Beyond the Line/Beyond the Self

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This paper explores a curriculum initiative of the University of New England to take teacher education students 'beyond the line' to schools in remote areas of Western NSW. As a response to the crisis in rural school staffing and claims regarding the inadequate preparedness of beginning teachers for rural teaching, the four day program seeks to introduce students to the life and work of bush teaching. Complex issues emerge in the ways in which the rural is constructed as the uncanny other in education, paralleling the ambivalent attachment Australians have long had for 'the bush' in constructions of national identity. In confronting that which is uncanny in life and work, the program provides students with opportunities to reimagine themselves within rural teaching, in effect to go 'beyond the self'. The paper addresses broader issues in the constructions of self and other in the formation of teaching subjectivities and contributes to a sociology of the intimate life of teaching. In what ways do stories of nation and citizenship, conceived here around notions of belonging and unbelonging, homeliness and unhomeliness, help to shape the subjectivities and practices of teaching and learning?