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The Dreamy State: An Autoethnography of Spiritual Meaning in Epilepsy

Ironically, rigorous study of anything has a tendency to drain it of its feeling, its blood (Moriarty, 2013). Nowhere more so than in psychology, which can be prone to 'psychologising' and losing a sense of the embodied individual (Muncey, 2010). Auto-ethnography is a contemporary qualitative research method, where not only is the presence of the researcher acknowledged, but the researcher is a part of the group being researched; an anthropological-insider (Hayano, 1979). An autobiographical genre of research, auto-ethnography provides "explanation and meaning through narrative, without categorisation or simplification of experience" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). It offers a deep and rigorous insight "coming from feeling...from the heart, based on personal experience" (Grant, Short & Turner, 2013, p. 11). Auto-ethnography seeks to evoke a lived experience in a socio-cultural context through a variety of expressive genres (Bochner & Ellis, 2002). My research involves an auto-ethnographic account of epilepsy as a lens with which to view the so called 'anomalous' experience of auras in epilepsy. I propose to present an auto-ethnographic paper that highlights how this approach is able to offer understanding of emotion that is not easily accessible through other research methods (Laslett, 1999).