

Living Legacies: Valuing Lives of Service

How can educational influence continue beyond classroom practice and sustain a sense of value, purpose and meaning for mature practitioners within a culture which privileges the external world over the internal?

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Abstract

This thesis makes two original contributions to knowledge. Firstly, I introduce and develop the idea of a living legacy contending that their creation encourages experienced, mature practitioners to reflect upon and record integrated aspects of their personal, professional and academic knowledge in ways that are of benefit to themselves, fellow practitioners and education generally.

My recognition of the potential value of creating a living legacy is initially located within a personal narrative of my search to find value, meaning and purpose beyond the end of my classroom practice. As my sense of value and values were predominantly located and expressed through work, vulnerability to external factors, including constructions of aging, were acute. Over time these damaged the grace and resilience that sustained my value-led service whilst its threatened end provoked an erosion of my sense of meaning and social role. My responses to these explore what may enable resilience and rekindle grace, and successfully finds a new outlet for my educational influence in the creation of my living legacy.

Secondly, in creating my own living legacy I recognised a quality of relational being at the core of my practice which influenced my narrative inquiry. I termed this empathetic communion and responsiveness and offer this as an original, living standard of professional and academic judgement for others to adopt, and by which my claims to have established empathetic relationships in my practice and my narrative research can be evaluated.

My findings reinforce the desirability and potential benefits of encouraging experienced practitioners to create their own living legacies as the knowledge generated is located within the macrocosm of the international attrition of mature teachers. Simultaneously my research shows the value of empathetic communion and responsiveness as an original, living standard of judgement in educational practice and narrative research. My conclusion is that without living legacies, significant and unique contributions to knowledge are being lost to present and future generations.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of

Annelise Francesca Harvey

My ever beloved niece & 'summer daughter'

In 'my middle' forever

1986 – 2008

Contents

Title		Page
Abstract		3
Dedication		4
Glossary of Constructions		8
Post Viva Preface		10
	Journey Structure	10
	Living Legacies	13
	Grace	13
	Empathetic Communion and Responsiveness	14
	Overarching Theories	16
	Implications	17
Foreword		18
Chapter 1: The Research Road		
Chapter 1 Overview		21
Purposes & Objectives		
	Personal	22
	Professional	22
	Academic	23
	Significance	24
Introduction: Russian Dolls		24
Limitations & Risks		32
Ontology & Epistemology		
	Ontological Lens	33
	Epistemological Foundation	34
	The Gate-Keeper: My Values	36
Methodology & Methods		37
	Methodological Pathway	38
	The Auto-ethnographic Path	48
	The Narrative Path	52
	Methods: The Pavement Slabs of Research	54
Standards of Judgement	Redefinition for an Internal & Relational Ontology & Epistemology	61
Standards of Judgement	This Thesis	63
Chapter 2 Overview		
Introduction: The Subjugation & Liberation of 'I'		67
My Story	Grace Lost & Found	71
	The Phoenix: Rebirth	85
	Beyond: Living Legacy Bridges	92
Conclusion		101

Contents Continued

Title		Page
Chapter 3: Creating Living Legacies & Valuing Lives of Service		
Chapter 3 Overview		102
Acknowledgement		104
Introduction: Connection		105
Modes of Approach for an Internal & Relational Ontology & Epistemology		107
The Experiential Approach		108
	The Phenomenological Perspective	108
	The Existential Perspective	108
	The Humanistic Perspective	109
The Social Constructivist Approach		112
The Stories of Others	Aoife: Introduction	113
	Story	114
	Barbara: Introduction	124
	Story	125
	Colette: Introduction	135
	Story	137
	Deidre: Introduction	146
	Story	148
Conclusion		154
Chapter 4: One Within the Whole		
Chapter 4 Overview		165
Introduction: The Scholarly ‘I’		167
Dimension 1: We Are Thrown		169
Dimension 2: We Are & We Act		173
Dimension 3: Burning Bridges		177
Conclusion		183
Chapter 5: Continuing Educational Influence – A Chain-of-Being		184
References		192
Appendices:	1	Research Ethics Clearance Form
		214
	2	Research Consent Form
		222
	3	Research Information Sheet
		223
	4	Participant Prompt Questions
		225

Figures

Figure	Title	Page
1	The journey structure combining methodologies and ideas contained within the thesis.	12
2	Education as an expression of love, hope and justice within the modes of personal, academic and professional knowledge.	23
3	Wilber's Four Quadrants of Consciousness (Wilber, 1997)	34
4	Some of the possible contributory factors in the attrition of mature teachers.	81
5	Suggested triangulation of factors contributing to spiritual resilience within practice.	163

Abbreviations

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SNA/SNAs: Special Needs Assistant/s

Glossary of Constructions

As my thesis is located within the interpretative paradigm with my research grounded in the internal, sense-making constructs of my lived experience I here define some personal expressions/constructions.

EXTERNAL & INTERNAL WORLDS

The external world I refer to includes: [1] the observable, measurable and predictable factors of academic, positivist research; [2] professional factors, such as title, financial reward and institutional status; and, [3] cultural constructions of physical states and appearances.

The internal world includes the meanings taken from lived experiences, practitioner values and personal constructions of self.

GRACE

[See: Post-Viva Preface]

LIVING LEGACY

[See: Post-Viva Preface]

SPIRITUAL

For me, spiritual refers to an inner consciousness and a reflective search for meaning, value and purpose in life. Also, these are about connection to a source/chain of being expressed in each life. I believe that while we know a separate existence, one from the other, we are but different expressions of one life-force/source. Believing thus, empathetic communion and responsiveness towards other is a necessity for me because I am the other in different form and expression. Equally, self-transcendence is enabled because I have nothing to gain and everything to lose in another's suffering. Thus, my spiritual, humanitarian and socio-educational values are synonymous.

SUBJECT-KNOWER-I & KNOWING-SUBJECT-I

The subject-knower-I encapsulates the pursuit of external, empirical knowledge and what I term the 'knowledge creed'. The 'knowledge creed' is based on passive acquisition of subject knowledge which is then appropriately regurgitated. For me, even the cognitive process involved is impoverished by this narrow reliance upon memory and recall.

Alternatively the knowing-subject-I represents the internal, interpretative nature of personal, embodied knowing. This process includes the active ownership of knowledge in which information received is understood through personal association. This enriches learning and memory with dimensional depths of emotion and personalised, cognitive constructions.

YOUTH CENTEREDNESS

Youth-centeredness describes my perception that within western society/cultural uniqueness and value are conferred more on the young than on the elders.

Post Viva Preface

This preface is presented as a separate response to viva recommendations to portray the viva as an essential part of the journey of the thesis. In my viva the opinion was that overarching themes, theories, concepts and implications needed highlighting at the outset and in the conclusions because they were being lost in the journey format. In response I here clarify the overarching journey structure, themes of living legacy and grace, and provide a clearer definition and clarification of my concept of empathetic communion and responsiveness to other and its process in my research. Also, I provide a brief summary of the two main findings of my research that my concluding chapter expands upon.

Journey Structure

My thesis using a journey structure makes two original contributions to knowledge. The first is the introduction and development of the idea of living legacies in which I contend that their creation encourages experienced, mature practitioners to reflect upon and record integrated aspects of their personal, professional and academic knowledge in ways that are of benefit to themselves, fellow practitioners and education generally. My recognition of the value of creating a living legacy was initially located within the personal narrative of my own search to find value, meaning and purpose beyond the end of my classroom practice. As my sense of value and values were predominantly located and expressed through work, vulnerability to external factors, including constructions of aging, were acute. Over time these damaged the grace and resilience that sustained my value-led service whilst its threatened end provoked an erosion of my sense of meaning and social role. My responses to these took on a journey-like research approach and structure in which I explored what may enable resilience and rekindle grace - in the sense explained below - and successfully found a new outlet for my educational influence in the creation of my own living legacy.

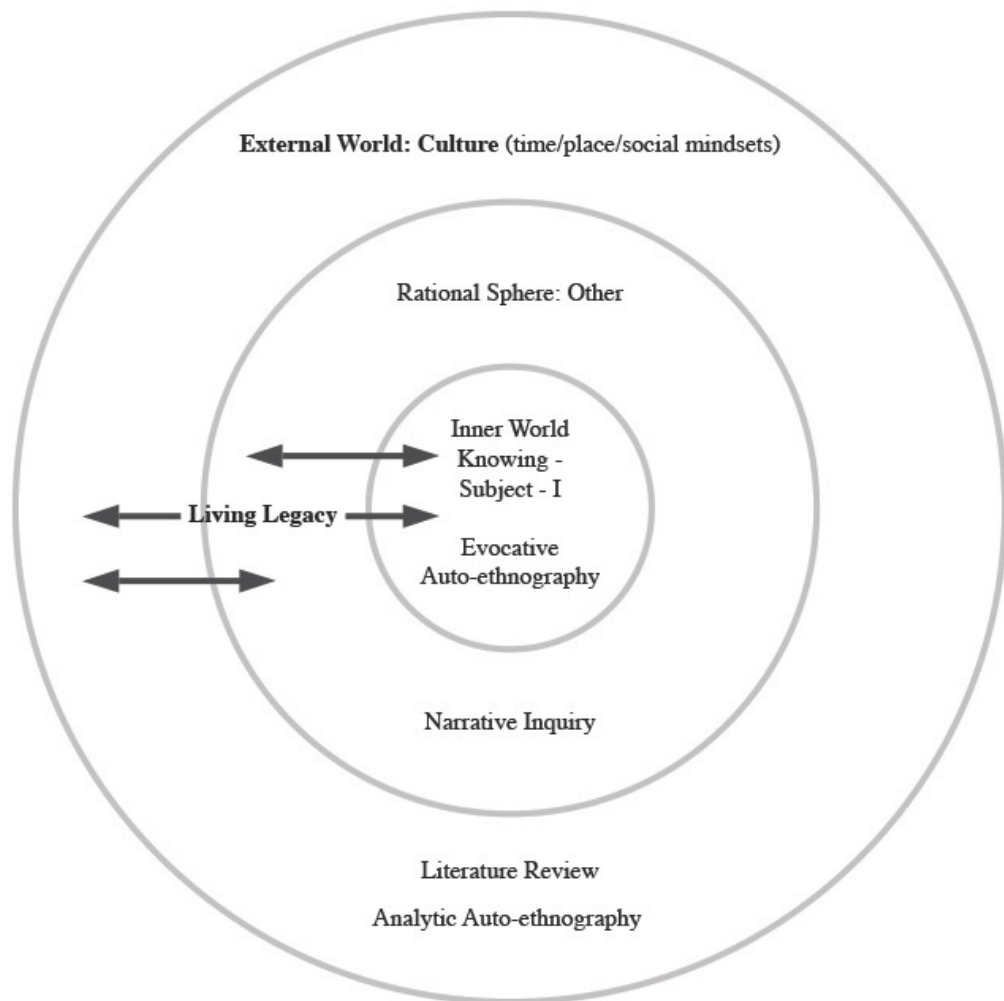
Thus, as my doctorate involved existential sense-making it was not easily accommodated within traditional academic structures. Also, to appreciate the

significant place personal knowledge held in the interpretations I and my fellow storytellers made in regard to academic and professional knowledge I needed to tell stories that narrower, academic styles and critical treatments have traditionally marginalised or ‘shrouded in silence’ (Ellis et al., 2011: 274). The journey structure taken aligned with my focus upon existential feelings and cultural experiences. It did so by describing stories of how personal value, meaning and purpose became located within professional practice while health, cultural constructions of age and aging and socio-political changes psychologically threatened them. This brought with it the opportunity to reflect and analyse the road taken, and in the ‘thick description of personal and interpersonal experience . . . make personal experience meaningful and cultural experience engaging’ whilst drawing upon ‘wider and more diverse’ sources ‘that traditional research usually disregards’ (Ellis et al., 2011: 277). In this way the journey structure is an essential feature of the thesis.

Furthermore, the journey format synchronises with the idea of living legacies because it supports a construction of education as the life-long grounding of academic and professional knowledge within personal experience, cultural constructions and practice. In this way the journey structure used draws from a wide-range of academic and professional theories and cultural constructions, exemplifying how and why one life of service may embody a generation’s narrative, and bring awareness to what may be lost as but one life vanishes without a tangible, public legacy.

Figure 1 offers a visual explanation of the journey structure combining the methodologies used with ideas contained within the thesis. Thus, the knowing-subject-I stands in the middle of a Russian-doll-like construction with two-way arrows demonstrating the formative and influential pathways between culture, other and self. Also, each ‘doll’ evokes a different methodological form appropriate to its sphere. In this way, the sphere of self is explored through evocative auto-ethnography; the sphere of other through narrative inquiry; and the cultural realm through analytical auto-ethnography that includes a lifetime ranging literature review. Finally, in the two-way arrow traversing all the stacked spheres, the words

‘living legacy’ demonstrate that while one is formatively submersed in a culture and relationships there embedded, one may through a living legacy shed a transformative light back onto it.



[Figure 1: The journey structure combining methodologies and ideas contained within the thesis.]

Also, from Figure 1 it is possible to understand the journey structure of the thesis. The outer circle, representing the limits of the Russian dolls, is the place of Heidegger’s (1927) ‘thrown-ness’. This was the journey’s starting point with chapter 1 providing a traditional literature review and other academic requirements in order to partake of the journey. Chapter 2 jumps from this outer circle of cultural ‘thrown-ness’ to the inner circle of the self, exploring the research phenomenon through the

inner world perspective of evocative auto-ethnography. Then, moving-on from this perspective, the research is situated within the relational through narrative inquiry's exploration of the stories of others. Next chapter 4 returns to the cultural, outer circle of time, place and mind-sets but now the gaze is through the lived-experiences and constructions that emerged through the research presented in an analytical auto-ethnographic form. Finally, chapter 5 containing the required elements of a conclusion returns to the academic parameters of chapter 1 completing a circular research journey.

Living Legacies

Living legacies are tangible, public formats for experienced practitioners to offer aspects of their embodied personal, professional and academic knowledge grounded in a unique story/journey to honour the past and illuminate the future. My living legacy is my personal testimony of my search for meaning, making sense to myself and others of the practitioner I was. Academically, it provides an authentic, historical record of what was and what has changed. Culturally, it is a political story that reflects constructs and values pertinent to a generation of educators. Overall, it shows the potential of a valued celebration of a life of learning and service that if produced at an appropriate time in service could revitalise the final years of classroom practice to the benefit of many. As such the underpinning assumption is that those in educational service can with passion and dedication ground their professional and academic knowledge in their personal values so that theories and approaches are not only understood and practised but are owned, developed and authentically and creatively expressed in practice. In other words, whilst a practitioner brings personal values, meanings and purposes to professional and academic practice the fusion between them makes original contributions to knowledge possible to the benefit of many.

Grace

The theme of grace permeates my thesis. However, it is not the religious grace of my childhood saints and martyrs. I was born into a family and culture in which religious

belief and adherence were as Kohlberg (1958) describes strongly ‘conventional’. My mother was a devout, practising Roman Catholic who had internalised authority receiving her moral reasoning from Church doctrine. Simultaneously, her faith was her source of emotional and spiritual strength and resilience. However, in response to what she took from it, she did not question or doubt it and from her I ingested a concept of religious grace as a sanctifying, external force that could irradiate my soul and keep me close to God; a construction that was captured by the magical halo around the heads of saints and martyrs on the holy pictures I collected. While it shone around their heads bent in fervent prayer or tilted upwards in joyful expectancy of being in God’s presence, it illuminated them. As a child I envied their ecstasy of living and dying for something greater yet containing them.

Thus, my construction of grace arose from these early, familial experiences and cultural images. What I saw on those enraptured faces captured what I felt in the classroom where I found existential meaning, value and purpose in a service that irradiated me with the passion of living for something greater than yet containing me. Also, this construction was so woven into my internal and relational ontology and epistemology that I personally only knew grace through service to other. Yet, it is not a sanctifying external force; grace in my thesis is an internal, life-enhancing connection with my deepest held values, with values being an all-encompassing term for spiritual, humanitarian and socio-educational aspects.

Empathetic Communion and Responsiveness

My second original contribution to knowledge is the idea of empathetic communion and responsiveness. Retrospectively I recognised that it was the essential relational quality at the core of my classroom practice that emerged through my narrative inquiry to be owned as the living standard of academic and professional judgement by which I held myself accountable in my research and became the concept that framed my research’s structure, method and findings. Ultimately, I offer it as an original, living standard of professional and academic judgement for others to adopt, and by which my claims to have established empathetic, responsive relationships in my practice and my narrative research can be evaluated.

There are three strands to the concept: (1) empathy; (2) communion; (3) responsiveness. Whereas each strand already holds known constructs, it is from their combined relational application in professional and academic practice that an original living standard of judgement emerges.

In my narrative inquiry empathy required a suspension of what is considered balanced dialogue. Rather than looking for a two-way equilibrium between parties, it was about pulling-in and back to make space for the other to open, expand and be known. In other words, a new relational balance was sought in which the other was enabled to fill the space two normally occupy while I became the listener, the witness and the keeper of safety. Empathy enabled me to follow where the other led.

Simultaneously communion was my aim. For me making space was not simply a suspension of self as that may have been perceived as an isolating withdrawal or holding back by the storytellers. Communion was morphing fully emerged as 'I' with all my senses, insights and my acquired academic and professional knowledge into the other's world. Yet, I was neither trying to take my world with me nor looking to create a new world made up of my-your hemispheres. I simply entered the other's world consciously prepared to draw upon all the aspects of self that could encourage, reassure and nurture the other in their dialogue and growth of openness. Communion enabled me to be present for the other.

The source of responsiveness was in the released energy of the other that permeated me as we engaged. Initially as empathy was being established it had a physical quality in which I experienced bodily synchronisation to the other. Then as communion was deepened it took on an emotional nature. Feelings under the words washed over and through me. The boundaries of self and other evaporated. All forms of bodily expressions, including gestures and glances communicated loudly, translated into words in my mind. Moreover, whilst empathy stabilised at an optimum point within the interview, responsiveness continued to develop beyond the encounter charging me with a responsibility towards the other that was carried into transcription and beyond.

Narrative researchers can hold magnifying glasses over the lives of others and report findings from comfortable distances. For me my narrative inquiry had to align with my sense of affinity with the storytellers and the values that underpinned my internal and relational ontology and epistemology. Empathetic communion and responsiveness to other enabled this. It transformed data collection and analysis into a deeply rich and meaningful experience for all involved. Ultimately, it has the potential to transform those involved as it eradicates the researcher/researched dichotomy creating onion-layers of deepening understanding and insight that turn silent realities into shared, witnessed journeys and the singularity of physical being into an intuitive one-ness with other.

Overarching Theories

As a living legacy my thesis embraces the totality of my life-time's exposure to academic and professional theories alongside the emergence of personal, embodied knowledge. Also, as each chapter looks at a different aspect of the research journey different theories from different fields are drawn upon to demonstrate an ordinary life of professional service in which passion drove interest and inquiry. Whilst this explains the use of texts and theorists as elements of my life journey, there are also overarching theories that I critically engaged with in my practice and which influenced my interpretations. These included in Chapter 1 Wilber's (1996) 'evolving consciousness' that resonated with and shaped my thinking in the explanation of my internal and relational ontology and epistemology, and from which my methodological approach arose; in Chapter 2 Erikson's (1968) eight stage model of psychosocial development and Smail's (1991; 2005) proposal that personal distress are the result of socio-political interplays and an individual's embodied history provided a theoretical framework for my evocative auto-ethnographic account in which I describe the dynamic socio-political and psychological forces that acted upon me; in Chapter 3 Maslow's (1970a) eight-staged hierarchy provided a socio-educational construction of self-actualisation for other dependent upon a self-transcendent commitment which was evident across narratives; and in Chapter 4 theories, such as Heidegger's (1927) 'thrown-ness', Kohlberg's (1958) developmental morality and Milgram's (1974) correlation between autonomous

agency and personal power, that had emerged from the themes and discourses of the storytellers to frame singular experiences and perceptions into a shared analysis are developed through an analytical auto-ethnographic script. All these are introduced and discussed within the relevant chapters and addressed in the conclusion.

Implications

My findings reinforce the desirability and potential benefits of encouraging experienced practitioners to create their own living legacies as the knowledge generated is located within the macrocosm of the international attrition of mature teachers. Also, the reception and response to the idea of living legacies from both the narrative inquiry participants, and researchers in education or other professional fields whom the idea has reached, gives evidence of a poignant need in many to access a means of reflecting, recording and making public their personal and professional legacy. My conclusion is that without living legacies, significant and unique contributions to knowledge are being lost to present and future generations.

Simultaneously my research shows the value of empathetic communion and responsiveness as an original, living standard of judgement in educational practice and narrative research. This standard emerges through my narrative inquiry to push through the dominant cultural focus that has the potential to limit auto-ethnographic research, and affirm the auto 'I' as the core of the greater, ethnographic 'we'. Moreover, as it does so it moves narrative inquiry from what I understand to be its established and acceptable process of applying reasons to justify actions into naming and owning values that explain behaviour. My conclusion is that empathetic communion and responsiveness is a uniquely powerful means of deepening, enriching and improving educational practice and narrative inquiry.

Foreword

*'As have no slight or trivial influence
On the best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.'*

(Wordsworth, 1798)

Whilst working towards my doctorate, the necessary, but feared, end of my teaching practice arrived. When it came, sitting in a small, cluttered consulting room in Dublin, I could not realise nor bear it. It hit me like an implosion of breathless panic. I immediately felt cold, alone and adrift. This rapidly transferred to physical shaking that affected both voice and body. I left the consulting room and phoned a friend. I stood on a busy, gradually darkening, city street, my back pressed tightly against a grey wall with my teeth chattering, frozen by the internal coldness left in the aftermath of the implosion. As passers-by hurried home, invisible to them I struggled with the words that I was trying to repeat without owning.

I squeezed my back tighter and tighter against the wall behind me as I tried to focus on my friend's comforting words. This was beyond choice. This was a path I had to walk. This was where the values of love and hope that had been the cable connecting and conducting my academic, professional and personal knowledge into my relationships with my students, now must energise life itself.

Struggling with increasing health issues, I had hoped for a long time that when the time came, a living legacy would transform grief into achievement. Watching so many of my contemporaries without significant senior position or academic regard leave the profession, head-low, heart-broken, spirit-depleted, I had feared their loss of grace. Grace for me is a life-enhancing connection with my deepest held, spiritual/humanitarian values. Living connected to them enables my ethical aspiration, expression and the self-esteem within which my sense of dignity resides; but connection is a fragile thing. It can be lost in the struggles, contradictions and

conflicts of institutional work, especially when one has grown tired and old burdened with professional frustrations and disappointments whilst remaining disconnected from an academy that could have salvaged community and inspired achievement. Bereft of professional regard and academic community, the personal, embodied knowledge of many of my contemporaries had neither outlet nor expression. What was their unique light turned inwards and burned the very source that had kindled and nurtured it. When they left the profession they sought alternative interests. They sympathised with those still teaching; still trapped. They met with other retirees and shared horror stories of how badly they had been treated. It took an age before some could reminisce with a fondness that did not stir an ocean of hurt:

*'She died a famous woman denying
her wounds
denying
her wounds came from the same source as her power.'*

(Rich, 1974 – 1977)

I was determined that when stripped of the practice that had given my life value, purpose and meaning, the grace of my spiritual values would remain intact and enduring, energising the next step, and enabling me to keep my head-up, and my heart and spirit hopeful. In the midst of the struggle to accomplish this, the idea of living legacies was born. For me a living legacy provides a positive bridge between a past and a future in which 'I' is the present.

As I see it, within me is realised the sum of my past academic, professional and personal knowledge. The present is the 'sum'. If each sum represented a candle, what light of knowledge the totality of these candles could emit from the past to shine for future generations of educators. Yet, at present, each 'I' shines separately; alone in the dark of its own extinguishing. So with the hope of my own living legacy, came the dream that in creating it I would contribute something of significance for others:

‘Auto-ethnography provides an avenue for doing something meaningful for yourself and the world.’

(Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 738)

At the start I did not know what my research-legacy would be. This lack of direction appeared at odds with the majority of my doctorate contemporaries. However, now I see how it gave me the freedom to engage both in breadth and depth with the process of simply making the journey. As a result of this my thesis has evolved from a unique engagement with the academy on a level I had never before experienced. For that, I am sincerely grateful to Dr Joan Walton, Professor Bart McGettrick and Professor Jack Whitehead who inspired and encouraged my essentially personal research path. It is the path that appears to me to be the forbidden fruit of academia and the profession. Yet I contend that it is an essential part of the life-force of the goals and the source of much profound but missing knowledge to both. Without the personal, in my opinion, the profession and the academy remains unearthed and unsafe. Like the elements of electricity, I see the academy as the neutral, steady current and the profession as the live, pulsating one. Although electricity will flow with just these currents, it is unsafe without the earthed element of the personal. This ‘earth-ing’ occurs in the embodiment of knowledge within the reflective practitioner in which knowing, doing and being become one (Davis et al., 2000).

My thesis attempts to account for this because it relates a journey to honour the union between the academy, the profession and the personal that has been conducted through a cable of my spiritual values of love and hope in all my relationships with children and, now, ultimately with self and other.

Chapter 1: The Research Road

Chapter 1 Overview

In Chapter 1, I identify the academic paradigm, professional causes and personal reasons behind my research. This includes a description of the moment in which my existential sense of value, purpose and meaning was most severely challenged by the medical opinion that my classroom practice could not continue. My literature review connects this personal experience with the international ‘tsunami’ of teacher attrition and early retirement. In doing so, issues of validity and reliability are explored against the backdrop of my internal and relational ontology and epistemology, and the methodological direction these prompted. Overall, this chapter contends that lives of service may be valued through the creation of living legacies and introduces the original contribution of empathetic communion and responsiveness as a new epistemological standard of professional and academic judgement.

Also, Chapter 1 outlines my internal and relational ontology and epistemology, constructing knowledge as a living, emergent consciousness flourishing in the internal but being nurtured in the dialectic relational. In this I acknowledge how Wilber’s (1996) ‘evolving consciousness’ resonated with and shaped my own thinking and overarches my thesis.

The contents of this chapter are organised to:

- 1. Outline my personal, professional and academic purposes and significance.**
- 2. Locate my personal experience of early retirement in global teacher attrition demonstrating how ‘I’ fits into socio-educational Russian-doll systems and has scholarly and political significance in the generation of educational knowledge.**
- 3. Identify my ontological lens, epistemological foundation and the values that are their gate-keeper.**
- 4. Outline my methodological pathway and methods.**

- 5. Redefine standards of judgement for an internal and relational ontology and epistemology.**
- 6. Introduce the idea that lives of service may be valued through living legacies that would benefit practitioners, education and society.**
- 7. Introduce empathetic communion and responsiveness as explanatory principles of my educational influence and an original contribution to knowledge.**

Purpose and Objectives

Personal

The personal purpose of this research was to understand the nature of my educational influence and its role in my sense of value, purpose and meaning within a culture which privileges the external world over the internal. For me this required naming and owning the values that inspired my practice; how they were expressed within the practice; and how they could be sustained as the practice ended. The purpose was to positively engage with my externally changing circumstances so that the grace of connection with my deepest held values could flourish and inspire whatever came next.

Professional

Alongside this was a greater purpose that by understanding the situated-ness of values and their role in personal value, meaning and purpose, an understanding of existential meanings and possible academic and professional contributions of dedicated lives of service could be achieved. Sadly, as the research focus of teachers' early retirement is predominantly on loss and a battle for retention (Hansez et al., 2005; Weber, 2002), what is missing from research is how the work-retirement transition can be transformed into more than a brief handshake of thanks, and become a celebration of unique and reflective lives. Therefore, the professional aim of this research was the illumination of how values can be positively rechanneled through the creation of living legacies to improve the experience and sense of social contribution of those approaching retirement.

Academic

The academic purpose of this research is to unify the personal, professional and academic. I owe my conceptualisation of this trinity to Professor Bart McGettrick whose deep, humanitarian passion for education as a united expression of love, hope and justice, within these three modes of knowledge, consistently informed and strengthened my commitment to my research:



[Figure 2: Education as an expression of love, hope and justice within the modes of personal, academic and professional knowledge.]

Through his insight I visualised these as three elements of educational service, each with its own qualities that balance, compliment and enrich the other. Therefore, for me to ridicule and debase one damages the nature, purpose and potential of the others. Yet that is how I perceive the current state of the academic and professional world i.e. bereft of personal grace. So this research is located in the personal domain with the goal to bring what drove, sustained and graced my service, and that of other mature, experienced practitioners, from the hidden depths of our private, inner worlds out into the light of the privileged, external world of the profession and the academy. For example, in terms of my research I recognised my personal drive to create empathetic relationships within which students and/or research participants were individually responded to, and from this arose the conviction that this should be the substance of good professional and academic practice.

Significance

Research into early retirement has had a reductionist focus upon the causes and prevention of teacher attrition. Focus on causes acknowledges ‘burn-out’ and other psychological and emotional conditions (Cau-Bareille, 2011; Lehr et al., 2009; Hansez et al., 2005; Weber, 2002). Focus on prevention predominantly addresses interpersonal, institutional issues, such as the regard of senior management, loss of self-agency and constraining workplace structures (Cau-Bareille, 2011 & Dunham 2002). Also, the frequently expressed concern of these studies has been on the impact upon those left behind i.e. students and less experienced teachers (Mantei, 2010; & Hansez et al., 2005). Both these focal points and concerns are worthy of study. However, the significance of this research lies with the essential human-being at the heart of the subject matter without whom the intrapersonal dimension, ‘shared understandings’ and the socio-cultural discourses are glossed over or lost.

Introduction: Russian Dolls

The nucleus of my research is a personal narrative of inquiry and learning. The focus of this is upon the challenge to sustain a sense of value, purpose and meaning, and their expression in responsive, empathetic relationships to the end of my classroom practice. This includes my personal struggle with socio-cultural and institutional issues and the exploration of their impact upon my sense of personal value and social role, alongside a search to live a life of service even when classroom practice ended. From this emerges a narrative inquiry that enables a powerful sense of connection with other experienced, mature practitioners which illuminates the validity and potential human scope of the study. I am neither alone nor outsider on the journey I authentically researched, interpreted and now share.

Every year dedicated, experienced, mature, classroom teachers are lost to early retirement. This is an international problem. Mantei (2010) describes the significant impact the loss of ‘late career teachers’ has had upon Australian schools, particularly in the responsibility placed on early and mid-career teachers to reshape current

pedagogies. Hansez et al. (2005) argue that the increasing numbers of teachers in Belgium who have retired early has led to significant shortages within the profession. In two consecutive reports in 2008 and 2010 The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future warned of a 'retirement tsunami' (2010: 4) that would deprive American schools of 'an unacceptably large number of our best educators' (2008: 2). In the United Kingdom the 'Independent' newspaper on 27th February 2012 reported that almost ninety thousand teachers took early retirement in the previous year.

Studies predominantly identify stress related issues as the main cause of early retirement in the teaching profession. Weber (2002) found that more than fifty percent of Bavarian teachers taking early retirement did so because of 'psychic or psychosomatic illnesses'. Hansez et al. (2005), concerned that stress was a major factor in the increasing numbers of Flemish teachers taking premature retirement, found that this was often located in a perceived sense of job depreciation and lack of recognition. Lehr et al. (2009) found that 'affective disorders' frequently accounted for early retirement in schoolteachers in Germany, and identified an imbalance between effort and the reward of esteem by supervisors or colleagues as a more significant risk factor for depression than low monetary reward or job security. Cau-Bareille (2011), looking at the early retirement of female kindergarten teachers in France, found that the acquired experience of these teachers did not protect them from the mounting human costs of their jobs. Teachers interviewed were affected by work-related constraints and cumulative fatigue, with feelings of personal effectiveness declining with age adding to increased anxiety in the last few years of their working lives. Dunham (2002) writing about stress in teaching in Britain cited Travers and Cooper's (1993) study that found that out of the sixty-six percent of participants who had actively considered leaving teaching, thirteen percent were considering taking early retirement. Also, Dunham (2002) identified that the 'older teachers' felt that they had once had greater freedom of choice in their work, but had come to the acceptance that they were merely employees who just had to do as they are told. He cited Blase's (1982) premise that cumulative stress leads to the erosion of coping strategies and burnout.

However, studies inevitably take a third-person viewpoint and seem to share a common construction that objective understanding may stem attrition. For example, Bowers (2001) examining the ‘Review of Ill Health Retirement in the Public Sector’ (HM Treasury, 2000) stated:

‘Keeping teachers more consistently in their jobs and limiting their opportunity to retire on the grounds of ill health can be seen to offer a theme which unifies the otherwise disparate elements of the ensuing review.’

(Bowers, 2001: 136)

Perhaps this viewpoint is ‘set within a context of government concern over increasing social expenditure’ (Bowers, 2001: 151) that has, in more recent years, been aggravated by international economic recession:

‘It is evident that some employers will need to retain the services of older employees to survive.’

(Webber & Smith, 2005: 415)

Certainly the state retirement age in many countries has risen. For example, my state pension age as a woman in the United Kingdom has risen from sixty, to sixty-five in 1995 and sixty-six since 2011. Across the western world the story appears similar. For example, in France the retirement age has been extended to sixty-two, with a planned rise to sixty-seven over the next eight years; in Spain it rose to sixty-three in 2013 and will progressively rise to sixty-seven by 2027; and in the USA the normal retirement age without reduced benefits is steadily increasing from sixty-five to sixty-seven. In the Republic of Ireland the story is slightly more volatile. When I was born in 1957 the retirement age was seventy. In the 1970s this was reduced to sixty-six but in 2011 the qualifying age for those of my cohort was raised to sixty-seven and for those following us to sixty-eight. Therefore, another concern with the apparent absence of first-hand accounts of early retirement is that there may be a broader, political agenda which is somewhat insensitive to the personal experiences, situations and needs of frontline practitioners.

Many areas of work in the care professions appear to run increased occupational risk of ‘burn-out’ (Maslach, 2003; McGrath et al., 2003; Pension et al., 2000; Felton, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1982), and thereby need the recourse to early retirement. Front-line, class teaching is no exception (Koenig, 2014):

‘For teachers, working with many students over an extended period of time creates a platform for emotional stress. In addition, adverse effects from social and political changes, combined with what Farber (1991) calls the erosion of public respect for teachers, have left many teachers disenchanted with the profession and at high risk for burnout. Farber (1991) notes that many reforms of the 1980s, which were centered on top-down changes, have left even more teachers dissatisfied, stressed, worn out, and overcommitted.’

(Vanderslice, 2010: 298)

Indeed, recent studies have recognized teachers’ burnout ‘as a serious occupational hazard’ (Pyhältö et al., 2011: 1101; Loonstra, et al., 2009) with negative comparisons ‘with other academic client-related professions’ because ‘teachers have been found to surpass the average levels of stress’ (Pyhältö et al., 2011: 1101; Travers & Cooper, 1993) and ‘to suffer high levels of exhaustion and cynicism that constitute the core dimensions of burnout’ (Pyhältö et al., 2011: 1101; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). In my opinion, ignoring or denying that this is a job with many psychological stressors that may lead to chronic ill-health and the necessity of early retirement is either naive or unjust.

However, from a review of the available literature, it appears possible that the inevitability of retirement, either early or timely, is being overlooked because age-related attrition is being subsumed within general concern for teacher attrition as may be seen in the research of Choinye et al. (2011), Manuel (2003) and McGaw (2002). This concern may also explain the focus on the effect upon those left behind and means of retention. If so, the lens being used to interpret and understand the

experience may not only be inappropriate to the phenomenon, but omits to situate the experience within the relevant psychological, social and cultural contexts. Moreover, personal issues and/or costs tend to be viewed as intrapersonal or institutionally interpersonal with resolutions being presented as potentially fixable on these levels:

'it seemed that the teacher working-environment fit provided a functional framework for exploring the narratives of episodes that promoted teacher burnout in the complex and multilayered working environment of school.'

'Hence, the strategies designed to promote the teachers' occupational well-being should take into account the dynamic, complex and nested nature of school as a working environment.'

(Pyhältö et al., 2011: 1108 & 1109)

Broader, macro-cosmic influences are kept outside the scope of the research. However, mature teachers experiencing an accumulation of pressures and contradictions may, like me, intuit that some issues/costs are rooted in broader social/cultural constructions, such as age and aging.

Therefore, an outsider, descriptive narrative focused on the institutional and professional impacts and consequences names the issues but limits subjective depth. Messy, intrapersonal angst can be contained, and its situated-ness within broader social and culture stereotypes of age and aging can be overlooked. This confers an erroneous appearance of relational neutrality on the issue i.e. early retirement appears to be placed outside 'the influence of changes in the relationships between' elder practitioners and 'economics, politics, ecology and sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts' (Whitehead, 2008: 1). This is not simply an imbalanced picture, but one that may be reinforcing social and culture prejudices and barriers.

Certainly for me, the intrinsic relationship between the social and cultural aspects of gerontology and the intrapersonal, psychological issues that an aging teacher may face seem overlooked. For example, one of the more frequent issues of early retirement studies is the impact upon younger, less-experienced teachers as seen in Chionye et al.'s (2011: 109) observation that the loss of experienced teachers does not 'augur well for the profession because such teachers could become mentors to beginning teachers and teach them the rudiments of the job.' This may reflect the phenomenon of 'youth centeredness' i.e. a socio-cultural trend towards conferring uniqueness and value more onto the young than the elders of a society. It may be part of the wider diminishing of respect for the elder members of Western societies' that Aboderin (2004) and Cowgill (1986) locate in industrial and economic factors. Indeed, Cole's (1997) cultural history of aging in America parallels improved medical and economic conditions with an accompaniment of cultural disenfranchisement in terms of loss of meaning and social role for older citizens. In this way, the findings of Dunham (2002), Hansez et al. (2005), Lehr et al. (2009) and Cau-Bareille (2011) may all be located in the social and cultural diminishing of the value and respect for elders. For example, Hansez et al.'s (2005) finding that a sense of job depreciation and a lack of recognition contribute to premature, teacher retirement in Belgium may fit into the context that as practitioners age their value and respect within an institution may, at best peak, but at worse diminish, reflecting broader social and cultural trends. Certainly, Dunham (2002) found an association between aging and loss of professional freedom of choice, and Cau-Bareille (2011) found that teachers expressed a reduction in personal effectiveness that they directly related to aging.

Also, the focus away from personal, insider accounts of early retirement onto professional and institutional consequences draws attention away from vast areas of concurrent research in other fields. For example, there has been no research that draws together aspects from the fields of gerontology, developmental and/or transpersonal psychology. It appears to be the norm and the practice across most spheres of human endeavour, to sharpen insight and knowledge in one field/discipline at the expense of a breadth of knowing. Indeed, when I first imagined creating a living legacy, it was in relation to my practice in the field of autism,

situated within the field of SEN [Special Educational Needs], situated within primary education, situated within education. These ‘Russian dolls’ fit neatly, one-into-the-other, representing a sharpening of my skill and a refining of my capabilities, and I can know one without necessarily having a depth of experience with another. However for me to be familiar with one, without ever having awareness of its relationship within a network, provides a blinkered, partial glimpse of their ‘raison d’être’. To understand Russian dolls I must understand both the singularity of each doll and the nature of the sum of them all. For me, this is as true for a living legacy of my practice in the field of autism, as it is for a thorough exploration of the research question.

The only difference is in the dolls themselves. The doll of a living legacy in the field of autism fits readily into the macrocosm of education and all the dolls exist outside and without me. The subject-knower ‘I’ who was to create a legacy situated in the field of autism imagined reflecting upon the acquired, gap-filling knowledge gained through years of study and service. However, the ‘doll’ of this research question is not a subject-knower-I but, ‘I’ a knowing-subject. For me, the subject-knower-I encapsulates the pursuit of external, empirical knowledge, whilst the knowing-subject-I represents the internal, interpretative nature of personal, embodied knowing. Both terms stem from a conversation with a school inspector of who told me that SEN teaching could either be curriculum-led or child-led. However, experience showed me only one road to good, educational practice and empathetic relationships within SEN i.e. the latter. Equally, within research the subject-knower-I makes external subject knowledge primary whilst the knowing-subject-I holds the internal knowing-I as primary.

This knowing-subject-I is situated at the microcosmic level of many systems. The system of this research is but one and this one is complex and many layered. In its totality the system represents much human inquiry across several disciplines, such as psychology, sociology and education. Interestingly, all these inquiries are concerned with understanding and/or interpreting the experiences of the knowing-subject-I, and yet there has been no research reporting the first-hand reflections of this ‘I’.

Therefore, it is with the knowing-subject-I that this research started and continually looked to maintain connection to personal sincerity, authenticity and trustworthiness. In doing so, I mirrored Walton's (2011: 7) view of 'living theory' as the product of a 'living contradiction' existing 'when there is a dissonance between the values' a practitioner holds, and how they actually behave, in the creation of a new, disharmonious struggle between an individual's youthful aspirations and the actuality of their achievement. Also, I anticipated that the source of this new dissonance lay beyond its intrapersonal place of impact, in the interpersonal borderlands where personal distress results, not so much from individual failures of insight or learning, as from the interplay between social and material power, and an individual's own embodied history (Smail, 1991; 2005). This complemented my exploration into whether Walton's (2011) proposal that 'living theory' enables a person to reflect on their own dissonance and seek to resolve it, could be transposed into the creation of a living legacy which would enable me to find the resolution necessary to sustain my sense of value, purpose and meaning beyond my classroom practice. Whilst the resolution sought may have significant impact in the intrapersonal sphere, a living legacy of continuing educational influence belongs in the interpersonal domain.

Moreover, my sense of value, purpose and meaning within my practice was dependent upon my spiritual values of love and hope being expressed through empathetic relationships. However, these spiritual values are not anchored in a specific religion. They are intrinsic and existential in nature. Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) noting increasing interest in workplace related spirituality proposed three categories. These are intrinsic, religious and existential. The second category is specific to a religion, but the first defines spirituality originating inside a person i.e. 'inner consciousness'; and the latter a reflective search for a meaning. Therefore, the spiritual values that underpin this research are an amalgamation of intrinsic and existential spirituality.

Also, in its 'methodological inventiveness' (Dadds & Hart, 2001) it goes beyond the smallest Russian doll, 'I', seeking communion and responsiveness with other.

Whilst the knowing-subject-I is the vessel of authenticity, sincerity and trustworthiness, shared understandings are my source of social validity and coherence. These, located in the researched social and cultural discourses of age and aging, offer a comprehensive nest of reliability. Ultimately, the intent of this is not merely to describe and illuminate a human experience, but as advocated by Habermas (1987), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Russell (1932 reprinted 1992) to interrupt what has become a silent, entrenched, normative, social order that it may be transformed for the betterment of many:

'unquestioning acceptance' of normative rules and practices 'by practitioners often contributes {albeit unwittingly} to reproducing the existing social order and so perpetuates them'

(Whitehead & McNiff, 2006: 101)

Limitations & Risks

The risks of this research lay in its breadth and depth. As a living legacy my thesis embraced the totality of my life's exposure to academic and professional theories alongside the emergence of personal, embodied knowledge. In other words, as chapters explored different aspects of the research journey, theories from different fields were drawn upon reflecting the expansive influences on our frontline practitioners. However, the approach of a knowing-subject-I anchored to value-led authenticity equally acted as a force of limitation and check upon the scope of the study keeping it afloat and steady amidst divergent theories. Also, the triangulation between 'I', the shared understandings of other and the cultural and social discourses of the literature review, acted as staples of social validity and coherence.

Ontology & Epistemology

Ontological Lens

Ontology is the study of the nature of being. I understand being as an embodied, social experience in which my being-in-the-world as a physical, sense-making organism is only possible through my relationship with other (Heidegger, 1927):

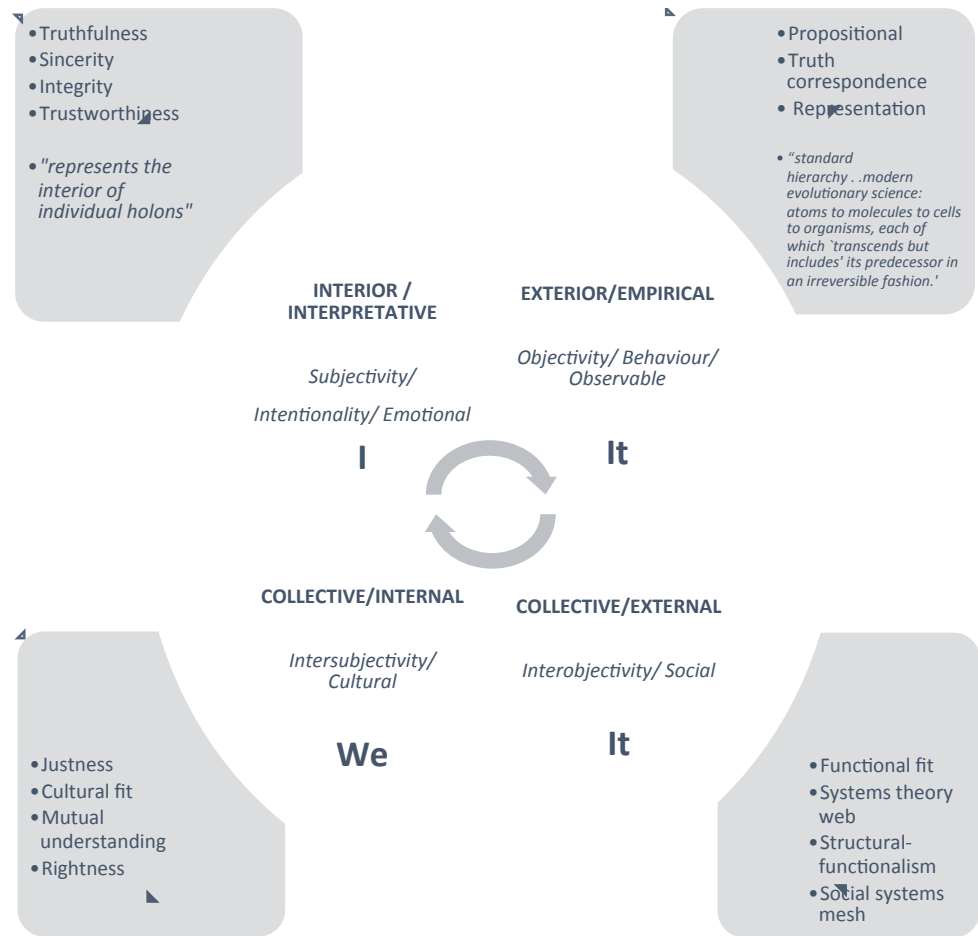
*'We are not alone. To exist means to be in relationship.
Even to be alone implies the possibility of being in
relation with others.'*

(Skilful Living Network, 2012)

My personal ontology is internal and relational. I do not deny the existence of the external world into which I was thrown (Heidegger, 1927). I situate it on the right hemisphere of Wilber's (1996) 'kosmos', where it represents all that is observable within and without ever increasing organisms and systems, and I accept its central, dominant place in the research of others [see Figure 3].

However, the predominant world of my research co-exists with this world. It is represented by Wilber's (1996: 76) upper, left quadrant of 'the interior depth that is consciousness itself'. It is the internal world of sentient, conscious beings of which I am one; and together with other human-beings, I do not simply see, hear and touch the external world, but I also interpret, respond emotionally, seek to understand, and invest with meaning all that lies without me. This process incorporates perception, emotion and cognition and meets, sometimes struggles, with relational support or challenge from other. Moreover, all this is done within the structures of a broader, relational discourse between my subjective knowing/meanings and the culture/society I live in as represented by Wilber's (1996) lower, left quadrant and its 'intersubjective spaces' (Wilber, 1997). This, then, is the ontological lens I am looking through in my research.

INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS



COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

[Figure 3: Four Quadrants of Consciousness (Wilber, 1997)]

Epistemological Foundation

Moreover, arising from this being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1927), I believe that our primary epistemology is internal. Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge. However, in agreement with Habermas (1972), from my own educational experiences I believe that the scientific form of knowledge has been elevated to nearly an unassailable position as the predominant epistemology of the West on a par with a religion i.e. 'scientism'. For me this has caused a negation and impoverishment of what I believe to be the primary seat of epistemology i.e. internal sense-making. Indeed, in both my undergraduate study and my postgraduate research

I was taught to be wary of ‘common-sense’. For me academia has invested this term with a negative emotional charge that envelopes intuitive and embodied knowing in a cloud of suspicious distrust. Furthermore, I contend that the scientific epistemology mirrors some of the observable and quantifiable aspects of our primary, inner epistemology, but omits elements that may be considered ‘softer, more subjective, spiritual or even transcendental kind, based on experience and insight of a unique and essentially personal nature’ (Cohen et al., 2000: 6). For example, in Kelly’s (1955; 1958) proposal that people act as scientists, building models that allow them to predict events from formulated and tested out hypotheses about the social world, people are presented as copying science; however, for me it is science’s external, knowledge-based epistemology that evolved from the primary, inner sense making of human-beings.

For me, even the natural scientist observing an external, sense-based reality, sees the world through a particular ontological lens coloured by an internal epistemology that privileges the observable and measurable above the subjective and interpretative. Therefore, unlike those who take the position that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions or those who take the opposing viewpoint that epistemology has primacy over ontology, I believe in an internal, interdependent emergence as part of a socially, constructed developmental process:

*‘In this sense, then, ontology is about ‘what exists,’ and epistemology is about ‘how can we know what exists’.
From these definitions it is clear that we must acknowledge the difficulty in discussing ontological and epistemological assumptions separately – they are necessarily entwined.’*

(Geddes, 2013, paragraph 2)

In other words, as my ontology is internal and relational, my epistemology is the knowledge of the inner experience, and of the shared meanings that constructed and re-structure these as they are negotiated and influenced by broader socio-cultural

discourses. I acknowledge the purpose of hard, concrete knowledge relating to the external world into which human-beings are ‘thrown’ (Heidegger, 1927). However, the knowledge that interests me and forms the essence of this thesis is the knowledge of inner meanings and the shared understandings of lived experience, and their connection with the formative, cultural soup one is born into.

The Gate-Keeper: My Values

Both my ontological lens and my personal epistemology nestle within my value of appreciating difference. This value is deeply embedded in my educational practice of accommodation, rather than the assimilation of difference. Therefore, I do not wish to use ‘slings and arrows’ against those who do not share my own research constructs, but rather to take part in a dialogue of how we can best relate meaningfully to each other:

‘If, as scholars, we cannot talk across difference as a means for increasing our understanding of critical social issues and problems, then our research, I would argue, is of little use.’

(Hendry, 2010: 72)

I believe that in the post-modern world, theoretical and methodological pluralism should and could be accepted as necessary and beneficial:

‘Truth’, or whatever we may call that which is meant to function as ‘truth’ once did, may be fluid. . . Striving to understand would no longer be competitive but merely the effort to play one’s part to the best of one’s capacity. And this would be the committal to the ‘truth’.

(Pelz, 1974: 207)

Like Pelz's redefinition of 'truth' I think that the definition of what constitutes valid scholarly research is at the heart of the matter. In my experience objectivity and third-person research is not only the domain of the quantitative researcher. There are many in the qualitative, interpretative field that pay tribute to third-person objectivity. They stand in observation of other. They are not to be found but in the hidden agendas of their writing. They watch and listen, record, analyse, informing change but remain unknown and unchanged themselves. They avoid personal disclosure and in avoiding it, for me, neglect honesty, communion with other, process and authenticity. What if the validation of scholarly, socio-educational research was based on these neglected ingredients and values? What if narrative research embraced as an epistemological standard of judgement the achievement of empathetic communion and responsiveness with/to the other; an ingredient that could deepen and improve human relationships?

'For things to reveal themselves to us, we need to be ready to abandon our views about them.'

(Hanh, 1987: 42)

Methodology & Methods

My methodological pathway refers to the ontological, epistemological and axiological rationale that underlies my study whilst my methods are the visible, concrete processes that arose from this and were used to investigate the research question. My methodological pathway provides a non-traditional approach describing the journey that led to the combination of auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry as my methodologies because the contribution of a living legacy should be both an academic and professional one. As a professional contribution one of its essential elements is the valuing of experience i.e. the process by which we refine our practice. Therefore, I was compelled to chart the methodological pathway including theories that were influential along the way to value the research process and to draw the personal, professional and academic into closer balanced accord.

Furthermore, as an auto-ethnographic thesis I considered the influences upon methodological choice to be of cultural import.

Methodological Pathway

Before my doctorate journey my relationship with my personal ontology and epistemology was obscure because my understanding of them was as a distant, student-researcher connecting to constructions of superior minds. I experienced myself as a small microbe attaching to a large, well-oiled, prestigious macrocosm that I could draw knowledge from but not influence. Therefore, I pondered over the thinking of others and wondered how to fit my ideas into respected constructions. Indeed, as I had experienced academia, it was unacceptable to reveal the self, and as facets of self, there was little place for my personal perspective and assumptions. Instead these were so privately contained and guarded that I had never named and owned the values that inspired my practice. It was as though the self who aspired to excellence in educational service was separate from the mind that undertook study and research to inform and improve her practice. Somewhere in my life a division between mind and spirit/heart had emerged. In my 'Reflective Portfolio' I recorded my first cognisant awareness of this division:

'I remember at the age of nineteen standing in the college library and realising the purpose of all those books. . . In that library I realised two important doctrines of the 'knowledge creed'. The first was that in the pages of these books were the ideas my tutors wanted. The second was that my own ideas did not carry weight unless I could anchor them onto the ideas contained inside one or more of the volumes before me.'

Now, I construct that my education took place within the dominant camp of an old war between the houses of objectivity and subjectivity. Within the dominant camp of objectivity all that is not observable, hard and measurable becomes untrustworthy

and unfit to research. For example, in a ‘Research Autism’ conference in 2010 the then Speaker of the House of Commons praised their strict adherence to natural science methods and inferred a strong, political distrust for alternative research paradigms, echoing Habermas’s (1972) warning that the belief in the inherent superiority of science has elevated it into the only legitimate form of research, Hendry’s (2010: 74) pronouncement that ‘public funding’ is tied ‘to specific modes of inquiry’ and Feyerabend’s (1978: 74) indictment:

‘it [science] is now part of the basic fabric of democracy just as the Church was once part of the basic fabric of society. Of course, Church and State are now carefully separated. State and science, however, work closely together’

Nevertheless, in the midst of this war, socio-educational research arrived at a precarious, broad, pluralistic expression that increasingly expanded beyond objective, third-person approaches to embrace the first-person. Generally objective, third-person approaches prescribe the form of data to be collected, how it is to be analysed and require a homogeneous, rule-abiding world in which knowledge can be isolated and repeated. Alternatively, first-person approaches value the personal meanings the social world holds for human-beings, and the processes by which they construct those meanings. Ultimately, this research reflects a heterogeneous, multifaceted world in which knowledge is fragmented and fragile. If the constructions and stories of human-beings are worthy subjects of research, and knowledge can be introspective, intuitive and experiential, then there is a multiplicity of possibility and outcome in an ‘illimitable’ universe with ‘unrepeatable’ events and multiple ‘causes and causal interrelations’ (Pelz, 1974: 205).

However, in the midst of all wars are ordinary people who are affected by what they are living through; and so it was with me. Born into and nurtured within the camp of the dominant third-person, objective paradigm, I knew only the denial and negation of ‘I’ in my education. In my ‘Reflective Portfolio’ I wrote:

'In secondary school I had experienced learning as a repository . . . It appeared to me that subject knowledge had to be poured into me for future purposes. Also, it appeared that the most important skill I could obtain was the ability to regurgitate this knowledge in order to prove my learning and suitability for a 'better' life . . . I interpreted this as essential for 'what life would do with me', rather than 'what I would do with my life'. In tertiary education . . . I imagined that the time had come for the development and expression of my own ideas married with my acquired knowledge. . . I believed that if I could logically and consistently present an argument about a given text, it would be respected regardless of whether or not a renowned critic had expressed it. I now believe that I misunderstood the codes and rules of knowledge as they existed within the academic faculty I was enrolled in. Also, I now believe that much of my higher education experiences were all, at least initially, a struggle to understand the codes and rules of knowledge of different institutions. For example, when undertaking my first module of study for my psychology degree, my tutor informed me that he had down-marked my first assignment for use of references to texts my peers would not have access to. In my first undergraduate degree I had learnt the importance of referencing my ideas to those of others without limitation on my sources. In my second undergraduate degree, there were tutors who preferred me to restrict my references to prescribed texts.

Next, having made as much sense as I was able to of different institutions' unwritten rules and codes, it became my aim to act accordingly, 'giving onto Caesar what was Caesar's'

... Now ... I have identified the tenets I feel I implicitly understood ...

These are:

1. Knowledge is out there.
2. It must be searched for and found.
3. It is found predominantly in the written form.
4. In this form it is highly prescriptive, logical, non-introspective and best enshrined within the third-person.
5. It is more valuable than the personal idiosyncratic, emotion-bound ideas and constructions arising from experience.
6. It has a malleable, institutional nature.
7. This nature requires obedience and compliance.
8. By giving these I may be allowed to contribute and/or add to the academy's body of knowledge, but not influence it to change.

The knowledge creed of this dominant 'methodological tyranny' (Hendry, 2010: 73) taught me to keep the personal silently imprisoned within a private, denigrated, inner space. Moreover, the doctrine that imposed this rigid restriction was clearly so pervasively powerful throughout my life that it was all I knew. In my opinion, it is this seeming normality that wrought the division between the personal and professional self and my academic persona in my previous study and research.

However, through my doctorate research this rift found healing. It began at the induction weekend when I met Dr Joan Walton and Professor Jack Whitehead and we discussed the absence of passion in research, the nature of knowledge and the role of values in educational practice. In my 'Reflective Portfolio' I wrote:

'... a new form of 'acceptable' inquiry had been enabled ... This new form ... was internal and introspective. Whilst the external feasting on books, journal articles, etc., continued to add layer upon layer onto my existing 'mind' bank of the known, an alternative inquiry had begun to illuminate the value of my own experiential, 'tacit' (Polyani, 1958), 'knowing in action' (Schön, 1991). It did this by shedding the light of conscious reflection upon the beliefs and values of the personal ontology that had driven my educational practice for over thirty years. It is not that before this I was non-reflective. It is that these encounters changed my perceptions of my reflections from being, private and insignificant to other, to being the proper and appropriate material of the 'conversation in which all universes of discourse meet' (Oakeshott, 1967, quoted in Anderson, 2000: 141, cited by Brown, 2011).'

Clearly what occurred was an induction into an alternative paradigm that was aligned with my personal ontological and epistemological perspective and assumptions. Suddenly, I was aware of a different normality and realised that outside the cave of my personal experience there had been a shift:

'... knowledge production is not a Western (or white, or male) privilege. Different knowledges are produced in multiple locations and these need to be acknowledged and engaged with if we are to challenge existing relations of inequality.'

(Zavos & Biliga, 2009: 153)

In many ways it was a shift of human consciousness as an old world view lost its sense of security and untarnished honour in the face of the devastating realisation that its modern day superhero, 'scientism' (Habermas, 1972) was also an agent of long-distance, mass destruction. Amidst the ruins of a toppling, dominant ontology and its concrete, observable empire were the lives of ordinary people. How do we

make sense of what occurred through the times people have lived through, if not through the lives of those who lived through it?

From this point onwards the methodology of my inquiry was directed by my personal ontological, epistemological and axiological perspective and assumptions. They were liberated to take their rightful place in my research with facets of self, previously confined to private reflection and expression, leading my path of discovery and approach. Therefore, whilst agreeing with others, such as Vasilachis de Gialdino(2009), Creswell et al. (2007), Savage (2006), Patton (2002) and Guba & Lincoln (1994), that choice of methodology cannot be separated from the researcher's personal ontological, epistemological and axiological perspective and assumptions, I additionally suggest that in my personal experience the dominance of 'scientism' (Habermas, 1972) restricted and subsumed alternative methodologies so that in my previous academic writings I wrote in a language and form foreign to my own voice and values. However, in this thesis my personal perspective and assumptions powerfully determined the methodological pathway of the research.

During this process I came to the belief that my internal value system was the gate-keeper to understanding why I was the practitioner I was. However, before this time I was ignorant of its power, and therefore its influence over my ontology and epistemology was silent and subconscious limiting my potential and vision:

'We need to recognize and understand our educational values and beliefs before reflection and therefore development can take place.'

(Kennedy, 1996: 21)

I needed to recognize and understand what I valued before I could know a methodological path that reflected the unique unity of personal, professional and academic knowledge that my practice embodied.

I now know that I had always placed value in the internal, relational world. For example, as a teacher the staple of my practice was empathetic communion and responsiveness which entailed holding in high regard the inner experience of the other and the shared understandings between them and myself. This involved spending several weeks playing, observing and entering a student's inner world in order to establish an empathetic relationship. The less conventional the means of communication the student could access, the greater the challenge to establish a relationship that allowed me to understand the core constructs that would shed insight into behaviour, needs and strengths. In understanding these I reflected on my own constructions enabling their evolution or devolution. These were valued, symbiotic, dialogical relationships which were founded on empathetic communion and responsiveness.

However, as I have already reflected, in the past, when undertaking research I knew to disassociate from these subjective 'truths' because experience had made me aware that I was in a world with a different value system to my own and that held, as Apple (1996) termed, 'hegemonic' sway over mine. Then I was encouraged me as part of my doctoral journey to explore both what I value and my values. This exploration brought the promise of resolution for the deep division I experienced between my academic self and my professional/personal self, but only if what I valued and my values authentically and trustworthily inspired and influenced how the research was approached and reported. As Dadds and Hart (2001) pointed out, I valued this task:

' . . . for some practitioner researchers, creating their own unique way through their research may be as important as their chosen research focus. We had understood for many years that substantive choice was fundamental to the motivation and effectiveness of practitioner research (Dadds, 1995); . . . But we had understood far less well that how practitioners chose to research, and their sense of control over this, could be equally important to their motivation, their sense of identity within the research and their research outcomes.'

(Dadds & Hart, 2001: 166)

Therefore, whilst others may face a variety of methodological options as they undertake doctoral research, in mine I was option free as it arose from my personal ontology, epistemology and axiological perspective and assumptions. As such it was an authentic looking-glass onto me, the knowing-subject-I researcher. Furthermore, nestled within a relational ontology, I acknowledge that it accords with certain contemporary worldviews that are part of a wider movement towards ‘living enquiry that aims, in a great variety of ways, to link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing’ (Reason and Bradbury, 2008: 1). In other words, its methodology does not arise from a personal ground zero but is situated within certain relational, interpersonal constructions and discourses of present day culture and society.

Intrinsic to the research question is the desire to find a creative expression for the embodied fusion of my personal, professional and academic knowledge. This arises from a lifetime of hands-on, reflective practice that depended upon the amalgamation and constant renewal of all three. My value system privately regards them equally, but publically knows that only two are venerated within a culture which privileges the external world over the internal. Sadly, the one least respected is the one that guided my reflection and practice in the other two areas: the personal, embodied knowledge essential to praxis. Therefore, it is in the paradigm of praxis that I initially sought to situate my research methodology.

Praxis is defined by Reason and Bradbury (2008: 1) as:

‘not so much a methodology as an orientation to inquiry that seeks to create participative communities of inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity and question posing are brought to bear on significant practical issues’

As such it finds expression in action research:

‘Action research can be best summed up as plan, do, review, which is repeated in a circular fashion. The

second plan must take into account the former review data and the evaluation of it so that new ideas can be tried and built upon.'

(Little, 1995: 31)

However, it was the circular nature of action research that concerned me. I was coming to the end of my practice and ending precluded return and revision. I was aware that my life situation was taking me beyond the reflective spirals of practice and revised implementation Little (1995) describes. Therefore, there seemed to be a lack of 'goodness-of-fit' between this approach and my research capabilities.

While reflecting on this I became aware of Whitehead's (1989) 'living theory'. Within action research 'living theory' proposes that practitioners 'are capable of generating their own personal theories by systematically studying their practice' (O'Connor, 2011: 8) without limiting the study to forward movement. For example, the 'living theory' doctorates of Van Tuyl (2009), Spiro (2008), Walton (2008), Sullivan (2006) and Naidoo (2005) all include a retrospective gaze. Also, I realised that Walton's (2011: 7) view of 'living theory' as the product of a 'living contradiction' existing 'when there is a dissonance between the values' a practitioner holds, and how they actually behave, could be reframed to explore the existential angst created between my youthful aspirations and the actuality of my mature achievement. Her idea that reflection upon this dissonance could enable resolution inspired my idea that a living legacy could enable a mature teacher to come to the end of practice with the comfort of resolution.

For me central to this was 'I' and authenticity. However, I was cognisant that MacLure (1996) had emphasized the importance of resisting telling an inauthentic 'smooth story of self' in action research when referring to the narratives of teachers' transitioning via action researcher to academia and dwelling in the boundaries between both before arriving at their desired

destination. Alternatively, as a practitioner I felt had arrived at my destination. The classroom was where I wanted to be. The boundaries I was dwelling in were different in nature to those of MacLure's (1996) participants. Also, my entrance to them was inevitable given aging and mortality creating an existential need within me to find resolution and embrace the 'in-between-ness' of my approach towards leaving the work that gave my life, meaning, value and purpose that refutes MacLure's (1996) description of boundary work as a 'transgression'. In telling the authentic, 'unsmooth story of self' I was hoping to resolve life-long contradictions and dualities in order to unleash values tethered to expression in classroom practice so that they could flow through the wholeness of my humanity. Even as I was required to leave my profession I did not have to abandon the values that inspired it. The hope was of re-direction, and in this new service and communion with other.

With these influences the methodological concepts and tools were emerging. However, as the learning spirals of action research were inappropriate to my life situation, 'living theory' (Whitehead, 1989) did not wholly satisfy my methodological criteria because beyond the centrality and authenticity of 'I' was always the relational i.e. the other and the world we co-inhabit and co-construct. The belief that guided my process was that from the authenticity of 'tacit knowing' (Polyani, 1958) or what is for me personal knowledge, a communion of shared understanding and insight could be achieved between 'I' and 'other' through which the social validity and reliability of my research could be assessed. In other words, in undertaking research into the issues around early retirement, I came to offer an auto-ethnographic narrative of my own experiences hoping to understand the experience and transpose into a new direction the grace of the values that inspired my practice. To do so I use 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and personal reflection as advocated by Schön (1983, 1987, 1991), Freire and Freire (2004), Freire (1972) and Habermas (1987). If I could do this I believed I could enrich what was ahead, and thereby improve the experience. However, as my values were rooted in service and communion

with other, the ultimate aim of my inquiry was to enrich and improve the experience for more than self. So, the second step of this inquiry was situating the personal within the narratives of contemporaries to broaden it whilst deepening the spirit of empathetic communion and responsiveness with/to other. Ultimately, with many jigsaw-piece views of a shared reality, the underlying social/cultural and psychological themes of this common, human experience may shed light on how those at the end of their career can feel the strengthening of the grace of inspiration, rather than the gradual diminishing of its light, and create legacies that enrich the academy, the profession and themselves personally.

So, with the intent to situate my personal narrative within the stories of others and then to understand our lived experiences through our place in the formative pot of our cultural ‘thrown-ness’ (Heidegger, 1927), my research journey brought me to auto-ethnography combined with narrative inquiry as my resonating, authentic methodological form.

The Auto-ethnographic Path

Despite being ‘wide-ranging, with different associations and traditions within different disciplines’, ethnography is generally understood to be a qualitative research design aimed at the ‘study of people and aspects of their lives and social world’ (Taylor, 2002: 1). What auto-ethnography does is combine autobiography with ethnography to explore aspects of cultural phenomenon through personal, lived experience, rather than observation and/or report of ‘other’:

‘Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) (ELLIS, 2004; HOLMAN JONES, 2005). This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others (SPRY, 2001) and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially conscious act (ADAMS & HOLMAN JONES, 2008).’

(Ellis et al., 2011: 1)

I see this as arising from the postmodern crisis of faith in what Habermas (1972) described as ‘scientism’:

‘postmodernism as understood involves a radical break with a dominant culture and aesthetic, and with a rather different moment of socioeconomic organization against which its structural novelties and innovations are measured’

(Jameson, 1984: vii)

As I view it this crisis agitated and eventually disharmonised the relationship between scientific and socio-educational research. For example, claims of value-neutral research were questioned when ‘the facts and the truths scientists found’ were seen to be ‘inextricably tied to the vocabularies and paradigms’ they used (Ellis et al., 2011: 2; Kuhn, 1996; Rorty, 1982). Perhaps this was most blatantly seen in the ethnographic research of anthropologists. Traditionally a common feature of ethnography has been ‘observation in order to study people’s lives’. Baszanger and Dodier (1997: 8) described this as the observation of ‘human activities’ whilst Denzin (1997: xi) defined it as ‘ways of life’ and Willis and Trondman (2000: 5) as ‘human experience’. What these descriptors share is the phenomenon of the ‘outsider’ looking-in at the ‘insider’ much as with the ‘European colonizers’ accounts of ‘other’ peoples, the development of Western anthropological fieldwork in pre-industrial societies, and various studies of migrant and ethnic minorities and urban populations within the USA’ (Taylor, 2002: 2); and, in my opinion, it is with this ‘outsider’ perspective that difficulties of differing ‘vocabularies and paradigms’ arise. However, this is not mere difference. For example, when comparing the lives of researchers and researched there are possible hidden stories of inequality of access and opportunity. Also, researcher aims and assumptions about what should be studied and reported contain the potential for judgemental prejudice and bias:

‘The researcher may also bring biases into the situation by virtue of his or her age, class, gender, general background and pre-existing theoretical orientation.’

(Plummer, 1995: 57)

Certainly, when one examines another's lived experience able to walk away back to one's own uninspected life, there are ethical questions of power and effect:

'Any form of research involves issues of power and these are particularly relevant to ethnographic research as it has so often been about people who are positioned as 'other' within large-scale relationships of domination and subordination.'

(Taylor, 2002: 3)

Thus, the turmoil produced by the crisis of faith in scientism (Habermas, 1972) destabilized the status-quo putting, for example, meta-narratives into disrepute (Ellis et al., 2011; De Certeau, 1984; Lyotard, 1984); but simultaneously enabling theoretical and methodological pluralism to emerge so that contemporary, socio-educational research arrived at a broad, pluralistic expression that now uses a range of methodologies to explore a range of substantive inquiries and issues (Smith et al., 1995). Auto-ethnography is one of these methodologies moving 'closer to literature than to physics', and in recognising 'the innumerable ways personal experience influences the research process' (Ellis et al., 2011: 2), the substantive inquiries and issues that it is primarily able to investigate are those relating to personal, existential matters as they emerge from and merge with the social context so that 'the boundaries of' self 'cannot easily be separated from the boundaries of the other' (Wetherell & Maybin, 1996: 222):

'The person does not simply surface in the world and is therefore also not exhaustible by means of the principles of universal measurement . . . neither is the person an isolated thing, an artefact resting entirely upon itself, something that would be separable from all measureable relationship to the world.'

(Stern, 1923: 183)

Thus, both in form and aim, auto-ethnography was the methodology best suited to research how I could sustain my sense of value, purpose and meaning within a

culture which privileges the external world over the internal. For example, the form auto-ethnography predominantly takes is the personal narrative. It values the evocative stories of our internal worlds as being ‘complex, constitutive, meaningful phenomena that’ teach ‘morals and ethics introduce[d] unique ways of thinking and feeling, and help[ed] people make sense of themselves and others’ (Ellis et al., 2011: 2; Adams, 2008; Bochner, 2001; 2002; Sacks, 1992; Fisher, 1984). Furthermore, complimenting my internal and relational ontological perspective, it places these stories within the inter-subjective domain of culture (Wilber, 1997) aiming to:

‘sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experiences shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us’

(Ellis et al., 2011: 2)

However, within auto-ethnography two approaches are claimed. These are the ‘evocative’ and the ‘analytical’. In my opinion arguments of divergent approaches may best be understood in terms of an academic dualism betwixt advocates who focus either upon the considered qualities of resonating, subjective autobiography or the promised objectivity of using existing theories to analyse memories of events that would appear connected to auto-ethnography’s roots in anthropological and/or sociological investigation (Chang, 2008; Anderson, 2006). The reality for me is not an ‘either or’ but a rich combination of both with the exact constituent parts being determined by the nature of researcher and research. I believe this is demonstrated in my thesis in which diary and journal extracts draw upon autobiographical experiences and reflections whilst the theories that have influenced my life are used to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of experienced classroom practitioners in a culture which privileges the external world over the internal.

Moreover, auto-ethnography’s aim to be ‘self-consciously value-centred rather than pretending to be value free’ (Ellis et al., 2011: 2; Bochner, 1994) accords with my quest to continue my educational influence beyond my classroom teaching that led

me to offer as an original standard of professional and academic judgement the empathetic communion and responsiveness which enriched my practice and my narrative inquiry.

From the reflective autobiographical contents, through the connected narratives of others, to established theories resonating through the stories shared, a view of the times and a phenomenon lived through is clothed in an analysis that accords with personal experiences and values. What finally emerges amalgamates evocative auto-ethnography, analytical auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry in the research of a cultural phenomenon located within the personal experiences of one situated within the loss of the many and enveloped within a society of all.

The Narrative Path

I was overwhelmed by the intuition that my lived experiences were part of a greater patchwork of lives stretching across international borders, and therefore situating the personal within the stories of others to broaden the inquiry was essential to me. So as another natural part of my methodological pathway I turned to narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry emerged from the field of qualitative research. It uses a variety of forms and analytical practices to interpret and understand human experience (Creswell, 2006; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) ‘with specific focus upon the stories told by individuals’ (Creswell, 2006: 54; Polkinghorne, 1995). My personal commitment to narrative inquiry is profound because within my internal-relational ontology I construct it as a significant bridge between internal worlds. Indeed, as I proposed that our primary epistemology is internal, Hendry (2010: 72) has argued ‘that narrative research is the first and oldest form of inquiry’. Basing her argument on the Bruner’s (1996) premise that ‘narrative is a structure . . . for organizing our knowledge and experience’ (Hendry, 2010: 73), she suggests that ‘narrative functions as an overarching epistemology that cannot be reduced to a method’. Indeed, having divided narrative inquiry into sacred, symbolic and scientific domains

she argues that these are ‘not distinct and incommensurable’ but on ‘the contrary, they are interconnected and interdependent’ (Hendry, 2010: 74).

Whilst agreeing with Hendry (2010: 74) I understand narrative inquiry as both a necessary part of my methodological pathway and as a method. As the latter it is visible in the concrete transcripts collected and collated through a process of empathetic interviewing, reflective analysis and responsive reporting. As the former it is the essential thread of communion between ‘I’ and other in the fabric of my rationale. For me this methodological thread of communion goes beyond Hendry’s (2010: 74) intrapersonal qualities of ‘intuition, imagination, revelation’ to embrace what is for me the ultimate goal of narrative i.e. the empathetic communication between inner worlds that makes responsiveness to other possible. As such, for me, narrative inquiry encompasses our silences as well as our words, our actions/movements as well as our thoughts, our emotions/feelings as well as our reasoning, our innuendoes as well as our clarity and our lived experiences as well as the moment. In other words, listening to another I observe as well as attend; I feel as well interpret; I enter another world without leaving mine, and in doing so, I empty myself whilst still accessing my past experiences. Moreover, with this methodological thread my ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions and perspectives were constructed, defined and interwoven into the ever-adjusting, relational phenomenon of the inter-subjective spaces between ‘I’ and other:

‘I have come to believe that narrative is essentially more than the telling of stories. I believe that narrative is the way we create and recreate our realities and ourselves.’

(Giovannoli, 2012: 2)

Furthermore, from this methodological thread my living standard of judgement arose. I was concerned not to place the stories of others under a magnifying glass that would illustrate my own experience whilst objectifying theirs. Fortunately in the suggested research perspectives and strategies of others, such as Creswell (2006) and Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000), I found guidance to avoid this pitfall and the reassurance that shared understanding and joint creation were possible:

‘As researchers collect stories, they negotiate relationships, smooth transitions, and provide ways to be useful to participants. In narrative research, the key theme has been the turn toward the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which both parties will learn and change in the encounter (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). In this process, the parties negotiate the meaning of the stories, adding a validation check to the analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Within the participant’s story may also be an interwoven story of the researcher gaining insight into her or his own life (see Huber & Whelan, 1999).’

(Creswell, 2006: 57)

This guidance resonated with my aspiration to achieve empathetic, responsive relationships with students which transferred into the interviews enabling a process of being present with other so that, in some ways, we became co-reflectors and co-creators. In this way, empathetic communion and responsiveness became the epistemological standard of judgement for my narrative research and a way of continuing my educational influence.

Methods: The Pavement Slabs of Research

Facing the end of my career I experienced a sense of psychological outsider-ness from many research colleagues because my focus had shifted from improving practice to leaving a legacy. Initially I imagined leaving a synopsis of what I had learned academically, professionally and personally. Given the inevitability of a clock ticking that only I it seemed could hear, my focus was pulled towards the accumulated ‘tacit knowledge’ (Polyani, 1958) of the past and its future plight:

‘. . . we live within the tensions constituted by our memories of the past and anticipation of the future.’

(Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 746)

I perceived myself as a bridge about to collapse or vanish. Either way there was fear and concern that the embodied knowledge uniting the past with the future would be permanently lost. In this space I began to understand the need for ‘methodological inventiveness’ (Dadds and Hart, 2001) and creative methods grounded in my ontology, epistemology, axiology, and appropriate to my ‘psychosocial stage of development’ (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson (1968) describes eight stages of lifespan, psychosocial development with each stage characterised by its own developmental task. The penultimate stage, ‘generativity’, is characterised by the need to create or nurture things that will outlast one’s life. Successful ‘generativity’ results in feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, whilst failure results in ‘stagnation’ and shallow involvement in the world. The final stage, ‘ego integrity’, is characterised by reminiscence with the older adult needing to look back and feel a sense of fulfilment. Successful ‘ego integrity’ results in feelings of wisdom and satisfaction, whilst failure results in regret, bitterness and despair. During my research I came to believe that the edges and ages of these stages are not as clear and stable as Erikson (1968) prescribed. He suggested that the stage of ‘generativity versus stagnation’ is between forty to sixty-five years of age and that the stage of ‘ego-integrity versus despair’ stretches from sixty-five to death. Alternatively, I experienced the developmental tasks of these stages not as separate, but as I approached the end of my practice they seemed transplanted one-on-top-the-other. In other words, the need for ‘generativity’ looked towards reminiscent reflection for expression.

The starting point of this thesis was at the end of a life-process. Hence, guided by the tasks of ‘generativity’ and reminiscence appropriate adaptations were needed. Schön (1983; 1987; 1991) categorised reflection into in-action and on-action. Clearly, reflection post-retirement is confined to on-action. Therefore, the conceptualisations of Fitzgerald (1994) and Boyd and Fales (1983) regarding on-action reflection were adopted to provide clarity of approach and direction. Fitzgerald (1994: 67) proposes that reflection on-action can provide ‘the knowledge used in practical situations, by analysing and interpreting the information recalled.’ Reflection, therefore, may

enable access to embodied knowledge applied in-situ by practitioners. Given the accumulation of years of practice, systematically accessing this knowledge may be extremely valuable to the practitioner, the profession and the academy. Alternatively, Boyd and Fales (1983), focus on the value of on-action reflection to self:

'The process of creating and clarifying the meanings of experiences in terms of self in relation to both self and world. The outcome of this process is changed conceptual perspectives'

(Boyd & Fales, 1983: 101)

On-action reflection does not simply add to knowledge, but can act as a catalyst, transforming conceptual constructs and assumptions i.e. increased breadth of knowing and depth of understanding enabling an evolution of personal knowing. In other words, the process of reminiscent-reflection may transform the knower's conceptual perspectives of the road taken and the road ahead. Therefore, I adopted as my initial method of inquiry an auto-ethnographic reflection which embraced the techniques of life history review (Butler, 1974) and included journaling and other personal writings; a method and techniques most appropriate to reminiscent-reflection and my life situation:

'Each is a first-person account, written as a story that expresses vivid details about the author's own experience. . . The authors privilege stories over analysis, allowing and encouraging alternative readings and multiple interpretations. They ask their readers to feel the truth of their stories and to become co-participants, engaging the story line morally, emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually'

(Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 745)

However, the use of journal/diary extracts and other personal writings does not merely refer to those made during the doctorate journey. For me, both as auto-ethnographic research and my living legacy, it was important to draw upon

appropriate writings from across my lifespan. These personal writings work as illustrations and cultural artefacts that contextualise ideas while offering unique insights into contemporary, lived experience.

My second method is narrative inquiry. Whereas the chain of continuity in the cycle of reflection was the practitioner and his/her continued reflective practice; the chain of continuity aspired to in the tasks of 'generativity' and reminiscent-reflection link the researcher to others. While I felt isolated from researchers seeking to improve their work-based practice I was aware of a multiplicity of other I-bridges, like myself, slowly disappearing and immediately being forgotten. The literature review I undertook supported this transforming my personal 'generative' quest into a connection with other.

Nevertheless, at first I was deeply challenged by this method. I did not want to lose the centrality of 'I' in my research because it was my expression and guarantee of authenticity, sincerity and trustworthiness i.e. my 'sense of identity within the research' (Dadds & Hart, 2001: 166). Also, I did not want to undertake any research that polarised researcher-self and researched-other. However, I did want to confirm my intuition that I was one amongst many who had left teaching feeling that something vital had been left unsaid. In other words, just by focusing on my personal experience there was no way of evidencing validity even to myself. How could I be sure that my perceptions were not my deceptions? There were others in whose lived experience and sense of value, purpose and meaning I could ascertain the coherence, similarity and truthfulness of what I suspected, and in the illumination initiate change. Therefore, I believed that the combination of an auto-ethnographic account with the 'generative', reminiscent narratives of others was necessary.

In traditional, academic terms the stories shared are phenomenological analyses of lifespan, educational experiences of four, mature, female practitioners in contemporary England and Ireland. The storytellers were in their late forties to fifties and had consistently worked as educators for over twenty-five years. Two were retired, one still taught and one had become a teaching assistant/learning mentor.

They were all known to me through my practice and were asked to share their stories because of chronological age, length of experience, expressed love and exhibited dedication to teaching, and a commitment to further training to improve practice but minimal pursuit of promotion and/or academic qualifications.

The starting point of the process were the ethical considerations in regard to the storytellers and any possible risks to their well-being. These were submitted for approval before possible storytellers were contacted [See: Appendix 1]. Verbal consent was given on the understanding that they were contributing to a study from which they could withdraw at any stage.

Before interviews storytellers was asked for their written consent and to peruse my narrative and the preparation papers [See: Appendices 2, 3 & 4]. For me the narrative sharing was essential to ensure a parity that could annihilate the researcher-researched dichotomy. I did not wish to examine the life of another without having submitted mine to equal scrutiny. I was aware of arguments concerning contamination and academic boundaries but my predominant professional and academic standard of judgement was empathetic communion and responsiveness to other. In my opinion, this required an open, sincere self-declaration that would encourage the other's expressive liberation. In other words, it was my intent to submit myself to the same scrutiny I was asking another to undergo and to avoid hidden agendas by declaring myself, my interests and constructions i.e. I sincerely revealed 'I' so that the 'you' could without manipulation and/or fear do the same, and in the open, expressive liberation of other empathetic communion and responsiveness could emerge and flourish.

Next the storytellers were encouraged to make any preparations they felt necessary, such as locating photographs and journals. Also, they were informed that the interview might require several hours and were asked to choose the venue to ensure their comfort and well-being. All storytellers chose their own homes, except Deidre

who chose mine. A time and date was then arranged and the right to postpone or withdraw was again stressed.

I used intimate, 'depth interviews' because Stevens (1996) had described how these enabled exploration of experiences and provided insights into subjective meanings and understandings. Also, I made interviews open-ended because Sapsford (1996) had outlined how these facilitate review of lived experience through a time-frame. This was supported with 'aide memoir' questions [See: Appendix 4] relating to specific life-experiences and stages with the focus upon the storyteller's present perceptions of events.

At the start of interviews storytellers were thanked for volunteering and encouraged to decide where they could most comfortably sit. They were reminded that they could withdraw from the interview at any stage and pause it for any reason. They returned their signed consent forms and were asked to give their permission to record interviews. The prompt questions [See: Appendix 4] were kept in visible sight. Interviews took between one to three hours with some stretching across several sessions. Either the prompt questions or, where possible, questions paraphrased from the storytellers' words were used to probe more deeply. No written notes were taken so as not to deflect from my main focus which was mindful, empathetic presence and response.

At the end of each interview there was a brief, open-ended conversation. For this the recorder was switched off because the aim was to reassure and express gratitude.

Ethically, beyond issues of anonymity, consent, truthful declaration of intent and rights to withdraw, postpone, suspend and/or break without any question, aware that life-reflection might evoke negative emotions, storytellers were encouraged to give careful consideration to the venue for their personal comfort and ease. Also, if during an interview a storyteller became upset I offered an immediate suspension of the

process, only recommencing at the storyteller's instigation. Then, at the end of interviews there was a reflective, unrecorded debriefing session in which gratitude and reassurance were expressed.

Moreover, the awareness that negative emotions might be evoked led me to bias the life-story format towards hope and future plans/dreams focusing on the creation of a living legacy. Also, I viewed the establishment of empathetic communion and responsiveness as an essential means of making the experience positive for the storytellers. In interviews I acted as a life-review witness (Butler, 1974), acknowledging through intensive, creative listening methods, such as advocated by Pinney (1968), the experiences storytellers related. This was evidenced in a post-interview email in which one storyteller reflected on the positive experience of having '*the opportunity to talk and have time to reflect about the choices that you have made.*'

However, in providing the opportunity for storytellers to be interviewed in their own homes I acknowledge that there were risks. Whilst I considered these meagre, to reduce risk and ensure personal safety, the place and expected duration of each session was noted and given to a friend who was asked to check-in with me if I had not contacted her within a given time-frame. Additionally, I carried a mobile phone to enable emergency contact.

In the post-interview stages as an essential component of the responsiveness engendered from the empathetic communion experienced in sessions, transcripts were sent to storytellers to verify authenticity and resonance with their personal 'truths' and feelings before analysis and interpretation was considered ethical or possible. Then when a story was written it was forwarded to its teller to be owned and given permission to be heard. Only after this could these professional, personal stories, understood through empathetic communion, be brought by responsiveness from the silence that would have swallowed them unheard to academic attention and public awareness.

Finally, overarching and underpinning both the auto-ethnographic account and the narrative inquiry is a literature review that includes theories encountered across my academic life because I believed this essential in the creation of a living legacy thesis. Valuing one life usually involves acknowledging others as is seen in books, dissertations and award ceremonies. Also, beyond this situated one with the named many is the ‘thrown-ness’ (Heidegger, 1972) within time and place which for me makes each one of us a cultural looking-glass. Therefore, it was important in exemplifying a living legacy, and especially an auto-ethnographic one, that the richness of lifespan academic and cultural influences infuse the thesis. This involved including, cross-referencing and interpreting literature from cross-disciplinary and cultural sources that had influenced my life going beyond the ‘common conventions and expectations’ (Holbrook et al., 2007: 338) of a traditional literature review as ‘a theoretical framework proposed at the beginning’ of a thesis and ‘a theoretical discussion synthesizing findings and their significance at the end’ (Ely et al., 1997: 225). Instead, the literature review is an integral part of the research weaved into the thesis’s substance and aimed at:

1. Locating personal experience in relevant cultural constructs and cross-disciplinary theories.
2. Situating the narratives’ shared understandings in social structures and cultural discourses.
3. Triangulating between the personal, the relational and the culturally lived experience in a way that contributes to greater understanding of the research phenomenon (Thurmond, 2001; Roberts & Priest, 2006).

Standards of Judgement

Redefinition for an internal and relational ontology and epistemology

Throughout my academic study I have been persistently reminded that research should be reliable and valid. I came to understand that these standards emerged from

quantitative research with reliability referring to ‘how far a particular test, procedure or tool, such as a questionnaire, will produce similar results in different circumstances, assuming nothing else has changed’ whilst validity ‘is about the closeness of what we believe we are measuring to what we intend to measure’ (Roberts & Priest, 2006: 41). In other words, in quantitative research reliability referred to ‘repeatability of results or observations’ and validity to ‘whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they are actually measuring what they are intended to measure’ (Golafshani, 2003: 598 & 599). Therefore, I could argue that these standards are inappropriate to this thesis because of its qualitative nature in which sense-making, shared understanding, trustworthy interpretation, awakened possibility and transformative illumination are intrinsic aims, rather than repeatability, accurate measurement or future predictability.

However, agreeing with Bashir et al. (2008) that ‘both qualitative and quantitative researchers need credibility of the research’ I appreciate Roberts and Priest’s (2006) argument for ‘equivalents’ to the concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research. Nevertheless, whilst doing so I stand firmly on two articles of belief:

1. The quality of a study should be judged by its own paradigm’s terms, and ‘since reliability and validity are rooted in the positivist perspective then they should be redefined for their use in’ (Golafshani, 2003: 597) the qualitative paradigm (Healy & Perry, 2000; Merriam, 1995).
2. Research standards should not be venerated as tablets of stone. As the *raison d’être* of research is to reveal more and more to us, our research standards should also be open to evolution and change.

Therefore, I believe that standards applied should be appropriate to the research and no standard should be routinely applied because even academic standards should be

evolving and culturally relevant; if they are not we are in danger of biasing the values and judgements of one generation, one culture or one paradigm over another.

Standards of Judgement: This Thesis

In my thesis these convictions, a methodology bridging two approaches and an internal-relational ontology and epistemology led me to draw from a number of standards/criteria. These included Bashir et al.'s (2008), Creswell's (1998) and Hoepfl's (1997) proposals of relate-ability, usefulness and appropriateness to other. Overall, in my opinion, these standards are implicit within the aims of auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry. For example, Ellis et al. (2010: 274) contend that auto-ethnography can 'deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us' whilst Giovannoli (2012) describes narrative inquiry as a means of making sense of our lives. Also, they fit with my internal and relational ontology, epistemology and axiological beliefs and with the dynamic fusion of academic, professional and personal knowledge which a living legacy offers.

However, whilst the standards that initially guided my research were influenced by the constructions of others, in the inquiry itself I arrived at an original standard of professional and academic judgement for narrative research. This was empathetic communion and responsiveness to other that enriched participant validation and the 'low inference descriptors' used (Johnson, 1997: 283):

'This refers to the practice of researchers sharing interpretations and theorising with participants, who can check, amend and provide feedback as to whether they are recognisable accounts consistent with their experience. . . using examples of participants' verbatim accounts within the written account of the findings to demonstrate that findings are grounded in data.'

(Roberts & Priest, 2006: 44)

Furthermore, I believe that as a standard of judgement empathetic communion and responsiveness depends upon a mindful presence-ing that enhances the reliability and readability of the data by deepening the researcher's engagement process:

'– moving backwards and forwards between the data and our interpretation of it – and making firm links between our interpretations and the data by, for example, using verbatim examples of participants' comments in written accounts of the findings, can all increase reliability and readability.'

(Roberts & Priest, 2006: 44)

Therefore, whilst relate-ability, usefulness and appropriateness to other are received standards of judgement overarching my thesis, in my narrative inquiry the standard of academic and professional judgement by which I held myself accountable was empathetic communion and responsiveness to other. Also, I believe that as my reader's reception and response to my research goes through a process of reason and persuasion, Habermas's (1987) criteria of social validity are applicable because my research offers comprehensive, sincere and truthful claims about personal and professional perceptions and experiences using appropriate methodologies/methods. In other words, as the research describes an emergence of personal clarification of themes and meanings, it also invites the reader to decide if the aims and standards were achieved. For example, I recognised empathetic communion and responsiveness to other as my living standard of academic and professional judgement only when critical peers felt that they experienced my storytellers as living, breathing, feeling persons whose voices were heard through their narratives. Moreover, through this process, empathetic communion and responsiveness to other though seeming to come after engagement with received standards was recognised to be both the essential foundation and the significant outcome of all other standards.

Chapter 2: A Personal Narrative of Value-Led Service

'Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life. . This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning. . . .Man, however, is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values!'

(Frankl, 1959: 106)

Chapter 2 Overview

Chapter 2 explores my struggle to connect with the values that drove my pursuit of excellence in educational service. The purpose of this was to understand my intrinsic and existential, spiritual values as defined by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002); how they were expressed within my practice and how they, and the sense of value, purpose and meaning they nurtured, could be sustained as my classroom practice drew to a close. With this was the hope of resolution between the dissonance of my aspirations as a novice teacher, and my final classroom-based accomplishments; a dissonance that I propose is deeply rooted in the cultural privileging of the external world over the internal.

Also, in Chapter 2 I explore the nature of the hope and resilience that sustained my sense of value, purpose and meaning, and contend that resilience, being vulnerably interlaced with the external, relational world, requires cultivation across a lifespan. Ultimately, I propose that living legacies provide a means of nourishing resilience in mature practitioners whilst imparting their embodied knowledge and insights to present and future generations.

Finally, Chapter 2 comprises the evocative aspect of my auto-ethnographic research. However, relating the subjective experience of moving through a cultural phenomenon using autobiographical accounts went beyond mere description. In my search to sustain value, meaning and purpose, the experience was interpreted, understood and transformed. With my internal-relational ontology and epistemology

interpretation and understanding had to resonate with existing theories that culturally contextualised experiences before transformation was viable. Initially I found this in the individual theories of Erikson (1968) and Smail (1991; 2005), and later in the collective resilience theories of Derkson (2010), Clauss-Ehlers (2004), Bronfenbrenner (1979). Erikson's (1968) eight stage model of psychosocial development spreading across the lifespan and Smail's (1991; 2005) argument that the causes of personal distress are the result of socio-political interplays and an individual's embodied history provided a theoretical framework in which the aging practitioner is acted upon by dynamic, powerful social and psychological forces which are, for me, at the core of auto-ethnographic research. Later theories that viewed resilience as a relationally bound process nourished or demoralised by cultural influences moved my research from interpretation and understanding to transformational possibilities.

The contents of this chapter are organised to:

- 1. Show understanding of how the subjugation of 'I', rooted in privileging the external world over the internal, compromised my academic, professional and personal sense of value, meaning and purpose.**
- 2. Shed insight into the processes by which practice may become divorced from and reconnected to grace.**
- 3. Communicate the essence of what was my personal, educational influence.**
- 4. Show how my educational influence was reborn and spread beyond my classroom practice.**
- 5. Clarify and communicate my understanding of the nature of the hope and resilience that sustained my sense of value, purpose and meaning as my classroom practice ended.**
- 6. Develop the idea that lives of service may be valued through living legacies that would benefit practitioners, education and society.**

Introduction: The Subjugation & Liberation of 'I'

In starting my research I was in my eyes a practitioner. I became a researcher because I was looking for a way to leave a legacy that would enable me to complete my life's work with dignity and grace. For me grace is the life-enhancing connection with my deepest held spiritual values that enables the self-respect wherein my dignity resides. Also for me spiritual and humanitarian are synonymous because service true to my spiritual values demands self-transcendent, empathetic communion and responsiveness with other. Therefore, my quest for a legacy included retaining my spiritual/humanitarian values and passion for socio-educational service beyond my classroom practice. Moreover, in listening to other mature practitioners I came to believe that the source of the loss of grace in mature practice is more likely to be interpersonal dissonances than intrapersonal contradictions and from this recognised the worth of a living legacy approach to knowledge that would value the experience of frontline practice.

Show understanding of how the subjugation of 'I', rooted in privileging the external world over the internal, compromised my academic, professional and personal sense of value, meaning and purpose.

Before this research, whenever I found myself within academia, I felt required to disown my ontological faith in the internal and relational. It appeared unacceptable to reveal the 'self'. 'Scientism' (Habermas, 1972) seemed to govern with a suppressive insistence on the observable and objective, and an emphasis on the accumulation and having of knowledge, rather than the being and the 'knowing'. I believe that this construction of knowledge was nested within broader, social status-quos that even in my childhood were being questioned by a dynamic movement of personal-political change:

Reflective Portfolio, June 2012

'I see myself as fortunate to have been born in the 1950s because I have been able to participate in the rallying liberation of the ordinary

and the personal from the dungeons of the non-important and disregarded. For many years I unconsciously rode the waves of this rally. Change abounded and I little understood how my life was transformed from the lives of my predecessors. I was the first girl in my extended family to study for a degree . . . this was only possible because of government grants. I did not marvel at this because the mind-set of time had taught me a new language of 'rights'. I constructed myself as part of a payback for the generations of those who had been deprived of higher education because of poverty or class. I deserved the opportunity of tertiary education . . . because others, like me, had been denied in the not so distant past. I was one of many torchbearers, not only for . . . my extended family, but for the era itself:

'One essential feature is that accounts, and the words people use in giving them, reflect wider social constructions of broad cultural and ideological themes.'

(Dallos, 1996: 132)

However, the very factors that propelled my 'right', also, threatened to impede my progress through the echelons of higher education. I had entered the higher educational system unprepared by my family's ignorance of this 'other world'.

Thus, I concluded that I had misunderstood the codes and rules of knowledge within academia, and that much of my higher education experiences were a struggle to understand these. Then having made as much sense as I could, I acquiesced to the predominant and prestigious nature of academic knowledge, never hoping for change but only participation in return for my compliance. In my doctorate study, I

came to identify the tenets I feel I had implicitly ingested [See: Methodological Pathway]. They can be summarised as being out-there, regurgitate-able, objective and inter-objective. Clearly, this is an individual construction of meanings imbibed. However, with reference to Dallos's (1996) criticism of 'Personal Construct Theory' that it can underestimate the correlation between a person's system of meanings, explanations, understandings and the wider shared, societal discourses that shape accounts, I contend that this personal account may reflect broader cultural definitions and discourses:

*'the possible narratives that can be contemplated are
constrained by the societally shared narratives available'*

(Dallos, 1996: 133)

I now construe that my previous studies were marked by either conformity to an external value system or ineffective, angst-ridden rebellion because I was separate from like-minds/spirits. Both these approaches were personally problematic, contributing in different ways to what Whitehead (1989) and Walton (2011) describe as a 'living contradiction'. On one hand, I stood prepared to ignore or sacrifice my values to achieve academic success. On the other hand, when the threat to what I valued seemed too great, my response was limited to walking away or taking an isolated stance disconnected from those pioneering an epistemology and methodology in-keeping with my own personal perspective and assumptions.

However, outside my personal experience there had been a shift of human consciousness in which the internal and inter-subjective began to gain regard. For example, aspects of ordinary lives became valid and respected points of interest to be commemorated in museums that once had exhibited only the great and the powerful; values became personal and relative through internalised principles of justice (Kohlberg, 1958); and the interpretative paradigm flourished. Therefore, as I researched teacher attrition I realised that within academia there were golden threads of alternative methodologies so fine and sparsely used or hidden within the vast tapestry that is academia that they were almost invisible. Following this realisation there was rapid change in my methodology because my disconnection from those

who held 'I' ontologically central to research was at an end. As I continued with my research I became aware that I could produce work authentic to my ontological, epistemological and axiological perspectives and assumptions.

Nevertheless, the identity shift from practitioner to academic was resisted on many personal levels. Despite being conditioned from primary school in the importance of third-person writing, I was never comfortable with academic declarations of objectivity. To write about chemical properties or reactions from distant observation was understandable, but to report or interpret the behaviours or words of living others using magnifying glasses held in outstretched arms was an anathema to me. Magnifying glasses were held in human hands and the outstretched arms holding them were attached to living bodies endowed with hearts, minds and spirits through which the totality of 'human-ness' including its passions, egos and biases flowed. To me self-reflective awareness, personal acknowledgement of interests, and empathetic communications with the other are antidotes to the hidden agendas that can undermine research.

Whilst applying these antidotes to my research, I became aware that MacLure (1996) emphasizes the importance of resisting telling an inauthentic 'smooth story of self' in the narrative of an action researcher. I knew that the transition I was experiencing differed from that of her participants. They had transitioned from teachers through their action research to academics. Moreover, they had aspired to and chosen transition, and therefore what MacLure (1996: 274) describes as their 'boundary work' may be 'an unsettled condition of "hybridity" or "in-between-ness"' viewed 'as transgression rather than transition'. Alternatively, I had arrived at the destination I aspired to in my classroom and only ill-health and the inevitable aging process had forced me into the boundary lands between practice and retirement. I understood how the loss of control to an inevitable social and physiological process created an emotional need to find resolution. I suspect this response relates to the psychological recognition (Taylor et al., 2000) that stress does not necessarily 'lead to negative feelings, social conflicts, and aggressive behavior' but that 'acute psychosocial stress can instead increase psychosocial behavior' (von Dawans et al., 2012: 658) especially in women (Taylor et al., 2000). In other words, the emotional turmoil did not promote either fight or flight impulses within me as the psychologist Walter

Cannon in the 1930s proposed. Instead I experienced the ‘inherent and effective coping mechanism’ of ‘tending-and-befriending’ the very circumstances I was being compelled through (von Dawans et al., 2012: 658). This included a movement towards new social connections within a less familiar area of education i.e. the academy. Therefore, my story of ‘I’ is authentic but not smooth.

My Story

Grace Lost & Found

‘We know what happens when people are prevented from exercising their capacity to question, the gradual loss of excitement, and the quietude of acceptance.’

(Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 45)

Shed insight into the process by which practice may become divorced from and reconnected to grace.

When I read Whitehead and McNiff’s (2006) words they deeply affected me because I had become one of those people, but as one of those people I knew no ‘quietude of acceptance’. I knew only a spirit-destroying, life-defeating dis-ease or what Saint John of the Cross termed, ‘the dark night of the soul.’ I responded with the following:

The gradual loss of grace;

The growing dusk creeping through directives and dismissals

Transforming love and passion into indifference;

Joy into resentment and fear.

This is not a limbo of quiet acceptance.

This is a purgatory of pain

*Where all that was youthful enthusiasm
Tortures the memory, trapped within resentments
Of legacies lost.*

Also, I voiced the questions, ‘How had I, a passionate and dedicated practitioner, come to this point? How does anyone come to this point?’

Smail (1991; 2005) has argued that personal distress results, not so much from individual failures of insight or learning, as from the interplay between social and material power, and the individual’s own embodied history. Through my research I have come to agree with him seeing how values forged in childhood, and reinforced by the socio-educational aspirations prevalent in early adulthood, inspired the educational philosophies that brought me and others, colliding and conflicting with institutional power structures to personal distress and the gradual loss of grace. I experienced it as the diminishing of love and passion for the work I had given my adult life to.

In psychotherapy seeking out relationships that can rewrite past hurts only to have the wounds re-opened is recognised. For example, Dallos (1996: 142) proposes that partners in a relationship may activate ‘just those aspects of themselves that they hoped their relationship would change, but had now become marooned upon’. They develop self-fulfilling, interlocking perceptions that produce the observable, repetitive patterns of actions they are caught up on. Also, whereas Dallos (1996) is describing intimate relationships from a social-constructivist perspective, in psychodynamic theory there are other concepts that support this. In particular, there is the process of transference in which ‘residues of early experiences of other people and ways of relating provide templates and scripts which in later life are continuously re-enacted with new people and in new and on-going relationships’ and may ‘reinforce the original hurt’ (Thomas, 1996: 164 & 181). My experience is that this unconscious drive can go beyond personal relationships to influence one’s choice of career.

In the 1960s I was an immigrant child removed from her family because there was a suspicion that my absence from school was a cultural misdemeanour rather than the result of ill-health.

Life History Extract, October 2010:

‘One day I remember my Mother taking me to a grand place with long, endless corridors and large, heavy, wooden doors. I remember being small, partially clad, alone with a congregation of large, grey men sitting around the biggest, polished table I had ever seen. I vaguely remember being examined. BUT I strongly remember being asked if I would like a holiday at the sea-side. In the minute moments before replying there were colours, brilliant colours; memories of what had been and had not yet been grasped would never be again; memories of my lost home and life. I said, ‘Yes!’

.. Next I remember being in the back of a van with a group of other children still believing in the promised holiday at the sea-side. I vaguely remember some sense of unease creeping in . . . It was dark in the back of the van and I had not understood till then that the holiday at the sea-side was exclusive of my family.

I forget whether the realisation hit me suddenly or slowly that this was no holiday. On arrival we were led into some sort of lower room with a counter at one end. I stood in-line watching the other children surrendering their meagre possessions until it was my turn. My beautiful, black, ballerina bag with the special bottom compartment was taken from me. We were allowed so little of what we had brought. I never saw the toy my Mother had packed for my comfort. My sweets were taken to

re-appear on a communal tray from which we children were allowed to pick one on certain days. If you were a favourite with one of the 'nurses' you were allowed to take two or three. Like the majority of children I never attained 'favourite' status. However, at that time I did not see myself as part of a great, disowned majority. I knew only the confusion of being without mother, father, brothers - without belonging and without favour. What qualified the favoured remains clothed in mystery to this day but for those, like me, who had been beloved in their families, this rapid reduction from subject of worth to mass object of paid care was beyond comprehension. It was a slow burning torture of worthlessness and then we had no words by which to name and extinguish it.

. . . In this place, in the 1960s, socialisation was an inquisitor. Forgetting was taught through fear. Self-control was instructed through the removal of warmth and compassion, and the enforcement of parental abandonment. Before my Mother died she told me that on the first Sunday I was removed the whole family made the long journey on two buses and a ferry to visit me. Standing at the door . . . they were turned away. Apparently it would have been too disruptive to my settling-in to have seen my family. I waited forty years to know of their efforts.

Resource-less victims were required to please by giving silent conformity. Cries of fear were not pitied but subjugated by daytime isolation. One night I was awoken by the sobbing of another girl in our dormitory. The impulse to go and comfort her was overwhelming but before I could overcome my bodies conformity to stay put, two or three adults entered the room. I do not know what happened. I hid beneath

my bed -clothes fearful of discovery. I had understood that being awake after bedtime was a crime. With the visitation the girl stopped crying but the next day she remained in her bed in the dormitory. I understood this to be a punishment.

Nothing was given in return for the obedience and submission required. Every Sunday we attended Sunday school where those who had successfully committed to memory a prayer were rewarded with a holy picture of some saint or martyr. I was very proud of my awards. I followed my companions carefully storing them in the one place we were permitted to make our own; a little pigeon-hole space in the dormitory in which we kept the few bits of clothing we were allowed from our bags. Those only symbols of my worth never made it home with me. I suspected even then that they were being recycled.

. . I returned home and went back to the same primary school as before, but I did not return the same child. Neither at home nor at school was I asked about my experiences. The adult lack of interest reinforced the experience as normal. Without an exorcism of words; without comfort and reassurance that it would never, ever happen again, the experience was buried . .

. . . Two years of illness and long absences from school and friendships; enforced separation from my family resulting from my own 'yes'; transportation to a different world than the one I was born into . . . took a heavy cost - I lost belonging and safety, the knowing of who I was and to whom I belonged. I lost security, the deepest sense of acceptance and the wide expanses of fearless, free expression. . .

. . . But in the losing there came the opportunity for new growth. As a child I had watched with both exhilaration and horror as huge expanses of sugar-cane fields were burnt before they were cut for transportation. I had been told that this was done to purge the snakes that might bite the field-workers. Before my eighth birthday life had purged me.

In the losing of my deepest sense of safety and value, I learnt a survivor's sensitivity to the wants and ways of others. They say that when one sense is lost another develops in compensation. I lost that most wonderful childhood illusion that I was the centre of a loving universe and I lost it so painfully, believing myself to blame, that the burden was on me to change. The void left by the lost illusion was gradually filled by watchfulness of others; a reading of faces; a listening to hidden words and an interpreting of gestures. The need to please to find favour was born but it was this need that would contain the seed of a value that I would take with me . . . The seed falling free from the deconstruction of my sense of safety and belonging would grow into a solid, strong value of service to others.

. . . Watchfulness can stay skin deep, behaviour-bound and self-serving. Empathetic watchfulness sees beyond appearance and behaviour; beyond all that is observable; and all that is observable is not all that is knowable. Understanding lay beyond . . . Beyond the crying, the screaming, the biting, the kicking, beyond, far beyond, there in the basement of each human heart and spirit with empathetic watchfulness came knowing of the communion of pain and joy. Moreover, the combination of service to others and empathetic watchfulness gave

courage to a petrified heart. To stand-up, head above the barricades is easier when the cause is another, especially another petrified child.

.. Writing this I truly understand the struggle and hope possible within the human heart and spirit that can transform one child's pain and utter confusion into a determined life-time drive to enable other children to be liberated from theirs.'

Although my stay in the institution I was placed in was short, it was long and formative enough to alter my world-view. From being the beloved, only daughter, only sister, youngest child, I became one of many objects of care in a world controlled, to me, by incomprehensible, all-powerful, indifferent yet biased, paid adults.

**Communicate the essence of what was my personal,
educational influence.**

Empathy and the appreciation of difference were gradually embodied by a child unconsciously choosing between closing down and shutting out all that caused her pain, or finding a means of easing that pain. I now realise that I chose to assign purpose to my pain. Thrown into a world with alien, indifferent rules and structures, where distress was a punishable offence, I became a hyper-vigilant watcher. My watchfulness internalised, connected with intuition and stripped me of defensive boundaries between 'I' and other. In this place, empathy and identification with the 'outsider' took root.

A combination of intuition, empathy and identification are powerful tools in teaching children with SEN. They can take you where others may fear to tread. They have guided me through most of my encounters with the 'outsider' children. In

particular, they led me to spend two weeks with a child in a psychiatric unit speaking to him through play; the only language he had left. Séan [a pseudonym] had developed schizophrenia at the age of nine. A year later he was hospitalised. According to his medical assessment he had regressed to approximate eighteen months making therapeutic interventions unviable. His parents asked me if I would help and the consultant psychiatrist agreed to me spending time with him. Intuition and empathy led me through my encounters with Séan, including the following one:

Journal Extract, July 1999:

' . . He walked in circle patterns round and round the periphery of the playground singing . . .

"I'll stay alive.
I will survive.
I've got all my love to give.
I've got all my life to live.
So, go, go, go . .
Get out that door
Because you're not needed anymore.
I will survive!"

I sat on the bench and listened, meeting his eyes when he sought mine out. After a long while he came and sat down next to me on the bench. He sat staring out across the space of the playground. As he stared I told him that I had heard what he had sung and that I had understood it. I told him he was right; he would be alright. I told him that when he was ready he would come back. Then I told him that I knew he was understanding me and that I knew he understood when others were talking even though he did not always want us to know that he did. Immediately he turned towards me and as he did so he smacked me across the face. I caught his hand as it came back for a second blow, and as I did I realised how little force there was in his attack this time

compared to previous ones. He let me hold his wrist with his hand suspended in the air. His eyes were confronting mine. I told him I would have to go if he hurt me again. I told him I would not stay and be hurt. I dropped his hand and he turned back away, staring out into the space of the play area again. We sat quietly together. Eventually I put my hand out and stroked him gently on his shoulders and back. He let me.'

In teaching I discovered my real, life-long passion and love. For me teaching equated with being of service and being of service felt like being truly alive. This did not happen gradually. It was as immediate as love at first sight. I simply walked in on my first teaching practice, on my first day, into my first classroom, my first class, and there it was, a sense of being, being present, being now, being vital; combined with an involuntary requirement to reach deeply into my own humanity to work with intuition, understanding, compassion, empathy and love:

‘ . . . to give expression to one’s faculties, talents, to the wealth of human gifts with which – through varying degrees – every human being is endowed. It means to renew oneself, to grow, to flow out, to love, to transcend the prison of one’s isolated ego, to be interested, to ‘list’, to give.’

(Fromm, 1979: 92)

For me Fromm (1979) is describing the connection with my values and the zone in which they are freely, fearlessly and spontaneously expressed. He is describing Whitehead’s (2011) ‘life affirming energy’ and Csikszentmihalyi’s (1992) ‘flow experience’. Also, he is describing Walton’s (2011) ‘moment-by-moment’ relationships that practitioners can create with children. However, Walton (2011) distinguishes between mere presence or ‘in the zone’ experiences as she feels encapsulated both in Polanyi’s (1958) ‘tacit knowing’ and Schön’s (1983; 1987; 1991) ‘knowing in action’, and a Buddhist ‘mindfulness’ in practice. She proposes that ‘mindfulness’ enables an individual to realise when there is dissonance between their values and their actual behaviour. I acknowledge that the experience I am describing was not the latter, and that the absence of ‘mindfulness’ played its

part in my loss of grace. Nevertheless, I contend that within the ‘flow experience’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992) there was no dissonance. I believe dissonance grew in the vacuum created by my lack of ownership of my values and my interactions with what Smail (1996) describes as social and material powers.

**Shed insight into the process by which practice may become divorced
from and reconnected to grace.**

Yes, within the zone of my practice there was no dissonance but there was a hunger to improve. Without owning my values reflection focused on approaches whilst intuition, empathy and ‘tacit knowing’ were downgraded to mere tools. My hunger drove me on a quest: first to be the best classroom teacher I could be, and then the best SEN teacher. Focusing on improvement from ‘out-there’ was exhausting because there were always new methods and ideas being promoted and more courses to do. Also, even if there was no dissonance within my actual practice there was persistently a high possibility of dissonance between my internal and external worlds because my knowledge and understanding were impoverished by the lack of ownership of my values. Despite all my passion for my work I now believe this led me to spend many of my last years in teaching stressed and in distress. It was a time without grace; my ‘dark night of the soul’ (St. John of the Cross).

Sadly, I was not alone. DeMik (2008) investigated the attrition of SEN teachers and many of the frustrations she reported reflected mine and Smail’s (1996) ‘social and material powers’. They included excessive paperwork, struggling to find planning time, difficulties meeting individualised needs, role conflicts, advocacy issues, lack of community and collaboration with mainstream teachers, barriers to inclusion, conflicting methods and concerns relating to standards and testing. Therefore, having now reflected on my experiences and values, I suggest that there were two routes in which I lost grace i.e. connection with my own values and the sense of self-value that they impart when connected. I call these routes ‘I’ & ‘I with other’. These were terms familiar to me in my practice where they depicted developmental stages in socialisation. In this context they are part of the onion layers of my embodied, individual history and knowledge.

Losing ‘Grace’: Contributory Considerations	
‘I’	‘I’ with ‘Other’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ ‘Moral Relativism’ (Taylor, 1989; 1991); ❖ Focus on ‘great man’ theories; ❖ ‘Instrumental values’ (Rokeach, 1973) imbalance i.e. moral values (what is right to do) versus competency values (most effective way of doing) because of institutional limitations/ demands/ restrictions, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Empathy v systemizing’ (Baron-Cohen, 2003); • Situation of investment (Baumeister, 1991); • ‘Terminal values’ (Rokeach, 1973) when either our ‘personal’ or ‘social’ values are out of sync with reality.

[Figure 4: Some of the possible contributory factors in the attrition of mature teachers.]

On the ‘I’ side is Stevens and Wetherell’s (1996) proposal that as older institutions, such as religion and communal organisations break down, increasing emphasis is placed on the individual and personal identity as the touchstone for meaning in life. Taylor (1989; 1991) termed this ‘moral relativism’ because people accept that everybody has the right to whatever values they choose. On one hand, this is fruitful soil for tolerance and Kohlberg’s (1958) post-conventional morality in which one overrides obedience to external rules as individual principles of conscience become paramount. On the other hand, it may leave an individual who has no access to collaborative inquiry and support isolated, particularly within an institution with conflicting values and priorities. In this isolation pernicious, health-destroying dissonance may thrive.

Also, I believe that a lack of reflection on the values which inspired my passion in teaching played a part in my loss of grace. No-where in my training or in all the succeeding years do I recall anyone asking me what the values that inspired and informed my practice were; neither do I recall ever asking myself. I did study the values and pedagogies of the renowned. Where I had never gone, was never encouraged to go, was to my own self. I was born into a world-view that valued academic and professional knowledge and seemed to take pride in being

impoverished of the personal. Moreover, the vacuum left by the rejection of the personal was filled by a construction of knowledge as a hard, accumulative, external product. Hawkes (2013: 7) promoting value-based education constructs this experience as an imbalance ‘between the cognitive and affective domains’:

‘In so many countries now, young people are encouraged to think cognitively and apply deductive logic to problem-solving. We learn to use objective, scientific methods which we bring to our listening and reading. We are taught to break down argument and to be critical, looking for the flaws in reasoning . . . but I believe that we no longer have the correct balance between the cognitive and affective domains. By affective, I mean the area of feelings and emotions that fuel our creativity and help us to be fully integrated human beings.’

However, during my doctorate journey I came to believe that a lack of reflection upon personal values impoverishes not only academic study, but also professional practice. Without personal reflection and the knowing and understanding it imparts, the values that inspire us as unique and distinguished human-beings to be passionate, compassionate and loving practitioners in empathetic relationship with our students cannot be owned. In ownership growth, strength, collaboration and human flourishing are possible; without our ownership how do we enable others to name and own their values?

Finally, on the ‘I’ side, I draw on Rokeach’s (1973) proposal that an individual’s values relate to conduct. He calls these ‘instrumental values’ and proposes that they have two different modes. One relates to moral values i.e. what is right to do, and the other to competency values i.e. the most effective way of doing. However, Glen (2000) proposes that when these are placed in conflict an individual is forced to prioritise. I share Glen’s (2000) view. It was my repetitive experience within different schools, with different managers, that when institutional demands, limitations or restrictions placed my moral values in conflict with my competency values, I unbalanced the two modes by choosing between them. Unlike most of my academic decisions in which I invested others with greater wisdom, in my

professional life, confidently experienced in my trade and driven to do my best for my students, my competency values were subsumed by my moral values i.e. I gave priority to my moral values at the expense of my competency values.

Unfortunately, this prioritising put me out of sync with some colleagues and managers. I lost count of people who equated professionalism with pragmatism and who cautioned me to work within prescribed boundaries.

On the 'I' With 'Other' side is Baron-Cohen's (2003) theory of empathising versus systemizing. In some ways it reflects my inner conflict between moral and competency values but here relates to social interactions. Baron-Cohen proposes that we are all on the spectrum of empathy – systemizing. If so I know where on the spectrum I expected my students with autism to be; and holding empathetic communion and responsiveness to other as my professional standard of judgement which hemisphere I inhabit; but what of my colleagues, management, parents, other professionals and inspection teams? Empathy can be a gift wrapped in razor blades if it is too much a one-way street. It is now established that the carers who nurture others need to be emotionally nourished, too; but who cares for the professional carers particularly the ordinary, time-served ones?

Whilst Kohlberg (1958) described a post-conventional morality in which obedience to external rules could be overridden by an individual's principles and Taylor (1989; 1991) identified 'moral relativism', Baumeister (1991) contributed the assertion that in contemporary society value is now sought in the personal sphere, such as achievement in work, relationships and the development of self. Huxtable (2011: 4) reflects this viewpoint:

'My values are ontological: that is they are at the very core of my being and give my life meaning and purpose. They are lived in the sense I unconsciously and consciously express them in what I do and the way I am.'

(Huxtable, 2011: 4)

Also, Baumeister (1991) proposes that areas of life have become subordinated to the development and creation of identity, and threatening this may provide sufficient justification to move-on. Whilst agreeing, I suggest that his proposal best fits those whose default is to competency values or who are situated in Baron-Cohen's (2003) systemizing hemisphere because, in my experience, I stayed on held-fast to doing the right thing for students in situations that seriously threatened my sense of self. Supporting this DeMik (2008: 22) concluded that 'the differences in' the personalities of SEN teachers 'drove them toward unique responses to the pressures of the job, causing some to choose to stay in the field and others to leave.' Clearly, the situation in which one invests one's time and energy in pursuit of personal values either nourishes or drains grace as Dewey (1944: 11) observed:

'the environment consists of those conditions that promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit, the characteristic activities of a living being.'

Show understanding of how the subjugation of 'I', rooted in privileging the external world over the internal, compromised my academic, professional and personal sense of value, meaning and purpose.

Rokeach (1973) also identified 'terminal values'. He proposed that these are double-stemmed with 'personal values' relating to what a person hopes to achieve and 'social values' how they wish society to operate. I suggest that personal and social values stand juxtaposed against each other and are as Huxtable (2011: 4) describes:

'relationally dynamic being held, formed and re-formed in that complex ecological space forming the living boundaries between self, other/s and the world.'

Also, I contend that when either remains out of sync with how things really are, over time personal distress may evolve. My personal value was to be the best practitioner I could be. My social value was that society would appreciate difference in all forms. This included valuing the dedicated, experienced practitioner equally as the administrator, the academic, the scientist or even the artist. I arrived at my personal goal; English and Irish Inspectors confirmed this; but society did not honour its part.

In too many ways society's message was that I counted for less, and counting for less I had failed to arrive at a place society really valued. Therefore, along with Gardner et al. (1996: 258) I propose that:

' . . . even seasoned professionals may have a hard time continuing to work in the absence of at least an occasional acknowledgement or evidence of appreciation.'

Though I write to acknowledge and promote the internal, it is clear to me that in a culture where the external is privileged one may need, even crave, occasional encouragement and regard, especially those engaged in public service.

As the reasons for my loss of grace clarified I began to consider what sustains or re-kindles grace.

The Phoenix: Rebirth

*I am she you cannot kill,
The Phoenix with the golden wing.
Many times bound,
To the fire,
You bear me.
But when you lay me amongst the screeching flame,
Another ME is born again.*

I wrote this as a teenager. It combines my moral and personal values. It states that virtue will survive i.e. that I will unfailingly do what I judge the right thing regardless of the struggle or the defeat; and that will be my greatest achievement.

Nevertheless, in the years before my doctorate studies I had had enough of the struggle identified by DeMik (2008). My studies were preceded by seven months of

illness after which I returned to work without the love and passion I had previously enjoyed. I listened to those who told me it was time to look after myself. I was to do my job and its required hours but nothing more. This sounded like the voice of the competency values I had estranged myself from to stay true to my moral values and that are the antithesis of my personal values.

**Show how my educational influence was reborn and spread beyond
my classroom practice.**

But I could not live the death in life the vampire of bitter experience brings for too long. The metaphor of the phoenix rising out of the ashes generates possibilities of survival and resurrection. It is the archetypal image of resilience. When Huxtable's (2011) 'relational dynamic' results in the loss of grace, the phoenix's message is to seek out an alternative, more nourishing 'ecological space'. So I looked around desperate to find a means to leave a legacy that would snatch worth out of the ashes. An advertisement for a professional doctorate would metamorphose into a re-connection with grace.

This metamorphosis began with the encouragement to explore the educational philosophy and values that underpinned my practice. From this I came to know that there was no contradiction or dissonance between my philosophy, values and practice. In my practice my philosophy struggled with macrocosmic issues but my values found expression in my one-to-one practice with my students. I dream of a society in which we are all valued, all belong and no-one is measured against another, and the values that underpin this found expression in service rich in empathetic communion and responsiveness. Connecting with my values accessed grace that warmed me from within and offered shielding from without. I understood why I did what I did and who I was and am. It was my virtue i.e. the best I could be in this life. Therefore, my sense of self was illuminated by the awakened connection.

From this I felt empowered to work towards my living legacy, and through a deepening understanding of my own values to examine areas of my work that held the greatest dissonance and conflicts. When dealing with these areas I had started

using avoidance and/or withdrawal strategies. The three areas I identified all involved other adults.

The first area was relationship between the teachers within the department I worked in. As a result of my documentation of the prevalent stresses within the department we moved towards a more collaborative, collegiate approach. This included shared responsibility for all students and weekly team meetings. This seemed to bring the teaching staff closer together. Our trust and support of each other seemed to grow, leading to a more confident expression of what was important to us as individuals and as a team.

The second area was my relationship with parents. To understand how to approach this I met with them individually or in couples at places of their own choosing. From each meeting I constructed two lists. The first was personal concerns and the second was concerns shared with other parents. The former I worked through at monthly, individual meetings. The latter I worked through at whole-group, evening meetings. As well as having very positive feedback from all meetings, my relationship with parents grew more mutually empathetic and responsive. I believed that the increased mutual respect and shared understandings would provide long-term benefits for the whole department. Also, in most of the feedback sheets there were unexpected but welcomed reports of improvements in parent/child relationships.

The third area of relationships between mainstream and SEN teachers had persistently challenged both my philosophy and values, and had also been identified by DeMik (2008). For me the present model of autism focuses on deficits not differences. A deficit model is used to imply a missing difference that either justifies 'segregation of people with the deficit from those without' (Faulkner & Lewis, 1995: 234), or combined with principles of inclusion can lead to melting-pot attempts to normalise students with autism. In the melting-pot classroom the danger is that teaching approaches and techniques are based on those used with students without autism but with explicit emphasis on the development of communication and

interaction, as these are seen to be where the deficits lie. For example, when I first met Ben [pseudonym] he was a student in a brightly decorated, language-rich, reception class. He sat at a group table, two tables away from his teacher. He sat facing other students. To look at his teacher he would have to turn his head right and look past several other heads and possible pairs of eyes. He appeared highly stressed. He waved his hands and arms about, and spent a lot of his time repeating words and phrases from television programmes. When addressed directly his head went down, his movements became more agitated and his echolalia increased. The school's response can be seen to be based on a deficit model. Something had to be added to the classroom to assist this student to fit into its practices, routines and curriculum without causing distress to self and others. Therefore, the school acquired a Special Needs Assistant [SNA] who sat next to Ben. She was there to constantly bring him back to the external world and to ensure he interacted with it. She was there to ensure he completed tasks. She was even there on the playground requiring him to play with peers. There was no place in the whole school where he could escape like any other student into his own reverie.

As the appreciation of difference is one of my deepest held educational values, I believe that classrooms should accommodate and adapt to the needs of students, rather than requiring their accommodation and adaption to pre-existing, unchanging environments. Guided by this belief I asked colleagues interested in improving the learning and well-being of children with autism, to voluntarily come together on a monthly basis to draw on our shared expertise. Membership of this group fluctuated. For example, there were three members of staff at our first meeting, sixteen at our second and eleven at our third. Again feedback was very positive.

<p>Shed insight into the process by which practice may become divorced from and reconnected to grace.</p>

However, MacLure's (1996) words are haunting me. This is not a 'smooth story of self' (MacLure, 1996: 283). The initial moments of exhilaration because, connected to my values, I had challenged my own fears and met with self-measured success are

not the end of my story. My values may have been my muse, and absence of knowing them may have been the cause of the loss of connection, but finding grace and channelling it again into familiar pursuits simply opened old wounds. For example, the interest-group experience highlighted underlying difficulties that made this area a huge source of the frustrations that had previously eroded my sense of grace. When one group member left a classroom's visual timetable was taken down, its quiet working area was dismantled, and all visual aids were discarded. I felt this loss personally, but in feeling it I realised my error:

'When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.'

(Corinthians, 13: 11)

Thus, I came to understand that rising from the ashes does not have to mean repeating the same course of action hoping that this time it will end better. I understood the need for wisdom and discernment in my choice of action. I understood the need for action grounded in embodied knowledge and appropriate to my own 'psychosocial stage of development' (Erikson, 1968). Also, I came to the conviction that whilst novice teachers need to know and name their values, experienced class teachers, without the cloak and vermillion of status, need connection with those that nourish the grace of the values they hold. For some collaborative inquiry, such as Walton (2011) describes is possible, but there are others without access to group inquiry who would benefit from professional and academic support in the creation of their living legacies.

Also, personal experiences led me to construct Erikson's (1968) developmental stages of 'generativity' and 'ego-integrity' as fluid and open to change. This is reinforced by Sheehy's (1996: 15) proposal that 'unlike childhood stages, the stages of adult life are characterised not by physical growth, but by steps in psychological and social growth'. Her views concur with my realisation that 'age norms for major life events' are 'highly elastic' (Sheehy, 1996: 15) because I experienced early retirement as the traumatic 'marker event' that for me collapsed Erikson's (1968) last

two psychosocial developmental stages one-on-top-the-other. However, she points at ‘underlying’, ‘inner’ turmoil as the initiator:

‘Marriage, childbirth, first job, empty nest, are what we call marker events . . . A developmental stage, however, is not defined by marker events; it is defined by an underlying impulse toward change that signals us from the realm of mind or spirit. This inner realm is where we register the meaning of our participation in the external world. . . It is discontent in the inner realm that signals the necessity to change and move on to the next stage of development.’

(Sheehy, 1996: 15)

I do not agree with this. In my experience, and in the testimony of the storytellers, even the threat of ‘marker’ or traumatic events can ‘signal’ change and movement to the next adult, developmental stage. For me, Sheehy’s (1996) viewpoint is anchored in constructions in which an individual’s internal life, although conforming to common cultural pattern or features, is autonomous and governed by the ‘capacity for personal agency and personal growth’ (Stevens, 1990: 423). Indeed, despite making reference to the ‘seismic changes in social attitudes along with the economic de-industrialization’ (Sheehy, 1996: 18) she concludes that, ‘People are increasingly able to customize their life cycles’.

<p>Show understanding of how the subjugation of ‘I’, rooted in privileging the external world over the internal, compromised my academic, professional and personal sense of value, meaning and purpose.</p>

Alternatively, I argue that I was pragmatically content with any ‘discontent’ in my ‘inner realm’ until health issues altered how I was perceived within my social context and threatened my ‘participation in the external world’ (Sheehy, 1996: 15). In particular I am referring to what was for me a shocking and distressing response to my health issues. Until that event I believed I was seen as a dedicated, experienced teacher whose embodied knowledge was valued and respected. Confronted by illness and a long series of challenging medical procedures, I took

pride in minimising effects upon the quality of my work. Therefore, when a younger colleague new to autism and early years was appointed to an early years' autism class over me because my age and health issues made me, according to the explanation given, less energetic and reliable, I was devastated. I felt that a mirror had been held up forcing me to look at what others were seeing which was not an experienced, dedicated teacher defying health obstacles to provide an excellent service, but an aging woman with declining health and energy; someone becoming a potential burden upon the institution she served. After that I cried whenever the spotlight shone upon the mirror image I would never escape from again.

For me this was not an emotional breakdown. It felt more like social deconstruction and reframing i.e. something happening in the transpersonal spaces around me, rather than simply an inner experience. It felt like a slow shrinkage away from how I had constructed myself into how illness and age were reconstructing me. I was being transported away from the 'who' I had spent my life constructing and was being transformed into who society would have me now be. Little by little I was becoming the 'she' in the mirror, and she and her time within the practice she loved was less.

Only then, faced with this imposed social persona and the dissolution of what I constructed to be my life's purpose did my 'life cycles' come tumbling down, one-on-top-the-other, piling one developmental task upon the other (Sheehy, 1996; Erikson, 1968). Only then did my inner discontent start to scream and signal 'the necessity to change and move on to the next stage of development' (Sheehy, 1996: 15). Also, only then did I perceive that the life stages I was moving through were taking me beyond the possibility of reflective-action cycles that had been an informal and enriching part of my passionate improvement of my practice (Lewin, 1948). I would not have further, on-going opportunities to refine or modify my ideas, and what would be left were not reflective modifications but reflective records i.e. the living legacy of my lived experience.

In my research I found ideas that illuminated my new path. In the 1960s Robert Butler described a process called ‘life review’ whereby people can give meaning to their lives. It is a purposeful, reflective, retrospective process which dwells on the past in order to come to peace with it and with it, the present. Although the normal ‘life review’ process is brought about by the realization of approaching dissolution and death, I believe mature teachers would benefit from a similar process of reflection by which we could tell our authentic stories of self, pass-on aspects of our embodied learning and finally voice some of the ‘living theories’ (Whitehead, 1989) our years in the profession have inspired. Alongside the research of colleagues seeking to accomplish an improvement in the world, these living legacies would be the stories of the embodied and lived knowledge of a generation (Schön, 1983; 1987; 1991). I believe that this would be of true value and virtue.

Beyond: Living Legacy Bridges

On an ordinary, non-descript Friday afternoon in May 2012 I closed my classroom door for what was to be the last time. It was the end of another school day. Before my colleagues lay an extended May Day weekend but on the Wednesday morning when they returned to work, I did not. On the Tuesday when they were still enjoying their short break, I was with a consultant doctor in Dublin being advised that the severity of my osteoporosis, complicated by other chronic conditions, necessitated early retirement. The image of the closed classroom door was to haunt me with a sense of lost existential value, meaning and purpose for nearly two years.

Officially I was retired on grounds of permanent ill-health on 13th August 2012. The day passed unnoticed and uncelebrated by anyone, including me. The next day, 14th August 2012, I was the on the other side of the phenomenon I had set out to investigate. It would take me approximately six months to return to my research and thesis writing:

Journal Extracts, 2012:

. . . I have received celebration cards. I am told I should feel relief and release. I no-longer live dictated to by an external clock configured by others. My time, energy and thoughts are my own. I rise when I want. I alone plan my day. Every day is now transformed into Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. So, what is the source of my present dis-ease?

. . .there have been days when leaving my bed has been a struggle. I face a constant battle to maintain the self-discipline and drive needed to apply myself to reflective writing. I lose that battle for weeks, sometimes even months, in a dark confusion that swallows me now that I exist without the purpose of my job. Perhaps it is simply that although I saw this coming, it is not the grand retirement I heard about when I was a child . . . I was in work on an ordinary Friday in May and out of work on the following ordinary Wednesday. . . I crashed unnoticed into retirement, and the world carried on . . .

Watching the television series 'Madmen' I have often thought that the image of the falling man at the start of each episode is like a nightmare experience. I now equate that experience with early retirement on the grounds of permanent ill-health. I fell away from all that constituted and confirmed my life so suddenly that I experienced a frightening free-fall. Have I yet hit bottom?

In falling I have fallen away not only from the work that defined not simply each day, but . . . years of my life. Also, I fell away from the roles

I constructed and had conferred upon me within the job. With the roles came the differentiation between work and free-time clothes, the structure of time with week days, weekends and holidays, and even eating and toileting routines. Moreover, these vital life constructions and the modus-operandi they brought fell away at a time in life when so many other staples were loosening and being forever lost. Children were grown and no-longer children except in my heart . . . They were starting out on their own adventures. Long distance watching, worrying and waiting had somehow slowly come to replace the immediacy of daily care. . . All was changing including the previously taken for granted body that . . . began to scream terrible warnings of irreparable damage. As my hair fell out and the weight fell away I was losing the very familiarity of the reflection of 'I' in the mirror. She who stared back was not 'me' . . . I fell and fell. .

As I fell there were others who had fallen before me. Some told me not to look back. The danger was not in the fall. The fall was inevitable. The danger was in the looking back. Looking forward, some told tales of how they had embraced a new me-life. They had time for their hobbies and interests. They went on cruises and long, cheap holidays that comforted and nurtured the body they had put on hold for so long. Others reinvented themselves finding new work interests and outlets. I stood amongst these others and felt the perennial loneliness that had been a faithful company through my life. . .

I committed the gravest of sins: I looked back. But looking back I did not turn into a pillar of salt. I did not petrify and crumble with the loss. I knew that the sell-by-date on the work I had committed my life to had arrived. My body had told me that clearly and undeniably. But I was left confused because I understood more deeply that what those coming to the end of their careers have to offer are bridges between what was, is known and will emerge. Somehow by falling so suddenly the opportunity to be a bridge was lost. I awoke on another continent. I looked across the ocean and saw only sea on the horizon. The land I had come from had vanished and with it my access and ability to influence - to make the difference . . . I could enjoy my new life on the new continent and all its fruits but the other world was gone.

Well, it would be so were it not for my thesis - my self-made bridge. On its own it is fragile. It will not last. It is precarious. But others will come and build, and two continents will be bridged.

Clarify and communicate my understanding of the nature of the hope and resilience that sustained my sense of value, purpose and meaning as my classroom practice ended.

When an end comes suddenly, no matter how anticipated, there is little time to undergo the processing that we may associate with adaption and/or learning. For me the resilience to survive and overcome this life-changing trauma was found in internal hope and an external commitment that I invested with a new value, meaning and purpose.

Journal Extracts, January 2013:

I am told that I am not at the end of something but at the start of another thing. I believe this represents the human spirit's thrust towards hope. There are so many phrases /clichés and even lyrics that capture this, such as 'one door closes and another one opens'.

I have experienced within my own life the transforming power of survival. Time is more than a healer. Time can metamorphose pain and loss into emotional resilience and new dreams.

. . . Words help like a safety ring or raft thrown to a drowning person but time alone in a cold and troubled sea even with a ring or raft is still precarious, dangerous and eventually may be deadly. Something beyond a ring or raft is required.

It seems to me that two distinctive features are needed. One is internal and the other is external. For me internal endurance is dependent upon hope and resilience and external rescue takes the form of an intervening task into which I can infuse value, meaning and purpose. However, internal endurance without external rescue is insufficient to return a human life to the heart and thrust of society.

I construct hope as a powerful biological and psychological quality that enables survival even through catastrophic, life-changing experiences. In other words, for me it is a default program arising unbidden so that its abandonment requires a conscious

act much as portrayed in Dante's (1308 – 1321) 'abandon hope all ye who enter here' and Milton's (1667) 'hope never comes that comes to all'. Also, I construct my act of seeking out an intervention task into which I could redirect, sustain and nourish ebbing existential value, meaning and purpose as an act of resilience inspired by hope. Therefore, my view of hope locates its drive in an internal agency. However, I believe that resilience has a different socio-psychological make-up.

Resilience has many definitions but is generally understood as the 'ability to cope with or recover from the impact of stress and turn it into a positive learning experience' (Gillespie et al., 2010: 699; Jackson et al., 2007; Richardson, 2002). This ability to bounce-back has traditionally been sought within personality traits (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013), but while I can construct hope and the acts it inspires as aspects of biological and psychological agency, resilience for me has a socially constructed complexity that may act upon an individual's hopes and social perceptions enhancing or diminishing them. Indeed, it is now viewed as a relationally bound process 'of nested structures or systems' (Derkson, 2010: 329; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), enabling those working with others, communities and cultures to affect how it is nourished. For example, Clauss-Ehlers (2004: 36) coined the term 'cultural resilience' to describe how the strengths of a culture can promote the development of coping through 'a dynamic, interactive process in which the individual negotiates stress through a combination of character traits, cultural background, cultural values, and facilitating factors in the sociocultural environment'. This reflects my own thinking. In my life others have attributed me with traits of resilience. However, I now suspect that what may be seen as a personality trait was constructed and nourished in the relational sphere across my lifespan. It was part of many pieces of the socio-cultural jigsaw that influenced my emotional, moral and spiritual development.

Furthermore, given its relational nature resilience cannot be innately stable (Ungar, 2008; Mahoney & Bergman, 2002). For example, Fleshner and Laudenslager (2004,

as cited by Gillespie et al., 2010: 698) warned that stress and in particular ‘prolonged stress, can be detrimental to physical and mental health’ whilst Masten (2001: 235) asserted that ‘Even the most basic of human adaptational systems are not invulnerable and require nurturance.’ Indeed, a school-community project I initiated once showed me how precious and vulnerable resilience can be. The project befriended elderly persons living alone in the community. Home visits were made with two children linked as big/little buddies and an accompanying teacher. The scheme adopted an elderly man named Granddad George. Visits with him were a delight for all. He was a remarkable man of great intellect, heart and patience with an enormous wealth of experience and knowledge which he shared in a child-friendly manner with his young visitors. We all loved George, and in all he said and did his optimism and resilience were evident. However, one night his home was broken into and George lunged from his bed at his intruder. Although George was physically hurt doing this, it did not explain the psychological deterioration that followed. All who knew George suspected that for the first time he had experienced himself as an old, vulnerable man. He never recovered and died shortly after this home invasion. For me, George’s spirit of resilience had been broken by the damage afflicted not so much on his physical person but on his self-construction. The intruder from the external world forcibly made him look at a different, unpalatable image of self:

‘The process conceptualization of resilience recognizes that the effects of the protective and promotive factors will vary contextually (from situation to situation) and temporally (throughout a situation and across an individual’s lifespan). Thus, although an individual may react positively to adversity at one point in his or her life, it does not mean that the person will react in the same way to stressors at other points in his or her life. . ’

(Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013: 15)

Show understanding of how the subjugation of ‘I’, rooted in privileging the external world over the internal, compromised my academic, professional and personal sense of value, meaning and purpose.

George's story supports the notion that resilience is dynamically subject to the interactions between our internal world and external forces (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Derkson, 2010; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Clauss-Ehlers, 2004; Masten, 2001; Egeland et al., 1993); and upon this I base my argument for living legacies of ordinary lives of service. Within our present youth-centred culture, in which external facets such as appearance, income and status are highly valued, the lives of mature, front-line practitioners are easily obscured and overlooked. Even the walls of our academies are ornamented with the youthful smiles of tomorrow's teachers and leaders while our libraries are rich with books about inspirational leadership. Within our culture we are encouraged to look forward and to aspire to lead from above, perhaps forgetting that without those here now and those supporting from behind there is no forward movement. Ironically, those at the lower ranks of our institutional hierarchies may enjoy the closest contact with our tomorrow adults, and in those daily encounters the hearts, minds and spirits of those next-to-be adults are being formed. Certainly for me we have obscured and overlooked the value of those who because of age are falling behind and who because of passion have remained below in the engine-rooms of our schools. I do understand the focus on youth and leadership because both these groups appear to be the architects of socio-educational change and transformation but equally I know that in daily, self-transcending service it is possible to transform one life at a time. Change and transformation are not necessarily extraordinary feats of dynamic leadership or the prerogative of youth.

As I met the challenges that can confront an aging, frontline practitioner, my resilience was nestled in internal hope and nourished by my self-construction of a life of value, meaning and purpose. What diminished resilience was looking into a mirror in which I was shown an aging practitioner without the energy to teach early years children and with the spectre of ill-health stalking her; an image I did not recognise nor wished to. Like George the depth of this assault upon my self-image went to my core and created the tipping moment when the life I knew began to give way to a life I had no choice but accept i.e. a before and after marker event.

In my narrative research I heard tell of this moment. What was of interest to me was how it could be positively transformed. Hawkes (2013: 58) reminds us that what children see affects what they do. He asks us to ‘become conscious’ about our ‘own behaviour and how this influences the development of children’. He warns that not nurturing the ‘tremendous potential’ and ‘innate qualities’ we are all ‘born with’ leads to the development of a ‘negative self-image’ (Hawkes, 2013: 48). My research interests are not far from these concerns. Firstly, if we do not value frontline practice as more than a means to a ‘better’ position how does this impact on the daily service given to our children? Secondly, if we do not value experiential knowledge what message are we giving to our students? Thirdly, if we do not nurture the ‘tremendous potential’ and ‘innate qualities’ our mature practitioners have to offer what impact does that have on their resilience and ‘self-image’ given that neither are stable entities?

Communicate the essence of what was my personal, educational influence.

Show how my educational influence was reborn and spread beyond my classroom practice.

The closed classroom door opened when I realised that empathetic communion and responsiveness was the practice that should guide my narrative inquiry and was in essence my living legacy to those in the service of other. The communion established by this practice had filled each ordinary day with the joy of value, meaning and purpose whilst responding, dependent upon a journey from self into the expansive knowing of another, deepened my sense of connection to humanity. In other words, what was practised within the classroom expanded and filled the changed world I came to inhabit. With it my resilience thrived and my hope lived on.

Conclusion

In Chapter 2 I explored my struggle to connect with the values that inspired my practice. I explained that it was necessary to do so to understand the process by which practice may become divorced from and reconnected to grace; to realise the essence of what was my personal educational influence; to find a means by which I could continue and develop this influence; and to understand the nature of hope and resilience that my sense of value, purpose and meaning could be sustained as my classroom practice came to an end.

I argued that resilience being intimately interlaced with the external, relational world is a vulnerable, socially constructed process that requires cultivation across the lifespan; and from this introduced the idea of living legacies. I contended that living legacies may provide means of acknowledging the embodied knowledge and experiences of ordinary practitioners and of imparting these to present and future generations. Also, the belief that they could be a means to realise a sense of achievement and fulfilment that would sustain interest and passion in mature practice was expressed.

Finally, as my personal living legacy I offered empathetic communion and responsiveness as a standard of professional and academic judgement exemplifying what is being lost by not having a living legacy approach to knowledge.

Chapter 3: Creating Living Legacies & Valuing Lives of Service

Chapter 3 Overview

Chapter 3 was driven by the intuition that as a mature practitioner I was not alone in my struggle to sustain values which were my source of professional inspiration and motivation. Moreover, given the international ‘tsunami’ of teacher attrition, there seemed to be a very real socio-educational and economical need to investigate and understand this phenomenon. However, contrasting with the existent research that focused upon the loss to the educational establishment and those left behind, my personal experiences gave me an insider’s focus upon the perspectives and experiences of the practitioners themselves. This focus transformed the empathetic communion and responsiveness I strove to achieve in my relationships with students into the original, epistemological standard of judgement that guided my narrative research. Thus, whilst finding a means of continuing my educational influence and revitalising my sense of value, meaning and purpose, I also showed the potential of valuing lives of service through living legacies that would marry reflective inquiry into personal and professional practice with scholarly research of academic, professional, personal and social value.

Also, from the narrative inquiry overarching theories emerged from the common themes and discourses. Meshing together they became a means of analysing and understanding the plurality of singular, subjective experiences. In particular, Maslow’s (1970a) eight-staged hierarchy provided a socio-educational construction of self-actualisation for other dependent upon a self-transcendent commitment which was evident across narratives. However, whereas Maslow (1964) proposed an internal process my research identified social-construction.

Kelly’s (1955) ‘personal construct theory’ also emerged from tensions contained within all the narratives as storytellers related their struggles to enable the self-actualisation of their students against conflicting institutional/managerial priorities

and values. In this my research demonstrated how conflicts between personal and institutional values can produce bi-polar constructs even in mature life. Moreover, the conflicts related resonated with Rokeach's (1955) proposal of two sets of values: (1) instrumental values with moral {right conduct} and competency {most efficient conduct} modes, and (2) terminal values with personal {hopes for personal achievement through conduct} and social {wishes as to how society should operate} subsets. However, they took on interpersonal as well as intrapersonal dimensions resonating with Smail's (1991; 2005) theory in which the individual is acted upon by dynamic, powerful social and psychological forces.

The contents of this chapter are organised to:

- 1. Identify the connection between 'I' and 'other' practitioners experiencing the researched phenomenon.**
- 2. Show understanding of this connection as a socio-educational construction of self-actualisation for other dependent upon self-transcendent commitment (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1970a).**
- 3. Identify and use approaches appropriate to an internal and relational ontology & epistemology in the analysis of narrative inquiry.**
- 4. Demonstrate the potential of the personal, professional and academic acknowledgement of ordinary, individual lives of dedicated service.**

Acknowledgement

*‘ . . . how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may Have
heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.’*

(Auden, 1938)

For me, Prometheus’s drive to bring fire to humanity and his subsequent imprisonment by those who did not want to share their divine privilege, reflects the spirit and fate of the many ordinary but extraordinary individuals who triumph quietly and suffer invisibly; falling, like Icarus, from the skies unnoticed and unmourned, but forever contributing to the unfolding consciousness and deepening spirit of humanity. In my life I have been honoured to know many Prometheus-es, and for me the following are the life-stories of just a few. They are personal accounts of professional lives of passionate, self-transcending service. On the personal level, they are profound testimonies of the unappeasable human need to ‘make sense to ourselves and others of who we are and what we are doing’ (Watson, 1996: 261). On an academic level, they are authentic, historical records of what was and what has now changed:

*‘We would do well to regard ourselves as characters
with an experience of life and a unique knowledge of
the world which, far from hiding it in a shamed silence,
we should be ready to impart to those less expert than
we. Only you have been where you have been and only
you know what it felt like: you are indeed the expert in
your own existence and it may well be the case that
there are things others could usefully know which only
you could tell them.’*

(Smail 1996: 118)

Moreover, despite lexical differences, they are rich with shared values and aspirations aimed at improving the ‘common lot’, and as such they are political stories that reflect constructs and values pertinent to an age i.e. ‘where shared paradigms result in commitment to the same rules and standards’ (O’Connor, 2011: 7). For example, they all share a common work-ethic in seeing work as giving personal meaning to life and hold the construction ‘that work should be fulfilling, be intrinsically satisfying or be a valued thing itself’ (Watson, 1996: 263).

Also, in that some of these shared constructs and values may have disappeared, these stories stand as part of the testimony of a generation of educators. They are today’s bridge between the yesterday and the tomorrow of dynamic, ever-changing educational structures; and as such we forget, ignore or leave them unheard at our own peril:

‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’

(Santayana, 1905)

Introduction: Connection

‘From the smallest amoeba, to the grandest of galaxies, we define ourselves by our borders, our boundaries. I am me, therefore, I am not you. We are safe within our territory but our borders can be places of instability and danger: cold fronts collide with warm; dynamic energy explodes. And yet, it is at the edges, the frontiers between where ideas are exchanged; where knowledge is gained. I am me but I must push past my borders if I am ever to know you.’

(‘Touch’, 2013)

As Walton (2008: 112) affirms, storytelling is ‘a powerful means of understanding the world and for learning to live creative and fulfilling lives within it’ by furthering understanding of what it means to be a ‘human being human’ (Brandon, 1977). Indeed, throughout my life I have found myself in the life-stories of others and

listening to their experiences has ‘contributed’ to my ‘development on a range of levels, including the spiritual and emotional’ (Walton, 2008: 97). Moreover, my spiritual sense of communion with other has been enriched through an ever-deepening awareness of our shared experience and understanding:

‘...in story-telling the role of the listener is as important as that of the teller – in some sense it is a process of the co-construction (or co-discovery) of meaning.’

(Wilkins 2000: 145)

Indeed, in perceiving myriad connections between us all, I was aware of a multiplicity of other experienced, mature practitioners facing similar life-changes as my own. The literature review I undertook supported this (Cau-Bareille, 2011; Mantei, 2010; The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2008; 2010; Lehr et al, 2009; Hansez et al, 2005; Weber, 2002); and it is this connection that illuminates the validity and potential human scope of this study. Thus, my research started with a personal account of my end of practice experiences in which I reflected, as advocated by Freire and Freire (2004) Schön (1983; 1987; 1991), Habermas (1987) and Freire (1972), upon how the grace of the values that had inspired my practice could sustain a sense of value, meaning and purpose beyond my classroom practice. However, as my values are rooted in service, communion and responsiveness with other, the ultimate aim of my inquiry was to enrich and improve the experience for other. So this step of the inquiry positions my personal story alongside the narratives of others. Ultimately, these jigsaw-piece views of a shared reality may shed light on how those nearing the end of their classroom practice can reframe their place within academic and professional structures; feel the strengthening grace of personal inspiration, rather than the diminishing of its light; and create a legacy that enriches the academy, the profession and themselves:

““Those people feel all alone,” I say. “Somebody’s got to show them that we’re all in this together.””

(Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 447)

Nevertheless, initially I was challenged by this wanting to safe-guard the centrality of 'I' in my research and avoid researcher/researched, subject-object dichotomies. So I spent an enormity of time submersing myself in the stories. Here I drew upon my assessment practice with students with SEN. This included a lengthy process of idiographic familiarisation, reflection and profiling by the end of which I experienced a sense of empathetic-communion with students much as described by Sardello (2008: 51):

'When we are within the presence of living Silence, which is being created every moment by the way we speak with someone, we feel an extraordinary fullness that makes it possible to be within the soul of another without harming the other person with our needs, desires, wants, and fantasies. . . We feel a soul relationship so deeply, in a bodily way . . . and we feel an immediate presence, a flow of subtle currents between our self and the other person.'

This felt like a physical, beneath skin experience and it was only after achieving this that I would cross-reference my insights with external influences, such as psychological reports. The resulting idiographic assessments formed the base-line of my work, informing my practice and determining the individualised methods/approaches I used. Therefore, reflecting on this procedure and the empathetic connection it enabled, I arrived at my inquiry process in which after submersing myself in a story I turned to the underlying, social/cultural and psychological themes and ideas it provoked to provide the lenses through which it could be illuminated and understood.

Modes of Approach for an Internal & Relational Ontology & Epistemology

I believe that these narratives lend themselves to analysis by two psychological approaches i.e. the experiential and social constructivist. Having submersed myself in a story, it was against the assumptions and constructions of these two approaches that I cross-referenced analysis.

The Experiential Analysis

The experiential approach ‘focuses on the experiencing person and the lived realities of existence’. Stevens (1996: 150) defined it as the combination of ‘three related theoretical perspectives – phenomenological, existential and humanistic’.

The Phenomenological Perspective

Within the phenomenological perspective, subjective experience and personal feelings are considered significant data/information:

‘To adopt a phenomenological approach is essentially to try to study human awareness as we experience it.’

(Stevens, 1996: 150)

Phenomenological study seeks identification with other through ‘analogy with, or extrapolation from, our own experience’ (Stevens, 1996: 151). This marries with empathetic communion with other that is at the heart of this thesis.

The Existential Perspective

The existential perspective also places subjectivity central to all investigations. However, the focus is upon ‘the dynamic quality of human experience’ (Stevens, 1996: 152), rather than feelings and experiences. Originating in the nineteenth century from Kierkegaard’s (1813 – 1855) contention that humans need to establish their own ‘subjective truth’ in the face of mortality, existentialism was later developed by Nietzsche’s (1844 – 1900) constructions of personal empowerment and choice. Then, in twentieth century, philosophers, such as Heidegger (1889 – 1976), Sartre (1905 – 1980) and Camus (1913 – 1960) proposed the concepts of ‘authenticity’ and ‘thrown-ness’. In the existentialist’s God-free universe, humans have no eternal nature to rely upon, and therefore each individual should decide for him/herself how to live. Acting in accordance with one’s freely-chosen purposes

nurtures personal authenticity and increases the individual's capacity to transcend and/or resist their 'thrown-ness'. 'Thrown-ness' encapsulates the significant, choice-less aspects of existence which make us what we are, such as family, gender, culture, social class and historical context. These aspects qualify our capacity for free-agency and intentional action creating 'situated', rather than total freedom (Stevens, 1996).

Both 'authenticity' and 'thrown-ness' are dominant themes in all the stories. 'Authenticity' is disclosed through personal meanings which ignite individual choices and actions and is expressed as autonomy, independence and freedom. 'Thrown-ness' in the narratives extends beyond the imposition of our earliest nature/nurture 'situated-ness' to embrace political codes and institutional authorities that govern individual 'authenticity' in the workplace, possibly creating tension and dissonance between them.

In exploring this discord, Rokeach's (1973) proposal of 'instrumental' and 'terminal' values was useful. 'Instrumental values' encapsulate the moral values of what an individual believes is the 'right' thing to do and competency values that are the most effective way to achieve something. 'Terminal values' relate to the 'personal' values of what an individual hopes to achieve for themselves and the 'social' values of how they believe society should function. For me these combined emerge as the source of 'authenticity', and as Whitehead (2003: 2) described may be the essence of the 'life-affirming energy of spiritual values that 'influence the choices' storytellers make, and 'contribute to both the personal power' of action, and their 'sense of responsibility for' themselves 'and others'.

The Humanistic Perspective

Reacting against objective behaviourism and expert-dependent psychoanalysis, the founders of the humanistic perspective were strongly influenced by the two previous perspectives, and offered 'an orientation to psychology rather than a coherent set of ideas and theories' (Stevens, 1990: 422) that is based on the following creed:

1. Subjective experience is primary.
2. Ordinary people have the capacity for personal agency and growth.
3. The experience of being a person requires a holistic approach because it includes feelings, thoughts and bodily awareness.

The founders included George Kelly (1905 – 1967) and Abraham Maslow (1908 – 1970) whose theories appeared pertinent to the interpretations made.

Kelly (1955) proposed the ‘personal construct theory’ arguing that an individual has ‘key dimensions of discrimination which underlie his or her experience of the world’ (Stevens, 1996: 162). He believed that these dimensions are contained and expressed in bipolar, personal constructions, such as ‘good’ versus ‘bad’. Also, he proposed that most people are not ‘consciously aware of what constructs they are using to make sense of their experience’ (Stevens, 1996: 162-3) because they are essentially ‘reference axis’ that guide ‘personal orientation toward the various events’ encountered (Kelly, 1969: 133). As one focus of the inquiry was sustaining a sense of value, purpose and meaning, there was an implicit inference of some conflicting, sapping phenomenon. Also, as the ‘instrumental’ and ‘terminal’ values of the storytellers were found to frequently conflict with changing institutional/managerial aspirations and priorities, within the narratives there was fertile soil for the propagation of Kelly’s (1955; 1969) bipolar, personal constructs.

Additionally, Maslow’s (1970a) extended, eighth staged ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ further illuminated the intrinsic conflict between the values and motivation of the storytellers and workplace goals. It included self-transcendence, aesthetic and cognitive needs besides the physiological/biological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualisation needs of his original five-staged model (Maslow, 1943; 1954). In my opinion, this expansion was not merely a deepening of individual insight, but as Wilber (1996: 137) proposes a socio-cultural ‘evolution of consciousness’. So,

whereas Sheehy (1996: 41) describes the ‘Baby Boomers’ born in the USA between 1946 and 1964 as the ‘Liberated Generation’ whose values were ‘shaped by personal freedoms’ her separation of the ‘children of the sixties’ from the older generations is, for me, synonymous with burnt bridges. Maslow (1908 – 1970) is clearly no ‘child of the sixties’ but the pertinence of his ideas to the ‘values’ and ‘lifestyle’ of the ‘liberated generation’ is evident. It is this correlation that underpins my assertion of socio-cultural, conscious-raising and supports the construction of these stories as the testimony of educators influenced by this phenomenon. Also, relating Sheehy’s (1996) description of the ‘children of the sixties’ to Maslow’s (1970a) eight-staged pyramid, the storytellers, all children living in the West in the sixties or seventies, had greater socio-cultural opportunity and encouragement to fulfil levels of need:

‘The values of the Liberated Generation have been shaped by personal freedoms . . . Education opened up for them. ‘Lifestyle’ became a choice. . . Women were free to work toward serious careers because the Pill allowed them to control their own reproduction.’

(Sheehy, 1996: 41 & 43)

Given that Maslow (1943; 1954) envisaged levels as motivated by internal needs, the harmonious alignment of personal drive and socio-cultural mind-set establishes a powerful phenomenon within and around storytellers. However, the liberation that Sheehy (1996) describes is predominantly directed at self-actualisation as the culmination of personal fulfilment, rather than Maslow’s (1970a) self-transcendent need to enable other to self-actualise, too. Therefore, the drive to make a difference to other expressed by each storyteller may not be in synch with dominant, socio-cultural discourses. Capping educational discourse at self-actualisation leaves those motivated by self- transcendence in schools swimming while attached to an anchor:

‘Every society has a certain centre of gravity . . . around which the culture’s ethics, norms, rules, and basic institutions are organized, and this centre of gravity provides the basic cultural cohesion and social integration for every society. This cultural centre of gravity acts like a magnet on individual development. If

*you are below the average level, it tends to pull you up.
If you try to go above it, it tends to pull you down.'*

(Wilber, 1996: 139)

I believe that the combined ingredients of these three perspectives led the way to auto-ethnographic research via third-person, narrative inquiry. I see the narrative inquiry of this chapter, firstly, as a bridge between a more established, accepted research form and an evolving one; and secondly, as situating the personal within the narratives of contemporaries so that the inquiry may be validated and the spirit of empathetic communion and responsiveness broadened and deepened.

The Social Constructivist Approach

Whilst the experiential perspective honours the significance I place upon internal/personal knowledge, I draw upon a different approach to provide the relational lens through which I equally view the world. Social constructivism provides this with the premise that the self is 'continually shaped and reshaped through interactions with others and involvement in social and cultural activities' (Wetherell & Maybin, 1996: 220).

Also, to authentically reflect my axiological perspective and assumptions, the method of 'situating' myself within the dialogues was felt to be crucial i.e. 'I' with 'other'. I aspired to this by including the words of storytellers in italics along with my personal reflections. This endeavours to reflect the social constructivist argument 'for a merged view of 'the person' and 'their social context' where the boundaries of one cannot easily be separated from the boundaries of the other' (Wetherall & Maybin, 1996: 222).

Also, as the social constructivists see indistinct borders between the person and the social context, for me, we were 'scaffolded' (Bruner, 1975) in our childhoods by common, social structures and processes, and nurtured on shared, generational

constructs and discourses. From this ‘thrown-ness’ (Heidegger, 1927) we have grown to exist in the borderlands of each other’s experiences, conscious awareness and reflexivity. Here, in these shifting boundaries, we find what we in our separate body-selves have come to think of as our own thoughts and constructions, mirrored back, and learn more about what it is to be ‘human being human’ (Brandon, 1977):

‘There are many reasons to believe that story-telling and metaphor is the ordinary language of ordinary people, a universal mode of communication understood in some way . . . by both teller and listener. Because they are a natural form of expression, it makes sense to use them in any investigation of human experience; as a means of inquiry, as a way of processing data and as a way of presenting findings.’

(Wilkins, 2000:144)

Therefore, in combining the words of storytellers with my own it was my intention to give joint voice to the narration of a contemporary social discourse i.e. a joint ‘social engagement which acts back on those communicating and’ further ‘constructs their nature’ (Wetherell & Maybin, 1996: 241).

The Stories of Others

Aoife

Introduction

Aoife’s story focused on a juxtaposed correlation between personal values and institutional structures and goals. It included the unassailable capacity for human agency, initiative and adaptation. It ‘is complex and multifaceted, involving elements of both structure and agency, the internal and the external, in a dynamic, dialectical relationship’ in which Aoife shapes the institution she works in, but is equally shaped by it (Watson, 1996: 242; Layder, 1990; Giddens, 1984; Berger and Luckmann, 1971). Interestingly, in contrast to the assumption that power/status

within an institution invests ‘a more significant ‘shaping’ role than others’ (Watson, 1996: 242), Aoife chose demotion to diminish personal and professional stresses and distresses. It was a means of maintaining some independence and control in areas of practice her values determined essential. Ironically, it also proved to be a subordinate position with unusual influence.

Aoife believes that personal power to influence rests in respect earned through long-term relationships. She has faith in interpersonal processes regardless of institutional ‘situated-ness’, and described personal and professional construction and reconstruction worked through these. Through her choices and actions she adapted to the changing nature, structures and goals of her workplace, gaining respect, enriching her relationships and strengthening her influence upon those both higher and lower in the hierarchy. In this way, Aoife’s ‘social identity’ emerged not as an entity but as ‘a project which is continually in the making’ (Watson, 1996: 260). This approach may have transformed her narrative into a ‘smooth[er] story of self’ (MacLure, 1996) but despite any such criticism what I personally took from Aoife’s story was hope.

Story

Aoife believes that she did not start out with ‘*a deep philosophy about education*’ but was guided by ‘*a personality or perhaps an idea of how*’ she felt it was important to ‘*treat*’ and value ‘*other people*’. To me this was the value-base that directed and inspired her entire practice. Indeed, from the start, her choice of ‘*open*’ and ‘*child-centeredness*’ as significant elements of her undergraduate course reinforced my conviction that she was motivated by humanitarian values, such as tolerance and equality. For example, her ability to listen and learn even from people who were at odds with her values was a testimony to this:

‘even the ones that were, perhaps, what you would call more traditional in their methods, you could learn so much from them, also.’

Alongside these values Aoife placed empowerment and clearly from her testimony the values of the younger Aoife were further shaped by her college experiences:

'But all the way through our lectures was this idea given to us that, you know, we could organise; we could make decisions and we were quite empowered as young people going into the classroom.'

The pre-college Aoife carried within her intrinsic, spiritual (Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002) values on the correct way to 'treat' and respect others. At college these values were framed by contemporary, educational thinking. They not only gave her a personal taste of autonomy but name, form and expression to her value-based, professional approach. Moreover, throughout her narrative, academic study appeared as a staircase with each step taking her deeper into socio-educational issues with which her values found alignment. For example, undergraduate interest in child-centeredness and empowerment developed into postgraduate awareness of educational inequalities:

'There was an awful lot of inequality in society and . . . specifically looking at how education could actually be a barrier for a lot of young people and young children, especially if they were from a different ethnic group . . . interested me . . .'

I understood that for Aoife one of the primary functions of education is the promotion of tolerance and equality through conscious-raising:

'I actually do a whole week on human rights with the older children. And we've looked at sexism, at racism, at disability rights, ageism. We've looked at gay rights.'

Aoife saw the first four years of her practice as an opportunity to develop her academic ideas and professional skills. It was a time of in-situ training in which

'open'/ness to good practice showed an intrapersonal synchronicity and accord with her values. Also, at this juncture, she interjected the word '*freedom*' into her construction of empowerment. This interjection and her contrast of 'valuing individuals' against 'national' measurements indicated an emergent politicisation. This seems to have been furthered by a Higher Diploma in Multi-cultural Education that increased her awareness of '*the inequalities in education at that time*'.

Aoife eventually secured work in a school where her socio-educational values could thrive. She found the child-centred philosophy and valuing of personal, informal relationships '*inspirational*'. However, she now believes that this was part of a generational movement that did not survive the later educational innovations:

'And they wanted an open plan, informal, child-centred school alongside their many other schools that they had. And there was purpose in that. And they were very proud of that and advertised it. But then because of government changes . . . changes in policy, it was very apparent very quickly that changes would have to be made.'

Nevertheless, what Aoife clearly had at this stage was a profound accord with school management/leadership i.e. there was harmony between her personal values of self-achievement and her social values as to how the school should operate (Rokeach, 1973). This was not to last.

Change came at the expense of the head-teacher she held in high regard. In describing how he left the school a '*broken man*', Aoife expressed a deep respect for his courage in standing by his '*principles and ideals*'. Doing so she reflected her own internal value for principled action; but for her the road taken was to be a different one.

When confronted by change Aoife made an attempt to re-stabilize the personal and social values (Rokeach, 1973) it conflicted with. She secured a new position within

the school that enabled her to maintain her valued independence in relationships and the curriculum. This post was in a purpose-built nursery. In it she staved off dissonance, creating an islet on which she perceived her values safe and protected:

'it did open up a way of me still being a practitioner and a teacher . . . but holding on to a lot of the values that I'd had . . . I had respected and I'd seen other people have.'

However, from the onset, her orientation to work had not changed and the demands of her new role were experienced as overwhelming. This juxtaposed her judgements of the 'right' thing to do with institutional constructions of 'the most effective way to go about doing something' (Greenbank, 2002: 791; Glen, 2000; Rokeach, 1973). Aoife now faced a multi-dimensional crisis. On a moral level she was afraid to let others down. On an intrinsically spiritual (Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002) level she was striving to ensure that the personal values she prized most highly were maintained and protected (Rokeach, 1973). On a physical level these values, so deeply rooted in her person-centred approach, required more time and energy than her working day allowed, making her question her philosophy and work ethic:

' . . . the work load was immense and I don't know if it was that way because of the philosophy I held; because I felt I had to respond to each child individually. Or whether it was just the way that I see the importance of my job and the role . . . '

Finally, on a professional level, her dedication to her work invested it with greater importance than her own wellbeing. Indeed, in terms of Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' (1943; 1954; 1970a), some lower, basic needs were sacrificed to fulfil higher ones. For example, she jeopardised her 'safety needs' in regard to health and family in her onerous commitment to doing everything to '*the best*' of her ability, '*one hundred per cent of the time.*' Yet I believe that it is not work per se for which Aoife sacrificed her wellbeing, but rather selfless service to others indicating that she aspires to the highest level of Maslow's (1970a) hierarchy i.e. self-transcendence:

‘ . . self-transcendence is reached when a person seeks to further a cause beyond the self and to experience a communion beyond the boundaries of the self . . . These transcended individuals . . . typically seek a benefit beyond the mere personal, identifying with something greater than the purely individual self, often engaging in selfless service to others . . . ’

(Venter, 2012: 69)

However, the self did intervene. Aoife became ill and had a year away from work although her concern remained other focused i.e. *‘family’*:

‘I realised that the energy and the workload that I was putting into work . . . had impacted on the family. And I was concerned about that. And I was concerned at it from their point of view . . . ’

So she made the painful decision to quit teaching. In so doing she realised that her very identity and being had become entwined in her practice:

*‘I had struggled so hard to leave the nursery to go off because **every** single thing in the nursery had been mine, from things that I’d built with XXXX to everything that I’d made. It felt like an extension of myself.’*

Therefore, still committed to working with children and needing to feel that she could continue to *‘make a difference’*, Aoife approached the school to become a teaching assistant. She hoped to radically change her work orientation because she saw this as the major cause of her stress and ill-health. Whilst prioritising her competency rather than moral values for change (Greenbank, 2002; Glen, 2000; Rokeach, 1973), she intended to *‘redefine the context and the terms of the dialogue’* (Venter, 2012: 69) between her intrapersonal values and interpersonal demands within the existing structures. In effect she negotiated a new contractual relationship

with the school that promised a new, more harmonious balance between her own and institutional values.

The role of teaching assistant proved right for Aoife but it came at the cost of the family dream to move to a bigger house. However, what was lost was weighed against gains in terms of personal choice, professional autonomy and independence:

'but as a teaching assistant you could step away a little bit from that and I could deliver things. I could work with the children again in a very child-centred way. . . And so I was still holding on very dearly to my belief on how to treat children. How . . .to get so much from them as well as being able for them to give - for you to give them something as well.'

Interestingly, whilst it may be argued that Aoife forwent the 'safety' and 'esteem' needs for better home and bigger income for the lower 'physiological' need of physical health, it is equally possible to infer that her sacrifice promised satisfaction to needs at either extremity of Maslow's (1970a) pyramid. The assistant position equates with less responsibility, institutional demands and accountability. Less external pressures and 'measurements' correlates with increased 'freedom' to pursue personal, value-based practice; albeit, in a different 'context' and with an alternative 'dialogue' (Venter, 2012: 69). For Aoife increased professional autonomy and independence meant less personal stress, improved wellbeing and decreased dissonance between her moral and social values and institutional competency values and practices.

Eventually, Aoife combined her teaching assistant role with a learning mentor position. This role brought her '*amazing*' satisfaction in terms of her cherished ability to '*make a difference*' whilst still holding onto her values. In comparison she sees the teacher role as impoverished by the loss of the holistic responsibilities she is now free to pursue. In her belief that teachers see the curriculum as their '*main role*'

and that this leaves them with neither ‘*time*’ nor ‘*space*’ to devote to issues that her moral values construct as ‘*absolutely crucial*’, she may have identified the predominant cause of dissonance between her values and those ushered in by educational innovations. Furthermore, from her narrative it would appear that those who envisage a curriculum-led role may achieve greater balance between moral and competency values. For them the ‘right’ course of action is primarily curriculum instruction and ‘*the most effective way to go about*’ that naturally promotes a narrow, convex focus. However, for Aoife, education is about conscious-raising and empowerment. It is holistic, expanding, concave and person-centred which infers many individualised, ‘*most effective way[s]*’ to achieve learning outcomes. Yet Aoife does not intuit these differences as person-bound; rather she sees changes in political and educational values that have left younger teachers disempowered to ‘*impact*’ on the ‘*personal and social needs of the children*’. As she expressed her ‘*incredible sadness*’ about this I realised that beyond the means of ‘*making a difference*’ one child/human-being at a time, there was for her the lost camaraderie and political engagement of the time before the changes:

‘Staff meetings were not about the timings of the day or how we do the register. It was about philosophy. It was about . . . how do we teach this or what do we teach, or how do we make sure every child is getting an education that suited to them?’

Aoife sees herself as a perennial learner ever-adapting in the service of others. For her there should be no dissonance between her values and her practices. She has a holistic view that unites the personal, professional and the academic:

‘Values about education are like an extension of how I want to be.’

Instead, for her dissonance is an external force that removes personal interpretation and control, limits free expression and autonomy, and ignores the existential issues that are at the heart of human experience:

*‘They struggle in all honesty sometimes I think because of the demands of the curriculum . . . I think teachers feel that that is their main role. And so they will say, “Oh, XXXX, will you deal with this issue?” and this issue can be **absolutely** crucial. It’s the reason why that child will feel good about themselves on that particular day but there will be teachers who feel they haven’t got the time, the space, to be able to do that. And I think that if I was still as a classroom teacher that frustration is likely to have been there for me as well because I would have felt I would have had to have conformed in many ways. . . I’d hope that I would still value the sort of personal and social needs of the children. But I’m not sure that a lot of the teachers, younger teachers, feel that they can impact on that sometimes which is incredibly sad’*

‘. . . because to me those ideas about how you treat each other; how you feel about yourself; how you deal with problems; how you cope with anger; they are crucial to how you will learn and how you will be a learner.’

Her comeback for what others have seen as a work-life imbalance is, *‘it’s just how I want to be, really’* and in many ways this is Aoife’s testimony of self-actualisation. Therefore, following Maslow’s (1943) argument that once lower needs are satisfied higher needs emerge; an actualised Aoife has only the actualisation of others to strive for now. For me, this is the motivation she cannot escape. For example, it is there within her sadness as she described how her ‘lower’ hierarchical status leaves her plans more vulnerable to interruption:

‘but I feel sad that it’s the way that we’ve been able to be used. You know, teaching assistants can be asked to cover and the sad thing about that, even though when I’m actually in the class and I’m doing a day’s cover for a teacher I’m enjoying it, . . . it’s still taking me away from things that I’ve planned.’

As an actualised Aoife carved out a new role within the school to protect and maintain her values, her retrenchment left her open to external disruption. The financial/material concerns that she refused to live her life by still rule over her in the priorities of others:

'from a finance point of view from the school when I've talked about it they're argument is, "We don't have a choice".'

Here, therefore, lives-on the dissonance between her personal values and the values of the dominant discourses within the school.

Yet, Aoife has found her political and spiritual place within education. It is a place that required financial, status and advancement sacrifices but left her values intact. She believes with the equanimity of her value-led choices that only in rejecting these could she do what she *'felt needed to be done'*. Choices that she agonised over now hold no regrets as she celebrates the 'lesser' life-path she chose as a *'way forward'*:

'deep down I know that this is the way forward. This. . . will always be a way of allowing me to continue to, hopefully - not necessarily influence - that sounds a bit too grand - but just to maybe have some impact.'

Having sidestepped status, Aoife marvels at *'younger teachers who within two years are already . . . going for a deputy-headship'*. In contrast, she saw her first four and half years in teaching as an apprenticeship and after several more years rejected an invitation to apply for the deputy headship because she still had *'too much to learn'*. Aoife clearly values highly experiential knowledge. Indeed, she described herself as *'a wise, old owl'*; albeit a nest-less one because she only has a defined space in the middle of the school. However, what may be an impoverishment to others is transformed by her into a safe, open place of counsel, retreat and succour. It is a place where her moral, competency, personal and social values can be freely and harmoniously practised (Rokeach, 1973). Also, in this space, experience is an asset:

'I can use life experience. And there are times when, you know, it's been great to be my age now because I feel I have got things I can draw on from my own life and help them through certain things.'

In the future Aoife sees herself remaining where she is. *'Despite its problems; despite the times when it's hard'* there is no better place to be. In her final analysis it is *'relationships with the people and the children'* that matter:

'the rewards of the job come from knowing the parents and knowing the children.'

They matter and are rewarding because they fulfil her primary, transcendental need (Maslow, 1970b) to *'have an impact'* and *'make a difference'*.

Furthermore, it is her personal construction of her professional experiences as the means of developing meaningful relationships true to her values and drive to *'make a difference'* that appears to have influenced how she views her own learning:

'The further study for me . . . It's very much working alongside people like educational psychologists. .working alongside social workers, working with other agencies and other expertise to develop something to help a situation happening in the school. . . It doesn't come from academia . . . It just comes from working with children every day'

Any academic research and professional development that she undertakes is aimed at improving her knowledge and skills to better meet the needs of others:

'I'll do some research on anger management techniques or I'll ring up an educational psychologist and ask for some advice, and that sort of learning for me carries on very much on that smaller level of dealing with a situation as it arises'.

'... it has left him struggling, dealing with other people's needs and ... I'm developing through - using social stories in a way. . . but not social stories in the sense that I've developed a character who behaves in a very similar way to XXXX, and I've made a book'

More than this, for Aoife the struggle fought and won at the sacrifice of health, status and financial gain unites the personal, professional and academic aspects of self:

'and to make things, to research, to help to support both colleagues and friends and children is what helps me to make me who I am'

For Aoife there is no separation between these; there never was and should never be.

Barbara

Introduction

Barbara's story contained bipolar personal constructs (Kelly, 1969) configured against existential issues, e.g. personal happiness versus authoritarian mistreatment and inexperienced conformity versus experienced judgement. Also, given that her childhood was marred by a '*violent*' teacher her narrative was unsurprisingly punctuated by conflict references:

'I was a vulnerable child imprisoned with this violent teacher . . . and then I became the opposite.'

However, juxtaposed constructs and her triumph in becoming '*the opposite*' can equally be understood by the contrasting educational experiences provided by her loving grandfather. His legacy is sustained in her enduring constructions of education as important, '*joyful*', entire onto itself, a means to self-actualisation and an expression of lovingly being there for the unique other. Against such high regard any opposition that jeopardised her ability to deliver the creative, life-enriching, intuitive education her values required was viewed as hostile.

Opposition came in the form of educational innovations that changed managerial aspirations and institutional practices. Perhaps because of their macrocosmic source, Barbara's 'fight' became a retreat into her classroom where she intended to survive the external siege. However, she failed to prevent incursions into her value-led practice, and eventually chronically ill obtained early retirement.

Overall, Barbara's story imparts a sense of intrapersonal bewilderment. Barbara sees herself as '*a loving, kind teacher that left early and should still be there*'. The '*should still be there*' is heavy with the wanting to '*still be there*'. I share this longing, and her personal confusion as to how such passion and dedication could be so lightly disregarded.

Story

Barbara feels she has been '*in education*' all her life. Her grandfather first inspired her learning and constructions of education. Barbara describes him as '*a highly educated*', '*self-taught*' man who, despite leaving school at ten, educated himself to a high degree. She imbibed the value he placed upon '*being educated and being knowledgeable about the world*'. Moreover, he nurtured within her the construction that '*education was the route, not to advancement*' but simply to being '*educated*'.

Furthermore, their relationship was a close, loving one. Barbara's parents were professionals whose work commitments left them with little family time. Into the void they left stepped her grandfather, *'like a saviour'*, providing kindness and love. Therefore, education/learning, along with the values of *'education for education sake'*, also became associated with kindness, love and *'being there'*. Also, in the familial and intellectual closeness shared, Barbara's sense of her own value and uniqueness was nurtured because she found herself the only one of her siblings who *'sapped up all the knowledge'* imparted. Within this idyllic, apprentice-relationship learning was a fervent joy. For example, she is proud he taught her to read Shakespeare at eight and she recalls fondly the pleasure of watching Patrick Moore's "Sky at Night" with him. Education became an experience of self-enrichment and delight, entire onto itself.

Barbara's grandfather handed-on another passion i.e. the love of teaching itself:

'He always wanted to be a teacher. It was always his aspiration to be a teacher.'
'I assimilated the knowledge that he would have been so proud of me if I'd been a teacher. And I think that's what sowed the early seeds.'

Therefore, having completed her secondary education, Barbara applied to train as a teacher and considered this *'the best thing'* that ever happened to her because she *'absolutely loved it!'* Equally, this decision provided the opportunity for her grandfather to return the pride she felt towards him:

'And he was so proud. . . we used to write to each other all the time and I had to be so careful when I was writing to him because he was so highly educated; a man that was never at formal school!'

In this way, qualifying was a joint achievement:

'And just before he died, I had finished my finals and he'd come. He had a wee attic where he used to store all his books, and he came down and said to my aunt, "Imagine X's going to be a teacher! And this was the greatest thing in his life! That his grandchild was! So I was very proud of that.'

However, for Barbara there was another significant educational relationship. In contrast, this was with a 'violent' teacher. It took her 'years and years and years to resolve through counselling and everything else' the damaging impact of this encounter, and marry the 'huge instability and insecurity and fear' it invoked with her external persona:

'I was a very happy, outwardly happy, vivacious, veracious for knowledge, but inside there was this huge instability and insecurity and fear that was bred in those years when I was violently treated.'

For me, this is more than a simple battle between the internalised mistreatment and her external persona. Contained in her overall narrative is a battle between personal happiness and mistreatment by those in authority. I believe that these constructs were arrived at through the conflicting educational experiences she described. Also, I further believe that over succeeding years in the spectrum between them another pivotal dynamic of improving the educational experience 'for others' balanced against maintaining personal happiness was 'laddered' (Hinkle, 1965). It is this that Barbara voiced when she said:

'I was treated very roughly when I was at primary school by a nun; a very sadistic teacher that taught me in my senior years, and because I was a child that - I would know myself had suffered ADHD. I was very creative and I was very musical. She was hugely violent in a physical and mental-emotional way and that left huge things in me. And I always said that when I was a teacher I would teach with compassion. So there was huge compassion in my teaching.'

Although profoundly affected by these polarised educational experiences Barbara was *'always happy'* in her work and connected this to the *'idealism'* of her youth and her *'love'* of *'creativity'*. These enabled her to successfully teach large groups through a curriculum rich in music, singing, dance and poetry. She was proud of her methods and successes in the early years but added that she *'wouldn't be able'* for the same challenges now. She spoke about the difficulties of small rooms, curriculum demands and visits from inspectors but counter-balanced these against her *'huge amount of energy, massive enthusiasm'* and her *'love'* for teaching.

However, her reminiscence of these *'difficult'* but simpler years led to recent comparisons that agitated and angered her. This was directed at what she saw as unnecessary bureaucracy, increased testing and the *'buffoonery around education'*:

'I absolutely hated the changing face of education. In that it seemed to be surrounded by not what you could produce as in regards the children, but what you could produce as regard notes . . . And paper work and the format changing all the time around points systems and testings; and the whole life seemed to be taken up with meetings after meetings after meetings'

Her anger was not directed at the impact innovations had upon her personally but the effect they had upon her practice. For example, they increasingly took her away from her classroom:

'They wanted me to go to meeting after meeting after meeting, fill in this form, fill in that form, fill in the other form and I knew it as all ridiculous because the forms were changing from one week to the next.'

There was discord between her constructions of education as inherited from her grandfather, and education as she experienced it within her workplace. On one hand, education was life-enriching, creative and sufficient unto itself, but on the other it

was a measured means to other ends. What Barbara constructed to be a good education and ‘the most effective way’ to deliver it (Greenbank, 2002: 791; Glen, 2000; Rokeach, 1973) conflicted with the values of *‘the changing face of education’*.

Eventually, unable to keep intrusive and disruptive changes outside her classroom, Barbara felt *‘battered down’*, and ill, retired. However, she does not feel herself alone in feeling *‘battered’*:

‘It was years and years and years of being battered down by this that got me in the end. A lot of other teachers feel the same and can’t leave financially, but I was fortunate that I still had my own creative, lateral thinking that I was able to say, “Right, I’ll earn money some other way.”’

Also, she does not believe that she was alone in leaving the profession prematurely because she saw *‘a lot of very innovative and enterprising teachers’* go too. Moreover, whilst the current economic recession inclines her to consider that leaving may have been a *‘bad decision’*, she only entertains this thought because she has *‘children at university’* who require financial support. In all other ways she declared:

‘it has been the right decision because my teaching was affected, my psyche was affected, my creativity was affected and nobody seemed to care!’

Barbara values her mental, physical and emotional health above professional status:

‘I had to put myself and my own emotional, psychological and mental health ahead of what was happening.’

Equally, she values her autonomous creativity above remuneration. Indeed, from her usage of *'battered-down'* I understood that threat to these is perceived as an assault.

However, from this I realised that whilst Barbara senses commonality in her angst, she paints a picture similar to Walton's (2008: 122) of isolated practitioners whose last resort maybe departure:

'... our society is rife with people who feel isolated, alienated and lonely; and who do not believe they have a valuable role to play in the world.'

Ironically for Barbara, what may finally guide them away from unrelenting assaults is their creative *'life-affirming energy'* (Whitehead, 2011) that children and the profession could have benefited from. For her another *'good teacher was lost'*.

Barbara now feels sufficiently recovered to look for an appreciative workplace in which she is free to express her creativity:

'I'm now re-entering education in the way I wish to do it which is in the classroom with music, with creativity, and with people that appreciate what I have to offer.'

Along with autonomous creativity Barbara's personal values include appreciation. Yet she stated that she does not need *'a huge amount of appreciation'* and constructed appreciation as an ethos that fosters independent creativity, firmly connecting both values:

'I was looking for independence to run my class and to teach the children in the way that I saw fit.'

For me she named both the personal and social aspects of her ‘terminal values’ (Rokeach, 1973) i.e. appreciated and independent in an enabling, trusting environment. However, I believe that these values are:

‘relationally dynamic being held, formed and re-formed in that complex ecological space forming the living boundaries between self, other/s and the world.’

(Huxtable, 2011: 4)

In this precarious state if either set of values remains out of sync with reality, over time personal distress may result. It did so for Barbara when she perceived that her autonomy to provide a creative, holistic education was not valued by the institutional/managerial agenda:

‘I probably would still be there - or I probably would have been in an environment where my opinions were appreciated and where if they were expressed they would be . . . I felt that everybody was almost locked into a Hitler like regime having to adhere to management, whereas experienced, long-term teachers’ opinions weren’t properly appreciated. . . .’

Therefore, ‘laddered’ (Hinkle, 1965) within her personal distress and bipolar construction of independence/appreciation versus compliance/disregard was another construct of experienced opinions versus inexperienced conformity.

These thoughts provoked Barbara into giving a synopsis of her practice that was punctuated with expressions of ‘love’. Also, it established her subjective meaning of ‘results’ for her students with SEN, developing it from merely ‘happy, contented, achieving children’ to ‘achieving a formal education’ and learning how to integrate in mainstream classes. In doing so, she juxtaposed a system rich in resource support against an impoverished understanding of the needs of the child with SEN. Barbara

felt that she had been ‘*well supported*’ by additional staff, such as speech therapists and SNAs, but she also felt:

‘There was a lack of understanding of the difference in their needs and in the needs of the normal child.’

Between the two extremes she positioned the class-teacher as ‘*the best person to identify the needs of a special needs child*’ and asserted that ignoring the knowledgeable requests of an experienced practitioner negatively affects children:

‘So, if I was looking for something it would be because of the child. It wouldn’t be because of me. It would be because I would have identified that this is what this child needs and I’m the best person placed to tell you that and a lot of the time management adhere to strict ruling and they would just say, “No!” And I felt there could have been more flexibility around what the needs of the child were because the only time I ever fought was around what the child needed. . .’

Again, her fighting spirit was aroused on the behalf of children not for personal interest. Indeed, as an experienced teacher she felt able to ‘*teach anywhere*’ expressing a profound confidence in her own teaching. For Barbara, ‘*problems started when*’ she, the experienced practitioner, ‘*went outside the classroom and tried to seek help*’ for her students. Indeed, she developed this later in her narrative situating ‘*younger teachers*’ in a submissive state of compliance to institutional demands whilst the experience of ‘*older*’ teachers enables intuitive, child-led judgement. Her analysis suggested that experience can enable one to take greater value-led action in the interest of other:

‘Younger teachers will come in and just adhere to what is already in the format. . . an older teacher will always have the experience of hindsight and of what they feel. They are able to express what they need. They also know children better . . . when I would get a class at the start of the year within a week I would have been able to identify needs. I would have been able to identify disciplines that I needed to use. I

would have been able to identify vulnerabilities. I would have been able to identify when I needed to see parents. And after all of that, almost instinctively, I would know how to teach a child.'

For me this was an acknowledgement of Polyani's (1958) tacit, embodied knowledge and honed intuition with which I felt accord.

There was further accord when Barbara named her predominant educational value:

'My value was compassion and to teach compassion. It's to teach children to be compassionate on every level. But not just on school levels when I'm watching them, but on a playground level, on a mommy level and on every level, that they must learn what compassion is; how to transmit it, how to keep it as a value in yourself, and how to look around the classroom, see who's vulnerable and to help that child.'

Barbara believes that this arose in response to the 'violent' abuse meted by a teacher. However, for me, it was also profoundly connected with the joy of education inspired by her loving grandfather:

'I want to express joy. I want to create joy in the classroom. I wanted to create the feeling that they could be whatever they wanted to be. That whatever they wanted to be was enough; and whatever they wanted to be, I love it! And that was what I always created. And - now my children are in their twenties and the children come back to me and they say, "We loved the guitar days! We loved the happy days!" I used to have a happy Friday and a happy Monday . . . And I wanted to create joy. But I wanted them to bring joy with themselves and that they remembered their time with me as being happy.'

Barbara increasingly interjected the word 'happy' into her narrative. She told me that she 'retired very happily' and that 'recent years were happy' in 'regards the

classroom'. Also, she stated that the *'happy'* child was her primary goal with *'the academic'* coming *'behind that'*. This may be because of the importance she places on personal happiness, her identification with vulnerable students, and values that propel her to regard them as her own:

'So they were upmost important to me . . . every single one of them. They were my children, when I went in there. They were the same as my children at home. They were mine. And I felt this passion inside.'

In my experience this may have been another source of conflict because most educational establishments promote *'professional boundaries'*, rather than personal identification and passion.

Barbara shared that she did not *'blame any individual'* and that the past was now *'all water under the bridge'*. There was a sense of a story coming to an end and a needing to find a resolution between past hurts and future happiness. Yet, even after a few years of retirement, as she spoke of her creative work to bring joy to those she taught while instilling within them humanitarian values, *'respectful'* manners and self-worth, the external, political perspective of the larger school intruded. She spoke again of her great love for the creative arts which she saw as a platform to celebrate and enrich children. When the school was smaller she had a school-wide scope of influence for her values and creativity e.g. in the choir and evenings of poetry and drama. Then, as the school expanded, values different to hers thrived and she felt her zone of creative practice and influence shrink. Eventually, she retreated to her classroom where she made her stand around her deepest convictions of:

'I will never be cruel to a child for anybody'

'I will never teach a child duplicity.'

Clearly, Barbara's '*violent*' mistreatment at the hands of a teacher/nun had taught her the importance of genuineness. Somehow the young Barbara had known that the actions of her '*violent*' teacher conflicted both with her profession and faith:

'And I realise that we all have failings and we have children that are possibly difficult to deal with but that doesn't mean that that we can't express compassion.'

Barbara has spent her whole professional life avoiding such '*duplicity*', and her reward for '*consistency in compassion*' and value-led, creative practice has been found within her relationships with students who recall fondly their time with her.

When asked if she had ever wanted to be a head teacher/principal, consistent with her clarity as to her values and strengths, her answer was, '*no*'. She had no illusions as to her talents and administration was not one. Equally, when it came to the pursuit of academic qualifications they were of no '*interest*'. Barbara's interests were all '*hands on!*' and '*directly involved with children*'.

Colette

Introduction

Colette's narrative is pervaded by profound intrapersonal angst that had originated from an interpersonal interplay between institutional power and her personal values and embodied history (Smail, 1991; 1996; 2001; 2005). She suffered the fate of one out of synch with the march of time. As a child she imbibed values that in her early practice she shared with colleagues and management. However, with time came change and a different educational agenda imposed by managers with conflicting values to hers. These changing interpersonal relationships and institutional regimes resulted in personal, bipolar constructs (Kelly, 1969) that reflected her emerging dissonance. Across every bipolar spectrum she expressed stretched her pain and sense of alienation.

However, by rooting her values in lost socio-educational principles Colette politicised her dissonance and alienation. In her story I understood how changes in the '*bigger picture*' had led away from the managerial practices that our generational, culturally-shared, constructions understood. For us both our practice invested our lives with meaning and purpose. Our drive to self-actualisation through professional practice cannot be separated from the social discourses we grew-up with. Contributing to these discourses are academic theories and studies. These included, Maslow (1943) and the Hawthorne experiments (Mayo, 1933, 1949; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). The conglomeration of these ideas was that human beings are 'social animals who' are 'more likely to do what' is 'required of them if their social needs' are 'met' (Watson, 1996: 269). Whilst the focus of the Hawthorne experiments was on encouraging and fostering a sense of belonging in employees, for Maslow (1943), human-beings seek to satisfy ever higher levels once lower level needs are satiated. These ideas had personal and professional impacts upon teachers.

Also, the construction of education as holistic and person-centred transmitted a deeper message of transcendence. If self-actualisation is achieved through professional practice that invests the educator's life with meaning and purpose, then the self-actualised person is liberated to seek satisfaction of the higher need of self-transcendence (Maslow, 1970a). If self-transcendence is implicit in the dominant academic and professional discourses one participates in, practice may assume a vocational nature:

'it has been a vocation. It has been a life commitment'

I, also, lived through the changes Colette described. I participated in the discarding of old educational materials and resources to make way for new. Perhaps along with these old values were thrown-out, too. Perhaps we let them slip away by failing to personally validate them, as I had in not even naming mine. Indeed, Colette dismissed her value of kindness as '*a silly thing*'.

If and when we did realise it, it was too late. For Colette *'there was no-one you could talk about education [with] anymore when all these managers came in'*. Like Aoife when I went into teaching I looked to managers and experienced colleagues for inspiration and guidance. They shared and enriched my values and ideals and together we shaped 'the work' as 'the work' shaped us (Watson, 1996: 241). However, energising passion when thwarted may turn heavy and destructive as Colette's *'harsh' 'abrasiveness'* that weighed heavily upon her:

'the system ultimately was too heavy'

In the end, Colette became just another casualty in a war of conflicting values.

Story

Colette retired after *'thirty-three years and three hundred and sixty-four days'* having *'loved'* education from her earliest schooling. This *'love'* she associated with *'always helping out'* establishing *'helping, making a difference'* and *'being with people'* as her educational constructs and values:

'I was always interested in making the difference in the classroom with the children.'

Also, she practised these by meeting the needs of children, parents and colleagues:

'... there was such need! It never got completed. There was so much need that you just kept doing it.'

'In the teaching of the children, it was the teaching of the parents and the teachers around me, the young teachers.'

Colette reminisced about her schooling as a *'lovely period of time'* with *'lovely'* expanding to include the *'seventies'* and the political ideas that influenced her:

'And it was that lovely, the idea, the socialism of it . . . it was still working on that principle that you looked after people from birth to the grave.'

Clearly, the politics of her *'small town'* had contributed to and affirmed her values of *'helping, making a difference'* and *'being with people'*. There was accord between her values, the institutions she was schooled in and the society that nurtured her.

On finishing school Colette was offered *'a grant . . . to study further'*. Led by the *'inspirational'* teaching of her teachers she went into teacher training. At school her interest had been encouraged with opportunities provided to practice with younger students. Also, she had voluntarily spent afternoons in primary schools supporting teachers and her summers working with youth groups. She even went away to summer camps with the primary schools she assisted.

Colette had a *'fabulous'* time at college and when she finished she eagerly took up a position offered by her home-town council. This eventually led to SEN teaching which *'became the passion'*. Also, as she progressed professionally she took an active role in national and local politics and became a union representative:

'I got involved in the bigger picture; the theory of it all. Why was it the way it was.'

Additionally, she undertook further academic study and professional training. Her greatest drive was to understand, *'Why were children not learning?'* In the end she came to the *'same old'* conclusion that the route to learning is dependent upon a

loving relationship between teacher and child which '*hopefully*' grows into a loving relationship between the child and her/his world:

'Fundamentally it still would be about love ultimately. Learning to know and to love and for the children to learn to love and to want to know.'

'... Love of the world. Yeah, of themselves and others and the adventure. . . to see life as an adventure; to want to know; to want to find something outside of themselves.'

She saw learning as dependent upon '*helping children to understand themselves*'. The child became her focus and making '*a difference*' in the life of a child required knowing yourself and learning to know others.

She became a curriculum and SEN co-ordinator, and after '*the government's big swing to focusing on special needs and all that brought with its legislation and policy documents*' she was recruited to a new SEN centre. This marked a cross-road in her life because she was simultaneously seeking promotion. Colette's choice was value-led with her choosing '*making the difference in the classroom with children*' over self-advancement.

However, alongside changes in her professional life there were also changes in '*the bigger picture*' that were, for her, detrimental because they conflicted with her educational values:

'all of those changes of the structures of school: how schools worked; all the initiatives that were being flung at schools so fast and furious. . . It seemed to me that it came away from people developing it themselves in order to make it work for the people they knew. Outside started very heavily forcing, pressing stuff on people. And for me personally that became the dilemma of where am I in all of this and where's all this other stuff in? And -people got very bossy. We got very angry, bossy

people, forceful people which seemed to me to be people who didn't understand where they were coming from but had big titles, big wages and needed to look like they were doing the job. And they were doing it exactly how my thirty years were telling me how it shouldn't be done; with force, upset, not understanding people. All the very things we'd spent years, I thought, developing in terms of relationship.'

Therefore, the previous accord between her values and those of the school and wider political agenda was gone. She faced two crises; a personal crisis of being managed in a way she would not treat children; and a professional crisis of being required to objectify her students:

'I didn't have time to be forming relationships with them. It was about collecting data, now. The children had to be objects we had to count them quickly, asses them.'

This objectification came with ever-increasing numbers of students, the demand of which 'wore' her 'out' and 'ground' her 'down'. Yet, even as this '*finished*' her '*off*', she continued to draw perseverance and resilience from her motivating self-transcendence (Maslow, 1970a):

'you still think you can influence don't you? You still think perhaps, you know, you can make a difference.'

However, she felt increasingly dispossessed and alienated:

'I just feel I don't belong'

Change in management practices heralded the breaching of the original psychological contract between Colette and her employers. The psychological contract is 'an agreement between the individual and the organization through a process of mutual bargaining, as to what is given and received, together with subsequent honouring of this agreement' (Blackler and Shimmin, 1984: 17). It is 'an implicit set of expectations about the nature of the relationship between the person and the organization' that forms a fluid, dynamic contract; but it is 'not a contract between equals' (Watson, 1996: 264). In Colette's case the breaching of the contract was marked by her exclusion from decisions relating to how much control she had within her work particularly in regard to effort and time management:

' . . . and certainly didn't ask. Nobody's ever asked me, 'What are you doing? What's your view on this?' They just told me.'

'I kept being timed and watched and told that I could fit more in if I didn't talk to the children. Perhaps, if I didn't spend time interacting with them. . .'

Interestingly, these are construed as significant areas of the tacit, psychological contract between an employee and an employer (Watson, 1995; Baldamus, 1961). Certainly, there appears to be a direct correlation between her increasing disaffection and her loss of control.

The position Colette took within the SEN sector required '*being with people*' and '*talking to the teachers and educating the teachers and the parents*' but these seemed subsumed under a new, alien regime with '*line managers*' giving her '*more schools and more children*' until '*in the end*' she '*broke*'. Under the new, enforced, psychological contract the earlier, harmonious, two-way '*shaping*' between her and work had '*broken*' down. Where there was balance and accord, there was now imbalance and dissonance:

'But I would have thought we really needed to know our young people and form relationships; loving family relationships with them to show them how to be loving people. It's become machine mechanistic again.'

This discord provoked Colette's negative judgement upon those she envisaged as constructing education as a 'supermarket' product. She came to believe that they did not 'really understand what they're doing' and 'were just promoting themselves'. Listening I knew that I had held similar views in regard to managers whose values I perceived were opposed to mine. Also, I realised that this stance may have contributed to my own angst and classroom retrenchment. Moreover, it suggested another bipolar construct (Kelly, 1969) of insightful, practitioner versus ignorant, self-promoting manager. Colette later developed this with images of steady, dependable educators set against the inconstant, self-interested, inexperienced line-managers who 'didn't really feel that they needed to understand teaching'.

Further, impacting on Colette's values were the financial changes to SEN provision. From being an authority service Colette's job became contractual with schools buying in the provision she had previously provided gratis. This altered her status with schools. For some she became an object of authoritarian control rather than a valued advisor:

' . . . and they were paying for us to come in because that meant that they could tell us what to do. So, you had newly qualified teachers talking to me and telling me what they wanted when I was diplomatically and sensitively trying to talk to them in a respectful way so we could somehow work together for the benefit of the child; and that's all difficult, tiring, exhausting.'

She felt exploited by managers who did not listen and did not understand her values, and mistreated by younger, less-experienced, mainstream teachers. She shared my perception that professional stress and personal distress may result from these

relationships because of opposing values, aims and needs. Colette consistently defined her work as '*connections*', '*relationships*' and '*being with people*'. Within this perspective she wished to work with or alongside other but was thwarted by conflicting needs and approaches:

'Well, you go as support but of course the class teacher's idea of support is to just take the children out of class and give them to you; get them out of their way ..'

Therefore, Colette's work was subject to a wide range of stressors whose cumulative effect was exhaustion and ill-health. Finally she saw these as '*clear*' '*messages*' that '*the time had come*' for early retirement.

Now retired Colette believes that the changes she witnessed forced her to leave while still having '*a lot to offer, the adults, the parents, the staff.*' Her sense of lost '*vocation*' and '*life-commitment*' reduced her to tears. Then these turned to laughter as she named '*love*' and '*kindness*' as what she still has to offer children in taking '*steps to help themselves to grow*'. She explained loving kindness as a '*respectful*', '*two-way*', relationship and understanding between generations. She sees this as '*fundamental to the whole basis of society*'. It is what she tried to live in her personal life, model in her professional life and wanted to leave as her legacy:

'Be kind, be kind, be kind to one another.'

However, verbalising her legacy triggered more sadness and the confident naming of her residual gifts turned to belittling hesitancy; but in her judgement of it as '*a silly thing*' I heard concern as to how others would think rather than self-doubt. Certainly her sadness and hesitancy subsided when I affirmed her value-rich legacy:

'Yeah, with respect and you can teach through kindness. You don't need to shout or beat somebody up in order to make them learn. They can learn beautifully and give. . . It's the giving that I think is very important.'

Nevertheless, it was not long before she spoke again of the educational innovations that had conflicted with her values:

'And somehow in this change . . . some sort of dark period came in the eighties and nineties, it became a more taking rather than a giving.'

This 'dark' menace brought *'fear'* and *'negativity'* in which people are *'counting money, worrying, terrified'*. It destroyed the *'good-will'* of the profession in which people, like Colette, wanted to *'make something happen'*. The focus on *'data', 'numbers and' 'money'* meant that *'kindness', 'flexibility', 'consideration'* and *'good manners'* were lost, and most shockingly for her was the denial of her personal values i.e. what she wanted for herself (Rokeach, 1973). These she was *'brought up on'* and their continuation was inferred by the socialist principle of looking *'after people from birth to the grave'*. Moreover, they were synonymous with her moral and social values, and as such were modelled in her treatment of other. However, in the *'dark'* changes they were institutionally denied. In the *'hurt'* these thoughts evoked she cried again:

'People are just cast aside (sobbing) . . . without a thank-you.'

'Well, I'm tired. I know that. I know that I'm physically and mentally tired and . . . that's like . . . swimming upstream, isn't it? You just end up exhausted. You don't feel you can go on. So . . . I'd like to try and get my strength back.'

However, as her sadness gave way to exhaustion I understood that for Colette, as for me, there was still a commitment to the service of other. Indeed, she later shared that *'If somebody needed' her 'to help out' she would be there.* It was clear that she envisaged what happened to her as the aberration, rather than the norm, maintaining faith and hope in the goodness of humanity. For her, people bring passion and *'love'* into education. It is simply what they do regardless of external agendas:

'So, you can only hope . . . People are good aren't they? Fundamentally people will find a way. Now the people will bring the love because people do and there's a lot of hard working young teachers there who are working so hard to make connections and make it work . . .'

Colette found resolution in this. Her demeanour changed and she appeared uplifted. She laughed and turned her thoughts to her legacy of loving kindness, but this time not from a position of defence. Authoritatively she dismissed issues of relativity and made Heron's (1996) *'personal, idiosyncratic truth'* her point:

'And then their life journey is discovering their truth, their values their understanding of themselves and others.'

'There's some sort of searching for truth and I think that that's a life quest for everybody and they go through all the different truths: family truths, society's truth and - but it's important for them to - to reach their values. Which I think is the pursuit of what you're fundamentally doing in the research. But how many people actually do reflect on that? But that's what was part of what I would have liked my work to have been -'

Colette's legacy lies in first knowing oneself and then other; and as one understands the importance and uniqueness of both, to realise and live by one's values. This she strove for in relationship-based approaches, teaching *'through language, through*

conversation’, and holding these above curriculum or managerial targets. Ultimately, Colette still carries the dream of ‘*a greater good*’:

‘How do we find a common way forward and the common way forward always has to be, again, for other, the greater good; for something beyond us for the next generation; for what’s coming and we need to be cohesive on that. And it gives all a meaning and a way forward. A shared meaning and a way forward.’

Deidre

Introduction

‘*Love*’ pervades Deidre’s story, arising from identification with children and their youthful energy and enthusiasm:

‘I also think I’ve never left childhood myself. So I enjoy children hugely. I’m a very child-like person myself’

However, this contrasts with an emerging loss of interest and grace.

Deidre’s ‘dark night of the soul’ comes after cancer and her premature return to work for financial reasons. These events constituted a hinge-like, ‘precipitating event’ (Dallos, 1996: 133) that marked a dramatic change in Deidre’s attitude to her practice. However, unlike Aoife’s ‘precipitating event’ this was not constructed as ‘new opportunities for change’ (Dallos, 1996: 133). The hinge connects the before-event, youthful enthusiast with the after-event, pragmatic stoic she became:

'I've become more pragmatic, more end-orientated. So, I'm not so much enjoying the process. I'm more getting the results.'

'But there's less fun in that. In some ways it's more like a production line. . . It's less engrossing definitely and less fulfilling.'

Her negativity seemed sourced by her perception of the cause of her loss. For Aoife the 'precipitating event' was illness but for Deidre it was her premature return to work. Therefore, whilst Aoife tried to change her lifestyle and work-ethic, Deidre apportioned blame to an indifferent, bureaucratic system that disregarded her physical need for convalescence. This demoralised her whilst directing her dissonance outside her workplace:

'I had no choice but I felt that the system not directly above me . . . [they] were extremely kind. I think I was resentful about the system that says if you're off a year of work that you're on no pay . . . I have no other form of income and I went back to work because I had to, not because I was ready to.'

Implicit in Deidre's anger and resentment is the duplicity of 'the system'. As a teacher she wished children to 'experience love, tolerance, respect, gratitude, positivity, humour', but for her these were denied. This blanket, indifferent ruling amounts to an impoverished mistreatment that contradicts the motivation that is at the heart of Deidre's construction of education i.e. the self-actualisation of other.

The 'precipitating event' left several of Deidre's lower needs vulnerable (Maslow, 1943; 1954). Her physical wellbeing was threatened narrowing her focus upon recovery. However, recovery was interrupted by financial needs. Exhausted and demoralised but awakened to the paradox of being treated in a manner she would not treat her students, she adjusted her focus to areas of unfulfilled, aesthetic interests. The self-actualisation of other still drives her daily practice but it is no-longer the

dominant motivation. Instead, there is disengagement and loss of what Whitehead (2009: 103) describes as the flow of ‘life-affirming energy with values that carry hope for the future of humanity’.

Story

Deidre is a teacher with more than thirty years’ experience who sees childhood as determining whether or not Maslow’s (1943; 1954) defined needs for safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualisation will be met. She argues that to be met children must ‘*experience love, tolerance, respect, gratitude, positivity, humour*’; and that without these the unfulfilled adult cannot assist the self-actualisation of children. Thus, she outlined a cycle of emotional and spiritual impoverishment in which what had not been known could not be given ‘*to kids - to other people*’. Also, she implicitly built Maslow’s (1970a) self-transcendence construction into her view of education and the developmental process i.e. assisting other to self-actualisation.

Deidre was teaching for ‘*six months*’ before she realised she was in the right job:

‘I was reading a story and all the [small] faces were there and then I thought, oh, my God, I’m in the right job! It was a lovely moment. It’s one I’ve had . . . only maybe a handful of times where you get that clarity of, yeah, this is where I’m meant to be-’

Following this she ‘*went off. . . and worked in [a] secondary school*’ abroad. This was a life-enriching experience but ‘*it made it really hard to settle into primary school again*’ because she had to adjust from ‘*talking about the big issues to*’ ex-soldiers to the care needs of infants. Her manager recognised that she was struggling and moved her into junior classes. New challenges revitalised her ‘*love*’ for teaching with revival becoming a theme of her narrative. It was expressed as a cycle in which new challenges were associated with youthful energy and enthusiasm that ebbed away into faded interest, ‘hard’ struggle and exhaustion. Also, it established a bipolar,

personal construction (Kelly, 1969) of energy/enthusiasm versus exhaustion/failing interest that permeated her narrative.

Some years on over the summer holidays Deidre worked with second language learners, but this left her exhausted and unenthusiastic by September. Having experienced teaching as 'fun' and believing that children must experience '*positivity*' and '*humour*' to enjoy '*future security*', she looked for the revitalisation of new challenges. When an opportunity to work in SEN came she '*jumped at it*'.

Initially this move invigorated and perplexed Deidre. Despite accessing government definitions of her role she was left '*more unsure than in*' her '*first year of teaching*'. To overcome her confusion she visited established SEN practitioners and undertook a Higher Diploma in SEN. The latter was '*brilliant*':

'It was a year out of school where you talked to adults.'

As a result of her study and reflection alongside like-minded adults, Deidre spent '*the next three years . . . energised again and delighted with life*'.

Unfortunately, Deidre was then diagnosed with cancer and had a year away from work. However, it was her return to work, rather than the cancer that became the '*precipitating event*' that altered her attitude (Planalp & Surra, 1992; Dallos, 1996). She returned to work '*exhausted*' and '*angry*'. Exhaustion she had encountered before but anger had been absent until this point. Significantly, it was directed at the indifferent employment regulations of a faceless bureaucracy outside the microcosm of her workplace that left her for financial reasons unable to take extended leave:

'the department of education made me go back to work really . . . I felt that you got so much sick leave but I wasn't well and I had to go back and I was very angry . . .'

Years on, her anger and pain still churn below her relentless work-ethic:

'And I don't think I stopped being angry. So, I think it changed my attitude to my job in a way I lost a lot of the joy out of it. . . I am still hard working but my work takes a lot more out of me . . . than it did before. I don't know why I'm crying.'

'I'd say the next two years every morning; this is from a girl who loved her job who would have her P.E lesson ready from before she got her legs out of the bed; I used to wake up to the sound of the alarm and burst into tears. It was a terrible way to be and I don't think I ever got the joy of my job fully back.'

It seemed to originate from a loss of faith in the system's fairness. Within her SEN post she is required to deliver a differentiated curriculum with individualised educational programmes, but when she needed to feel valued and be given personalised consideration she was treated objectively. I believe Deidre was experiencing fear and anxiety evoked by the threat to the security of her safety and esteem needs (Maslow, 1943; 1954). Cancer threatened her existence, but her slow recovery destabilised her ability to provide for herself. She returned to work motivated by her safety needs:

'I was resentful about the system that says if you're off a year of work that you're on no pay . . . I have no other form of income and I went back to work because I had to, not because I was ready to.'

In my opinion, whilst Maslow (1968) differentiated esteem needs into reputation and self-respect they can be interwoven. For example, when my professional reputation

felt attacked my self-esteem was jeopardised. I suspect that this is true for Deidre because of the unresolved anger and resentment she still harbours; her safety needs are once again secure but there is some other unfinished business.

Deidre returned to teaching and worked through her exhaustion and lethargy but it is clear that they have not completely lifted. Something significant was lost. Deidre described it as a diminished creativity and increased, '*end-orientated*' pragmatism that ultimately make her work '*less engrossing . . . and less fulfilling*'. I consider it the unfinished business expressed in an ebbing of Whitehead's (2009; 2011) 'life-affirming' 'grace' i.e. the source of inspiration within her practice.

Moreover, after the 'precipitating event' the previously, lively discourse was weighted with '*resentment*' particularly expressed towards '*preparation*'. Deidre felt this, too, and said:

'Now, having said that it sounds all very negative. That shouldn't be true.'

Thereafter, she pulled her story towards a 'smoother story of self' (MacLure, 1996) and the perceived source of her resentment, '*preparation*', became the same source as her '*success*':

'The other thing is I keep doing it because it works. At the end of the year the children have books made for them. Their standard goes visually up. So, I'm trapped by my own success.'

Her exhaustion was '*pragmatically*' reasoned into the coping strategy of moving eventually into job-sharing '*with somebody that [she] would be amenable with*'. Meanwhile her pain and anger were subjugated to her unrelenting passion for her

practice as she admitted that '*underneath all the exhaustion*' she '*still love[d]*' her work and found it '*good fun*'.

However, in this future in which she only works part-time, she envisages developing interests that further her personal aesthetic and self-actualisation needs. Although many of her old hobbies are now closed to her due to health issues, it is still to personal interests outside of education that she is looking. Guillemand (1982: 223) in her description of the 'typology of social practices in the retirement situation' outlined the mechanism of 'reinsertion into social organisations' as a 'substitute for professional one'. Although Deidre is still working, there is a sense of a shift of energy and enthusiasm away from professional practice into her personal interests, signifying a disengagement from work. Cumming & Henry (1961) proposed a theory of 'disengagement' in which they saw aging as equating with withdrawal from society and a surrendering of social roles. They, also, proposed that 'disengagement' is accelerated by declining health and mobility, and that once begun it was self-perpetuating. Recognising that in her story there is a rift between Deidre before and after cancer I believe that although the 'precipitating event' of this disengagement was her premature return to work, there is an association between her life-threatening illness and her ongoing detachment. A life-threatening illness may remove the veil between virtual and actual awareness of mortality. The diagnosis of cancer is a status changer. Having to return to demanding normality before the process of the psychic integration of events had begun to bring resolution may be at the core of Deidre's anger, resentment and verbalised disengagement. Sadly, if Cumming's and Henry's (1961) proposal is accurate, Deidre's process of disengagement from her practice, now begun, is unstoppable.

Herein Deidre's story alone is a poignant and powerful argument for living legacies. For Deidre, as she falls like Icarus from the sky, there is the ebbing of 'grace' that is perhaps easily dismissed one human-being at a time, but what of interpersonal loss, professional loss and possible loss of academic contribution? Deidre enjoyed academic study and the adult interaction it brought. Indeed, one year of post-graduate study inspired her for three. However, I intuited from her rejection of

further study on the grounds of an ‘*addled*’ ‘*memory*’ that she constructs academic study as a one-way road of internalising information/knowledge. Like me before my doctorate journey Deidre showed no construction of the value of experiential knowing and knowledge. Yet, her ‘*legacy*’ is rich with the ingredients of a profound love for learning that includes, enjoyment, safety, ‘*fun*’, ‘*positivity*’, ‘*enthusiasm*’ and an ever-expanding world-view:

‘I would love that the children enjoyed their time at school, that they felt safe, that they had fun and that they learnt to see the positive side of life and that they loved learning. I would love to see children loving learning. When I’ve caught children being enthusiastic about reading that just does my heart good because it opens a world to them.’

Its ontology is of a qualitative, evolving, relational truth:

‘I like to explain that I might have tried something else that didn’t work either. We all meet with that. Nobody knows it all. And just keep going forward.’

Its methodology is child-centred, relational and problem-solving. Its values are respect, tolerance and love. Its methods are supporting, understanding and celebrating the other:

‘I like to see them respecting each other . . . I’ve some beautiful little ones at the moment who will clap for each other if they get an answer right. And that’s just lovely! . . . Celebrating each other and realising that the others have needs and that they’re not the only ones with problems or insecurities or success.’

Illness and bureaucratic regulations punched holes into the grace of *'enthusiasm'*, *'energy'*, *'fun'* and positivity with which Deidre once embraced her practice. The patches her constant love for her work placed over these holes sustain her in *'just keep going forward'*, but they have failed to re-energise her. Much of what I call grace seeped out and what is being maintained seemed flaccid and degenerative. As Deidre would like to leave the legacy of self-actualised children *'with happy memories of school'*, I would like her to leave her beloved practice on the *'high note'* she dreams of with *'happy memories'* of a valued job well done.

Conclusion

*'We know now we have always been in danger down in our
separateness
and now up here together but till now we had not touched our
strength . . .*

*. . . What does love mean what does it mean "to
survive"*

*A cable of blue fire ropes our bodies burning together in the
snow We will not live to settle for less We have dreamed of
this all of our lives*

(Rich, 1974: 6)

The intuitive feeling driving this chapter was that I was not alone. The literature review supported this, but its predominantly third-person approach offered neither understanding nor *'belonging'*. Invariably the standpoint taken was an outsider's, and the problem to be solved was the interests of the global institution of education. Also, feeling alone had been a predominant part of the experience; I did not want it to be part of the solution. In my separateness, the truth of my generational, cultural and spiritual connection was obscured, adding to personal and professional vulnerability, and the loss of *'grace'* in practice.

In these stories I found the source of this vital connection. They involved complex psychological structures which were composed of life-stages, life-defining moments

and interrelated substructures and themes that were all underpinned by a ‘secret reservoir of values’ (Okri, 1996: 21). It is these values, common phenomenon to all, that are the profound connection. They are the source of the personal strength and dissonance expressed in every story.

They enabled the youthful drive and enthusiasm that Deidre focused on, and the prevailing love and hope within practice that was common to all. However over time, the cumulative effects of contradictions between internal and external values brought professional stress and personal distress (Smail, 1991; 1996; 2001; 2005). Nevertheless, the combined and overriding impression made by these common, socio-educational values is their enduring nature expressed through each storyteller’s resilience, adaptability and resolve.

I believe that the backbone of this endurance is the construction of education as a means to self-actualisation for other and a powerful, self-transcendental commitment to this (Maslow, 1970a). Across all narratives, these inspired youthful energy and enthusiasm, tended mature hope, endurance and resilience, and then, paradoxically, later on required some form of personal and professional letting-go. Moreover, I came to the belief that these common stages were the result of ‘thrown-ness’ (Heidegger, 1927). All the storytellers were raised in the West at a time when childhood and adolescence were reframed as important developmental stages requiring tending and care differentiated from adult treatments:

‘Since the Second World War, school has become an increasingly important part of a child’s life, dominating evenings with homework and effectively ending the old habits of juvenile contributions to domestic management.’

(Hardyment, 1992: 92)

'the teenage years came to constitute an age period of interest and concern and it was decided that adolescence, in the psychosocial sense, should be a universal experience'

(Rutter, 1979: 6)

Physiological, safety and belonging needs were recognised and the importance of satisfying them was increasingly a matter of concern. For example, besides Maslow's (1943) 'Hierarchy of Needs' other academics, such as John Bowlby (1953) postulated the importance of satisfying needs through early, intimate relationships. These added professional and academic argument to the drive to improve life for one's offspring:

'World War Two Generation parents, determined to insulate them from the hardships the older generation had endured, opened up for their children a world of seemingly unlimited opportunity.'

(Sheehy, 1996: 42)

Therefore, I hold that we the storytellers belonged to a generation who were more greatly facilitated to climb the rungs of Maslow's (1943; 1954; 1970a) hierarchy than our predecessors. Moreover, provision for this extended beyond the familial to the political and social e.g. the welfare state ushered in after World War II enabled me to become the first female in my extended family to pursue the satiation of cognitive and aesthetic needs by attending university. As our increased access to education fulfilled our cognitive thirst for knowledge, advances in birth-control and cultural changes provided freedom from biological and gender roles that enabled self-actualisation through having a career and a family. Also, a career meant increased income to satisfy aesthetic desires through leisure activities. Clearly my generation had greater familial, social and cultural encouragement and support to aspire to self-transcendence:

*'No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world'*

(Lennon, 1971)

As our parents had wanted a better life for us, we now wanted a better life for all. I heard this like a heart-beat in every narrative. We wanted to improve our world and education was the perfect arena for doing that.

However, along with our shared values, I heard the echo of another common but threatening dialectic in every story. It was the *'fear', 'pain', 'hurt', 'illness'* wrought from the dissonance between internal and external values, or in Deidre's case impersonal regulations. Sheehy (1996: 44) marked the 'Eighties', when we the storytellers were establishing our practice, 'with a starkly different attitude' to the preceding era:

'With the political revolution of Thatcherism touting the glories of privatism and individual ambition, the educated young pursued material success and pleasure and mocked idealism.'

(Sheehy, 1996: 44)

For me the 'political revolution' Sheehy (1996) described was the imposition of business values onto education with successful self-actualisation 'measured in terms of money and status' (Jacolev, 2009: 11):

'The focus on self-actualizing as the highest level of motivation, especially in the context of corporations, fostered a self-serving and narcissistic leadership style, one that erroneously holds that success, especially financial at any cost, equals self-actualization.'

(Venter, 2012: 65)

Smail (2005: 2) portrays it as a loss of ‘moral guidance’, and the ‘Market triumph’ of ‘Business barbarism’. I heard its imposition across the narratives:

‘Aoife: I was told, by a leading, local authority inspector at the time, “XXXX, we’ve had enough philosophy at this school!”’

‘Barbara: They wanted me to go to meeting after meeting after meeting, fill in this form, fill in that form, fill in the other form and I knew it as all ridiculous because the forms were changing from one week to the next.’

‘Colette: So, all of those changes of the structures of school: how schools worked; all the initiatives that were being flung at schools so fast and furious. . . It seemed to me that it came away from people developing it themselves in order to make it work for the people they knew. Outside started, very heavily, forcing, pressing stuff on people.’

Also, I felt it in the indifferent regulations that sent Deidre back to work exhausted after cancer.

Moreover, before this accord seemed predominantly present. It was most powerfully described by Colette’s account of compatibility between her values, those of her ‘*inspirational*’ teachers and the ‘*socialism*’ of her hometown. Also, it was implied in Aoife’s enduring relationship with her ‘*inspirational*’ head-teacher and Barbara’s recall of her earliest practice when she was at her ‘*happiest*’ entrusted with responsibility for the ‘*creative stuff*’.

Nevertheless, the shift in the dominant discourse was perceived gradually and the ‘*fear*’, ‘*pain*’ and ‘*hurt*’ was not focally lived. For Barbara and me it was associated

with past experiences of pain to be struggled against and overcome. For Colette the primary actuality of a 'before' order in which there was a fulfilling life-routine, job-satisfaction, self-actualisation and camaraderie in serving other, evaporated. There were no past traumas to explain the disappearance. The socio-educational constructions she had known from childhood were simply replaced by a new 'after' order. For Aoife and Deidre there were powerful 'precipitating events' (Dallos, 1996: 133) that challenged their status-quo and work-ethics. They both faced their mortality and in so doing demons hidden in the existential shadows became visible. Aoife located hers internally but Deidre situated hers in macrocosmic bureaucracy. Therefore, although individual experiences were different, each story contained the echo of the others.

Also, as each story turned from its 'before' to 'after' order, the 'struggle against' took on a constant over the shoulder threat. For Aoife, it took the form of external values and managerial priorities that still stalk her. For Barbara, retreat into her classroom proved insufficient defence against intrusions and demands for more 'meetings' and 'paperwork'. For Colette, institutional relationships grew increasingly 'abrasive' as her personal and professional power was overwhelmed. For Deidre, the threat crept-up when she least expected it. She returned to work a prisoner of her own financial needs. Thus, the threat once manifested became a 'dark' shadow to each storyteller's professional passion and dedication. Then, as the life-stories continued to unfold the virtual reality shadow solidified into hard actuality. The previous, old, psychological order was not simply challenged; it was gone. This created for some personal bipolar constructs (Kelly, 1955; 1969) by which the new order could be understood. For all, the end result was loss. For Aoife, it was the loss of her teaching practice, the nursery, income, status and the dream of a larger, family home. For Deidre, it was loss of 'joy'. For Barbara, Colette and I it was the loss of health and practice.

Interestingly, prior to the moment when loss became inevitable, in every narrative its distant possibility was overshadowed by love of practice:

*‘ . . the world of still youngness where we can take our
health for granted and throw ourselves at life,
unprepared for inconsolable loss . . ’*

(Sheehy, 1996: xxi)

For example, from the onset of my illness, retirement did not emerge a fully determinate but was a quasi-reality. This is understandable as it was completely alien to the life I knew in which my practice gave personal meaning and was ‘one of the key locations where’ my personal and social identity met ‘in the creation and recreation of’ my ‘sense of self’ and ‘subjective experience’ (Watson, 1996: 245-6).

Also, I believe that the personal bipolar constructs (Kelly, 1955; 1969) that emerged reflected the macrocosmic changes as they impacted upon the interpersonal and intrapersonal. The storytellers were young practitioners when post-war idealism matured into cultural consciousness in the form of established humanistic and social psychology, respected childhood and adolescent studies, formalised duty of care for employees, equality legislation and other social reforms. This cultural consciousness was imbibed into the structures and practices of educational institutions. Then, gradually, the socio-political world changed.

In response, the structures within schools were transformed: new managers were appointed; new curriculum demands and methods were imposed; new values and ends were introduced; and employment contracts were reframed. Educational movement towards child and value-led approaches, halted, blockaded by a curriculum-led, skills and knowledge based perspective. Both perspectives emerged from cultural consciousness but in their differences were an anathema to each other. This difference is powerfully and poignantly expressed in the substructures and themes of the narratives. In my opinion, it is the difference between education for societal transcendence and education of work-force individuals.

Indeed, Maslow (1968: 136) differentiated self-actualisation from ‘special talent creativeness’. He admitted that ‘like most other people’ he had ‘been thinking of creativeness in terms of products’ and that some ‘special talent creativity’ could be little more than ‘a mouthpiece’ of another’s creativity (Maslow, 1968: 135 - 6). Alternatively, he contended that self-actualisation:

*‘sprang much more directly from the personality, and
which showed itself widely in the ordinary affairs of
life . . .’*

(Maslow, 1968: 136)

For me this is a description of the values that inspired the storytellers and a vision of what they hoped for their students.

Also, Maslow’s (1968) differentiation indicates the difference between the old and new order of the narratives. In other words, the contrast between value-led, conscious-raising education for a creative, community of spirit versus curriculum-led, standards-raising education for individual enhancement:

*‘We are possessed by the horrific individualism upon
which Business mores are based.’*

(Smail, 2005: 4)

However, Maslow (1970a) viewed self-transcendence as a quality of personality reasoning that it is achieved by being ‘no longer grounded or anchored in’ one’s culture ‘without being alienated from it’ (Venter, 2012: 67); but for me it is a socio-cultural and interpersonal process similar to Bateson’s (2000) concept of ‘ecology of the mind’ in which ideas ‘can be organised into a system of ‘minds’ the boundaries of which are fluid and extend beyond the individual’ (Walton, 2011: 9). I experience my values as an internal, guiding grace whilst believing that they arose through the

interplay between personal experience, interpersonal relationships and the socio-cultural discourses they were located in:

'Morality is not an individual, but a social matter; it makes demands upon us which extend beyond our finite, individual lives.'

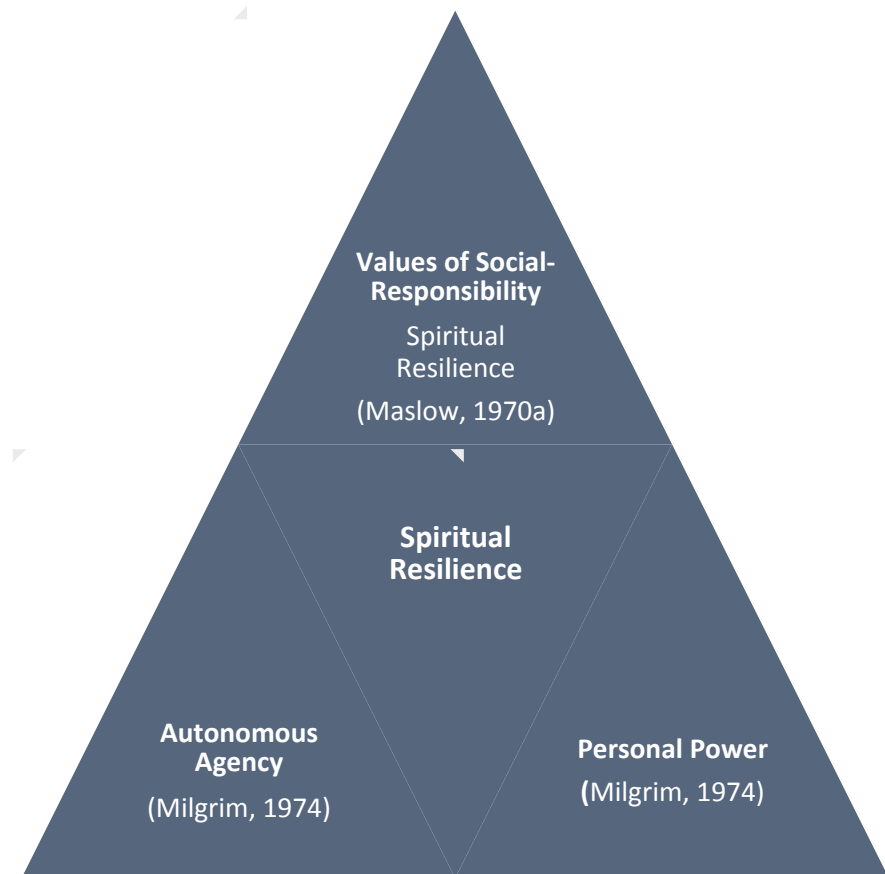
(Smail, 2005: 2)

The storytellers saw their key-role as aides to the achievement of self-actualisation in their students. At first this role was aligned with the prevailing socio-cultural mind-set. As Aoife and Colette related they were encouraged in their training and early practice to impart an education that was life and spirit transforming. Then the mind-set changed. State schools became businesses and education became their saleable product. The new focus was upon the skills and application of hard, measurable knowledge. Even young children were understood through nomothetic approaches 'evaluated in terms of tests and evidence', rather than idiographic approaches, focusing upon 'exploring the behaviour, experiences, feelings and lives of whole individuals in depth' (Thomas, 1990: 377) and more akin with the storytellers' value-led practices.

Yes, I found myself in the narratives of the storytellers. In them I discovered greater understanding of how and why my grace had felt threatened and what fuelled its resilience. In doing so, I recalled Milgram's (1974: 62) controversial experiments in which he found an 'extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority' unless they had developed autonomous agency.

Autonomous agency was a theme heavily developed in the narratives of Aoife, Barbara and Colette. To exercise autonomous agency Milgram (1974) argued that a person must feel self-empowered, rather than situate power within an external authority. Again, the struggle to maintain and exercise personal power was a theme stretching across the stories. Both autonomous agency and personal power appeared inherent gifts and sources of resilience for the storytellers' deeply held values. Therefore, whilst Milgram (1974) proposed a two-way correlation between

autonomous agency and personal power I suggest a triangulation with values rooted in social-responsibility that have at their core Maslow's (1970a) self-transcendence:



(Figure 5: Suggested triangulation of factors contributing to spiritual resilience within practice.)

In the final analysis the question raised by these narratives is, “What do we want from our schools and our educators?” All the storytellers give a similar answer. They talk of emotional intelligence, conscious-raising, and a loving, kind, respectful, transcendental nurturing of other. If schools do not aspire to this, capping themselves on Maslow's (1970a) cognitive, aesthetic and even ‘special talent creativity’ levels, the highest level of human need, self-transcendence, remains unfulfilled.

However, diverging from Maslow (1943; 1970a) I believe that the ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ is neither linear nor progressive. It is but an image for us to understand

ourselves. I can struggle with my own mortality and still aspire to self-transcendence as Aoife did. I can feel my influence dwindle and still make the other's creative self-actualisation my priority as Barbara did. I can battle with my own isolation and loss of power and still be there for other as Colette did. I can be demoralised by impersonal bureaucracy and not turn my back as Deidre daily struggles to do. The reason for this may lie in Milgram's (1974) finding that a 'greater ethical imperative' can call for the protection of the learner over the needs of a system, and to this 'higher authority' some individuals feel accountable.

In the living legacies of educators we may behold the nature of this 'greater ethical imperative' and the potency of its potential contribution 'to develop educational thought and practices which promote education as a humanising influence on each person and on society locally, nationally and international' (LHU, 2010-11).

Chapter 4: One Within the Whole

Chapter 4 Overview

Chapter 4 was driven by the conviction that awareness of one's 'thrown-ness' (Heidegger, 1927) enables a two-way process in which one is formatively submersed in a culture, but may through reflection shed the light of transformation back onto it. In it I combine Geertz's (1973: 10) and Goodall's (2001) ethnographic 'thick description' of a culture with the preceding auto-ethnographic and narrative inquiry 'thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience' (Ellis et al., 2011: 277). Whilst the previous two chapters examined a cultural phenomenon using evocative storytelling with analysis supported by psychological theories, this chapter expands the cultural experience from 'I', beyond 'we' to a socio-cultural chain-of-being. This revisits the image of Russian dolls introduced in Chapter 1 with the smallest doll nestled within the 'we' of fellow practitioners here situated within its generation's cultural 'thrown-ness' (Heidegger, 1927). From this a narrative of the sum of them all arises. However, this is not a grand narrative. It is simply the world through the perceptions of those who lived through the phenomena researched so as to interrupt what has become a silent, entrenched, normative, social order that it may be transformed for the betterment of many as advocated by Habermas (1987), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Russell (1932 reprinted 1992).

In it I propose three dimensions in the socio-cultural situation of the storytellers: [1] the culture into which we were born, [2] the world we tried to influence and improve as professional adults and [3] the world that imperceptibly changed around us in later years. These dimensions form this chapter's field of research conducted through a literary review that balances academic and professional sources/influences with socio-cultural ones. In examining these I propose that societies and cultures go through developmental stages which may be witnessed in the lives of individuals; and in the case of the storytellers what is notable are the factors that facilitated the meeting of needs as identified by Maslow (1970a) whilst simultaneously exposing them to influences furthering both a sense of personal rights and responsibility towards other. Understanding this complex grounding is the focus of this chapter.

Moreover, this focus reveals that it may have been entering educational service at a time when education was constructed as a means of social improvement that was the impetus behind self-transcendence within professional practice. At a time of much socio-cultural change the storytellers viewed themselves as aides to the self-actualisation of students, equating this with social improvement. From a unique combination of moral self-agency, autonomy and values of social responsibility, living standards of personal and professional judgement arose.

However, consideration of the third dimension suggests that the combination of political, institutional and socio-cultural changes and the present status of hands-on practice and personal, internal knowledge may contribute to the international attrition of mature, experienced teachers. Additionally, these may be exacerbated by pathologizing the aging process and privileging the external, including youthful appearance. Thus, I argue for the viewpoint that constructions of age and aging are socio-cultural in nature and introduce the conceptualisation of social and psychological adaptability as being subject to life-long interpersonal and cultural influences. Also, I contend that a socio-cultural, complicit acquiescence in the loss of mature, embodied knowledge may have reinforced feelings of powerlessness and isolation in older citizens and that a study conducted by Trinder et al., (1992) may have already identified the optimum time for a living legacy intervention of mature, experienced practitioners.

Hence, Chapter 4 provides the analytical auto-ethnographic aspect of my thesis as it amalgamates theories from previous chapters to academically frame the common experiences, themes and discourses of the subjective experiences of the phenomenon researched. The overarching theories of this chapter include Heidegger's (1927) 'thrown-ness' and Kohlberg's (1958) developmental morality in relation to the social situated-ness and constructions of the storytellers. The latter linked into Milgram's (1974) correlation between autonomous agency and personal power and Maslow's extended hierarchy of needs to frame the socio-political and personal values and changes the storytellers related. Combined they offer a world-view from the perspective of those who were thrown into a particular time, place and practice.

The contents of this chapter are organised to:

- 1. Support the viewpoint that an inquiry into one's own personal and professional practice can constitute scholarly research which is of academic, professional, personal and social value.**
- 2. Demonstrate how culture and society may be witnessed, understood and transformed in the 'thrown-ness', actions and lives of individuals.**
- 3. Show understanding of how dissonance between internal and external values may erode existential value, meaning and purpose and contribute to teacher attrition.**
- 4. Demonstrate what is lost when those who bridge the past and the future are not valued and indiscriminately burnt-out.**

Introduction: The Scholarly 'I'

This chapter supports the viewpoint that an inquiry into one's professional practice can constitute scholarly research which is of academic, professional, personal and social value. Life stories are enacted within our 'thrown-ness' (Heidegger, 1927) emerging, in their telling, to reflect the shared experiences, values, discourses and aspirations of our embodiment into specific cultures, historical times, geographical places and societal affiliations. However, the research process involving reflective records, analysis/interpretation and insight, may enable us to understand how we influence and act upon the culture that defines us. My story and the narratives shared were smelted in the furnaces of my generation's cultural situated-ness, taking shapes, forms and expressions reflective of our age, place and society. Out of this formative submersion, arising from our different experiences, our individual stories emerged shedding the light of potential transformation back onto that which shaped us:

“ . . . autoethnography centers attention on how we should live and brings us into lived experiences in a feeling and embodied way. This is the moral of auto-ethnographic stories—its ethical domain.”
(Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 439)

Moreover, for me, this reflective, transformative gaze has three distinct, yet interdependent dimensions. The first is the world into which we were born and forged. This world acted upon us influencing and moulding our emerging values, ideas and experiences. For example, in Colette’s story, it is a ‘*small town*’ world steeped in working class ideals of socialism and the aspirations of the 1950s/60s Labour Party. The second dimension is the world we participated in as we became professional adults; the world we tried to influence and improve as we acted upon our values and convictions. For example, in Aoife’s story this world is keenly felt in her training, early teaching and postgraduate study with her values developing through exposure to ideas and practices complimentary to them. Then, as these were honed into exemplary practice, Aoife was invited to pass these on as a mentor for newly qualified teachers. The third dimension is the world that imperceptibly changed around us in our middle years whilst we were pre-occupied by our personal lives and professional concerns. This was the world we struggled with, gradually falling out of synch with, and with age, aging and the possibility of retirement withdrew from with some becoming totally lost to. Interestingly, in all the stories this happened whilst self-serving, professional interest and advancement seemed subsumed by matters personally held in higher regard. For example, Aoife’s dedication to the creation of a nursery that would embody her socio-educational values; Barbara’s efforts to develop inclusive and celebratory educational opportunities and practices in her school; Colette’s choice to ‘*make the difference in the classroom with children*’ rather than seeking promotion; Deidre’s drive to make education alive and ‘*fun*’ that required constantly facing new, personal challenges; and my own quest to improve my hands-on practice through academic and professional study/training.

Remnants of the culture that bred us, we strove to live the values of that passing culture even as it slowly vanished around us. I first met Colette on a training course for co-ordinators of mathematics in the early 1990s. For us both it was our first awakening to the psychic depth of the changes that assailed education in our middle years of practice. During one important debate about implementing the National Curriculum, our facilitators suggested ‘isolating’ the older, ‘eccentric’ colleagues if they would not comply with innovations. Colette and I looked at each other in horror and fear. We knew then that with the metamorphosis of our schools into business-like enterprises we were rapidly becoming the ‘eccentrics’. As the testimonies of our stories tell, time proved us right.

Therefore, it is these dimensions that form the research of this chapter supported on a literary review that places traditional academic sources alongside cultural influences, such as references to news reports and the lyrics of popular songs. In my opinion, omitting these non-academic sources would have diminished the living legacy aspect of the thesis perpetuating the denial of the true depth and width of the subterranean depths of cultural influences and situated-ness that inform and influence practice.

Dimension One: We are Thrown

We, the storytellers, were born in the West either on the last waves of the 1950s or the first waves of the 1960s. These waves were stirred and tempered by the hopes of a post-war world that included the abandonment of selective education systems across the globe:

‘Around the world, selective education systems were being replaced with comprehensive ones. The Scandinavian countries and Japan had begun the process immediately after the war; Israel and most of Europe followed; New Zealand and Canada continued with the reforms they had started before the war; eastern Europe adopted the common school model of the Soviet Union.’

(Gillard, 2011: section 5, paragraph: 1)

Underpinning educational change was what theorists, such as Barnes (1995), Hardyment (1992) and Rutter (1979) describe as the construction of childhood and adolescence as an important developmental stages requiring care differentiated from the adult's. This construction defied what Aries (1962) termed the 'miniature adult' view of childhood in which children could simply be prepared for a future that accorded with gender and social rank. Something of the nature of the 'American dream' in which everyone could aspire to upward, social mobility achieved through ability and effort, rather than the previous givens of social class and/or the circumstances of birth, spread sucker-roots across the ocean divide.

In England the eleven-plus was abandoned under the weight of argument that it exacerbated inequality between the academic and non-academic, and reinforced the entrenchment of social classes. Comprehensive education underpinned by dreams of social equality and mobility, was introduced. In Ireland, by the mid-1960s, the construction of education as the guardian of nationalism, the Irish language and religious beliefs had begun to be deconstructed. In its place a new construction of education as the means of future, economic growth and sustainable, national prosperity was evolving:

'A remarkable shift in thinking and policy resulted in education being perceived as an investment rather than social expenditure, starting in the primary school.'

(Duignan and Walsh, 2005: 7)

As the dream of comprehensive education in England was founded on governmental encouragement and financial support, in the Republic of Ireland education as a means of raising economic and national standards was promoted with 'sharp' increases in 'pupil-teacher ratios and the expenditure on education . . . in the 1960s and 1970s' (Duignan & Walsh, 2005: 8)

These were the socio-economic and political cultures that impacted upon the storytellers. Across both countries a macrocosmic thrust for social improvement is evident. Additionally, a new, powerful youth culture was evolving that was heard on the radio and seen on the television. Again, like sucker-roots from across waters that divide lands, this culture spread and may have been the origins of the youth-centred society that the storytellers are now growing old in. However, whilst the spirit of this culture in the 1960s and early 1970s was one of liberation from past values and mind-sets, the social activism of youth was equally focused towards issues of social conscience. For example, alongside protest songs against the Vietnam War, there were songs of liberation, justice and equality.

Also reported in the press or televised into homes for the first time in history were marches, sit-ins, boycotts and other acts of civil disobedience all in the name of social/humanitarian causes. Alongside these were images of the horrors of war and inhumanity, including the photograph of Phan Thi Kim Phuc running naked, her clothes melted from her body, permanently burnt and scarred by a napalm attack on her Vietnamese village and the mistreatment of civil-rights activist in the USA. As a school child I remember watching these as I eat my evening meals. The message that ‘the personal was political’ (Hanisch, 1969) was clear and with it came the personal responsibility to oppose wrong and struggle for social improvement, equality, liberation and peace for the other.

Perhaps in the West the socio-cultural influences upon us marked a transition from a time of duty in which authority held sway over self-agency and determination. As we emerged from the cocoons of our childhoods we had been nurtured by both traditional duty-bound values still to be found in our homes and institutions, and the broadcasted, humanistic values of the liberated and televised generation. Perhaps the combined wisdom of both these times was social conscience internalised through principles of justice as expounded in Kohlberg’s (1958) theory of morality. In modifying and expanding Piaget’s (1896 – 1980) work to explain the development of moral reasoning, Kohlberg (1958) proposed three developmental levels:

1. Pre-conventional based upon the determination of right and wrong according to rewards and punishment.
2. Conventional in which blame is avoided and approval sought through adherence to societal conventions.
3. Post-conventional in which individual principles of conscience can lead to overriding obedience to external rules.

However, while Kohlberg (1958) internalised his developmental model of morality within the individual psyche, I suggest that the lives of individuals bear witness to societies and cultures going through developmental stages. For example, the war poems of Siegfried Sassoon (1886 – 1967) capture his personal disenchantment with patriotism when confronted with the horrific realities of the trenches during World War 1. However, Sassoon's experience was neither unique nor isolated. His voicing of his generation's truth was amplified by other voices, such as Wilfred Owen in World War 1 and Randall Jarrell in World War II. Then, all these individual voices decrying the dehumanising nature of war and establishments that sacrifice their youth to glory and duty, converged in the 1960s with ordinary people joining the outcry for peace and overriding their obedience to an external authority and its power to reward or punishment. For us storytellers, children watching this, the evolution of morality embraced world peace, global civil-rights and equality issues. Indeed, by the time we were young adults the post-war dreams of a better world for all had matured into our cultural consciousness in myriad forms, such as child-friendly practices in our schools and hospitals, improved employment rights and equality legislation. To some lesser or greater degree we all experienced this cultural consciousness with its post-conventional morality (Kohlberg, 1958) imbibed into the structures and practices of the educational institutions that nurtured, trained and then provided our early teaching positions.

Dimension Two: We Are & We Act

‘ . . . the difference in the attitude of a spectator and of an agent or participant. The former is indifferent to what is going on . . . The latter is bound up with what is going on; its outcome makes a difference to him. His fortunes are more or less at stake in the issue of events. Consequently he does whatever he can to influence the direction present occurrences take. . . for an active being, a being who partakes of the consequences instead of standing aloof from them, there is at the same time a personal response.’

(Dewey, 1944: 124-5)

This research has led me to the supposition that one of the most salient features in the cementing of my values, and those of my fellow storytellers, was stepping into the world of educational service at the time we did. We belonged to a generation who were more greatly facilitated to climb the rungs of Maslow’s (1970a) extended hierarchy than any of our predecessors whilst simultaneously being exposed to influences urging us to bring the ‘other’ with us into the sunlight of our privileged day. It may be that we were being forged at a unique, historical time. Traditional influences binding us to duty and obedience to external authorities and a more conventional morality as illustrated in Milgram’s (1974) experiments and Kohlberg’s (1958) theory were still perceptible in the stories, attitudes and lives of our elders. Also, they still permeated the mind-sets of the institutions we found ourselves in. For example, within my own narrative I recalled how having made a long, arduous journey to visit me in the care of the local authority, denied admission my family simply walked away.

Post-conventional influences were pushing through the very fabric of our society and psyches (Kohlberg, 1958). For example, in England under the Wilson administration between the years 1964 – 1969 many innovations in social policy were implemented. Gillard (2011) notes that these included, the abolishment of capital punishment (1965), the decriminalisation of homosexuality (1967), legalisation of abortion (1967), the abolishment of theatrical censorship (1968) and divorce law reformation (1969). Furthermore, these influences came into our homes as voices and mediums

of the status quo, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC]; but as they came they may have ‘called into existence’ alternative constructions undermining those that they were supposed to preserve (Marx & Engels, 1848, reprinted 1948: 28). Indeed, they exposed us to a world and ideas beyond our small communities and cultural heritage. They encouraged us to feel and share responsibility for what was happening across our planet. I was made aware of this at the memorial service for my mother when the woman who had been our greengrocer reminisced how as a teenager I had become loud and truculent in her shop denouncing her sale of South African produce during the time of apartheid.

In comparison with our parents and grandparents we already knew our privilege but sometimes, as in my account of my third level education, it was easier to see what we enjoyed as our due, rather than the call to improve the lot of other. Therefore, to understand how a sense of rights became firmly rooted in service and responsibility towards other needs closer examination.

In the narratives of others I came to believe that the cultural construction of education as a means of social improvement that was prevalent when I entered service transformed my sense of rights into self-transcending responsibility towards other. Also, in the narratives, it is clear that we entered a vocational workforce in which the realisation of the other’s potential was interwoven with our own personal and professional success. Indeed, listening to the narratives of others I recalled my forgotten joy of being exposed to new ideas that promised a more engaging, enjoyable, equitable learning experience applicable and enriching to the lives of students, and thereby contributing to social advancement. These included, mixed ability classes, thematic teaching, the Nuffield Mathematics Project and the ‘real books’ approach to reading.

Mixed ability classes arose with the philosophy of comprehensive education in which schools did not select their intake on academic achievement and/or aptitude or

financial income and/or social status, but on a ‘come one, come all’ basis of welcoming equality:

'The abolition of selective examinations at 11 or 12 had a rapid effect on the ways in which primary schools were organised: at the start of the 1960s, most primaries were streamed; by the end of the decade, most were not'

(Jones 2003: 80)

Also, Gillard (2008: paragraph 1) noted that:

'In his preface to the 1963 Newsom Report Half our future Lord Boyle, then Minister of State for Education, wrote "The essential point is that all children should have an equal opportunity of acquiring intelligence' (Newsom 1963:iv). This was a significant statement, for if intelligence can be acquired it is clearly not innate . . . '

Clearly mirroring the political and cultural shift away from duty and obedience to external authorities and conventional morality (Milgram, 1974; Kohlberg, 1958), within education the nativist construction of innate, predictive intelligence gave way to the constructivist developmental theories of Piaget (1896 – 1980), validating and enhancing the role of schools and teachers in social advancement:

'It is the possibility of such acquisition that offers scope to the teacher.'

(Kelly, 1978: 9)

Moreover, as comprehensive education opened the way for mixed-ability classes, thematic or the cross-curricula approaches emerged from mixed-ability teaching. Kelly (2012: 5) and others have noted that ‘cross-curricula teaching and learning has strong links with the constructivist view of learning, as children work collaboratively and learn from their own direct experience’. Equally it is about social equality, access and inclusion as it envisions and enables students with different abilities and

learning styles to participate in learning from their place of interest and strength. This then, along with a vibrant width and depth of the teaching/learning experience, was its appeal for me.

Also, into the mixed-ability classes, complimenting thematic approaches to teaching and learning, innovative methods were introduced, such as Nuffield Mathematics and 'Real Books'. The intention was to make learning 'realistic, purposeful and interesting' (Solith & Vousden, 2009: 471)

I readily assimilated these and other innovations because their aims and objectives were highly compatible with my socio-educational aspirations and spiritual values. From their narratives I believe this to be true for all the storytellers. We all entered educational practice believing that access to equal, relevant and engaging educational provision could improve the lives of our students. Indeed, the narratives reveal how variations of this belief became living standards of personal and professional judgement in practice. For example, for Aoife social equality and improvement are judged through her personal and professional integrity and ability to raise social awareness; for Barbara imparting joy for learning and humanitarian values was judged through her ability to create genuine, happy, familial relationships with her students; for Colette furthering of the greater good was judged through responsive, self-transcending relationships with other; for Deidre inspiring joy for learning was judged through a sense of loving creativity that required timely and repetitive self-reinvention; and for me it was empathetic communion and responsiveness to other judged through the establishment of relationships in which the other's self-actualisation could grow.

Thus, through-out my early years of practice there was a sense of being swept along by a tide of educational innovation resonating with my own values and aspirations. Here, where the ideals of my childhood found community and practice, I belonged. Moreover, from the stories of others I now know I was not alone.

Dimension Three: Burning Bridges

However, clearly from all our narratives around us the socio-political world was changing and ‘increased governmental control over education’ was having ‘a significant impact on’ educational ‘aims, purposes and values’ (Shuayb & O’Donnell, 2008: 3). Moreover, in our stories these changes were most significantly felt in the structural transformations within schools. For example, the storytellers told of new managers being appointed, of curriculum innovations and methods being imposed, contrasting values and ends being introduced, and employment contracts being reframed. Also, as the socio-political world changed and transformed education we, the storytellers, were aging and to a greater or lesser degree showing little impetus for promotions that would take us away from the hands-on practices we loved. Indeed, in most stories there was a sense of entrenchment into practice; perhaps, no-where felt more powerfully than in Barbara’s story of classroom retreat. This combination of changing socio-political mind-sets, cultural constructions of the physical processes of age and illness, and the status of hands-on practice within our society may have been the lethal ingredients of a time-bomb that tolled the early demise of Aoife’s, Barbara’s, Colette’s and my teaching practice. Certainly, within the narratives their combination was the road to disillusionment, exhaustion and illness suggesting that they may be essential ingredients in the international, early attrition of mature, experienced teachers. Therefore, in looking at the cultural wholeness into which my auto-ethnographic account and the narratives of the other storytellers are situated, they demand consideration.

Throughout the thesis changing socio-political mind-sets have been explored. Equally the value of hands-on practice has been intrinsically examined in the overriding theme of living legacies. However, what has been left unexamined are cultural constructions of retirement and its place in a natural process that I believe has been pathologized in our youth-centred society.

It is well accepted that constructions of age and aging are socio-cultural in nature as different views from around the world show. Indeed, many Eastern cultures see age as the process by which their elders are invested with wisdom:

*'In the more traditional societies increasing age
is accompanied by increasing prestige.'*

Loether, (1969: 1)

For example, in Japan there is an annual, national holiday called 'Respect for the Aged Day' on which elders are celebrated. Alternatively, the contemporary Western construction appears to be that 'becoming old' is 'something that can be cured, controlled, even stopped' (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001: 14) conveying a view of age as a disease to be eradicated or held in remission by scientific advances:

*'We revere those of strong and sound health . . . There is a
general feeling that the older person is beyond that stage in
life when he is best able to contribute to society; he is
"over the hill"!'*

Loether, (1969: 1)

Indeed, currently there is even a television series entitled, 'How Not to Grow Old'! Therefore, I understood that Western perceptions of retirement and the aging process were influenced by this socio-cultural view. Also, as illness featured across all the narratives, it was important to explore the socio-cultural meanings of disease.

Wilber and Wilber-Killam (1991) identified two entities that confront a person suffering from a disease:

*'One, the person is faced with the actual disease process
itself – a broken bone, a case of influenza, a heart attack,
a malignant tumor. Call this aspect of disease "illness". . .
Illness is more or less value-free; it's not true or false,
good or bad, it just is – . . .*

But two, the person is also faced with how his or her society or culture deals with that illness – with all the judgements, fears, hopes, myths, stories, values, and meanings that a particular society hangs on each illness. Call this aspect of disease “sickness”.

(Wilber & Wilber-Killam, 1991: 40)

This exploration portrayed cancer as both an illness with ‘a scientific and medical phenomenon’ and a sickness with ‘a phenomenon loaded with cultural and social meanings’ (Wilber & Wilber-Killam, 1991: 40). Within my research I was exploring aspects and issues relevant to the universal experience of aging only to realise that what I termed an ‘experience’, ‘process’ or even a ‘journey’ was being medically and scientifically approached as an illness, and culturally constructed as a sickness. For example, when reviewing the psychology of age I found that it primarily addressed age-related ‘problems’, such as memory loss. In my opinion, this focus has influenced the construction of age as a disease or ‘disorder’:

‘Biologically, aging is described as a deteriorative process. Socially, too, aging appears as a time of loss of roles and relationships.’

(Aly, 2012: Slide 3)

As I reviewed the available literature I found that I was not alone in this perception:

‘For example, Russell (1989) argued that Australian gerontological research and practice was dominated by a focus on problems, while Russell and Oxley (1990) argued that ageing is generally associated in the literature with ill health, incapacity, and dependency.’

(The Australian Psychological Society, 2000: 4)

This refutes Wilber and Wilber-Killam’s (1991) separation of medical illness from cultural sickness, implying some correlation whereby a natural experience/process has been reframed as an illness, and thereby negatively culturally constructed. Moreover, within the narratives, what Wilber and Wilber-Killam (1991) described as an ‘actual disease’ frequently collided with the aging process, adding actual personal

experience to the socio-medical construction that the process of aging is synonymous to a process of degenerative illness/disease:

‘Aging is a process of general, irreversible, and progressive physical deterioration that occurs over time.’

(Aly, 2012: Slide 2)

So, through my research I clearly understood the socio-cultural depth of my psychological shock at the diagnosis that ended my classroom practice. Aly (2012) identifies four conceptions of age. These are chronological, biological, psychological and social. According to my diagnosis my biological age is at least fifteen years older than my chronological age. This opinion, lodged in the fact of brittle bones fracturing without sufficient cause, redefined my social age, and firmly closed my classroom door with me on the outside. As psychological age is defined as an individual’s ‘adaptive capabilities’ (Aly, 2012: slide 6), the reframing of my biological and social ages impacted upon it. For me social and psychological adaptability, as with resilience, does not rest solely upon internal resources although this may be the prevalent construction:

‘Transition times place a real demand on psychological and spiritual resources, especially when something taken for granted has been threatened or taken away. Even when economic and social resources are available, one must still find it within oneself to come to terms with change and the losses that may accompany that change. It is one of the challenges of older age to use and enhance existing personal resources to sustain one through difficult transition times.’

(Treacy et al., 2004: 6)

To me this view is nativist and absolves macrocosmic, socio-cultural constructions and structures of any contributory responsibility. As Walton (2008: 122) acknowledges ‘our society is rife with people who feel isolated, alienated and lonely; and who do not believe they have a valuable role to play in the world.’ Her words are

highly appropriate to the elderly in our society as Treacy et al.'s, (2004) report for the Irish National Council on Ageing and Older People and Windle et al.'s (2011) report for the 'Social Care Institute for Excellence' in the United Kingdom show:

'Currently in Ireland, there are more than 435,000 persons aged 65 years and over representing 11.2 per cent of the population. Many older people are increasingly living alone or with an elderly partner and a large body of international and Irish research indicates that loneliness and social isolation are a part of the experience of old age.'

(Treacy et al., 2004: 12)

'There are a number of population groups vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness . . . Nevertheless, older people (as individuals as well as carers) have specific vulnerabilities owing to 'loss of friends and family, loss of mobility or loss of income'

(Windle et al., 2011: 2)

When one is removed by health and/or age from social role/s, engagements and relationships after many years of service the grief may be primarily psychological but what is lost, and responsibility for the loss, are not containable within the dismissed person. Indeed, in a study carried out more than half a century ago, Blaw (1956) found that retired persons were more likely to consider themselves old than their working counterparts. Clearly, it is the meaning 'old' holds that is important, and I suspect that it reflects a cultural construction of our retired elders as 'unproductive and overconsumptive collective resources' (Talarsky, 1998: 101). Also, I believe, that this meaning is linked to the privileging of the external over the internal i.e. to 'our culture's lack of interest in understanding the nature of subjectively experienced consciousness, based on an implicit assumption derived from materialist science that it is 'not of significance'' (Walton, 2008: 122). Somewhere in the history of our Western culture we have come to complicit acquiescence in the loss of mature, tacit knowledge as though it served no purpose and was of no significant value to the next generation. In doing so, I propose that we have reinforced feelings of powerlessness and isolation in our older citizens who

experience this as being reduced to little or no value. Also, we may be reinforcing and aggravating this if we measure psychological adaptability within defines that require those who have lived lives of dedicated service, to abandon values built upon self-transcendence and embrace indulgent self-actualisation like a second childhood. For example, Guillemand (1982) described a typology of three different social practices observed in those who have retired. These were:

1. Social withdrawal with daily rhythms broken only by actions necessary for biological survival.
2. Reinsertion into new social organisations that substitute previous life activities with new professional interests or ones based around leisure consumption.
3. The development of new political dimensions either as ‘protest retirement’ that pro-actively seeks to improve the lot of the retired or as ‘acceptance retirement’ that shows a heightened acceptance of changes in social status.

According to Guillemand (1982) the social practices available to those who wish to continue living lives inspired by values of service are new professional interests that may be disassociated from the previously known or ‘protest retirement’ that narrowly serves one’s own socio-cultural group i.e. the retired. Little wonder, therefore, that Loether (1969) stated:

‘Generally, retirement is a traumatic experience for one who has spent many years in the labor force; some persons look upon retirement as the prelude to death. Even those who look forward to retirement may find the adjustment process difficult.’

(Loether, 1969: 6)

What may improve this is The Australian Psychological Society (2000: 2) proposal that ‘older people’ should be ‘recognised’ ‘as resources within the community, rather than burdens’. How better to do this than to acknowledge and make available to

future generations the ‘knowing’ acquired and accumulated during a lifetime of service. However, as seen in Colette’s story, leaving the commencement of this process until an individual has become drained and defeated may be ineffectively too late. Indeed, the postponement of a reflective, scholarly process in which one makes available to others aspect/s of one’s lifetime of professional service that one considers significant, may in itself contribute to Guillemand’s (1982) limited retirement typology. Alternatively, it may well be in the interest of all current practitioners and students to identify a professional life stage when our maturing practitioners could be actively encouraged to consider a guided, self-reflective, scholarly process not unlike Butler’s (1974) ‘life review’. Moreover, the prime time for this may already have been identified by Trinder et al. (1992: 32):

‘A career plateau can be defined as a point beyond which the probability of career progression is quite low. Research has suggested that the problems of a career plateau increases beyond the age of forty (Rosen and Jerdee, 1990; Coulson-Thomas, 1989; IPM/KPMG Peat Marwick McClintock, 1990) This age appears to mark an important juncture being either followed by an advancement for some, maintenance and career plateaus for others, and obsolescence, stagnation and career decline for others.’

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how individuals are born into a socio-political soup that nurtures psychological constructions and meanings through encounters with cultural ideas and others. That the personal is constructed within this framing is easily shown. The challenge was to show that the personal may reflect back and shine the light of a scholarly, transformative gaze upon that which forged it. Therefore, in seeking to understand my own ‘thrown-ness’, I took my generation upon my shoulders and sought answers for both its limiting, destructive constructs and its inspirational visions. In doing so, I identified my generations’ and my own academic, professional and personal place within a chain-of-being. Also, I came to understand and depict the self as both constructed and a potential contributor in a socio-political, cultural ‘evolution of consciousness’ (Wilber, 1996).

Chapter 5: Continuing Educational Influence

A Chain-of-Being

This thesis researched how educational influence can continue beyond classroom practice, sustaining a sense of value, purpose and meaning for mature practitioners within a culture that was seen to privilege external properties, such as appearance, income and status, above internal sense making. It did so using a combination of auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry. The outcome was two original contributions to knowledge that unite aspects of personal, professional and academic knowledge through long-term, educational service i.e. the idea of living legacies and empathetic communion and responsiveness to other as a living standard of academic and professional knowledge. Through these I have continued my educational influence beyond the end of my classroom practice, extended its scope and found a renewed sense of value, purpose and meaning.

More precisely, empathetic communion and responsiveness to other emerged through my research to be the concept that framed its structure, method and findings, becoming my living legacy. It had so become the essence of my classroom practice that it flowed unconsciously into my doctorate practice to become the living standard of academic and professional judgement by which I held myself accountable. It did so as my research turned from looking at what the practitioner brought to the practice, to how practice influences the practitioner. I understood that when there is a fusion of personal, academic and professional knowledge in which the personal acts to earth practice in socio-educational, humanitarian/spiritual values, the relational-being of the practitioner can be influenced, even transformed.

Moreover, I confirmed through the literature review that my professional predicament was located in an international tsunami of teacher attrition/early retirement, and in the stories of my fellows I heard strikingly similar existential angst and personal longing. Combined, these high-lighted the contrast between Maslow's 1943/1954 and 1970 hierarchies of needs. The earlier model aspired to self-

actualisation whilst the later to self-transcendence. The existential angst and personal longing that led some storytellers to retire early was underscored by a self-transcendent commitment to the self-actualisation of their students. This finding left future researchers to question the effects upon the fulfilment of the highest level of human need if cultural/institutional educational aims are capped at self-actualisation.

However, the data refuted a linear and progressive construction to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943; 1954; 1970a). For example, storytellers' were clearly able to sacrifice lower needs to fulfil higher ones. Also, whilst he differentiated esteem needs into reputation and self-respect the evidence of my research was that they were profoundly interwoven with aging and status impacting upon institutional reputation and personal self-respect. Furthermore, whilst the narratives evidenced self-transcendent commitment to the self-actualisation of other, they contested Maslow's theory that self-transcendence is a personality quality that goes beyond cultural influences. Cultural forces were clearly implicated in the destruction or sustenance of the sense of value, meaning and purpose that underpinned the self-transcendence evidenced in the stories. Indeed, the stories demonstrated a cultural nourishing of this aspiration which was then followed by years of cultural draining in which conflicts between personal and institutional values produced Kelly's (1955) bi-polar constructs even in mature life.

Also, in understanding the place of culture in either the sustenance or erosion of the value, meaning and purpose underpinning self-transcendent practice I proposed a development upon Milgram's (1974) correlation between autonomous agency and personal power. Autonomous agency and personal power were themes in three of the four narratives and were portrayed as significant in the resilience of socio-educational values. Therefore, I suggested a triangulation between Milgram's (1974) autonomous agency and personal power and socio-educational values which, deeply rooted in social-responsibility, had at their core a culturally/generationally imbibed self-transcendent commitment to the self-actualisation of other. From this finding I proposed that regard for this triangulation could nurture the spiritual resilience of dedicated practitioners.

Furthermore, during my research other theories were challenged. For example, I came to believe that the edges and ages of the psycho-social stages of life are not as clear and stable as Erikson (1968) prescribed because I experienced the developmental tasks of the final two stages, 'generativity' and 'ego-integrity', as being transplanted one-on-top-the-other. This recognition reinforced Sheehy's (1996: 15) proposal that 'the stages of adult life are characterised not . . . by steps in psychological and social growth'. However, while she points at 'underlying', 'inner' turmoil as the initiator of this growth, in my experience, and in the testimony of the storytellers, the threat that signalled the movement to the next adult, developmental stage came from an external or interpersonal 'marker'/traumatic event. Therefore, overall humanistic and constructivist theories that acknowledge an individual's internal life with cultural influences whilst maintaining a belief in autonomous 'personal agency and personal growth' (Stevens, 1990: 423) were challenged and the key role of culture was supported.

In doing so, the evidence of my research suggested that personal stress and distress occurs not only when values are internally imbalanced, but also when one's values conflict in some way with institutional/managerial values, and that the cumulative effects of this may contribute to early retirement. This finding added support to Smail's (1991; 2005) proposal that personal distress results, not so much from individual failures of insight or learning, as from the interplay between social and material power, and an individual's own embodied history. It also affirmed the choice and combination of methodologies particularly in regard to the auto-ethnographic cultural focus upon those 'experiences shrouded in silence' (Ellis et al., 2011: 274) and the narrative inquiry conviction that our stories reveal 'the way we create and recreate our realities and ourselves' (Giovannoli, 2012: 2).

Additionally, I contend that the combination of auto-ethnography with narrative inquiry enabled the incorporation of Laidlaw's (1996) idea of 'living standards' in practice pushing the current limits of auto-ethnographic research from a dominant emphasis on the cultural through narrative inquiry to bring empathetic communion and responsiveness as a living standard of academic and professional judgement to

the academy in the form of a living legacy. This was achieved by moving from what I understand to be the established and acceptable narrative inquiry process of applying reasons to justify actions into naming and owning values that explain behaviour i.e. from justification to explanation. Equally, in my opinion, this affirmed the auto 'I' as the fundamental 'Russian-doll' at the centre of the greater, ethnographic 'we'.

Also, I contend that the weaving of the literature review throughout the analytical auto-ethnographic aspects of the thesis enabled a unique insider's insight and interpretation into cultural and cross-disciplinary influences upon educational practitioners. We filter society's ideas, aspirations and mind-sets through practitioners as though they are free-flowing rivers, ignoring that under surface torrents they have subterranean depths enriched by lived experiences and dense with the debris of discarded values, approaches, beliefs and theories. The approach taken in this thesis was to acknowledge these hidden depths through the reminiscent, generative stories of front-line witnesses; these illuminated the analytical perspective and salvaged one discourse from society's nadirs.

Therefore, as demonstrated through the literature review and narrative inquiry continuing educational influence and sustaining existential meaning in life are not significant to me alone. Furthermore, if others do not benefit from my experiences their value is diminished for me. At the present time, mature practitioners predominantly evidence successful educational influence in terms of the individual lives they have touched. For example, Barbara found comfort in the reminiscences of past students who flourished in her care and after reading the transcript of her own story Aoife emailed:

'The love and satisfaction that I still get from my work doesn't come from any financial reward . . . but from coming home each day feeling that you have tried your best and that you may possibly have made a difference to one child or one family . . .'

Indeed, the initial focus of my continuing educational influence was upon the storytellers themselves, as demonstrated in the following email extracts:

Aoife 23/12/2013

It is very rare to get the opportunity to talk and have time to reflect about the choices that you have made. . . After initial nervousness, I realised what a positive experience this could be. After reading my story and the interpretations given to it, I did feel even more that the choices I had made were the right ones. . . I realised that being a “wise old owl” gives me a great deal of joy and confidence. It has been 30 years since I left college and began my “career” in education. I still genuinely believe that I do not have a very strong academic knowledge, just a feeling about what is right. . . Thank you Catherine – I feel so privileged to have been chosen to be part of your study . . .

Colette 17/12/2013

Thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to tell my story. If it does help other I am grateful for it.

Whilst such influence is qualitative, it is also fragile in its dependency upon being in the right place, at the right time with the right person/people. Also, as such it is more frequently felt than expressed. It can simply be the joy of a child walking away independent in spirit and mind. Therefore, its fragility makes mature practitioners pawns to fate and their potential contributions to knowledge hit-and-miss. Indeed, as an example of the contribution mature, experienced practitioners could make both my arrival at the journey’s onset and the journey I made itself should be evaluated because (1) it might so easily not have been undertaken or (2) the thesis might not have taken the form it did had I not met with the same encouragement, guidance and support along the way.

However, I do not dismiss this delicate chain-of-influence. Chance personal, professional and academic encounters have led to the propagation of the living legacy idea from its naissance in a draft paper delivered to a small group in May 2011 at the ‘Value and Virtue Conference’, York St. John’s University. Inspired by this idea, Professor Jack Whitehead took it back to a study group in Bath where it influenced Dr Marie Huxtable to develop the website <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies/livinglegacies-thebook.asp>, and an online book (Henon, 2012). In an email she wrote, “These are testaments to the influence of you and your idea of ‘living legacies’” (5/04/2014). Moreover, as she developed the idea in her own unique way, the concept seized the imagination of another professional. Shelagh Heetred (Linkage West) ‘inspired by the words of a woman of African Caribbean origin in her 70s’ who told her ‘that, despite initiatives, funding and recognition of the important role that Commonwealth migrants made to her City . . . she did not feel that there was any visible legacy’ (email: Shelagh Heetred, 10/04/2014) developed it into a ‘portrait exhibition’ celebrating ‘the lives and cultures of twenty-four first generation . . . migrants who [had] settled in Bristol 50 years ago’ (email: Shelagh Heetred, 21/10/2013). The exhibition marked the opening of Bristol’s ‘Black History Month’ 2013 and can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mcqC6yKBe0>. Then, in 2014 Professor Jack Whitehead dedicated a chapter of a book he co-authored to the concept of living legacies. In it he claims that living legacies in the form of ‘living-educational-theories of our influences in living-global-citizenship can make a significant contribution towards social movements’ (Coombes et al., 2014: 91). Clearly the idea of living legacies has a profound resonance with many people who are imaginatively developing it to enable the value, meaning and purpose of their lives and the lives of others to flourish:

‘I use my camera every day to document my experiences with these phenomenally energetic elders. I use video to ‘retell their stories’, to capture the energy, resilience, ambition and drive for others in the hope that they might begin to understand a little of the remarkable people with whom they share their city.’

(email: Shelagh Heetred, 10/04/2014)

Equally, in personal encounters I have seen empathetic communion and responsiveness to other as a standard of professional and academic judgement finding resonance with other practitioners and researchers e.g. ‘I have been inspired by your chapter on your interviews with your colleagues’ (email: 6/11/2013) and ‘Your chapter . . . was with me and I found it very helpful’ (email: 19/04/2014).

Therefore, I place great emphasis upon the ‘living’ aspect of my contributions to knowledge. I am part of a chain-of-being and as my ideas originated in the constructions of my predecessors; my ideas are seeds to be germinated in the imaginations of others. As such I have found great joy in hearing how my contributions to knowledge have taken on many forms in the minds and work of others. Moreover, I await others knowing my joy and celebration as they create and make public their own living legacies, watching their ideas germinate in the imaginations and spirits of tomorrow’s students and practitioners. Perhaps in the final analysis, we change the privileging of the external world only when we ourselves place value upon our own place in the chain-of-being, and our responsibility to influence it on behalf of the ‘flourishing of humanity’. Therefore, in the final analysis I hope that my research supports Polyani’s (1958: 381) aspiration:

‘to re-equip men with the faculties which centuries of critical thought have taught them to distrust. . . For once men have been made to realize the crippling mutilations imposed by an objectivist framework – once the veil of ambiguities covering up these mutilations has been definitely dissolved – many fresh minds will turn to the task of reinterpreting the world as it is, and as it then once more will be seen to be.’

Within Polyani’s (1958) aspiration rests the potential significance of personal knowledge taking its rightful place as the muse for professional and academic knowledge. Now more than ever before an individual encounters a pluralistic barrage of information and ideas. I believe that the resonance of some of these with my personal constructions and values created the cognitive, emotional and spiritual Petri

dish in which my original contributions to knowledge were formed. This Petri dish is for me the place in which the dynamic fusion of personal, professional and academic knowledge occurs and from which this living legacy emerges. I am the sum of my lived experiences, the literature, academic theories, professional approaches and cultural concepts I have assimilated, accommodated and reframed. What is lost with me if I burn and vanish from educational service, is lost to all; but in a world where harmony exists between personal, professional and academic knowledge living legacies would value lives of service and empathetic communion and responsiveness would enrich personal, professional and academic relationships; and both would contribute to educational knowledge.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Ethics Clearance Form

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Education

Section 2. Details of proposed research study.

a. Full title:	Creating Living Legacies: can the experience and embodied knowledge of experienced, educational practitioners make a valid and useful contribution to the academy and the community of educational researchers?
b. Aims and objectives:	For participants & researcher: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to promote reflection on the values that have guided practice and the possible individual, living legacies created/ to be created;• to provide witness and acknowledgement to both, the experiences participants feel were formative, and the embodied knowledge they have developed;• in doing so, the possibility of improving one's personal sense of place and reconciliation in time and space;• from this – a greater appreciation of self;• a possible means by which later years practice may be renewed and reinvigorated; and,• possibly the creation or representation of living legacies.

	<p>For the academy and the research community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to explore how experienced, educational practitioners can create their own, individual legacies that portray their educational values and aspects of their embodied knowledge; and, • to explore the possibility of a different pathway by which experienced, educational practitioners who have not sought senior management promotion and/or significant postgraduate qualifications may contribute their, otherwise neglected, insights to the academy and the community of educational researchers. <p>Also, in terms of the relations within the environments participants may be working in, an increased sense of personal value may possibly renew and reinvigorated practice positively impacting on others, particularly students.</p>
<p>c. Brief outline of the research study. Please ensure that you include details of the following:</p> <p>Design (qualitative/quantitative etc).</p> <p>Measures (questionnaire; interview schedule; experimental trial etc.)</p>	<p>The research study is qualitative in design with the proposed measure of in-depth interviews. Generally it is intended that these interviews will follow an open-interview structure. However, participants will be provided with an auto-ethnographic, personal narrative and a questionnaire designed to reflect a ‘life-story’ structure before the interview (see attachments). The questionnaire may be used in a minimal way by the researcher throughout the interview to ensure the themes of educational values, professional choices and challenges and legacy are covered. Beyond that it will be left to the individual participant whether or not they refer to this questionnaire as they relate their ‘story’.</p>

<p>d. Where will the study take place and in what setting?</p>	<p>At a place of each individual participant's choosing to ensure the highest possible degree of comfort and relaxation.</p> <p>In providing the opportunity for participants to choose to be interviewed in their own homes, it is understood that the interviewer may incur a certain level of risk. Whilst this potential risk is considered less substantive than the importance of participant comfort and ease, to reduce the risk to the interviewer and ensure personal safety, the place and expected duration of the interview will be recorded and given to a reliable person known to the interviewer who will be asked to check-in with the interviewer if they have not been contacted within a given time frame. The interviewer will carry a mobile phone with them at all times to make and enable contact.</p>
<p>e. Give a brief description of your target sample (e.g. age, occupation, gender). Is the participation individual or part of a group?</p>	<p>Educational practitioners from a range of educational settings for pre-school and primary aged children who are 40+ in age.</p> <p>Initial in-depth interviews will be carried out on a one-to-one basis but the possibility of meeting with some/all the other participants to reflect on the process and share stories, etc., will be raised and offered to all participants at some stage in the research process.</p>
<p>f. Are any of your participants in vulnerable groups (e.g. children under 16, individuals with learning difficulties or mental illness)? Please specify the nature of the vulnerability and complete section (g).</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>g. Vulnerable groups: Have any special arrangements been made to deal with issues of consent (e.g. is parental or guardian agreement to be obtained, and if so in what form)?</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>h. How will participants be selected, approached and recruited?</p>	<p>As a result of personal invitation to individuals I have known in a professional capacity who fulfil the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ are over forty years of age; ✓ are experienced professionals; ✓ have not sought senior management promotion and/or significant postgraduate qualifications; ✓ have engaged in in-service or further training out of interest and at their own volition; ✓ have in the past, to me, expressed a love/passion for their work; and, ✓ have appeared dedicated in their work.
<p>i. Is written consent to be obtained?</p> <p>If no, please state why.</p> <p>If yes, please complete the standard Consent Form (see p 6) and attach to this documentation.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>(see attached form)</p>

Section 3. Risk & Ethical Procedures.

<p>a. Are there any potential risks to participants? These could be physical and/or psychological. Please specify, and explain any steps you have taken to address them.</p>	<p>I am aware that any reflection, particularly where there has been an investment of passion, time and energy, may evoke negative emotions. This is why I will urge participants to consider carefully where the interview is held so that they can be at their optimum comfort and relaxation before we start. Also, I will stress their right to withdraw without any question, pause the interview and/or take breaks at every stage in the process. Participants will, also, be offered a 'debriefing session' although it is my aim to ensure that every participant feels shared control for/over the interview and that they end on a positive note, therefore, possibly reducing the need for such a session.</p> <p>In providing the opportunity for participants to choose to be interviewed in their own homes, it is understood that the interviewer may incur a certain level of risk. Whilst this potential risk is considered less substantive than the importance of participant comfort and ease, to reduce the risk to the interviewer and ensure personal safety, the place and expected duration of the interview will be recorded and given to a reliable person known to the interviewer who will be asked to check-in with the interviewer if they have not been contacted within a given time frame. The interviewer will carry a mobile phone with them at all times to make and enable contact.</p>
<p>b. How might participation in this research cause discomfort or distress to participants? Please specify, and explain any steps you have taken to address these.</p>	<p>As participants are mature and are reflecting on a life-story style format, there will inevitably be some painful/upsetting memories. As well as the steps outlined above, the life-story format and the focus on the creation of a living legacy is deliberately biased towards hope and the future plans/dreams i.e. the overcoming/resolving of painful issues (see attached sheet). Also, the overall aim of the interview experience for the participants, as</p>

	<p>outlined in the above aims and objectives, is that it should be a positive one. One way of accomplishing this is the anticipated role of the researcher within the interview context acting as a witness, acknowledging through in-depth listening the experiences related by the individual participants.</p>
<p>c. How might participants benefit from taking part in this research?</p>	<p>Hopefully, greater insight into the values that guided their practice and an appreciation of their own contribution to education. Also, in the process, the possibility of improving their personal sense of place/belonging and reconciliation with time, structures/limitations, etc, that may well renew and enrich practice to the betterment of all, but particularly, the self and present students. Overall, I hope that participation in the research may become part of a journey towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater understanding of self and one's values; • the possibility of improving one's personal sense of place and reconciliation in time and space; • from this – a greater appreciation of self; • a possible means by which later years practice may be renewed and reinvigorated; and, • possibly the creation or representation of one's living legacy which would hopefully be experienced as an achievement and celebration of one's embodied knowledge and practice.
<p>d. Does any aspect of your research require that participants are naïve?</p>	<p>No.</p>

(i.e. They are not given the exact aims of the research) Please explain why and give details of debriefing procedures.	
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Section 4. Data - Confidentiality & Anonymity.

a. Where and how do you intend to store any data collected from this research?	Both in hard copy and as computer files.
b. Under Data Protection regulations (e.g. <i>data is stored securely and is not accessible or interpretable by individuals outside of the project</i>), give details of steps you will take to ensure the security of any data you collect.	Hard copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and all computer documents will password protected.
c. What steps have been taken to safeguard the confidentiality of personal records?	Participants will be invited from different countries and localities. All references to specific places, institutions, etc., will be removed. Also, without changing/losing any 'interesting data' any notable dialect terms/ phrases/ words will be removed or substituted. All participants will be given pseudonyms unless they request otherwise.
d. Will this research require the use of any of the following:- - video recordings No - audio recording Yes - observation of participants? No	
e. If you answered YES to any of the above, please state how you will ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and what you intend to do with these records on completion of the research.	All records will be destroyed within 12 months of the completion and submission of the research project.

Section 5. Comments of Supervisor

I have read Catherine's research ethics form and consider that the research plan she has created satisfies all the relevant ethics criteria.

Dr Joan Walton

Appendix 2: Research Consent Form

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

Title of research project: Creating living Legacies: can the experience and embodied knowledge of experienced, educational practitioners make a valid and useful contribution to the academy and the community of educational researchers?

Name of research project leader: Catherine Harvey Forester

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions

Yes	No

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Yes	No

3. I agree to take part in this research project.

Yes	No

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher: Catherine Harvey Forester

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 3: Research Information Sheet

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

Outline of the research:

This project aims to explore how experienced, educational practitioners, through reflective narrative inquiry, can bring together their educational values and aspects of their embodied knowledge to create living legacies that may make valid and useful contributions to the academy and the community of educational researchers.

Who is in charge of the research? Catherine Harvey Forester

Institution: Centre for Child and Family, Hope University

Contact details: catherinehforester@hotmail.com

What will my participation in the research involve?

1. Reading through the researcher's narrative, preparation questionnaire and this form.
2. From this you may feel prompted to make some preparation for the open interview – e.g. locating photographs, journals, writings, etc.
3. Participation in an open interview. This may take several hours but will take place in a place of your own choosing i.e. where you feel comfortable and relaxed.
4. Reviewing/editing the transcript of the open interview.
5. Possibly meeting with some of the other participants to reflect on the process and share stories, etc.

Will there be any benefits in taking part?

Hopefully, greater insight into the values that guided your practice and an expression of your own contribution to education. Also, in the process, the possibility of improving one's personal sense of place/belonging and reconciliation with time, structures/limitations, etc., that may well renew and enrich practice to the betterment of all, but particularly, the self and present students.

Will there be any risks in taking part?

Any reflection, particularly where there has been an investment of passion, time and energy, may evoke negative emotions. This is why it is important to consider where you would like to have the open interview to be most comfortable and relaxed. Also, it is important to bear

in mind that participation can be withdrawn at any stage, the interview can be terminated at any stage and/or breaks can be taken at any stage. A 'debriefing session' will be offered although it is my aim to ensure that interviews end on a positive note.

Every attempt to safe-guard anonymity will be taken and discussed with you at any stage of the project. Anonymity is, also, assisted by participants coming from different countries, the use of pseudonyms, the removal of place references and the removal or substitution of dialect words/terms/ phrases wherever noted.

What happens if I decide I don't want to take part during the actual research study, or decide I don't want the information I've given to be used?

The right to withdraw would be honoured, as would the right to withdraw information at any stage in the project without any need for you to give any reasons. Also, having withdrawn any information requested, the edited draft would be resubmitted for your scrutiny and satisfaction.

How will you ensure that my contribution is anonymous?

Every attempt to safe-guard anonymity will be taken and discussed with you at any stage of the project. Anonymity is, also, assisted by participants coming from different countries and the use of pseudonyms. All references to specific places, institutions, etc., will be removed. Also, without changing/losing any valuable comments dialect terms/ phrases/ words will be removed or substituted. All participants will be given pseudonyms unless they request otherwise.

Also, please, be reassured that all hard copies of transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and all computer files will be protected by a password. These will all be destroyed after twelve months of the completion and submission of the research.

Appendix 4: Participant Prompt Questions

First I would like to take this opportunity to thank-you, once again, for agreeing to be part of this project. I am so looking forward to meeting with you, hearing your story and, as you reflect, sharing in the construction of your educational legacy.

Below is the proposed format for the open interview. Although the structure was designed to create a chronological story-line, as it is an open interview it will only be loosely adhered to. Also, while your authentic story/legacy is the significant point of the interview, I suspect that what may well be produced in the dynamics of our interaction, is a co-creation of the reflexivity of *two not one participant* i.e. the interviewee and the interviewer. For these reasons I see the session as a living, dynamic exchange 'open' to our unique, joint construction.

Finally, I want you to know that I am 'mindful' that any reflection, particularly where there has been an investment of passion, time and energy, may evoke negative emotions. However, I hope that this experience will, ultimately, be one you will feel celebrates your years in education. I hope you will enjoy our time together constructing your story/legacy but it is important to bear in mind that participation can be withdrawn **at any stage**, the interview can be terminated **at any stage**, breaks can be taken **at any stage** and a 'debriefing session' will be offered although it is my aim to ensure that the interview ends on a positive note.

1. How long have you been involved in education?
2. Tell me how this came about.
3. Describe your early years in educational provision.
4. Tell me about the values and aspirations of those early years.
5. Describe your middle years in education.
6. Tell me about any events and/or choices in those years that you feel significantly impacted upon you e.g. your practice, values, aspirations, etc.
7. Describe your more recent years in education.
8. Tell me about the issues of these later years.
9. Tell me about your future plans and dreams in relation to your practice.
10. Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
11. What would you like your educational legacy to be?

Many, many thanks!

THESIS-PX9b7