

## PART THREE: PRACTICE

### CHAPTER NINE

#### A PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCE

*In this chapter, in a further reflection, I distil and crystallise my learning, by referring to my Embodied Knowledge (in Chapter Six), Eros and Organisation (in Chapter Seven) and Agape and Organisation (in Chapter Eight). Here, I go on to develop my embodied living educational theory as I clarify how I can become an instrument of love through pedagogy of presence.*

*Later, in Chapter Eleven, I provide an account of practice, which supports these claims.*

#### **Letting love show me the way**

I have used the inner / outer dynamic in various ways throughout the thesis, referring to Wilbur's (1995) inflow and outflow, Marshall's inner and outer arcs of attention (Marshall 2001), Marshall's living systemic thinking (Marshall 2004) and Ruddick's fostering growth (1989). I have been looking for learning points, for the moments of coalescence (Bortroft 1996) between the inner and the outer, whether this refers to movements in my inner body, or movement between the inner world of the self and outer social world.

My spiritual practice teaches me the discipline of becoming an instrument of the body and I reflect and learn how this embodied knowledge is transmitted to others. I use the transformational nature of love, applying the concept of maternal thinking and maternal activity, as does Fletcher (1999), in my reflections on how love influences my organisational practice.

From eros arises greater awareness of the effects of desire in leadership practice, its motivating energy, its search for completion through achievement, its potential lack of respect for other, its capacity to ignore flow.

From agape arises greater awareness of relationship, appreciation of the action of emotion and feeling, its desire for wholeness by surrendering to the other, the potential for confusion if diplomacy is perceived as leadership weakness.

I have brought eros and agape into a leadership narrative, and find that they share an abiding concern with the dialectical, with what happens when idealism and relationship meet with an opposing force. If eros remembers the pleasure to be had in the dynamic of contradiction, then the potential of erotic energy is harnessed in collaboration. If agape remembers to respect the boundaries between self and other, the discursive gap between the known and the unknown in relationship becomes a place of joint learning.

The control of desire in the 5<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga helps me to harness the forces of eros and helps me to achieve my aim, although not necessarily to reach the exact target originally envisaged. The practice of concentration in the 6<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga helps me to notice the value of relational spaces, to pause before I speak, to appreciate the implications of standing in another's shoes.

In seeking to become an instrument of love, I prepare for my understanding of love to change in the enaction of my duties and for my experience of love to change me. I do not hold fixed meanings, but seek to recognise the inclusional flow of love across the boundaries between self, other and the cultural context of our relating.

I have flexed the boundaries between feeling, thinking and practice, employing reflective writing and the ordering principles of language and silence. In this way I have created the potential for bringing more of my understanding of love into my practice. It is this blurring of boundaries using a hermeneutical and phenomenological approach that has enabled me to clarify and alter my understanding of what love means.

I considered the anomalies, the discursive gaps in my understanding, realising that creative synthesis arises from seeking to see the whole, to meet the unknown in the gaps between my cognitive knowing and felt experience. I expected that I would also be influenced and influence our shared understanding of what love means across boundaries whose insulated thickness is variable. I am building on the concept of Marshall's (2004) living systemic thinking, thinking

about how the (o)ntological self, the Complex Self as defined by Rayner (2004) changes in, and has influence in, the social world.

This is an inclusional practical inquiry that flexes the boundaries between self, other and our shared symbolic landscapes

'Inclusionality is that space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete massy objects, is a vital dynamic inclusion, within and around permeating all natural forms across all scales allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication. Correspondingly boundaries are not fixed limits – smooth, space-excluding, Euclidean lines or planes – but rather are pivotal places comprising complex, dynamic arrays of voids and relief that both emerge from and pattern the co-creative togetherness of inner and outer domains... (Rayner, 2003)

The way that I have inquired has enabled me to develop the relation between the 'I' that acts in the world; and the 'eye' of consciousness, the observer of the inner world. My mind looks both ways, there is the self that has been constructed by living in a participative world and the self whose soul feels almost as old as the hills.

My inquiry brings my knowledge of love into the academy through propositional knowing and into my practice through the dynamical boundaries between self and other. The boundary between 'me and we' is the pivotal place where resonances and dissonances are both felt and dispersed into the relational flow. If I feel and act with love, this understanding leaks through the boundary of the self into the inclusional flow, and is returned to me. In the resonance of the return, my understanding of love is clarified.

Here, in the pivotal place between boundaries, I see eros thickening the insulation of the boundary and exercising power in the way that structures organisational culture, and I see agape reducing the insulation of the boundary and influencing organic growth of organisational culture. Poised in the moment of coalescence, I realise divine love as an integrating energy that enables me to see the part as the whole.

## **Pedagogy**

In seeking to pedagogise my knowledge of love I realise that this knowledge is transmitted through my body, through physical presence as well as through speech. In Chapter Six I showed how I use the explicit pedagogy of language, demonstration and touch when teaching yoga. I go on to show how this includes an implicit pedagogy, encouraging increased awareness of the student's own inner body. And then I show how I seek to pass on my tacitly held knowledge through an embodied intention to transmit the qualities of silence. In this way I have demonstrated how my body is a significant aspect of the transmission context in which pedagogic communication takes place.

Drawing together my embodied knowledge with my later reflections on loving leadership in Chapters Seven and Eight, my tacit, embodied knowledge has been verbalised through the accounts of action and the subsequent reflections. In this way my tacit pedagogy has become implicit. Using the ordering principles of language and silence in conjunction with cycles of action and reflection, I have recognised my 'unthinking' previously unacknowledged embodiment of love, and as a consequence I have come to understand how I might become an instrument of love. Now, in the final stages of my inquiry, I claim to bring love into action through a pedagogy of presence, and in describing my method and evaluating my actions this pedagogy has been made discernible.

Learning with love through action is an internal reordering that enables my tacit knowledge to come into action without my necessarily thinking about it. Love is invisible and implicitly held as I perceive the relation between 'the impulse to move and the movement ... the intention to think and an impulse to think' (Bohm, 1996 p.25). I think that this tacit reordering enables love to pass through my intention and into action within the pedagogic relation.

## **The recontextualising field**

The purpose of this inquiry is to reframe experience and recontextualise organisational discourse, using 'recontextualise' in Bernstein's (Bernstein, 2000)

sense of redefining and transforming the ideological field in which practise takes place. Most of Bernstein's theories are concerned with the macro politics of State and education but in so doing he also addresses the symbolic ways in which identity is formed. In relation to recontextualising principles he says this:

'The pedagogic discourse to be acquired is constructed by the recontextualising process of the transmitter(s) which creates a specific modality of the specialised knowledge to be transmitted and acquired. The acquirer rarely has access to the transmitter(s) recontextualising principle, but this principle is tacitly transmitted and is invisibly active in the acquirer as his/her 'gaze' which enables the acquirer metaphorically to look at (recognise) and regard, and evaluate (realise) the phenomena of legitimate concern' (Bernstein, 2000 p. 173).

I do not expect to speak **about** love at work, but seek to express love tacitly in the way that Bernstein describes above. As an instrument of love's purpose, I let my 'gaze' follow love's resonant direction. As a leader, what I notice and what I consider important has influence. I think that the effect of love can be expressed in the way I work with others, and the way that our relation contributes to, and influences, organisational culture.

I am careful not to start out with an explicit discourse of love because it will be divorced from my embodied knowing and my silent practice, and thus likely to serve my own egoistic ends. What I seek to do is to bring love through the resonant boundary between myself as a 'distinct place'<sup>1</sup> and the 'contextual space' in which I work with others. This is inclusional action that has social impact if space is seen as presence rather than as an absence. If space is perceived as presence, then it is 'a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organisation, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication' (Rayner, 2004b)<sup>2</sup>. This means that my tacit knowledge of love is not only brought into a social relation, but contains the potential to recontextualise the organisational field in which I work. In this way my (o)ntology is brought into my action through embodied presence.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Distinct place' is a way of describing the changing nature of 'discrete objects' that we usually perceive as fixed, 'Contextual space' refers to movement of spaces between 'distinct places' once the boundaries between them are seen as dynamic, on page 66

<sup>2</sup> The mathematical basis of Rayner's theory is discussed in Chapter Two, page 65

Now I am refining what the 'mandala of possibility' looks like, seeing it form from a deeper level. It is as if the insulation that conventionally binds us in our separate social roles is loosened and modulated by our common humanity and through this the usual classifications of social discourse become open to revision.

**How do I know that tacit pedagogy is ethically sound?**

Is divine love above the Law? Yes, the poet (Auden, 1976) and the philosopher (Ricoeur, 1996) both agree.

Are my mandalic imaginings above the Law? In the context of organisation most definitely not. So does that mean that I am bound in my professional practice by the rules of convention? Most definitely not! So, let me examine my position further.

Most of my decision making is malleable, sometimes changing position as I understand more about what I am doing, at the same time knowing that once I have made a decision I need (most times) to follow through, to finish, to complete the logic of it.

Other than staying logical within the decision itself, surely I have fixed points, a place from which to distinguish right from wrong action?

What I have learned about 'goodness' through this writing, is how much I value unity and rely on the harmonic resonance of mind, body and spirit to guide my decision-making. Writing about the activities of leadership I have described an inclusive process that incorporates the dynamic and clash of differences and similarities when I work with others in organisations. I aim for an Hegelian synthesis that is not based on a fixed universal referent, but on generating a sense of shared wholeness and satisfaction as we work.

Realising this I now understand why I applaud Archbishop Rowan Williams for his decision around the appointment of openly gay but celibate, or practising homosexual Anglican clergy to bishopric in the Church of England. I see him making a decision to put Church unity above sexual orientation, whilst encouraging the Church leaders remaining in conflict to keep talking.

Faced with a decision that could not please everyone, Rowan Williams chose collective wisdom above individual passions. Not a very politically correct decision, but in my opinion, very wise.

Some months after I had written this paragraph about the non-appointment of Jeffrey John to a Bishopric, it was announced that he was to be appointed to some elevated position in the St Albans diocese, the diocese in which I live. I happened to be in Church that Sunday when the Vicar read out a letter from the Bishop. It asked parishioners to turn to the Bible for guidance if they were troubled by the appointment, and I thought, yes, that is one of the purposes of religious practice, to help us change the habitual ways we look at the world. (Journal June 2004)

Then later I saw an interview published in the newspaper where this issue (amongst others) was discussed, and this is what Rowan Williams said about his decision:

'unity is a principle...it is all to do with a calculation that goes something like this. The decision was one that ruptured a whole set of relationships which are not about structural harmony but about mutual learning and mutual giving – relationships let's say between churches in the developing world and the Church here or the Church in the States. To rupture those relations would be bad for the Church not as an institution but as a community...making people feel they have not been taken seriously.' He then added with admirable humility, 'I recognise the argument of unity versus principle and it stings. It goes deep' (Hattersley, 2004).

### **Pedagogy of presence**

I have made it clear (in Chapter Two) that taking unity as a principle in my search for wholeness does not mean ignoring contradiction or difference, or imposing my meanings on others. Instead it means working at the boundaries between self and other to create new meaning and renewed relationship. In knowing love as a transformational energy capable of changing meanings, I now understand how I can become an instrument of love. I can do this, not by following the meaning of words, or re-interpreting conventions, but by following the directional resonance

of my embodied knowing. I have described this process in Chapter Six when 'teaching' relaxation in the yoga class:

'Every class varies, and I do not plan what I say. I encourage a letting go of the body, awareness of the breath, awareness of feeling, awareness of thought ... It is a preparation for meditation, but I do not explicitly say this. ...I want to pass on a sense of what I understand about the ordering principle of silence. ... I call this tacit pedagogy, because it is not conscious transmission rather it is an intention to transmit a way of coming into stillness. I have a sense of love and care as I utter the words ' (Chapter Six, pp. 186-187)

I aim to let love be the 'secondary quality'<sup>3</sup> of my leadership activity as I hold the embodied sensed memory of divine love. It is this embodiment that enables me to develop my capacity to envisage harmony beyond contradiction. This embodied memory becomes manifested as 'presence'. It is not a thought process. This presence is in the discursive gap, it is the 'presence in absence' of inclusionality, the relational space between the known and the unknown.

I let love lead my actions on organisational issues as I foster the growth of the organisations in which I work. And I seek to clarify these meanings and improve my loving practice through the ordering principles of silence derived from spiritual practise, and through the ordering principles of language derived from reflecting upon my journalled accounts of action.

Housing Associations in general, are organisations that are constantly changing and developing in response to Government policy initiatives and the needs of the financial markets. The associations that I work in are learning organisations in a state of continuous improvement, constantly adapting their services and organisational structures. Leaders in housing associations are always developing and creating new ways of doing things, moving across the discursive gap from the known to the unknown. Developing effective ways of communicating is necessarily an intrinsic aspect of leadership activity. It is in this context that I practice a pedagogy of presence. Through the pedagogisation of my embodied knowledge I can become an instrument of love's purpose, and allow love to influence my leadership activity.

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<sup>3</sup> By this I mean the hermeneutical quality from which my actions arise.



### **My embodied living educational theory**

My embodied living educational theory is my explanation of how I learn to improve what I do. It is the result of an emergent process that combines felt experience, with practical knowledge with propositional knowledge, from which developed a form of inquiring that is uniquely mine.

This very individual form melds together spiritual practice and action research methods. It incorporates an embodied, non-verbal knowing with an interpretative subjective approach. It sets out to bring (o)ntology into action, to demonstrate the practical value of 'being'. In developing my embodied living educational theory, I come to know how I know, to develop my (e)pistemology.

My (e)pistemological foundations have been discovered through cycles of action and reflection whilst holding the sensed memory of love in my mind. I have developed this knowledge whilst engaging with others in Inquiry and Peer Group processes. I have evaluated this way of coming to know in action accounts of practice.

My conclusion is that I come to know through my embodied inward resonances and my embodied responses to the social world. That whilst I seek a sense of mutuality and attunement, I also find pleasure in the dynamic of contradiction. That when the sensed memory of love is seen in the discursive gap between resonance and dissonance, this brings a loving presence into that space. That it is the transmission of energy across this gap that I refer to as 'a pedagogy of presence', which becomes a loving presence when the embodied memory of divine love is held in mind.