintended pregnancy, those pregnancies that are mistimed or unwanted at conception (Schwarz, Lohr, Gold, & Gerbert, 2007). However, the *intended* ambivalent pregnancies are the group that does not seem to be well represented. This is, of course, why I do not advertise my ambivalence, just the antipathy toward my pregnant body (Goldenberg, Goplen, Cox, & Arndt, 2007). U.S. culture participates in the hatred toward the female body; especially a threatening pregnant body, and this hatred translates well into pithy Facebook status updates. *The fetus insists on chocolate, though I can’t tie my shoes. Decaf sucks.*

Being pregnant is akin to writing a cost–benefit analysis report with few pros listed on the right-hand side of the spreadsheet. In my search for certainty, the unbalanced sheet of costs won’t disappear. The ricocheting pro versus con dialogue is not something I mention when the nurse practitioner asks me, “Was this a wanted pregnancy?” The answer isn’t an absolute yes. But it also isn’t no. Josh and I both say, “yes.” I could say *I am committed to a healthy pregnancy.* But then I would also have to say *what I consider to be a healthy pregnancy.* And this includes coffee, cookies, and bitchy skepticism. I know not to react against the happy glowing pregnant lady myth in the obstetrician’s office pasted with this dominant discourse. Pictures of patients’ happy infants thumb-tacked to the corkboard stare me silent as do the Anne Geddes prints hung in every exam room, the flowered wallpaper trim encasing the building, and the box of toys spilling out of the kids’ nook in the waiting room.

**COST: LOSING YOUR SHIT (FAULKNER, 2014)**

“They grow up so fast, don’t they? Take time to enjoy!” said the 60ish man with the mean-well avuncular smile. I get these drive-by comments when strolling...
around Bowling Green with the kid. Sometimes from a perky woman with coiffed hair, perhaps a small well-groomed dog attached with an untangled leash to her painted nails. Never do women carrying, dragging, or coaxing (okay, begging) small children across the sidewalk fling these comments or questions at me. They are all too busy trying to not lose their shit under the impossible weight of mommy expectations. I am not enjoying the bone-crushing, soul-crushing infant stage or being a first-time, one-time mother. Wardrop and Popadiuk (2013) sum up my feelings: “women navigating the transition to motherhood contend with a number of changes and new roles, and our societal scripts and cultural attitudes toward mothering play a large role in how this transition unfolds” (p. 20).

When I read that breast feeding postpartum women are more likely to be anxious than depressed (Wardrop & Popadiuk, 2013; Wenzel, Haugen, Jackson, & Brendle, 2005), I feel a sense of validation for my experience of the first few years of my kid’s life. I look up the term and see that the higher the postpartum anxiety, the more likely a woman is to label herself as “bad mother” and to feel negative about motherhood (Reck, Noe, Gerstenlauer, & Stehle, 2012). I found the term postpartum anxiety only when I was researching something else. No medical professional ever screened me for this, even when I cried in my OB’s office six weeks post-partum. I recognize that I suffered from generalized anxiety about motherhood and self-criticism—the Bad Mom Blues. I wonder now if I had known much sooner the term postpartum anxiety, would the first years have been easier?

COST: COURSE EVALUATIONS (2015)

When I had Women’s Studies’ students read “That Baby” in my relational communication class, they eviscerated me on teaching evaluations. I didn’t offer a trigger warning on my syllabus: Warning! Bad Mother Material. One student claimed that the reading created an “uncomfortable class environment for students having to present on the instructor hating her pregnancy.” My ambivalent pregnancy and motherhood writing triggered negative reactions, but even more importantly, my actual embodied self as ambivalent mother standing in front of the classroom functioned as a trigger. My body and presence triggered their middle-class assumptions about pregnancy and motherhood. And I suspect that I shattered their ideas of female teacher as warm and altruistic mother.

I received the following types of comments on my evaluations:

The instructor hates her child.
I was offended by how she talks to her child.
I had a miscarriage, and I felt bad being in her class. She is too personal.

The students also read a piece about the difficult first year of my child’s life (Faulkner, 2014), wherein I talk about hating the mother role and all of the expectations of being so child-centered. I wrote about loving my child but abhorring the mother role by critiquing cultural advice and expectations of what being a good mother mean: mothering an infant is boring, mind-numbing, exhausting, and restrictive. I did not find care-giving to be fulfilling or the realization of a long-held dream. And in the current context of combative mothering, the competition between middle-class mothers as to who is following the best parenting advice, and thus, who is the best mother, is stifling (Abetz & Moore, 2018).

I am not allowed to hate being pregnant or dislike the mother role. I am a bad mother, person, and human being, and thus, a bad teacher. I am shocked that Women’s Studies’ students had these reactions, as I assumed they would appreciate the critique of compulsory motherhood and ideas of motherhood as a fulfillment of femininity. And what about the idea that the personal is political?

Students missed the point of critiquing larger cultural ideas about pregnancy and parenting by focusing on me as the author. Even though I tell students not to assume they know anything about an author when reading research presented as personal narrative and autoethnography. Even though my parenting is not something students witnessed. Even though I would knife anyone who fucked with my kid. I had hit a middle-class nerve.

In contrast to these reactions, my colleague and friend, Pamela Lannutti, has used “That Baby” in her classes with different results. She sent me the following email on March 20, 2015:

So, here’s a good summary of student reactions to the ‘baby will cost you’ article:

(1) They have declared it the best thing we’ve read all semester (then apologized because they’ve read two of my things this semester).
(2) They want you to come work at La Salle. Or at least visit I agree and will put that idea forward).
(3) There was a minor sex war between the men and women about who should get “the most say” in deciding to have a baby in a different-sex couple.
I decide not to have students in my classes read this article again. They don’t get to have an opinion on my feelings about my body or my mothering.


Josh wakes up with a snort. It’s cold. His neck and right side are stiff. *What’s that noise?* He groans when he recognizes the scream of the fetal monitor alarm. The slide-out chair next to the air-conditioning unit was like sleeping on the ground in winter. It was that comfortable. He had been sleeping on that rock for almost three months.

“Sorry! I’m trying to fix it. I’ll turn it off.” I learned which button could reset the machine after a few nights of the annoying pattern: The alarm would sound. A nurse would stroll down the corridor and through the kitchenette to our room to adjust the monitor straps. We would fall asleep. The alarm would sound. Josh would tell me to push the call button. I would fiddle with the machine myself, because I knew the nurses could hear the monitor in their station. Of course, the nurses never heard the alarm. Or they ignored it. I know that Josh got tired of telling me to reluctantly press the call button by my head. At first, he assumed that something was wrong with Mimi, but the alarm went off anytime I rolled over, the baby hiccuped, the air-conditioning went on, the sheets wrinkled. And so we wait.

When I ask what he remembered about the birth, Josh describes my screaming, the blood, and the moment Mimi shot out like a piece of popcorn. And what a waste of money that doula was, the one who urged a high-risk woman to leave the hospital and who did not show up until the last hour of labor, minus the nurses never heard the alarm. Or they ignored it. I know that Josh got tired of telling me to reluctantly press the call button by my head. At first, he assumed that something was wrong with Mimi, but the alarm went off anytime I rolled over, the baby hiccuped, the air-conditioning went on, the sheets wrinkled. And so we wait.

I am supposed to tell you how happy I was, that the birth was my happiest moment ever, that I cried, wailed, and shook from joy. Yes, I shook, but the shaking was from exhaustion. And the first two things I said were “Thank God I’m not pregnant anymore.” Then a panicked “It is a girl!” What I remember is that I was simply stunned. And then relieved for the shower I got to take after the golden colostrum moment, the cord-cutting, weighing and swaddling of the baby. This was the prize for no analgesics, no epidural.

I disclose pieces of the story during the semester I teach a relational communication seminar, relieved—no ecstatic—to end the year of breastfeeding, to be lifted out of the cloying baby fog. I talk about my birth story, which contains as much about the pregnancy as the birth and in much more detail than I anticipated. This telling mirrors many of the impulses individuals in Della Pollock’s (1999) study on birth stories, both good and bad, recount. The students and I struggle through the latest iteration of Leslie Baxter’s relational dialectics theory—RDT 2.0—my favorite interpersonal theory in graduate school because of the idea of unresolvable dialectics. The latest version is even better given that the focus on competing discourses; dominant cultural discourses about what being a good mother mean are silenced by marginal discourses of ambivalent mothers. Dominant discourses are given more weight, while marginal discourses are silenced. Sometimes, a hybrid moment occurs when something new arises through dialogue.

I rolled around in the idea of flux, the way it felt like an epistemological homecoming. We argue about whether we can apply RDT to our personal experience given the radical idea that relational scholars should use discourse and not the *individual* as a unit of analysis. This shocks me into framing my (and as I understand now Josh and Mimi’s) story as a series of marginalized discourses, in particular ambivalence (versus certainty), bodily knowledge (versus medicalization, versus middle class pregnancy), and flux (versus cost–benefit ratios). The problem is that these marginal discourses are not well represented in the totalizing picture of the *pregnant lady*. The rigidity freezes the alternative script, doesn’t allow me to look at my funny, stubborn, watermelon, pot-sticker and dog-loving child and say with smirking elaboration “but it was all worth it.”

**COST: TIME AND WILL (FAULKNER, 2017B) BENEFIT: MATERNAL CONNECTION**

My mother gave me a damp cardboard box of family photos and memorabilia a few years after Mimi was born. When I sorted through the yellowed photos and paper scraps, I found a baby book that she had made for me that stopped at 18 months—the time that my younger brother was born. I have no scrapbook or baby album for Mimi; her photos are stuck
in unmarked files in my work hard drives, pieces of paper about growth and feeding advice from her pediatrician stuffed between the pages of my unfinished baby book. Pregnancy and infancy were utterly overwhelming and trying on different kinds of mother suits to find one that didn’t pinch or squeeze my bisexual-feminist-contrary-self took me well past my child’s toddlerhood.

My mother told me two children in diapers plus a five-year-old flummoxed her, and she spent her time digging a hole to breathe under a pile of dirty diapers. I juxtaposed images and text from my unfinished baby book and my daughter’s never begun baby book in a MotherWork scrapbook—two mothers, my mother and me, in conversation about the difficult business of never being a good enough mother (Faulkner, 2017b). I embrace radical subjectivity (Sotirin, 2010) in mother writing to focus attention on these issues and show how the use of personal experience can empower dialogue about this motherhood business. My writing embraces the non-binary dialectic surrounding MotherWork, the dominant discourses of self-abnegation, breeding as feminine fulfillment, child as star in a mother’s play, women as never good enough, and the marginalized discourses of mothering as painful, unfulfilling, and boring.

Revisiting my daughter’s birth story and early years finds me reliving some of the negative affect. With time, I’ve forgotten some of the bone-crushing exhaustion now that I deal with different parenting issues. However, I still feel the mother competition. I answer to mom and Dr. Faulkner. I am a professor and a Girl Scout leader. I am a different mother than I was then, and I will be a different mother tomorrow. This is spinning reflexivity. If I revisit “That Baby” in another ten years, I imagine the important parts to dialogue about will have shifted and altered with my changing identities.

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