

Science and Mathematics Education Centre

**The Curriculum of Humankind: A Writing-Interpretive
Inquiry on What it Means to be a Teacher
and a Human Being**

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**This thesis is presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of
Curtin University**

November 2013

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published by any person except where due consideration and acknowledgement has been made.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. G. Kelly', written in a cursive style.

Date: 17th October, 2013

Abstract

Education, teaching and learning now acknowledges the need to ascertain who people 'are' in the landscape of system and curriculum change. The relative habitat of self and teaching is a topic still under review, especially as it applies to literary and evocative narrative - as a catalyst for other ways of being with and 'seeing' self and cultural activity. Subjects and themes of auto-ethnographic research have been well noted in the content literature: of the defining validity of self-identification and textualised ethnography and the questions of voice and representation. Social efficacy, as canonical myths, is always present and manifests itself in the suburban experiences of self. Autobiography as a framing convention and auto-ethnography as an interpretive medium are employed to explore the ideation of the *teaching self*. The study joins the vital interpretive discourse on alternative writing about people in cultures and ties autobiography with auto-ethnographic inquiry. The writing situates itself in the landscape of teaching and what it holds for revelation on teacher identity and in particular, human meaning in the context of teaching. Key cultural and autobiographical areas of interest are observed from the 'inside' as thematic connections on what a professional life-world might offer people as ethnographers of the self. The findings are the crucial formed and forming themes that have emerged to highlight teacher identity with implications for training and recruitment, curriculum identity, public consideration and the self in the context of collective meaning. The findings also suggest a real need to 'see' the more holistic and fuller life of a person who continues to teach and a reminder to society that teachers are not just products of training and exported to schools: the balance between life-teaching and the self is evident when we reflect through the mediums of auto-ethnography and inquiry.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all teachers everywhere

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the people who supported me during the thesis writing; those who have been part of the long road. Writing is a lone venture but there were those conferring on me special words of faith. I was not alone.

I thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Peter Charles Taylor. I am deeply grateful for his faith. Peter is an excellent mentor and guide. He enabled me to move forward through a kind of servant leadership peculiar to strong teachers, and the gentle reminders of simple trust and inspiration.

I had other friends; my literary companions who gave me validation, knowledge and understanding about how things are and might be.

I give enormous thanks for the willingness of the participating teachers, who did not hesitate to see something worthwhile. Without your tales mine could not be told.

And finally, to the many students and teachers who taught me the real worth of being me.



On the Fairsea 1960

*I'm the little one with the big ears; the thinker with
no socks...*

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Part A

Being, Becoming and Belonging

Chapters 1 to 4 place the reader in the research frame and provide a sequencing of the thesis in discussion. Each chapter in Part A takes the reader further into the reasoning and emergent character (Polkinghorne, 1997) of the work before arriving at Part B; the formed narrative accounts and interpretation. Part A forms the extended and detailed entry to the later, exegesis-style writing: its multi-purpose and background identity; significance, role of the research method, auto-ethnographic inquiry; the study's ethical and data frame; the hermeneutics of the writing, the researcher as the messenger of the self the reader explores. The study is a creative and human inquiry that seeks to 'draw out' the humankind of teaching.

Who I am is a testament to vast temporal experiences that need to be gathered for reflection and placed in the context of a qualitative perspective. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) are adamant that the interpreter's inquiry is not complete without his or her autobiography. I have written mine, as a kind of shared intra-autobiographical discussion to unravel how my life-world has led me to teaching, and how it relates to others who share the same professional daily settings and vocational landscape. The autobiographical chapters are micro-tales that form the prelude to the stories of other teachers interpreted by the researcher, through the lens of the other 'I'.

The nature of the work enables the reader to feel and think, about their own lives in teaching, a more holistic identity that includes the world of others. I am therefore committing myself to the role of narrative inquirer, narrative analyst and interpretive-narrator of a more personal landscape as Lejeune advocates (1989).

Reflexive inquiry enabled me to adopt a privileged view of other voices; those that have presented themselves as portals to the landscape of knowing; to offer readers (and writers) an invitation to understand and sustain a sense of self in the context of a working life.

I have joined the discourse on alternative writing about teaching identity, to partner autobiography with narrative inquiry and to discuss many of the complexities and contradictions of self in teaching. Autobiography is presented as a catalyst and *metaphorein* guide to human *being*. As David Carr suggests (1986, p.97): “...coherence seems to be a need imposed upon us whether we seek it or not.” The writer becomes the medium of understanding. So, how do we find human meaning among the impositions that pervade teaching and learning?

Teaching is multi-faceted, with multiple human experiences that are both personal and public, and we experience both among the revelations of lives lived; the ‘presence’ of meaning in time and place (Van Manen, 1990). I contemplate, through figurative immersion, the ‘occupants’ of consciousness. And these are storied throughout the thesis. The varied and universal motifs of self are explored, as the teachers of life’s simple and complex truths: the journey, trial, myth and mask, home, advocate and the muse. How is personal identity constructed socially? How might we act if we could see our teaching-role through other, more creative eyes? Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman’s (2004, p.30) introductory discourse is a good starting point: “*In studying the politics of identity, we find that who we are, is invariably related to who we have been and want to become.*”

How does auto-ethnography and writing inquiry assist in reconciling past and future with present life-work? What are we creating when we separate the self in teaching? How might story create a resolution in our-selves? How does the auto of biography behave as a poly-vocal identity? How does narrative unite the personal and professional

view? Moustakas (1990), in his search for a heuristic understanding of life-worlds, describes the crucial element of reflection in knowing the self. In the daily felt work of curricula, teachers experience division between instruction, deliberate and imposed reflection. Kemmis and McTaggart (in Denzin, 2000, p. 578) discuss actions that seek to understand, through exploration, the inner nature of self-efficacy, a personally satisfying resolution to living with self and others:

The reflexive-dialectical perspective on practice thus attempts to find a place in a broader framework of historical, social and discursive construction and does its best to recognise not only that people's actions are caused by their intentions and circumstances, but also that people cause intentions and circumstances – that is, that people are made by action in the world, and that they also make action and history.

This then is a narrator's thesis, although I rest my work in the hands of the scholarly. It must be read as an open book in the context of biography, of literature and tale-telling and has within it the conflict, irony and contradiction of human being. My thesis was always meant to reflect a writer at work, exploring the back-roads and history of a time living a life. I struggled to find a 'method' that would enable or allow me to offer my life as a medium for circumspection. And any study also abides in the structure of a university life, and must be balanced with studious perspective and what research might do for others – for the context under scrutiny.

And some roads lead us to struggle and some to a sense there's more adventure to come. I want to share these experiences with you, my reading companions, to honour a creative force that has bound me to human endeavour. I want to explore and share my life as a writer; to dedicate my experience to something I've believed in, suffered and achieved. Story seems the obvious choice.

Chapter 1

Exposition

No one could any longer describe the forgotten prize, but it was rumoured that it was enormous and perhaps infinite. The Secret Miracle by Jorge Luis Borges

There is always the shadow. And there is always the prospect that what we do rests in the temporal benevolence afforded to us when we remember who we are and might become. We are living in social worlds; the stories of us and the daily life-world which creates what we shall remember later and what others will remember us for. I wanted to explore and discover the multi-faceted landscape of vocation and human experience. And so I write, hoping that words will do the same.

I have experienced teaching as hope, tension, confusion, wisdom, excitement, empathy, failure, sickness, loss, miracle and magic, sameness and spontaneity, mask and imagination, friendship and alienation, achievement, judgement, habit, saviour and home, journey, conflict and the relegation of feelings to professional duty and others. I wanted to find a way that would place these experiences into some kind of resonant context; to share and discuss what my life with teaching has meant and what it might mean for others, as a writer and interpreter. My personal life has also been filled with the parallel experiences that accompany change, roads I travelled, literally, as a young walker of roads and the choices that arose and decisions I made, like everyone else.

I had written stories of other lives but not my own and not my life as I became; who I am and what I do today. I discovered when I was a Master of Education student that I was engaging in ethnography and a kind of naïve phenomenology as grounded theory. I was telling the stories of mature-aged people who decided to return to study and how this decision was impacting on them through the domains of

Education, Psychology and Mythology. I was engaging in a kind of inquiry, a narrative and interpretive inquiry, as a biographer of experience. I documented their fear and anxiety, their trials with learning and aspirations, their achievements and, more importantly, the transformational aspects of learning and how and why learning brings meaning. However, there was a great deal more I needed to know about research identity and paradigm (Deally, 1996).

I was tracking and using reflective practice in the experiences of starting, staying with and finishing time with learning and why people persevere with study. I invited those students to keep journals and become the authors of their own experiences. We shared feelings, thoughts and discussed what time meant for us as recorders, learners and people engaged in the dynamic of meeting cognitive experiences with personal ideation. Sometimes we had the experience but missed the meaning, like the feeling of being the constant amateur.

I invited each person to observe themselves, to off-set what we were both experiencing as students and researchers of the self. We were illuminating our understandings about our positions in the teaching-learning environment. We couldn't escape what was happening and realised we were characters and narrators in a collective story. There was still a good deal more I could have done to describe the felt sense of time and place and how this in turn shapes our views of experiencing.

I have always been a writer, since I was a boy, when I first began to write poetry of a sort, and then I became a reader and returned to writing when I felt I was old enough again to invite a partnership with self and subject. I am a visual artist too and part of my MEd. study (1996) was based in how individual images are also collective narratives; in that the lines, shapes and subjects we were creating as art students had similar or the same human contexts.

Our desire was to tell the human story as artists. We were self-realising through a formalised life in Education, who knew the power inherent in the moment and mythology of experience for development. The curriculum was Art and we were 'artists' wanting artist-eyes, but there still remained the estranged relationship between the two worlds that should have been one. The lecturers were determined to make it rigorous and didn't really see the nature of individual and collective meaning facing them, although the art works themselves denoted images of what concerned human beings. They too experienced the dichotomy of professional versus personal life-worlds. The system, it seemed, still had a controlling power over time and experience, through the issues of accountability and policy agenda-making. So, as a teacher in a school and then a postgraduate student, I could see the missing bridge.

How will the reader respond to the interpretation? This question has its own unique identity located in the cognitive and feeling experiences of the literary reader. The first stage of the study was to write my autobiography, to establish and find the common bond, the other I, the yin-yang of researcher and writer as a literary documentary, a long story with a life. Easier said than done I discovered. I chose excerpts from my own story that I wanted to include as reference points or points of reading departure for others.

The excerpts play several roles in the research frame: to provide a theoretical and creative stimulus for readers to write their own stories as a powerful method of reflective practice; to respond critically, as personal responders to the thesis, as documented 'evidence' that holds the key to self research and future awareness and as reflexive praxis of both known and unknown truths; to hold open the door of experience, that empowers others to respond to themselves as living portals of learning opportunities for learners; to witness how story imagines us, to act, in turn, on others, in ways that promote teachers as the human gatekeepers of collective participation; to engage

teachers in the process of collecting themselves, lest we forget; and finally, to reflect on my own practice, the *self* as teacher and what teaching has meant to me, as a way of knowing the self and what one person can and might do, in the act of becoming human.

The thesis has been written as an interpretive-inquiry exploring how creative non fiction works as a main body and an exegesis-style identity, in documented chapters of experiences, the traditional 'I'. The autobiography is titled: The Tale of an Unsuspecting Boy Who Grew to be a Likewise Man known throughout the study as The Tale.

From The Tale: Chapter 21

I didn't get to see The Great Wall but I did spend days exploring The Forbidden City, savoring the smells and tales of dynasties in every space. I pondered on the dramas that had taken place over the centuries - the intrigues of daily politics and fears of the courtesans, concubines and eunuchs. Or was it the usual sense-imbued artistry I wished for. I walked around the ancient city, open to dead armies, positioned by duty and absolutism.

And then out to the swelling sounds of cars and huge, peopled squares of granite and banners. I looked behind and saw the image of Mao Tse Tung; a coloured shadow on the wall, the Red Guard marching honorably in front, pacing time. Some images stay forever. It was the constant canvas I always had to fill – the lines, shapes and subjects that separate us, to place one ideal in front of another; the way things often get in the way of a more understanding life; the way Education does with learning; Law and justice; Health and healing; Religion and spirit; the patience of the unknown artist, waiting, waiting...

Dewey said that: “Artists begin with an inclusive qualitative whole not yet articulated” (1934, p.191). The blank canvas of any story begins with a journey of the possible, of personal and professional transformation, of the emergent and reflexive self. Ideation, I often

suppose, is an emergent dependent on the cohesive identity yet to come. And so writing about what teaching is from an insider perspective is a little like swimming among the many to find the important words worth revealing. When I was a young researcher attempting to understand the role perseverance plays in study, I came across other writings that influenced me to explore the domains of knowing and the nature of self in relation to experience. In the beginning, I experienced the same struggles my research participants did at that time, to start again: "*They [the participants] may feel powerless to act because of the roles they have played before, or brought with them*" (Deally, 2002, p.16).

Issues in a study like this (indulgence, acceptance and so on); wondering will my thesis make any difference to anyone; the constant writer's dilemma. My supervisor's experience was always there, a matter of beginning, often the greatest leap of faith. Peter Taylor is a transformative practitioner, skilled mentor and impressionistic writer, a person aware of the nuances of writing, above and below; of the writer's task. I know the vital importance of having a guide who can see the variance hidden from the writer during the writing and research process; the wood from the trees. Our first meeting was seminal; me clinging to what I thought I knew, while Peter asked: "*What is transformation?*" I had my own ideas on this; about the ways profundity describes us, although most of the time, coming up short.

I also had left-over feelings about my Masters' degree I couldn't hide, feelings of needing to meet agendas and show knowledge; showing the intelligence of academic acceptance. I had suffered the contradictions of sameness and written a text in the nineties for teachers entitled, Acts of Change (Deally, 2002), about how change is crucial in the Arts but not about the fallacy behind the word, when systems ask or require teachers to work more, better or differently.

Even so, many of the decisions we make are part of the hide and seek of change, in that the ideas we offer or impose on other professionals

have a sub-text to do with surviving accountability and constructing a pre-set identity. People inhabit settings with experience, and so being with others, to teach others, is a collective dynamic we often hope makes everybody happy.

Once I began my autobiography, I discovered yet again the dilemma of the draft and demanding nature of editing; not to mention the constant swing of revelation and apprehension. I was self learning and the writing became (becomes) a trial of knowing the self, of looking down alleyways and in cupboards. I wrote in my journal (2009): "*This is a purpose...*" I thought, "*...to write my life story, not that it means anything to anyone necessarily, but to place it in the context of what it has meant to me, in who and what I became...to reflect on the long road I'm still on and whether it's the same road for others.*" In doing this, the act, I was documenting how the boy became a teacher and how that has led me to writing, but more importantly, how writing in the context of the profound has 'made' me the reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983). And I felt this might have important implications for others.

We already know what autobiography is, its place, and we also know the laborious scepticism that accompanies self inquiry; the narrowing place of lone experience and of the dangers of narcissism. Writing memory is also a journey through mirrors. I had to be sure, even though my personal confirmation sometimes betrayed itself on the road of doubt. In the end it became the ability of my experiences to offer me the mantle of empathy and compassion, the doorway to recognising in others what lives in us all, what lives we've all led and what our experiences have 'done' to us as a collective identity. This was the key that took me from the pool's edge, the mirror of self doubt, to make a bond with myself I had made once before.

From The Tale: Chapter 2

My parents had the bright idea that I should attend Sunday school but I never went. A ship is for sailing and watching the sun set on burning skies and skating, dipping decks, exploring what's possible on the ocean waves and things like that. It was another adventure and something to be alone with – not the scratchings that often accompanied the echoes of children. Two other notable things happened: we crossed the equator and I was confirmed. I was born a Roman Catholic and we were on an Italian ship, and so for me, receiving the Holy Sacraments was an extra big occasion. It was my first, conscious, sacred initiation and in writing I have kept that pledge in a roundabout way - the obligation to defend faith through words.

The church and I have rarely come to terms about religious identity. I sat at the captain's table for dinner and I watched in awe as he said his bit, smiled and conveyed his blessing - the nearest thing to God. And the crossing meant paying homage to other Gods, like Neptune; sailors dressing up as women and women as men – crowns, spikey bits, penalties and games. This was a glamorous event filled with colour and frivolity; just what we needed. Sailors were forced to walk the plank and recite Italian poetry written by other shipmates. It was all good fun and boosting morale is what sailors are good at. They have experience in small spaces and trust in the elements - ritual and water. It was a welcome respite to the ebb and flow of peopled decks.

There comes a time when going meets the reality of leaving and we remember what makes us leave or stay. What will it be like, this other world? Will I be happy? What will become of us? Sometimes even the sea can be monotonous.

All the children were lined-up to receive a present according to

age. I was often in queues. The dignified looking gentleman in a white uniform handed out appropriate gifts and we went away. I was six I think, so I was entitled to a red, plastic jeep. Someone took a photo of me as a PR exercise for the Sitmar Line and put it on a postcard, but I was un-amused because the Bunsen burner is what I really wanted. My brothers each received a Bunsen burner. I 'dropped' it overboard, to watch it bounce and drift away.

Now this may seem like the precocious act of a spoilt brat but I certainly wasn't spoilt and I didn't know what I was doing really, about gifts and presents. I'd been given gifts before and had them taken back or stolen and so I didn't trust childhood offerings. Italians weren't the makers of Trojan Horses, but I think now of Seneca, the Roman philosopher. He would say, it's OK, it's all stoic anyway; the soul is a practical past-time, one of give and throw away, as the body dictates. I suppose I could have buried it somewhere, deep in the bowels of the ship. But I didn't think of it when I was confronted by the depths of oceans.

From The Tale: Chapter 8

In the morning the houses down the hill were half-way under water and people were rowing small boats to rescue what belonged to them. Humans, dogs and cats were rooftop dwellers now who forgot their differences. There's nothing anyone can do in these instances, except wait and lend a hand. People were arriving at the church, as a sanctuary from the sudden, uninvited water. Floodwaters are dangerous. They're brown and scary and the depths are deceiving. The ground gives way to the film of mud and rush that's so deceptively obvious from above. The under-tows and spirals can drag you under and hold you until you drown or float away or both.

The day was ominous, the sullen water always glistening in the

teasing sun and the treetops moving with the undercurrent. I knew things had been washed away and died. I entertained the idea, for a moment, on how it would be if I walked into the water and let the swirling water take me. I stood on the bank, the rain and wind pushing me forwards, my feet unsteady on the sliding mud. There's a dullness that accompanies certain kinds of moments. It can't be fixed and nothing comes in, unless it's wet and cold and nothing remains, except the dampness that follows - a tiring and demanding thing and in the end exhausting. The force of life brings us back and I sat under a tree, older and wiser.

I wondered how many ceramic icons are lost in floods: the hanging ducks flying south; watery kookaburras laughing in an old gum tree somewhere; bad and boomeranged ashtrays. I imagined furniture bobbing against the walls of lounge-rooms, photographs of families, marriages and grandparents who'd seen it all; TV's floating past toilet doors, down wall-papered hallways, loved ones in frames. Something else floated by while I pondered all things bright and beautiful; a bright red jeep. A real one. I suddenly remembered my act on the Fairsea, when I was the immigrant child and petulant, stubborn philosopher. So this is where it ended up. It banged into a tree, circled, looked at me and continued on its way. I wondered if we'd meet somewhere else, some time in the future. I was amazed that it still had the ability to float. I hoped it had forgiven me for throwing it overboard. I laughed at my predisposed nature to make everything figurative. A man on a hill was watching me. Suddenly he turned and walked away, like an old hound dog. I went back to the church hall.

As people arrived, I directed them to the vanishing Milo. It was all I could do. The hall was filling up fast. I was a stranger in another mural of natural disasters so it shouldn't matter. We

don't seem to mind each other so much when nature is more powerful than our own puny lives. I couldn't even remember the direction I came from to get to the town – some road or other. It was often like this, arriving on foot at places at night – the unpredictability of hitch-hiking. Everything was different at night. And there we are. People just talked. Some were even jolly, as if this was a gift or some sign, that they should finally see something more important. The priest was passing around sandwiches and I helped. The soggy congregation looked at me a little bemused. Who is this masked boy?

An old woman with a shivering cat told me that this was bad but the one in '53 was worse. "It all just goes away..." she said, or something like that "...just sit tight". I was in no hurry anyway and eventually the waters did recede...

A major purpose of the study is to reflect on the self, as a personal and professional life and an act of commitment. And this would mean finding those other voices that would hold my commitment together as literary mentors; the voices of veteran researchers and writers; muses of the self. I wrote every day, trying to relive memory, as a boy on a long road that began on a ship; then a young man on other, longer roads and then the man beginning to realise his place in the journey of living a life with multiple and heightened senses of his world, struggling to find the right words. I have been a little overwhelmed at times by the power of writing to reveal the meanings in the life I thought I had led and was leading.

As a writer and teacher, I am used to figurative language, to *make strange* as they say, but I wasn't ready for the mirror ahead, as Narcissus caught in his own act, and as the paradoxical-Medusa, the gaze of self turned to stone, and then the archetype, turning stone to life. Audience in autobiography became an issue, a shape stripped bare, as both an ethical concern and as a concern for its use as a work that might initiate and inspire others; to write and to read, the

story of another human being in the curriculum of change, desiring transformation and in crisis; of how to make a life with teaching a resolution of self. And since irony has always been a welcome and unwelcome part of my life as a human and a teacher-human, I decided to start with a metaphor or two.

From The Tale: Chapter 1

My journey began and grew on the outer edge of life: sometimes the childish observer, nose against the sweet shop; sometimes the reluctant participant, barely grasping the moments that came so easily to others, and sometimes traversing the spaces in-between, fragile and adrift. Many of my early childhood memories are a blur, blocked by circumstance and the monkey of playful neglect.

Beginnings are the first touch of the process and demand the first tentative steps of sounding experience and knowledge for the reader to come. The final chapter, the final part of the autobiography, I decided, should have a circular feeling, that we come around and go around and land somewhere that shouldn't be so surprising, to consider the live and die nature of mortal growing and emerging. The study reflects this structure of life in-keeping with teaching as a living vocation. The meeting of autobiography and research is the study itself, the thesis, which has raised many other questions and issues, to do with systems as well as about the people who work in and with them.

The reality of systemic logic is that individuation and epistemological correctness often construct how we reward ourselves with types of knowledge along the way, in the economics of achievement and acceptance. This tends to limit the roles teachers might play to the singular, more functional contextual behaviour; the duality of living in two worlds of education, self among system (Deally, 2002). And systems can never really get it right. They are bound to the variations

of either right or wrong; another duality of time and place. This may also cause doubt to enter the contexts of living and working with others. And when doubt takes hold it often reduces the possible to the correctness desired of us. Doubt is mentioned many times in this study; in its postmodernist sense and in its ability to flatten life.

Uncertainty is a factor of contemporary life, of teaching and of knowing in research. Knowing things may be different to how the acceptance of *knowing* befriends a more contemplative life when we work. And so the profundity of the study lies in its evocative nature to raise not only the ideal, but also the more philosophically based questions. If teachers were to see more of their stories (better stories and within themselves), and see bigger images of themselves, away from the flattening familiarity of suburban feelings, would they take on the mantle of transformative roles; the potential of the possible?

If teachers would read the stories of others, not just as social research but as evocative tales of the fictional real; would they begin to connect to a more personally, more *present* form, as recipients of a life informed by wisdom and the artist at work; the shaman or sage; or the revolutionary with a heart of gold or just the simple poet, seeing and believing in the nature of the profound word or the simple formula of simple uncomplicated truths? And if this were to become a common knowledge about teachers, would the resonance of these acts inform a public view of teaching and raise the opinions of others about what we do; to a level akin to the kinds of kudos usually reserved for those whose lives are said to match their faith in something more profound than themselves? Would the normal acts of teaching be both felt and seen as acts that transform others into humans that serve the world as portals to harmony and spontaneous truths? Or is this too idealistic in a world managed by temporal duty and the constraints of living a life at work, governed by an unseen minority in a well kept and embattled arena? How do very personal forms of research benefit others who work and live in the same time?

The research questions drive the philosophical and postmodernist face of the study and stand at the base of the work. In an age of commercial melancholy, we need recognise teachers as a powerful and stable social influence on the lives of young people, especially when those changes call for others whose training recognises the need for some consistency in the world. The irony with human nature is that consistency may not be a reliable human trait.

Teachers work in the landscape of irony; the nature of system and policy; the moving goal-posts of vocation. And if Chapter One seems a little too idealistic, the personal romantic view of the scholar, then consider the meaning of loss of the ideal self in the world of learning, that makes a difference in the lives of others.

When we write we miss less, of ourselves and who we are and have become. Never before in my life have I been more aware of what I've done and how much my own sense of integrity means to me; my time of life now, perhaps, but mostly why I write and the confirmation of the writing moment. A teacher's comment seems appropriate:

Teachers tend to reflect on what they do - not who they are. Writing my own story for your study has meant I could tell someone finally about what teaching has meant to me - now that I'm at the end of my life with this career. No-one has ever asked me to write my story before. I wanted to reflect on who I am as a teacher and how my life is also my work.

This echoes my objective for the study: it is not so much about what we do but who we are, and how a life experience is also a teaching experience; to bring our lives into fullness with ourselves when we work. The thesis explores the life-world of a teacher and presents the stories of other teachers to narrate why people teach and how their lives matter in the context of teaching. How does an experience become the living text of another? Who are we when we teach? What does a life reveal? The questions of self and teaching seemed endless,

revealing themselves in myriad ways, along with the many voices of writers in the context of vocational identity.

I began to read with a selective eye and these ‘others’ became my referent guides to understanding, that my truth telling encounters with inquiry are also a relationship with the postmodernist view of language as constructed subjectivity; of how we might write ourselves into a state of confidence to reveal what we did not know. When I write, I meander among the great themes of life and in this way I do miss less. I write myself into an understanding of the unknown.

Autobiography enabled me to receive a more human awareness, not as self importance but as an educational writer exploring the contexts of self as a connected medium and facilitator of reflexive disclosure; and partnered with inquiry, to write about teaching as human curricula. My thesis explores life experience as an opportunity to offer empathy among the ideals of good service; to connect the personal with a public life; a human dialogue of development, with writing as a living guide to meaning; a chance to tell our own tales of *becoming*. I use a poly-vocal ‘position’ within a diachronic structure of emergent voices to discuss the overt and covert face of teaching.

In this thesis I am the inquirer-interpreter of the human in the teaching landscape, and my experiences as a teacher, writer and artist provide a multi-layered perspective in exploring the self, as a living portal to the other. I am the insider-observer, a *metaphorien* guide, to facilitate teachers as authors and writing agents of the self.

Chapter 2

The Research Face

Insofar as the basic principle of their communication with each other had become the idea of not making their individual knowledge public - since it had to follow, as regards the individual, that each Hungarian assumes that every other Hungarian knows what he does and knows it equally well, though they are not in a position to determine what they do and do not know. However, since they can rely only on constant, mutual assumptions, assumptions that enable them to search for the meanings of words by ignoring their meanings, all they can jointly know is that they all have to rely on assuming things of which either they do not know individually or cannot know individually what it is they do not know jointly. A Tale about Fire and Knowledge by Peter Nadas

Background to the Thesis

I engaged with teachers in documenting and interpreting experiences to empower the self as writer; to create literary moments to be read as reflective stories. As the beginning excerpt suggests, the naming of something is also a convoluted truism of identity. The ‘making strange’ of interpretive and narrative research is making the known a little more curious; making the collective individual and the individual a seminal part of the collective; to stop the guessing and retrieve the crucial moments to progress the clarity of ourselves among the dichotomy of our stories. At the same time we might give credibility to the lived-experience. The study does not seek to name the aspects of classroom practice.

Four teachers were chosen as ‘exemplars’ of a teaching world because of their individual length of teaching and experience, as living reflexive examples. They were given fictitious names or pseudonyms for research purposes: Pat, Jane, Frank and Kate. My own story, however, is the major facilitator, a catalyst for the writing experience,

the seeker of truths. I presented each teacher with a chapter from my autobiography, a tale, with a set of questions (see Appendix B) to facilitate the writing, as support to feelings and ideas. The answers are presented and woven into the interpretive inquiry in Part B. However, I wanted to keep questions to a minimum and found the conversations, during and after the storying, fuelled the purpose of the study and desire to continue.

The teachers were free to interpret both the prompt questions and the post storying questions in their own way. The conversations took on their own identity and served to inform my thesis writing in general. There were no formal interviews as such, rather a kind of Socratic dialogue on the move. The post-story set of questions came from my conversation with the teachers as themes that revealed themselves; the questions reflect the themes. At no time were the teachers pressured to respond. The responses took many months. Early unsolicited feedback also occurred from teachers who felt they wanted to offer something to the research identity before they began their own stories; their own kind of postmodernist viewing place. The transcripts of these conversations are not included as data but served to inform and inspire me before, during and after the stories.

It's important to recognise the vulnerability of writing personal story and how facilitation, to negotiate and qualify autobiography, is ever-present in one form or another (Olney, 1998). Facilitation enables experience to emerge, to balance thoughts and feelings. Pat's early feedback to the study:

I've just read Chapter 1 and 2 of your story. I feel I'm in no position to comment on the task you have set yourself, but I can say it has a strong sense that this is an original piece of research you are undertaking; a very human response to stories. I like that. In a way I find it refreshing that your work is derived from people's (including yours) stories. It sits comfortably with me that you have found a way at this level, to produce an original piece

of research rather than read lots and synthesise their ideas into a cohesive point of view.

Initially when you approached me I thought that the act of writing my story would be the end of the process, but in fact, as you have highlighted, was just the beginning. As well I have found that the interactive chats between you and me, and with the other teachers participating in the project, to be quite an enlightening process. There's no doubt I respond and am inspired more so by good conversations rather than in the writing and reading format. That's just me. The process now seems to have a life of its own and I would be interested in a second writing where, no doubt, I would look a lot deeper at some of my significant life events and what they mean in my work and life.

I also have to acknowledge the crucial experience of paradigm, as theory-into-writing phenomena the postmodernist voice allows; my seeker's mind and what is possible, which gives permission to be in an inter-dependent relationship with theory-as-human. Narrative inquiry means a fuller exploration of the self, including the often discussed constructed teacher identity. A narrative inquiry, in its relationship with academic and social research, should not only be an evocative read but an insightful and challenging read, enabling the reader to gain insight or understanding into the self, both as a person and a person who teaches. This is at the very core of the writing process. And it should be revealing: character, themes and identifiable moments of recognisable issues connected to living a social life. It should have the aesthetic power of fiction, of a good auto-read with the ability to connect, at its foundation, not only to the reader but also to the daily lives of professionals who have felt empowered and disempowered in their teaching lives.

Bruner (1995) says that readers of personal stories 'see' the revelations of narrators as interpretations based on their own

experiences. So the narrative inquiry is the much talked about bridge to connective understanding; through the universal, literary medium of story. My role as a researcher-writer and teacher-interpreter is to investigate the narrative links to teacher identity; to act as the servant-leader, of the stories of self and others, to perhaps reveal the unseen, yet felt sense of identity.

Organisation of the Study

The thesis has ten chapters arranged in two parts. At the beginning of each chapter I offer a brief outline of the purpose and nature of the chapter to guide the reader. Some chapters begin with a literary excerpt, chosen from a story or text. I have not included the date and page numbers in favour of a literary profile. The book or text can be found in the reference pages of this thesis. The nature of the work aligns itself to a literary format and incorporates or utilises Polkinghorne's (1997) diachronic structure of emergent voices. Taylor (2013, p.4) writes on the historical roots of quantitative and qualitative research and Immanuel Kant's, "...role of the investigator's subjectivity as central to his/her inquiry of natural phenomena..."

The chapters form around several salient research questions (others are explored throughout the thesis): How is a life story a teaching story? Who are we when we teach? How do our life experiences contribute to the holistic identity of our teaching? How does storying become a reflexive and thus a transformative learning practice in the reflexive experience? My autobiography acts as the catalyst for the auto-phenomena which informs the inquiry itself.

Theoretical Perspective

This is the researcher's qualitative observational and theoretical perspective on the context of teaching, and sets the personal scene in describing the professional life-world of teaching as I 'view' it; the

exposition and nature of teaching in the context of being human. The study is an observation about the culture in relation to the underpinning questions. Richardson (1994) describes layered text as a strategy for placing the writer into the literature and social situations of work with ethnographic inferences. It is the narrative inquiry wide lens focusing both inward and outward on cultural aspects of personal experience (Ellis, 2004). What are the myths? What roles do teachers play? What is human (and dehumanising) about these roles? What are the usual faces we see and voices we hear? What other voices and roles are possible? The thesis is based on several fundamental and conceptual framings: being, becoming and belonging, or the very nature of living a life in the context of others; and being, return and what things might be, or future thinking for teacher understanding and professional worth.

Being, Becoming and Belonging

This is the human nature of autobiography and narrative inquiry as they are in this thesis; identity linked to resonance, as the driving stimulator for the writing. Reed-Danahay (1997, p.13) discusses “...*the ways in which stories of education entail stories of leaving home...*” and other personal life and metaphorical evocations that connect to the next disclosure as inquiry. Danahay’s notion of “...*geographic dislocation associated with modern day academic employment...*” is an interesting connection for example. I extend this to include personal location.

Home and its metaphorical and literary meaning for humans (leaving, being with and finding) is also one of the study’s references. It is the narrative of the writer’s life, from childhood to current teacher and how, for many, teaching has become a home. Metaphor is a figurative convention and interpretive device for personal and professional transformative experiences during writing processes. What roads

bring us to certain roles; certain homes? Autobiography gives individuals a presence and deep levels of experience are made meaningful (Lejeune, 1989). What are the consciousness layers of personal experience? And this presence will act as guide to multiple voices: artist, educator, advocate, poet, home, trials and monsters, masks and revelation. Where do I belong? This may also be the anxiety of any home; in that where we belong should be a place of sanctity and sometimes is not; the irony of settings to pull away or bring tension. Just like the recalcitrant teenager, it can remove its presence to punish us for not being perfect.

Being, Return and What Things Might Be

There is a linking, like all narratives. There are no separate parts as such but method often requires the breakdown of how life reflects context and how that reflects research. Again, it is the sensitive incorporation of theory into narrative inquiry for connective transformation and our “...encounters with ideas, readings and theories are experiences and the meaning we make of them...become part of [the] narratives.” (Conle, 2000, p.58)

Each chapter has a voice or voices that inform the reader in ways that invite an understanding of the thesis. These voices form a *poly-vocal* identity peculiar to postmodernist inquiry. Sometimes that voice is literary, poetic or philosophical, sometimes it is scholarly and sometimes it has a professional-based intent. However, the storyteller is always present in some way; relating, through narrative, the tale of the writer’s experience, to produce the multi-lingual perspective of the contemporary educator. The writer is a multi-positioned researcher, exploring and using the genres of both inquiry research and literary narrative within or between chapters. It is exploratory because it utilises the function and phenomenon of emergence as a device for further writing; the voice of the writer’s inquiry.

The Chapters of the Thesis

In all the chapters segments of *The Tale* appear as the literary referent and connective life-voice of the teacher as a human; the autobiography which is intended to give the readers a sense of the world of lived-experience. The thesis is like a book and, like many books, is in chapters. This is intended to enable the reader to follow both the story and the research narrative as an inquiry bound to the nature of experience and identity. The study invites the reader to view the kind of research presented here as an intimately guided journey specific to the nature of human beings who teach; who reside in the vocation of life. It is a story of personal interpretation and how inquiry acts as a paradigmatic device for understanding identity as both a specific and general term of being and working.

Part A

Chapter 1 – Exposition

This chapter is the writer's opening voice, as a teacher-writer laying the intention, to set up or set the reading scene; describing what has gone before and the driving personal nature of the study and what it should reveal. It also explains the role of the auto-inquirer, the place of a life within a story within the thesis. I provide a rationale for the inclusion of my own story, as a person with a life that led him to teaching and how this life is also a universal life, as a human being with a role, and in this case, a profession.

Chapter 2 – The Research Face

This chapter outlines and discusses the structure of the thesis, narrative and interpretive inquiry, as a method and how autobiography works as a unique postmodernist, multi-paradigmatic

medium which enables story to have its place in researching human beings and people at work. It provides a background to the thesis in relation to the nature of the study. The relevant, salient literature comes into play here, as literary companions, to add a cohesive and wider research-view of narrative as a framing of experience.

I discuss how I apply the *poly-vocal* nature of the study and why this is an appropriate device for inquiry into humankind. I outline how the data are generated, and give consideration to ethical issues and theory into practice identity.

Chapter 3 - Where Do I Belong?

In this chapter I explicate the role of autobiography and inquiry in relation to the thesis as powerful, personal and literary mediators in understanding both the human and vocational journey and often illusory nature of belonging. This chapter continues to inform the wider view of the study and stays close to the auto-nature of the work as a discursive identity. I describe the ideal of the teaching world, informed by the writer's experience and share analogous perspectives on the context of teacher identity.

Chapter 4 - I am the Other

Here, I use both the writer's voice and the voice of 'the scholar' in discussing the study's autobiographical framing as both a search of self and a unifying medium for sharing lives, and in explaining how this acts as a bridge to knowing and knowing others. Chapter 4 invites the reader to take a last, scholarly look at the connection between teacher and teaching and its social worth. Significant discussions unfold. It is essentially the intimate sharing of a life lived through narrative and narrative interpretation.

Part B

Who we are is revealed through the rich detail of the writer, as the protagonist connected to daily work, with critical moments to form a picture before the tales of others in Chapters 5 to 8: me, them and us. As such, the notion of who we are constructs a freedom to move between and around states of my being, exploring and discovering in my own self the valued other, the poly-vocal voice, which extends into Chapters 9 and 10. This is the revelation of self to teaching so that others may see in themselves the valued other and how experience, memory, thought and writing connect to form a worthy research partner in the landscape of thesis work.

Chapters 5 to 8 - The Other I

Chapters 5 to 8 provide the stories of others, the teachers, and their reflective answers to questions about teaching and life are woven into the text as pertinent interpretation-excerpts. These are the story responses influenced by the writer's tales and presented to them from my own life. The Tale and the exegesis are like a tapestry woven as a thesis of inquiry. Generic and guiding questions were asked of the teachers, as reflection and guidelines, and these questions are part of the storying in this chapter. Essentially, the teachers' personal and vocational shared stories were influenced by mine, and analysis shows how my story resonated with theirs as universal writings on teaching; who are you and who are we forms the picture of the stories. It is the auto-ethnographical perspective, and presents as a link to teacher identity through inquiry writing.

Four stories are told (four characters) and individual responses follow that are interpreted as one teacher in the lives of others, for others. It is the knowing and knowledgeable voice of the conscious and unconscious interpreter. In this chapter the inquiry seeks the human

in the tales and, like all interpretation, also looks at both the text and sub text of lived experience; the teacher as the multi-faceted player in the context of teaching.

Chapter 9 – Anything Worthwhile is Worth Repeating

In this chapter I explore the summary of storying and what it reveals: as the archaeologist of common identity and the builder of human forms. This is the archetypal chapter to explicate a deeper viewing point. It is both grounded theory and discussion facilitating the reader's mindfulness.

Chapter 10 – Resolution

This is the final chapter as a critical reflection on the initial questions driving the thesis. Here I reflect on the study, autobiography and my life as teacher, the universal teaching practice and the possible life-world of a teacher in a critical world. I offer recommendations in the form of discussion, derived from both my own stories and the stories of others.

Epilogue

Here I provide the reader with a meditative closure.

Significance of the Study

The objective or goal of this study is to evoke, reflect and explore on the life-world of teachers as a bridged-narrative, with one informed voice explicating how the parts unite a collective identity (a mediator of story). As Campbell discovered (1972), the spiralling nature of consciousness is also the return, but no journey is complete without a beginning and a reflection on Abbeele's (1992, p.13) notion that

“...the voyage needs no other goal than itself and can thus take the form of an infinite wandering.” And meaning often finds itself in the meanderings of exploration. What may be worth knowing are the simple ‘truths’ of what we do among others, every single day, even though narrative inquiry is not about finding or discovering truth necessarily, but more about exploring the ideal of worthiness in the context of what we do (Conle, 2000).

We work to live; to make money to pay for securities in our lives; to pay also for the children we bear along the way, for the type of education we hope will make a difference. But some things are not so obvious. The psyche that drives the linear kinds of daily mind-set also tends towards quantitative plans for others. And while postmodernism posits uncertainty principles, it also recognises the equality of claiming interpretive diversity in cultural and personal inquiry. The writing, the thesis purpose(s), becomes the figurative mantle of experience; the writing relationship that permeates the work’s identity as a major literary concept within the thesis, to remember what we’re doing, why we’re doing it and what we’re here for. And this has its own tremulous position.

The irony in forgetfulness or tension, to move me forward, happens when I abandon the writing for instance, or neglect for any length of time its place in my temporal partnership with my thoughts. I write myself into an understanding of the metaphor’s place, to shift the ordinary to the extra-ordinary which may explain narrative inquiry to itself. Therefore, I have joined myself to the company of others, to make myself vulnerable again with knowledge and identity; a human at work in the fields of knowing, something worthwhile.

Discursive inquiry builds on the knowledge about identity, narrative, emotion and envisioning the self in living contexts. It is specific to individuals and yet has the global opportunity for transformational

experiences in settings. In the social theory of teaching, the stratification of experience has served to relegate the meaning of metaphor and symbolic significance to invisible or mostly unnamed phenomena, usually associated with the rendering of curriculum or the lived mantle of policy. Husserl (1962) wrote about the nature of humans and events and how we are influenced by them, in a constant succession of repeated experiences.

Teaching is arguably the most powerful role one person can play in life, as a living guide to success for others. I have experienced the many-sided complexities this life-world offers and demands. I have created and invented voices; the silent and silenced and the open. I'm interested now in what lies beneath, what's above and what's in-between, the life that brings us to where we are. I know that this life has meant something to others. Habermas (1971) reminds us of the simple questions confronting reflexive practice, about who we may want to be and what is a good life when we work. Where is the line that divides or separates the inquiring self or the private self and the public life we live when we teach? A dialectic is generated from inquiry and is also a stimulant to know ourselves in the context of others, and to play in the shadows of knowing the other; the before and after and the essential now. Reading another's story is a kind of a virtual journey that seeks to coincide with another's reality on ways to see the world. When I'm stuck I forget who I am as a recipient of judgement and activate another part of my life, to activate another role, a more spontaneous person. Art taught me that. The person, the reader, experiences resonance as empathy and hopefully interprets this in the daily work of curriculum and pedagogy. The thesis title suggests that curriculum is also a human endeavour and linked to humanness. Conle (2000) discusses the dialectic relationship of curricula and life, and a life lived with curricula and research, and how this relationship is intertwined in the nature of narrative inquiry.

A curriculum is a story that demands some form of attention, to translate or interpret and people have a curriculum of their own, formed in the human reality of living with time and others. However, policy often forgets the constraints of a temporal human life in the workplace of teaching, and learning and the conditioning of accountability makes truth a casualty at times. We want to honour the road to genuine acceptance; that human nature is the heart and soul of learning. Education may be about other things. A truly committed teacher is always accountable (that integrity again) at any time, mostly to themselves, the faith we have in our own lives and the investment we make in the lives of others over time. This is a resonance impossible to measure and opens us to narrative (Deally, 2002). The study attempts to name this investment.

Narrative Inquiry

Each chapter has a voice or voices that inform and narrate for the reader, ways that invite an understanding of the narrative as a whole. These voices form a *poly-vocal* identity peculiar to postmodernist writing and in-keeping with the exploratory nature of narrative inquiry. Sometimes that voice is literary, reflective or scholarly, often calling on the voices of significant others and sometimes it has a wisdom-based, artist-oriented tone to explicate a multi-lingual perspective necessary to describe a contemporary and very human, educational life-world. A constructivist theory of teaching as curricula, as a purely pragmatic way of knowing something, fails to open us to others, and so we miss more than we know (Giroux, 1992). And we know more than we can say (tacit knowledge) but often have no means of saying it.

The study method of inquiry draws on the profundity and conceptions of narrative, as a meeting place for those who have chosen the professional life-world of teaching. Poly-vocal writing is a

method to invoke experience and memory and activate a multi-lingual and evocative picture, as the measurement of understanding, as proposed by the scholarly exemplars located in my writing-relationship with researchers and artists, image makers and the poetics of experience; to make meaning of a life lived with teaching. This may be enough. And there are plenty of cautionary tales too on the use of narrative as research, as Habermas (1987) and Polkinghorne (1988) describe in detail. Some of these issues are raised in the ethics section of this thesis. Conle (2000, p.58) argues:

...the incorporation of theory into narrative inquiry can overpower an experiential narrative unless the theory, in turn, becomes a part of the story...our encounters with ideas, readings and theories are experiences as well and the meaning we make of them can become part of our narrative.

And the theorists (the literary companions) are cited and named throughout the thesis as references for the reader to explore further, should a sentence or paragraph 'prod' a curiosity to know more about the context of the moment or topic under inquiry. And so there is a deliberate inclusion of the many writers who have contributed to the area of auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry. This is a narrative inquiry, not a theorists' inquiry. No is it a classroom inquiry. It is a human inquiry. But there is always the presence of irony in writing-research, in that no matter what is said, the criticism of a thesis (worth and value) will always be present and is dependent on the reader's interpretation.

The contexts and scope are rich and wide, and so a unique kind of methodology (as a 'bridge') is needed to blend the study's questions and facilitate defined responses, hence the multi-vocal perspective offered here. Understanding teacher experience and transforming teacher perceptions is to do with how meaning 'holds' the self in a more profound place within (Nussbaum, 1990). Curriculum, pedagogy and policy are constructed, powerful, functional and

intellectual narratives. They have an impact on the lives of people and the way they think about vocational life-worlds. Schwab (in Goodson & Walker, 1991, p.160) discusses theory as a 'moribund' research identity in that:

Theory, by its very character, does not and cannot take account of all the matters which are crucial...that is, theories cannot be applied as principles to the solution of problems concerning what to do with or for individuals...located in time and space...

And so there exists already, in the human fields of research, and by its nature, dichotomy, contradiction and dilemma, especially in the area of narrative as inquiry. The challenge for the researcher-writer is to find the voices that pull these things together as part of the landscape of teaching. I draw on the many voices, as literary companions, to enable me to speak with some authority and tread for myself the terrain of understanding narrative and writing as inquiry, as portals for transformative practice. Carole Conle's work (see specific publishing dates throughout the thesis) offers an interesting, accessible and insightful perspective on narrative inquiry, both as a medium for expressing the tales of experience in teaching contexts, and as a 'tool' for knowing how narrative functions as a device for appraisal and ethical experiences.

Conle writes with great conviction and with an understanding of the nature of research in this area and draws on her own 'friends', including the works of Connelly and Clandinin, her early mentors when she studied and taught at Toronto University, and William Booth. I understand Booth's (1988) notion of 'friendship' as it applies to the guiding voice of literature in research and why Booth and Conle are so drawn to the idea and concept of writing and readers as research allies and companions. Conle came to Canada as a young German immigrant; her own road to teaching, and I came to

Australia as an immigrant boy with similar feelings of loss and home and the road of life that led me to teaching.

From The Tale: Chapter 2

I was lost on a train from London, wondering what was happening. We were ten pound refugees and arrived at Southampton docks to board a ship called The Fairsea; an Italian-owned passenger and cargo liner. The ship was a joy to behold, beautiful to me, like a dream come true at last. Even though I was used to going from Liverpool to Dublin and back again, I wasn't really prepared for the finality of this excursion - from land to floating iron and it was something I couldn't take in at first. I caused a great deal of trouble going up and down the ramp, trying to grasp the reality and phenomena of the ship that was taking me to another home. 'There's enough blue sky to sow a sailor's trousers...' some woman said as I watched England move away. I asked my mother to repeat it many times. The woman was middle-aged with a large hat, a nanny's umbrella and a look of troubled curiosity. And I have found the ship of life's tossing and rolling all along the way - in all of life's strange and ordinary places.

Australia needed workers to fill its factories and build its skylines and so I guess my parents had enough sense to try it and see where their wings would take them. The Sitmar Line had won the lucrative migrant contract - to bring people from the UK to Australia on the Ten Pound Scheme. It was a beautiful ship with a history of its own. Originally it was a small aircraft carrier in the US navy - the USS Charger I think. It had a major refit in the early fifties and re-named the Rio de la Plata and overhauled again, renamed The Fairsea (there was also a Fairsky) and used as a cruise ship. There was room for

about a thousand people. Lots of people came over to Australia on that ship, over time, including three other brothers who later became The Bee Gees.

It was a long, sleek-looking ship, lots of life-boats, sailors in white and fresh paint. I roamed the decks with an energy only found in a boy's excitement. There were plenty of people to see, conversations to listen to and things to hide from, like adults, and lots of opportunities to play a variety of roles on a ready-made adventure: pirate captain, major buccaneer, explorer of hope; leprechaun on roller skates, secret agent, eccentric boy-millionaire who'd stowed away and no-one knew and refugee of course, running from poverty and the conflict of family violence. And when we had life-boat drills in rough seas, I'd become Kenneth More on the Titanic, helping people with their life jackets, who didn't really need or wanted my help anyway.

I'd been on ships before, between Dublin and Liverpool but nothing had prepared me for the ride of immigration. And my parents; of the daily, increasing awareness that something different and long lasting was ahead; the inner and constant trepidation of transience they must have felt; of seeking the New World, hope nestled on a wave. We moved toward an unpredictable future and the opportunity to grow and spread the wings I prayed they had.

The change in my father was noticeable. He was less troubled by his family and his self. That's what moving away can do I guess, a change, going somewhere to start again; to go. And so we did. Blue sky, sailors trousers, my mother forever sea sick and me riding sofas in public sitting rooms; a ship within a ship, as I went up the room and then down the room, according to the sea or until I was thrown out by a vigilant sailor. And then the sofa reached the Middle East. I'd never really experienced real heat before. Port Said was a furnace with

strange sights and exotic smells, men selling sawdust-filled leather camels from small boats and everyone in white or shades of colours. I liked the white pants my parents bought me. I was given a cheap, snake-embossed, elastic loop-belt that went around my belly with the majority of my shorts over the top and a striped T-shirt.

The journey was a great adventure across different oceans: one country to the next; one land with its history secure by cultural ascendancy, to another, whose history resides in the conflict of when others came to land, once upon another's time – the leaving of one world for another. I was always thinking of home; thinking what a time I was having as well. I didn't really know whether I should be sad or happy. There comes a time when going meets the reality of leaving. What will it be like? What will become of us? Sometimes even the sea can be monotonous. But the journey never is.

Conle has written extensively on narrative inquiry since her doctoral study (1993) on the nature, use and value of narrative for pre-service teachers. She read widely on writer's like Habermas (four validity claims) Heidegger (resonance), Connelly and Clandinin (stories of experience) and Booth (scales of friendship), from whom she draws much of her work as method and to identify the uses of literature as partnered framing. In this way we become inter-independent writers, the good side of communal acts. Conle retains this independence while honouring writers in her work. Her style is both creative and functional and has the quality of separating those voices she needs the reader to 'hear'. And while it satisfies the entity of literature-friendship, I am in the process of finding my own voice in the writing of this work, a voice that has some atmosphere as the edifice of learning, as the place where readers might respond with a sense of comfortable friendship and acceptance.

So I have drawn from similar or same qualitative authors, as companions, to assist in shaping my thoughts as a human wanting a human life with teaching. And as Carolyn Ellis advised me in 2009, when I was unsure of my direction: “*Do it...just write...*” she said. And read I thought; just read. Interpretation also encompasses what we read from writing inquiry; interpretive writing. This is also collective evidence from which we bear the evolving body of our thoughts as researchers. The writer clarifies the narrative intent and the research provides the platform for representation. I call on the invaluable work of theorists, as ‘friends’ who have trodden narrative paths and as the teachers who became writers; to bear out my own interpretive inquiry, expressing my own voice on teaching, experience and identity, the creation-myth and transformative action of leaving one place for another in the conflation of voices.

Conle (2000, p.55) suggests a strong correlation-relationship between research and the body of personal experience:

Narrative inquiry tends to expose another side of ‘practical,’ the one connected to accumulated life experiences that resurface, usually unnoticed, in daily action.

It is this daily action and the life lived which feeds writing inquiry. Theory can be a partner of metaphor (a theme of literary interpretation) to frame a more holistic encounter with humans seeking a marriage with curricula as the ontology of daily work. It can be the practice of partnership for both research and professional reflexive work. Schwab (1991), for instance, wants praxis to take pride of place. A curriculum should come from reflexive practice as a symbolic phenomenon as Blumer (1969) described so well, along with others like Schon (1983), Turner (1986), Bruner (1986), Goodson (1991), Denzin (2000) and Pinar et al. (2004). From these writers I see that if curricula are symbolic, then it is also a passing-through-

paradox teachers may feel as refractive experience, which invokes Denzin's (1989) central ethnographic question: What's going on here? What may be truly practical is the internal search we initiate in knowing the self, and to engage other, more creative roles (Polyani, 1969).

There is another take on this; the one that not only re-evaluates, repudiates and re-revisions communal practice in the context of teaching (Hillman, 1977), but who we are and our connection to the multiple choices alterity offers; knowing the relationship with the 'other' we do not know. And the duality associated with accepting and rejecting academic findings as universal truths, and living them as the curriculum of daily knowledge, as consequences of an agenda not created by the self, contributes to the inequity and imbalance we feel in communities (Neumann, 1996; Kelly, 2008). This is a translator's position that eventually leads to the subjugation of self in favour of the filtering of a central agency mind-set. Teaching, however, has a *locum tenens* aspect to it, when people live the illusory state of control, managing our place in the world, not really to do with the active self. This may be another kind of marginalisation and can be emotionally debilitating. The disengagement of self comes at a heavy price. We need a way to mark the moments of our lives as the journey we must all take; alone and together.

Narrative in this inquiry, as a mode of method-reasoning and as representation, looks for particular connections with experiences and between events, using literary and archetypal conventions: the journey, character and scene-setting for instance, and has the most chance of telling a lived story authentically. When teachers sense a 'freedom', as the essential feeling of being, that distinguishes them from the context of place and policy, the creative self invites opportunity and takes a perspective separate from and inclusive of others (Hillman, 1983). The opposite is reflexive action through story.

When we engage with meaning, as Angrosino and de Perez (in Denzin, 2000, p. 680) remind us, awareness of self becomes; “...*consciousness raising about the nature of interactions.*” Conle (2000, p.209) invokes Carr’s caution on the move of the inquirer from the ‘I’ to the ‘we’ and the risk of losing our ‘insider’ status as narrators to become “...*merely a good example of someone else’s truth.*”

And so the meaning is in the interactions of research, on other writers of the self; to acknowledge the self as a writer and what we value in others. In the end I am attempting to add another dimension to a much discussed research phenomenon and how the verisimilitude of autobiography enables us to recognise the true position of self in work and cite our whereabouts in past, present to possible futures. When I write my story as a person, as a teacher, and give that story to another teacher to read who responds, ‘yes, I see that in me’, I am acknowledged. What are the implications of this acknowledgement, this validation? As teachers we are also recording, through memory, action, place and time, whether we realise it or not. Narrative invites a response to the experience, and reaches to a higher social awareness for practitioners wanting to name what happens, without falling prey to narcissism, sometimes present when auto becomes personally *automatic* (Taylor, 2003). This too is a matter of ethics and audience.

The privileged struggle has been the notion of voice; to identify the friends who enable me to talk with some conviction. Auto, the ‘I’, is also the lens to another voice; the ‘we’. It resides in the matter of both human and personal truth and what is meaningful, and when interpreted with a focus to learning, becomes a portal to levels of knowing and, more importantly, to the levels of connecting self to bigger human issues. Connect that self to creative work, that connects to research, and we have words that might be read differently about what we all know together, as similar yet different

experiences we know reveal themselves in our everyday work 'habits'. And in the discussion on what the work is and will be is the research, is the road we are walking now, in the same fields of human toil. The trick, if there is one, is to call on these voices as they appear to me, the writer; as referential muses, as the recipient of the resonant self, who, in turn, finds meaning in what we do in the daily world of teaching.

To understand the literary voice is to give time to the writer, to reveal himself in us (Foucault, 1979). As I have suggested, readers should find their own meaning in the writing as a narrative guide and dialectic medium, to find their own discussions with the life they have with teaching, and as a vicarious convention, find empathy. Spicer (2005) discusses autobiography and how it gives proximity of access to others and how the intimacy of this kind of inquiry enables the reader to 'become' the author, incorporating experience. This is among the higher goals of the thesis, the main reasoning within the writing: to transform the reader into an active writer of the self; to find some comprehension of how a life *is* the work. Metaphor becomes the medium for knowing the self in the context of daily tensions. Literature and Art have been the best concerns of the mediators of human play. And so the thesis identity is writing inquiry, on the teacher-writer's world; to investigate a life and a life with research, alone and with my reading and writing companions; to 'shape' me or guide me on the significant road ahead. The study is therefore a story of a life and of lives; to act as catalyst-mediums in narrative form, to evoke and make strange, and to make meaningful sense from the sometimes estranged nature of teaching others; the self-debating of self in translating curriculum for others.

A Method of Research

Inquiry and auto-ethnography are mediums for shaping and sharing experience, and expression, and the essence-sensation of narrative, and my understanding of its role, are consistently discussed throughout the study, so that the reader is in no doubt about its significance as a research method. Narrative accounts are written from personal perspectives, among the multi-paradigmatic nature of postmodernist theory as interpretive research. Chapters 5 to 8 contain the stories, the living data and thick description of experience. At the very core of this study lies the role creative non fiction plays in knowing another human being. Shared narrative has the ability to transform perception and bring fresh perspectives to the workplace. Story also has the power to move people to other kinds of understanding. It follows then that the chosen teachers, their lives, should have enough experience and conviction to want to tell their tales; when reflection means empathy for others. They are compassionate people with stories to tell. What will those stories reveal?

Sampling Theory

The study is in two parts: Part A, the research identity and Part B, the autobiographical identity, which includes the stories and responses to pre and post questions, woven into the thesis; to explicate the journey with the self in teaching, and through the shared experience of writing and responding. How did my own journey lead me to teaching? Is this the same journey my colleagues were/are on? How are they similar roads? How is a life also a teaching life? I chose teachers from my own workplace; a very busy, inter-cultural and diverse metropolitan senior secondary campus. And for the participants, this will be their last significant reflections on the road from childhood to teacher retirement. The selected

teachers (appointed through performance criteria) have been at their current setting for over twelve years. The long road of teaching and learning has brought them to this place, to bring their vast experiences to students who are often disadvantaged, disaffected or disengaged, trying again, after 'failing' so many times, as well as those young people seeking workplace training, and those seeking a place at university when the odds are against them. The participants represent an excellent sample of the teaching world. All have taught for over thirty years, with varied life experiences, including roles as leaders.

My goal was to 'capture' the personal life-world of a human location. This thesis is not about classroom practice, curriculum or student issues and concerns. And so it was important to me to have a sample of teachers who were used to various professional development experiences; who tell stories about their own daily lives among others, usually as social anecdotes: where they've been, their families, issues and concerns, like mortgages, how much super will they need and regular, normal accounts of their daily challenges. This was important because the relationship with both the researcher and the invitation to respond needed to be in-tact and secure; a safe and creative, reflective environment. They are truth tellers by nature, with an extremely high sense of integrity; they are who they say they are.

The teachers had also participated regularly, over a period of ten years, in university classroom research surveys or classroom environment research. They were used to reflecting on what students say about their work: self-efficacy, young adult ethos, student-teacher relationships, involvement and so on. They were used to responding to their lives as teachers in classroom and staffroom environments. The study placed their broad experiences in a more

personal context, aligned to storying, as discussed in detail throughout the study in multiple ways and multiple voices.

The participants were used to being reflexive and flexible in relation to time and development. And I made this a temporal agreement with creative practice; to allow for reflective responses in a climate of flexibility and support. Four teachers were invited to participate in the study through the reading, writing and speaking (conversations) process of responding. Each teacher received an autobiographical segment; a story, tales (known as The Tale) from my own life. They read the stories over time; multiple readings, to digest the multiple aspects of the tales and then write their own responses about their own lives supported by the prompt questions as guides (see Appendix B). However, they are free to respond to the tales and questions in any way they feel is appropriate. Firstly, I wanted the tales to ‘touch’ them; evoke or to inspire them. Creative and divergent thinking and writing can do this, especially in the context of shared lives. And if I know you as a colleague I am also guaranteed the added benefit of curiosity.

The task was to write their own stories in direct response to my individual tales. Small segments of their larger stories appear throughout the thesis/exegesis to illustrate or support a discursive moment on a theme or subject. After finishing (drafting and editing) their stories I gave them ‘time out’ and time to read their own stories as much or as little as they need to, and the stories of the other teachers. This is something they all wanted to do; to read the stories of others. This was also a choice. The post story questions from my interpretations explicate what themes have emerged, respond through further storying, and then, like a tapestry unfinished, I wove the responses into the exegesis as thick description, to provide the meanings they attributed to life events (Polkinghorne, 1988). Within this framing, the autobiography (as both a professional agent and

recorder of experiences) serves as a mediator to 'carry' evocative content; a medium for interpretive disclosure.

The Autobiographical Chapters

How much did I know about each teacher? Only the little social information they have told me, even though I have worked with them for over twelve years. Our lives have crossed through the normal pleasantries that accompany collegial relationships. I know them as excellent teachers, where they were born, their classroom subject identity, their complaints and positives; what they have done for students and what the students say about them; kinds of expected, perfunctory knowing associated with school environments. My stories 'spoke' to them and the emergent writing provided the catalyst for the ethos of narrative inquiry.

There were decisions involved in the selection of chapters for them to read and what chapter would be the most appropriate. Conle (2000) talks about the self in systems and so how will the teachers read the tales? What tales will have meaning? Tales that contain figurative language are more likely to ensure a desire to respond metaphorically and with a felt sense of ownership that accompanies the storying of self (Grumet, 1990).

Interestingly, Grumet and I have both 'conscripted' international mime artist and theatre practitioner, Bob Berky, to work with our students in years gone by. She recounts her classes (in Pinar et al., 2004) and how imagination can be used to 'estrangle' us, to see through familiar actions and leave only the vital identity of an experience. Elbow (1986) suggests that if we seek a relationship through figurative connection (metaphor), we reveal ourselves at a higher level of abstraction. Would this provide the buffer of emotion to ensure ethical and emotional safety? Dewey (1934) says that

different ideas have different 'feels' and that desire is a conversion of interest into objects, and for Conle (2000), objects are the content of her stories. And the object also offers a reader-writer persona, as a memoir that will always be pre-selected and scrutinised. When we write autobiographies and accept the relationship they have to research, we cannot claim anonymity unless it is used to protect the participant. Ricoeur (1984) says we are our own stories and what our stories say about identity is a life with teaching. Individual tales could not be given to teachers without some information of the person, however small that may be. And the choice wasn't without its share of trepidation.

I gave my first chapters (1 and 2), when I was a boy to Pat. He is the oldest of the group with a mentor's soul. Pat has been teaching over forty years and still retains his compassionate self to work with the most challenging of students. He also has the writer's desire to work with words and was my first choice for those sensitive chapters. He would be able to see a fuller identity. To Kate I gave Chapter 3; the chapter when I arrive in Australia as a child migrant. She is a long standing English teacher. She might see the pathos and beyond, into the issue of home as a universal metaphor. She would also appreciate the humour of the boy and his 'estranged' ways. For Jane, Chapter 4; my road to primary school, my first experiences with poetry, my neighbourhood friend and my early attempts at storytelling. Jane has seen almost every country in the world as a seeker and historian. Jane works at a dog's refuge home on the weekends. But there is something missing. I felt this chapter might bring to her another sense of herself. Chapter 19 I gave to Frank; the Geography teacher. This is my story of death, debilitation and other losses. I chose Frank for this chapter because of his own experiences with these issues, his empathetic nature.

I think too that it didn't matter; they would see a link, not just because my basic claim is that teachers have life experiences that infuse their teaching worlds, but their willingness to accommodate the human aspects of this life in favour of an empathetic face. They will provide the 'we' to the 'I' and so the premise is that we act as bridges to bigger worlds for people seeking hope's human roles. If this is true then the system's public view must acknowledge that there must be more creative and unifying ways to honour such people who offer stability and faith, as models of a bigger interpretation; the opportunity we give others to invest in themselves. In this way autobiography plays a significant part in the curricula of humankind, as both inquiry and validation. Systems need the confidence to give up what they require, in favour of someone else's worth; the people they employ to teach others.

I could invite the teachers to read the entire autobiography and have them select the chapters they felt 'drawn' to or want to respond to. My much debated feeling in the end is to have them read salient moments; to 'place' them in the tenuous position of reading 'informant' experiences, as an unpredictable and surprising segment of another professional's life-world; the roads we take by choice and the roads that lead us to other paths, and in this way, stimulate the responses to the meta-narrative among the tales and within themselves.

Within the stories there are the various elicited allusions to life among the everyday, from the trivial to the most profound, and it is these realms of reading and responding that show the fully human potential of reflection. Stories remind us of the detail in experiences. What is the reader learning and will this initiate a desire to miss less of their own lives?

Did I have certain preconceptions, certain preordained notions to begin with? What was the fundamental issue before I enrolled on the journey of the thesis? The truth is that I want to give something back before I leave the profession for good. On my own journey I have seen the slow erosion of the human content of teaching in favour of policy. The irony is that we have so much on the plate of human need now, through changing local and global situations, urban and social demographics: inter-cultural, refugee, human rights education, political expediency, testing and accountability, poverty and peace education, vocational choice and social change, changing and suffering tertiary identity, and so on. In the beginning I wanted to simply (although it turned out to be anything but simple) tell stories; to place my life in perspective at this fragile time.

I realised it was a life that led me to teach others for a common good but also because teaching gave me a real sense of my self. On reflection I could see how much of my life experiences were bound up in finding a soul I could share; of being someone who had a story to tell, about something more profound than I am; something worth living for and writing about. If this is true for me it may be true for others. If this is true, then what does teaching mean to the wider world now; to the general public looking for saviours; types of answers to personal and global issues and concerns? When revolutions happen it is often the teachers and academics who are the first to go. In the context of university study we might call upon the profundity of transformative practice; the archetypal role of a university as a place of contention, confirmation and redemption. And if this is true then it is in the doing that matters. The goal is itself, as I have read so often. We need only trust the affirmation that accompanies the search. Leishman (1964, p.12) interprets the thoughts of the German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke:

What he called his 'work' came to mean for him more and more the experiencing and expression of reality, of intensity of being, and about his conception of reality and being, as about his dedicated search for them...

The Role of the Thesis

The thesis is an invitation to explore our own lives as teachers, through storying life experiences, who we were and who we have become. The best way to do that is to write. Through both personal and professional revelation, the thesis unfolds the curriculum of human beings. It is content after-all. As this is primarily a study of self in the context of teaching, the profile is academic in nature but holds within it the form of pedagogic thoughtfulness (Taylor, 2003) because it invites writing as a way to attend to experience as narrative. Writing is the key referent-informant and the reader is the person who is invited to see, to read and to feel; to become part of the stories presented here and through the metaphor of bridged alliance, share their own experiences, as and while they read.

This study invites teachers and the general public to look beyond the pages and see the other, the teacher with a voice, who implores the other, the reader, to consider the writer in themselves; the reflexive teller of tales. The study is exegesis in nature (on a life lived and the lives of others) where reflective discrimination (research) is tied to a body of work (autobiography) that constructs the concept of reader-resonance, a major language-structuring principle for inquiry and evocative writing.

Resonance, as I have described it from my own work and from my reading (Heidegger, 1962; Booth, 1988; Conle, 2000), is the process of reciprocated meaning that flows to further understanding which leads the reader to the inquiry purpose. When we read we create

metaphorical connections to render personal meetings with experience. A meeting of human beings and being with place and time and context has a contingent nature. The narration, the inquiry, gives voice to experience, as a life lived through personal story, and a life lived with teaching. The study draws on multiple aspects of narrative, including Habermas (1987) and Taylor's (2003) ideas of verisimilitude as authentic narrative truths. The teller moves from role to role to convey the voices that are part of the ethnography of writing inquiry. Theory then, is explored, as Conle and DeBeyer (2009, p.41) refer to it, as "...*measures of literary friendship...*", as and when needed, as informed framing for the writing. It is important to discern which voice is being spoken and that the auto-voice is infused throughout the thesis as a referent 'tale' to invite the continued reading within the inquiry, to infer the power of narrative.

So, why not find measures of collegial empathy? Conle and DeBeyer (2009, p.56) cite Habermas's communicative action which claims truth in expression, corresponding to the intention "...*to understand one another as participants in a life-world.*" The tales stimulate the readers' mantle of self. Resonance as conceptual structure, as a method, as Conle and DeBeyer argue (2009), is the experiential, felt response of an audience. Resonance enables evocative description, as a recipient factor and as a guide to teachers in order to break the stance of what to write. The questions, as universal framing, are offered to facilitate the writing and telling experience. However, the main field of exposure is the disclosure and the inquiry of experience. Carter (1993, p.6) describes story in teacher research:

It is a narrative with a subject matter which encourages the projection of human values upon this material...story is a mode of knowing that captures the nuances of meaning in human affairs...and can only be demonstrated or evoked

through story. Story accommodates ambiguity and dilemma as central figures or themes.

Inquiry-integration is a key feature of the thesis text and storying, whether as research or tale-telling, becomes the object of the research and a bridge for professional development (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). The use of autobiography as educational practice and method partners inquiry, as a literary reference-informant device, to deliver personal story and reveal experiences in the lives of teachers; the creation of resonance. Resonance as it applies to this study is based on the concept of the meetings of narratives and what the teachers feel when they read the lives of others, when, as Conle (1996) suggests, one narrative meets another (the reader's experience or tale). Doll (in Pinar et al., 2004, p. 501) talks about exploring cultures that are "...*local in origin but global in interconnections.*" Many older teachers especially, have led interesting and exciting lives with varying experiences in teaching. They've also had experiences that have caused them both joy and pain. Teachers work in the public eye, and there are expectations from community, administration, colleagues, parents and students. This accountability takes its toll.

Anecdotal and other evidence from those I have consistently cited, suggests a loss of self in those moments. Research becomes another way to honour and acknowledge commitment. I offer my background in literature, my life with teaching, 'survivor', colleague, guardian, imagist, poet and facilitator; a search for the real and implied life-world. I also offer the writer-reader practise in and on reflection (Schon, 1983) and the practice of personal and professional feeling states; to become the other, yet same person, through the writing and resonance of evocative narrative. The study moves backwards and forwards in the chapters, through the voices; academic, personal, storyteller, scholar, philosopher, practitioner and artist. These are

poly-vocal perspectives to offer a completeness of the study as the end product. I have chosen to integrate professional theory, human being and resonant experience by integrating my own autobiography within the thesis, as a device for stimulating what John van Maanen (1988) calls 'confessional tales'.

Questions generate deeper insights into the identity of the auto-responses and the connection to self and teaching. The stories are holistic examples of how resonance works as a 'meeting place' for reasoned feelings. Research continues the process of linking response to teacher identity through narrative, in order to maintain the integrity of the method, which reveals itself as a literary text, to be read and published for teachers on the personal life-world of teachers. The narrative takes into account two fundamental issues: self writing and contextualised, narrative inquiry. The autobiography is essentially a catalyst for resonant deliberation. The writer 'sees' the teachers and they have seen where the writer has been and how they link to the shared identity of teaching. Each player has a part to play for the writer and the writing. The autobiographical segments are designed to act as a life-referent, stimulus and join personal experience to teacher identity and the role of connection to explore the collective state of experience, and offer potential meaning through inquiry. The trilogy of experience generates a process on the ways professional journeys are viewed. The data collective should inform theme and the construction of meaning.

The method chose me to some degree, in that 'a way' to explain a long life in teaching had been a constant and co-inhabitant desire to influence the field in another way, another manner. I am a writer finding his way through writing. I believe in the transformational and poetic power of literary evocation and narrative as a crucial element in the selection of expertise and form. I work as a kind of literary 'home' informant or 'insider' who constitutes a blending of

anthropological autobiography and narrative, where the writer is the study and catalyst for data collection within the culture of participation. Denzin (1989 and 2000) has distinguished multiple forms of biographical ethnography and among them is autobiography as a case for research, and a reference point for personal response as data. Reed-Danahay's (1997, p.6) work on Denzin's research is revealing in that: "...for Denzin, auto-ethnography entails the incorporation of one's own life experience when writing about others." A key factor of the inquiry is the presence and articulation of narrator as 'medium' and mediator of experience. Reed-Danahay continues (p.9):

...the concept relates more closely to 'native' autobiography, rather than to native ethnography. The life story has ethnographic interest. The multiple perspectives...articulate the difficulties encountered when trying to distinguish between ethnographic or an autobiographic perspective. Increasingly, ethnography is autobiographical and reflects cultural and social frames of reference.

The thesis is exploratory-exegesis in nature and literary writing of collective identity. Narrative identifies the common and the differences. It is cultural reflexive research. What is the character of human curricula? Pinar et al. (2004) suggest that curriculum is the process of persons coming to form not content. What are the links between personal story and teaching? This is the backwards and forwards, inward, outward, becoming blurred, to make strange, the familiar in the unfamiliar between personal and the cultural thread of the writing. It is looking inward especially, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and through, refracts and/or resists life's cultural interpretations (Ellis, 2004). The writing connects the estranging nature or ambiguity of the human field, with cultural identity, and explores the verisimilitude of experience through narrative forms to

explicate meaning. We look inward to expose what is vulnerable about ourselves and what this may add to cultural phenomena.

The Nature of the Data

Again, and in accordance with the unique blend of writing inquiry, findings are the emerging themes with implications for professional development, training, curriculum, political consideration and the self in the context of collective meaning. The study should provide its own private and auto-ethnographic 'recommendations'. What we 'find' is cognisant of the material we read and how, in turn, this relates to us as human readers, and more importantly, what the reader will then do to shape others through practice.

Booth's 'measures of literary friendship' (in Conle & DeBeyer, 2009) outlines the dependent nature of data collection in the quality of invitations and shared level and coherence of the work for meaning and revelation. The thesis writing extends this to include collegial empathy through the stories; to see more than the everyday in a fellow teacher's life, and extend that to their own daily work. The researcher interprets the phenomenon of shared writing. The emergent nature of the stories as data makes the writing an unfolding narrative. Narrative and autobiography are the data of experience, of what Dewey (1934, p.196) named as: "*...emotion connected to tension...a result of harmonious relations between the organism and the environment.*" The thesis is a source for collaboration as self generated modeling.

Data are emergent in nature, in-keeping with the method of research and used when the writing demands types of input; my teaching life, the referent writers of research or theoretical framing; the responses to The Tale chapters and responses from teachers and the autobiography itself, as research 'paradigm'. The discursive inquiry forms the main source of data, in partnership with the literature, to ensure a critical voice overall, as a poly-vocal tapestry woven into the

thesis-text. Providing context is an essential quality standard of interpretive research to enhance transferability as data source and the interpretive, inquiry writing does this. The thick description comes from the trilogy of research literature, *The Tale and the stories*, the relationship between the autobiographical content and inquiry. The thesis is a collection of narrative data which incorporates research literature and reflective writings to explicate meaning. Conle and DeBeyer (2009, p.45) suggest a way for data collection as revelation in narrative inquiry appraisal which applies to the emergent interpretation in this thesis: “*We gathered narrative data when an audience encountered the narrative (story).*” And when an idea, concept or revelation was encountered.

The teachers’ responses are used to stimulate other reasonings and feelings about teaching (see Appendix B). But as Conle (2000, p.15) explains: “*...there is never a total identity in a temporal world: no two people, no two events ever completely show all aspects of a particular time and place. There is never a complete understanding...*” Multiple and extensive notes on readings and became the theorist’s link, which then became the narrative bridge on the writing itself. Notes became wider thoughts to other parts of the thesis as conceptual understandings. The journal was my personal companion and reveals itself within chapters as part of my poly-vocal voice. Clandinin and Connelly (2004) discuss the importance of journals as vital ways to activate the written experience for research data. Teachers are invited to read the chapters and respond to the questions as a form of feeling-association.

Autobiography then is the platform that supports the interwoven discursive nature of the study. It ties personal to professional identity, as a powerful reflexive tool of discovery and links this to possible application.

Ethical Issues

Narrative inquiry requires the writer to recount (a dilemma of all narratives); that something similar to do with experience has gone before. It is in the telling. What is knowledge? How does experience meet epistemology and survive as research? As one teacher said: “*Getting the balance right is always difficult.*” Schwandt’s view of the telling (2000, p.191) reflects the uniqueness narrative offers to “*...interpret in a particular way what the actors are doing...*” And this also applies to settings and types of knowing. Narrative has an inbuilt responsibility about ethos and the ethos of inquiry (Conle, 2009). Any writer of experience is an interpreter, in some ways by default, and this is not without the presence of irony. The evocative writing of experience for research purposes contains both explanation and the seduction of metaphor.

The thesis has to make educational as well as metaphorical sense to readers with relevance to contextual understanding. The writing in this study seeks to form new friendships (Booth, 1988). Ethical dilemmas have restraint (academic honesty) and freedom (story), to ‘travel’ openly and with the ethos of literary integrity, to contain context as a wide and narrow framing of experience and make for the reader, a reading of possibility. Academic freedom is not boundless like fiction; but it does bring further awareness, tacitly or openly, to individuals who might affect what others do in practice. And of course teaching is not all joy, fields of pleasantry filled with the sights and smells of flowers in spring; we merely have to run where fancy takes us. It is fraught with agenda: interruption, misunderstanding and accountability, even within the most amiable of settings.

Experience therefore has more than one function: it provides access to certain content and it is needed for the appraisal of that content. A conjunction of art, experience, and morality (or ethics) is now on the horizon.

The writer's previous works poses ethical issues on how much of this past writing should be used. The issue of self plagiarism becomes apparent. However, narrative inquiry denotes its own method in that it has a peculiar identity linked to writer-reader perspective or framing. It is the writer-researcher's responsibility to adhere to past, present and future realities connected to what is and what is not content and context. All writing in the context of ontology should be a vital consideration in using past works, including the poetics of feeling with reasoned experience. It may be a crisis of representation, but for the literary-researcher, past works are part of the auto-experience and should be used with discretion, pertaining to worthiness and the concept and action of verisimilitude. Many of the feelings and thoughts about a teaching life have changed and many have remained and grown into deeper awareness. Anything worthwhile is worth repeating, albeit with renewed integrity to the contextual moment and time.

Conle (1999, p.13) talks about the dilemma of a temporal life-world and evokes Grumet's plea to teachers to avoid the loss of self and to find expression in telling experiences: "*There is a struggle implied in this new path, leading from the 'old self' to a new, narratively contextualized self.*" And so the writer needs to revisit what has gone before and edit the tale as a journey (van Maanen, 1988) into forming the extended life; the life that is still teaching. Information is also the action of contemporary understanding from undeniable history. This is not fiction but the experiences of the self, including what has been written before. Having said this, the work should contain a renewed awareness to current thoughts and practice. Teaching is past, present and future and calling on past works generates a continuing discussion because we write from a present perspective. A postmodernist paradigm has its own secrets and revelations (Bok, 1983). We cannot set ourselves above what research is still unravelling in all areas of qualitative knowing, and we should not

restrict any writing because we wish to secure some form of epistemological correctness; to withhold what we might discover about the *human* in teaching. Researchers write for multiple audiences, then and now. Therefore, the writer's works are on display when needed, like the other friend in need of further description. We should remember the role of ethics in aesthetic narrative inquiry (Taylor, 2003). If we want ethical teachers then the *auto* of autobiography is a temporal 'gateway' to expressing the self in the context of life as Education. Conle and Debeyer (2009, p.42) discuss the nature of context dependent research: "*The act of appraising the implicit ethical qualities of an experiential narrative is, in itself, a context-dependent ethical enterprise.*"

As teachers, we are the context to better places; the symbolic, ethical and meaningful road. We also live as metaphors and are players in a wider game. So the ethical dimensions are not as clear as the participant-informant identity. Interpretation is always open to bias and this dilemma is countered by the literature on narrative reasoning, with selected works to frame thought and the nature of experience in research. Interestingly, Neumann responds to autobiography as a form of anthropological discovery (1996, p.184): "*Autobiography should be read for its anthropological value rather than its position in the genres of literature...*" and how individuals "...act as vehicles of meaning..."

We must also remember the 'I' as a constructed and live human being that forms out of justice and moral judgement. Individual reading denotes the meeting place of narrative, ethical inquiry. Experience is the key feature and shared between reader and as a resonant phenomenon (Conle, 2000), framed in the context of professional understanding, from over thirty three years of service. Narrative is also a paradox of inquiry; it has a constructed in-built potential for multiple readings, like all storying. In this study the narrative

features invite a 'vicarious' experience for the reader (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.7). The content, the subject and the writer, merge as a conflation of experience to invite an engagement with audience. The 'appraisal' lies in other voices to augment the nature of educational practice and bring added dimension of reality and potential for the reader. The writer is the inquirer in the end, bound to human exploration. The study is also a dialectic; the confirmation of words to move others beyond the normal self. And for teaching this is crucial.

Narrative inquiry and ethical reasoning is a conflation of the professional adult reader's encounter too, and as Dewey (1934) suggests, is the study of experience. The participating teachers are adults with their own stories to tell. The teachers are invited to write what they feel comfortable with and what they find to be salient examples of their lives and a life with teaching. Choice is always an ethical part of the research relationship. Connolly and Clandinin (1988, p.31) reveal some light: "*Your curriculum is a metaphor for understanding your students' curriculum.*" Curriculum is also a metaphor for issue, agenda or choice. And this has implications for knowing the self when we teach. What experiences in schools shape our teaching selves? Conle and Debeyer (2009) talk about Booth's notion of responding to narratives as friends or the *company we keep* (1988); to access empathy.

The researcher may also be considered at risk; the vulnerability of disclosure and how this impacts on the researcher's emotional state. And there is the ethics of expertise; the question of whether I have the experience to facilitate or lead people in creative, professional and personal activities. I have worked in a variety of sensitive and fulfilling settings; secondary and tertiary education Arts-based programs and study, including pre-service teacher development; theatre director and actor training; Drama in Education; Drama as

therapy with maximum security inmates, profoundly deaf children, occupational therapy students; remote teaching service; Education Support school-based Arts programs, creative writing and various roles as mentor and guide.

Confidentiality and anonymity are crucial and assumed, with the right to withdraw at any stage of the study as a voluntary choice. Participants have received a thorough written and verbal description of the study (see Appendix A). No actual names are used in the study that would identify participants or settings. Teachers are identified through pseudonyms or given fictitious names. Data collection is planned to coincide with the lives of participants with no disruption to daily life and work. Constructed questions and methods are in close consultation with the thesis supervisor and participants and drawn from literature and development on the nature of questioning for research (Conle, 2000).

In narrative inquiry there is the issue of impact on the text. How do I respond to the responses? Will the final text continue the 'friendship' offered in the inquiry? Full disclosure of the nature of the inquiry is vital. Will a sense of meaning develop from the inquiry? The inquiry is centred mostly on the researcher's framing, as an observer and interpreter of meaning. There is also the matter of what is revealed and what is left behind: revelations, memory and myth for future acts (Bok, 1983). Grumet (1978, p.288) makes some excellent points about aesthetic and action research as: "*In order to reap the disclosure that lies dormant within our curricular forms, we must claim them in our familiar, daily experience and then estrange ourselves from them.*" And this must be partnered with human ethics. This identity of disclosure must have the key ingredient of integrity. Writing inquiry makes the kinds of human resolutions needed to make sense of past, so that we can return to the present with future

considerations and ask: Will this provide meaning as seminal to the actions of others?

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The importance of the study is conveyed at all times and has the added affect of knowing why teachers are engaged. Again, it is essential to explain the study thoroughly and present it through invitation and interest to secure openness. The presence of confidentiality was introduced early. All participants were notified in writing of the option to withdraw voluntarily, without prejudice, at any stage of the inquiry. No tapes or disks were used during the study and all responses were edited by the participants before final entry.

Chapter 3

Where Do I Belong?

The chapters in Part A lead the reader, topic by topic, to the teacher stories in Part B where the ‘pieces’, the chapters from Part A, come together in the thick description of the thesis, the main focus and climax of the study. Chapter Three explores the deeper human and illusory nature of belonging. I discuss the search for self in knowing and knowing others in meta-dimensional ways and the often adopted human ‘states’ that attach themselves in the need to belong. Chapter Three is the penultimate chapter of Part A and informs the reader of the intimate nature of autobiography. We story ourselves, to become who we are and at home with who we are.

Autobiography

The very nature of telling a story means that somewhere along the way, the writer is persuaded by the power of language to describe objects and subjects in deeper ways; to draw, in that moment, a place where people might gain a fuller sense of belonging. Writers ‘belong’ to this phenomenon and I often think as a teacher, there are other things at work that construct the way I am, in my attempts to find harmony, but sometimes sense that I am adrift in the curricula of belonging; the convoluted acts of finding simple truths again.

Authority is always present in academic writing in one way or another; the dialogical perspective from those who acknowledge the presence of disciplined revelation. Research is persuasive and we bind our writing to the voices of others who have gone before. Writing the personal, the individual matter of individual significance, as Bakhtin (1981) thoughtfully reminds us, often has to run the gauntlet of persuading others about the privilege of being acknowledged for our internal authority, our internal state of belonging.

And so I employ the voices that appear to me as I need them. The study is all autobiographical; even my academic voice, drawing on learned companions travelling similar roads.

From The Tale: Chapter 8

Meditation was impossible for me. I was driven by the need to push on and be in movement - to worry time and take the loneliness away. Only the action of moving could do this but I longed for the ability to sit and ponder; plan perhaps or be with things more important than my own distraction. I made a card out of leaves and found a small stone, placed it on the veranda and left. I wondered if the people there were safe. I knew those cane fields were full of snakes. Snakes know and sense intention good and bad. They're the genderless and living metaphor of the world. I'd read a little about the Apache and Hopi and what they said about snakes, human doubt and human fear: 'Snake does not bite man; snake bites what man thinks'. I knew the hippies would be okay then. They were giving and well meaning; existing with and extending their own kind of inclusive bliss. All animals have stories and I had mine.

Finally, I arrived in Brisbane and slept the first night under a tree in the main park. In the morning I woke under a roof of fruit bats, just hanging around, wondering who I was. They looked like a committee of Bella Lagose look-a-likes, ready for cocktails. I didn't mind bats. I'd seen plenty and read about them but I wasn't quite prepared for the size of these amazing folk. They're accepted residents of Brisbane, haunting the urban skyline. At that moment I would have given my own cape for a piece of fruit. I must have resembled a bat in my dark-blue sleeping bag - eyes the size of blind holes. I lay there wondering if their radar was detecting even the most delicate of my movements.

We played like this for a while until I was prodded by the incoming intensity of light and knew pretty soon I'd also be seen and chased away by other, more human kinds of uniforms. 'No work here...' was all I heard. I started to fret now. My stomach had shrunk so I wasn't craving but I was in need of something to eat just the same. Cities have a way of exposing frailty. It's the trade mark of progress and the endless pre-occupation with busy-ness and security. And so I left, to walk again through suburban roads and highways that lead me to open spaces.

I found a ditch opposite a fringe roadhouse on the outskirts of the city, heading south. I was tired, but anything was better than the mask of family and sibling tension. I felt free and if not, left alone. I slept, cold and hungry and relieved to be out of the city. All cities have great histories, beautiful, ordinary closed suburbs and vistas, tree-lined streets, parks and manicured lawns - but when you're alone, poor and a stranger, they take on a very different hue. I came to understand that cities are also other things to those less fortunate.

Very early the next morning I watched a delivery van drop off the daily supplies at the roadhouse and stole some milk, bread and cheese and like an animal, I found a secret place nearby to eat in safety, unwatched by anything that would interrupt a good meal. Milk and bread never tasted so rare and I had food left over. I felt calm and I began to notice how nice the day was too. When life was good, I took the time to notice how things grew and blossomed and how the shades of things offered me more of the world. Perhaps in these moments I had conquered my own awkward need to find tension at a million miles an hour. And sometimes when things were bad, when I gave power to loss, I was reminded of how the scents of nature on the air weren't really there for me - the trickster at work.

It tested my individual faith and became a nagging reality about situation, until hope broke through again. And there is always hope - of constancy and renewal. My naiveté saved me from too much reality most of the time.

I left a note on the door thanking the roadhouse people I would never meet. A car stopped and took me away again. I was dropped off in Toowoomba. I thought the desert was cold but this was bad. There was a snap freeze that night. I was too cold to hitch and I was desperate for warmth. There was an orchard nearby, on some local council or city property of some kind, an apple or pear orchard. I made the foolish mistake of taking my clothes off to put other bits on. The cold quickly found me and I couldn't shake it off. I climbed into my bag but it didn't matter. I curled up, my back against a tree. The ground was crackling around me and it was getting colder by the hour.

I walked around the streets. A homeless dog saw me and without hesitation pushed its body next to mine. I knew how it felt. I grabbed it and went into a nearby telephone booth. I put as much of the dog as I could, under my cheap, chequered, lumberjack coat and we sat there all night, shivering together. We talked about life, being a dog, being human and being alone on freezing nights and questioned why we were there. Finally, the light was coming and we felt better. We were both very grateful for the company. Cars were on the move and so I said goodbye and got onto the road in case that one car, that one person, would go by and I'd miss a good ride. A car stopped and a man said he wasn't going far but he'd take me to where he was going. A phrase I heard many times.

The dog was standing on the curb. He looked at me for a few seconds and then walked off. I followed his trail for a moment and then I saw the place where I was trying to bed down. It was an orchard at the front of a very large hospital for the

mentally ill. Some journeys take us to the same spot, over and over. The sudden warmth inside the car was overwhelming. I said I was sorry and fell asleep. The next thing I knew the car stopped and I was outside again. But I was warmer now.

My body had recovered a little and the sleep was good - the little things. I thanked him in my own special way. I made a habit of smiling at drivers when I was dropped off, so they could see my thanks and know their generosity was important to me - to give them a grateful memory.

I was drowsy and walked to the local cemetery and slept for hours under a poplar tree, the smell of dog still around. I must have looked disheveled but I didn't care. Poplar trees have a peculiar mood. They hiss and clap when the wind demands; sounds that make them live. Eventually my eyes opened to fading light. I'd slept all day. I had the strength to sit up and commiserate with epitaphs in the shadows: Mrs this or Mr that; Bobby, son of Beth, died of one thing or another; dearest son, you shall not be forgotten; past, present and future lives, familiar and unfamiliar. It's disarming when sleep turns to rest, which turns to peace - permission to halt the turning world. The leaves of the poplar offered a noisy support to my young and groaning limbs.

I watched under a cloud of shapes and went to sleep again, huddled in my polyester and cotton womb, daddy and mummy. The stars were doing their usual startling dance and I was tiny again; a boy in a bag, in a cemetery, filled with the dead and tales of stone.

I have chosen to inspire and to motivate if possible, other teachers to write, not just as people in the vocation of telling tales, but to enact the mantle of the writer, and therefore to engage the power of language to construct an historically present personae (Richardson,

1994). What does this do? Autobiography has been recognised by numerous people for its presence as a mediator of consciousness. And, in this form of study, it creates revelation and the unexpected because it brings a local, specific identity of experience, while offering an internal community (Bakhtin, 1981). The teachers were invited to live a life again, filled with the ethos of the implied author, as Booth suggests (1988), as a writer of human practice. Pat's early response to the study:

Initially, when you approached me I thought the act of writing my story would be the end of the process, but in fact, as you have said, it was just the beginning. I've found the interaction between you and I and with other teachers participating in the study quite enlightening.

The process seems to have a life of its own now and I'd be interested in a second writing where no doubt, I'd look a little deeper at some of my significant life and teaching events.

Telling someone anything becomes simpler and simply more powerful when we make it personal to our own experience. When we feel the confidence in knowing our own worth, we are likely to be feeling the fundamental attributes of empathy and compassion, friendship and collegiality, so that no action is separate from the human dilemmas we face every day. Autobiographical writing is a lone endeavour, and yet, it can also be the beginning to knowing others; the secret yearning that others will also know me in the end. We travel the historical and contemporary roads of right and wrong, and through acknowledgement and the felt meaning of acceptance, the road feels safer. And in the public eye of system living, this can mean we stumble a lot less.

Autobiography becomes the self action which makes or creates the valued colleague and the valued person. It seeks a greater truth, especially in the context of knowing the face of something like

teaching and what other teachers have experienced. The writer tries to see all; the feelings, the metaphor, the intimacy of location and the researcher tries to find all; the wider gaze, the limitations, the possible, correctness, ethics and academic acceptance. Autobiography has the ability to soften the often debilitating nature of doubt and confronts the relegation of self (Grumet, 1990). It may take experience to notate experience, as quests and trials; the fiction and facts of belonging. The recording of any journey is an evolution that also exposes the fallible nature of security: home, duty, values and beliefs are questioned and may not exist in the next minute as they were.

Transformation is not just a willingness to give something up in favour of a better view; it is a realisation of the trilogy of a connected world; gone before, now and future experiences. And these are dependent on the willingness I have to explore a place I have never been and may wish to leave; the transient nature of being. Indigenous people understand the nature of transience as an opportunity to evolve with nature and the natural order of things. Writing a curriculum for others to teach, is serving up kinds of transient information, for others to know, according to social and commercial demands. This paradox has given birth to policy as well; the documents of what is and should be so and changed when another voice permeates the scene.

Autobiographical writing is the same life, in the irony of living with curriculum identity, as a vocation with sets of predetermined content. Writing the self is also an existential inquiry of understanding; of what we name later for ourselves, and what we have chosen to take responsibility for, when we write what has already occurred and then facing the mirror of a collective partnership. Where is the place where a sense of self might flourish as the moving abstraction accepted by others? Could we bear knowing we are alone? And how does autobiography gather me to the meeting place of common discovery,

the ultimate fear my story may never be told?

What is the nature of paradox in the work we do? Does a curriculum pretend to be human? If I don't believe, how effective is my own discourse for the public good? And the two personalities of autobiography may contain the natural duality of irony and contradiction. There is also the necessity of readers to return to their own lives. I witness my own self as Spicer suggests (2005), and in return, offer continued experiences for others trying to get a fix on what it is we are all trying to get a fix on, together (Polanyi, 1967). When autobiography is joined to this collective striving, it becomes a crucial medium for interpretation, as an understanding of how we are in the context of the professional other and how this, in turn, presents an opportunity to know others in a world of leaving one home for another. And it may be that autobiography has a way of reconciling past, present and future (Goodson, 1998) as central to the internal and developing discourse on who I am as a teacher. The paradoxical nature in finding the strength in my own voice when I engage with interpreting theory too, has not gone unnoticed (Cixous, 1997).

Interpretation as Mediator

He came to the hut of a fortune-teller and an interpreter of dreams. He wanted to go in, but he was scared of the visions they might evoke, the requests for spiritual appeasement they might make, if he told them about his dreams. When the Light Returns by Ben Okri.

Interpretation is a matter of resolving the lived experience of temporal contexts, to retrieve what would otherwise be the loss of that time with experience. In this way, inquirers act as mediators of human and research experiences, and interpretation becomes the urban alchemist's human practice, as the living library of experience in the sanctuary of resonance. And, at the risk of losing the reader's

support, some things just are, as ingredients of the mind we try to name. The goal of interpretation in this inquiry is to save, conjure and savour experience for the reader to come, as agent and witness, in the context of life. So, in mythic, metaphorical and in terms of the wisdom we often seek, who are the gatekeepers of knowledge and values? What are the deeper analogies? What roles, what kinds of people, should go deeper into the unconscious of the world, to mediate knowledge and carry significant understandings to communities? In the urban world, psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors are usually the people endowed with very specific analysis-oriented roles which inform our views on the nature of self and life. And we have learned much about the nature of the psyche. It may be that the goal of psychiatry or psychotherapy is to arrive at a resolution with the self that says, 'it' just doesn't matter. We are alone, to imagine, that what is happening to me, is happening to everyone (Jung, 1969).

The living process is available to us simultaneously on two levels of consciousness: healthy fantasy and healthy reality (Hillman, 1977). In 1992 Hillman, said to be the father of archetypal psychology, suggested that after more than one hundred years of psychotherapy, the world is getting worse. In this climate of pathos and irony we sometimes impose our collective will on those who serve and learn in public roles, as benevolent policy, resulting in a passive-aggressive reaction to knowledge giving and receiving (Geertz, 1973). Teaching is seen as a public service and teachers see the role entails public service. The dilemma is that if we believe this then we are endowed with only what the public sees in us. If I can feel a greater cause for my human being, I may be able to cross into an inter-cultural understanding about the etymology of my contemporary life with knowing and being (Polanyi, 1969).

Other Worlds

Other worlds, as shamans know, have multiple settings; multiple meanings of being with cultures and those who adopt their meanings, to develop, preserve and nurture identity. Shamans have multiple roles to play in the community as aesthetic practitioners, functionaries, healers and mediators. In shamanic terms, the etymology is that of the mediator or practitioner who can visit what is above and below, as the anthropology of collected conscious and unconscious states of being (Nicholson, 1987). Shamans have a collective responsibility to define, clarify and enact the heuristic messages from other worlds. They have access to ontological meeting places. In cultural anthropology, shamans are an integral part of identity and regarded with certain rites of passage, and accepted as the gatekeepers of certain portals.

Shamans are the intermediaries or messengers between worlds and knowledge, restoring the balance of the physical and the mental, often regarded as the connected soul of cultural identity. In this way they are the archetypal travelers of identity, moving in space and time; the journey of becoming as individuals and communities. The shaman has the privileged cultural right and expectation to interpret the multiple dimensions to affect identity. In research this is the hermeneutical act. Again, the analogy lies in the shaman's role as an example, in the modern teacher's willingness to give up the commercial total reliance on social information; to enter a more wisdom based circle, to value once again the transient nature of knowledge in a contemporary world.

These were ways to acknowledge the unseen as intuition or acts of a special curiosity, and the accumulation of archetypal sources of knowing. In the suburban world of teaching, this kind of analogous interpretation of identity would have to be acknowledged and accompanied by curricula, as just another part of the role we might envisage. This is more easily done in the context of Art or Literature,

or in discussions on sacred psychology or mythology (Hillman, 1983). The cultural role of the shaman brings guidance and offers the healing perspective to restore balance through acknowledgement and cultural facilitation, even though the role leads to unexpected places in postmodern practice. Accepting the unpredictability of an autobiographical reading for instance, as a literary mediator, is working with the same tacit understandings we face when sharing human knowing. And so the lengthy analogy of the shaman extends to the writer and then beyond as the knowledge-bearer. What is possible in the world has always stemmed from the imagination. How do we describe and recognise the dynamics at work in experiences? Are there people willing to seek at deeper levels of knowing when we study to become teachers?

Seeking the meta-dimensional language of interpretation is an act of revelation, and aligned with Ricoeur's (1984) metaphorical function of allowing the possibility of valid autonomy. We enable the unfolding identities of people to surface through the adopted role of interpreter, to play them out and experience them openly as lived dynamics we might transform; to voice for ourselves what 'normal' descriptions do not. We note the mystical as a conscious ingredient of Shakespeare's writing for instance, and so we are moved to understand the relationships in the curiosity of profound description. Bettelheim (1976, p.63) suggests that, "...*the content of the unconscious is hidden and most familiar, darkest and most compelling...*" We consciously and unconsciously ascribe to a moment or action the meanings of the plural self; known and unknown.

Interpretation is an act of multiplicity; of seeing not only what is important for the reader in the context of the research but also what is important about where the writers, the authors, place themselves in the common world of teaching. Positioning is a feature of writing and a way of looking at this conceptualisation of experiencing, as teachers sharing real time in schools, to view the pre-conceived

notions and ideas about educational settings and authority as kinds of projections. We may live the roles assigned to us by others in order to placate or pacify attitudes or save the intention of our work from dying. The analogy lies in understanding how meaning serves the seen and unseen.

Erickson (1986, p.127) poses a fundamental question when he asks: *“How are meanings created and sustained in daily interaction?”* Schools are pre-ordained settings, as Blumer (1969) purports and they allow both the real and the symbolic to interact. We experience something more of our personalities. And sometimes we fail to recognise the value in building metaphor in these moments. When we enact inquiry, we construct a different kind of vocabulary, a repertoire of images we call upon when experiencing the layers of inference.

The role of the interpreter is to offer a sustainable life with work through the act of explication. The archetypes and myths which both serve and govern the plains of understanding also offer greater awareness. We may sometimes fall short of reaching significant understandings and expectations the setting requires of us because of time and task restraints. Systems have a kind of benevolent ‘fog’ which sometimes acts as the pragmatic leveller of insight and innovation, Schon’s (1983) place of preferred analysis on human issues and the daily forces that try to limit us. Professional development is mostly about enacting what others want to make of us. There is life within systems, and this is the human curricula of work, redeemable in the interpretations of the lives we have lived (Deally, 2002).

Transformative action, as I understand it, reveals meaning among the words, thoughts, actions and feelings of a human being; the living story, to revision life. Real discoveries are made among the pressures of life and this is significant reflective action. When we write of ourselves, we recount what is also familiar, and the everyday

situations we take for granted are often the moments we forget make us human. Humans are black and white; shadow and illumination, when someone takes notice. And constructing identity, how and who we may want to be among others, is both a biographical and an autobiographical experience. It is interdependent on the moment and the kinds of incidents we explore and witness and the incidents which are exploring us. It is a fallacy to suppose we can construct our teaching lives in isolation. This has implications for settings when we translate curricula as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) suggest.

When we write about our experiences, we also build ideas of ourselves, the 'states' we want to try out in the context of others, acquainting our development in life with our future lives. We construct myth through shaping the dialectics of time and space. In an educational sense, this means actions which last. In a teaching context it is actively attending to what teachers know and how we assimilate experiences. We also create myths when we unwittingly play the passive sides of ourselves and present development as knowledge worth knowing.

The Bringer of Life

Roles can be defined in archetypal ways. So it is with writers and researchers who seek to explore the types of roles we play in the ontology of research. My role as writer-researcher is to explicate or draw out the life of the teacher; to bring life to the person who teaches and to 'see' the stories through the eyes of artist, who sees the aesthetic nature of life as it applies to teaching, poet, who interprets a life as natural metaphor; colleague, context, resonance and philosopher, the politic and profundity of reason and being with teaching. This is a meeting of thoughts, of what is known and unknown to the interpreter for the sake of meaning. The discursive nature of the thesis presents me with a social opportunity to honour an obligation to teaching, as a literary forum, on the lived experiences of teachers, both as human beings and as educators. Interpretation

brings experiences to life because there is another story in each individual's own account. The interpreter therefore is the living portal, whose role requires research and its creative act, to inquire about those around us, to bring a fullness of being, away from the nagging self and into the realm of discussion. And it will be the reader in the end who interprets the real meaning and relevance of the work. Writing can do this and art can do this; to regain a sense of order more akin to the balance of place and time.

Our increase in social standing, social awareness, does not necessarily increase our happiness in life. We need a literal reminder of the ways we have been or dare to be with the world, as travellers through time, to arrive at places within ourselves that suspend our existence, long enough to see its worth. And when the dreamer sees the dream and waking life as ordinary, the interpreter sees its possible form and its meaning for the dreamer to revision another, deeper sense of self (Hillman, 1977). What do we see in the images of self and auto-ethnography?

The places where teachers are creating self and group identity are constructed environments to do with the transference of knowledge; of syllabus and content. We are in the precarious position of having to constantly prioritise time in relation to what is expected of us, in cerebral ways, and relative to demands. Models of accountability; and assessments can also be kinds of fiction, despite the best-practice ethos they may purport to serve. And labels often attach themselves as part of the experience of teaching. Identity is based on the shaping of information. Rarely in this state does the teacher get the opportunity to feel the naturally connected roads of discovery: where we come from, who we are, and where we may be going among the forests of complex growth. Growing professionally occurs amidst didactic and linear paradigms, and these are kinds of imposed narratives. We are navigating the dominant images which pervade

settings and we may, unwittingly, construct ways to circumnavigate the human of these experiences.

We often walk the paths of predetermined behaviour; the risks that are ultimately meaningless in the context of possible enlightenment. Experiences in this state may not build identity but foster misplaced loyalty to the usual self; the antithesis of worthwhile action or the position of the anti-hero perhaps. Meaningful self disclosure, for instance, builds identity by offering intimacy, the sensing of an internal support. We see what belonging is among the common trials and labyrinths of daily settings.

Theseus accepts that there is more at stake than just the conscious awareness of conflict. Somewhere in psyche there is a sense that the labyrinth he is about to enter has made his world exist for him through the acceptance of the trial. The act of slaying the Minotaur brings hope to others. The meaning rests in the doing and the imagined experience. Life storying confronts chaos or confusion and enables teachers to deal more effectively with concerns (or the unknown) that emerge from experience (Goodson, 1998). This is also professional development. We might even learn to appreciate the value in getting lost in favour of the trial. We would know each other empathetically. However, there will always be monsters. Crucial incidents happen when we succeed in finding meaning. The hero emerges from the dark. We all need the opportunity to release and realise the images and acts that describe us (Hillman, 1983).

The story of the Labyrinth is also about monsters unseen, until the moment of recognition, death or rebirth. In contemporary terms the labyrinth is the machinations of secrets, revelations and the constructive and destructive nature of vocational life; the consequences to do with failing or kinds of spurious participation. We remember the acts which 'lure' us into the roles of survivor, victim or

the anti-hero; an identity imposed by others, instead of knowing ourselves in other ways. When we explore alternatives, we also confront the repetition of tired service. Writing life is the bringer of life and the drawings of self awareness.

The Storyteller's Act

Life writing, autobiography, is an internal dimension, born in the critique of self. Hillman (1983) noted that most writing on the self does not include the many archetypal modes of inquiry the psyche holds within the multiple layers of identity. The characters are often just a function of the tale, minus the detail of deeper, more creative excavation and resolution. The teacher is not usually a writer, the self inquirer at work. Social paradigm often dictates the types of reflection we undertake. Most of the teachers in this inquiry are excellent verbal tellers of their own experiences in and out of school, often humorous and detailed oral accounts that are shared in the settings of staffrooms as interesting hallway anecdotes.

Teachers lives are mostly oral lives, bound to instruction, information and decoding, to get things right. The evocative telling of a tale requires figurative immersion. What is often missing, although informative, is the explicit feeling of human toil and what the experience means for people who have chosen to live among the fields of pedagogy every day, usually presented as good statements of fact with little attendance to formation (Bruner, 1995). There seems to be an absence of integration, of interdependent entities within the experience, the absence of meaning, even though implication is present. The function is an obvious template of common truths; taking on, unwittingly, the beliefs in events and relegating them to the literal translation of socially scripted circumstances. The story is meaningful only as a kind of factual, professional outcome of our

remembered pasts. And this may not be conscious among the many logical relationships that inhabit daily teaching experiences.

The role of the inquirer is to author experiences and offer opportunities for teachers to author themselves. Epiphany is often located in interpretation. Much of the teacher's lot lies in sequencing the event and what happened in a particular year but not what the experience might offer memory. History rests largely in the domain of choosing which experience applies to particular kinds of professional development, which may be better or more satisfactory than another. The brain works to include what makes sense and often forgets the internal meanderings for the more abstract, but no less important offerings to do with connectedness. History is mostly linear by nature, and therefore accounts are fixed in recollections. Recalling allotted experiences has a tendency to place the editing mind in the forefront of memory, where one experience is edited out and another in, or what is an acceptable response to work (Carr, 1986). Language is often a victim of careful planning and how others might see us; the teacher's way of watching themselves, which may lead to a kind of internal, vocational doubt.

Teaching breeds persona, the otherness of a life, while maintaining a kind of co-dependent loneliness of self. Carl Rogers (1970) observed several important things in relation to loneliness: one is that separateness is a basic part of human life, and we can never know what it is like to really know someone else and how this feeling maintains a special kind of separate behaviour in us. The other is the suggestion that anomie is a lasting characteristic of human feeling and a person is most lonely (p.111):

...when [s]he has dropped something of his outer shell or façade – the face with which he has been meeting the world – and feels sure that no one can understand, accept, or care for

the part of his inner self that lies revealed. Each person learns, early in life, that he is more likely to be loved if [s]he behaves in certain ways which are approved by significant others than if the behaviour is the spontaneous expression of his own feelings.

Rogers explains how we develop this “...shell of outer behaviours...” to “...relate to the external world...” and how this comes to form the vulnerable self, to rely on the machinations of our relationships with others, as mirrors of the temporal self. An interpretation of someone’s story may also be flawed and imposed with the inquirer’s sentiments; the questions to be resolved. I am not a tabula rasa of interpretation, but rather a living testimony to a time spent in narrative, as a teacher, writer, artist and urban dweller. I have other roles too, like most people who teach. We are not inexperienced either about context or feeling. A section from Jane’s story:

The key words: support, kindness, friendship are repeated every year by different students, however I still love to read: ‘You have made a huge impact on my life and I will never forget it.’ I have been called incredibly kind and a great teacher who has had an impact on their lives. However, it is these hundreds of students who have had an impact on my life. I am what I am today because of the challenges of the classroom.

I believe that I am paid to read what I would read anyway and I love telling stories. My life has been one of meeting kind, supportive and caring people. Even today at the ripe old age of 66 I still have around me colleagues who will help me do whatever I need. I have brought my life experiences to teaching and I can identify with the issues that many students face in the classroom and in life.

Writing evocation is often relegated to effect and not how the experiences affected them and how this continued as a life journey.

The personal life becomes another account aligned to public policy. However, among the statements are the areas of feeling, waiting to engage the reader as a human being and colleague. Whether the interpretation is accurate is not the predominant issue of inquiry research, but the implications of the story for a wider agenda, and the responsibility the public has toward the populace of teachers willing to join their own lives to the lives of others. What kind of role models do we seek? Is it important to be taught by someone who is kind and who has had kindness showed to them? How is this person revealed in the classroom? It may be comforting to the public to know that this is a person who sees young people with equal feelings and who might influence them to see others with feelings similar to their own. This is a resonant act of the hidden future, an act of faith in the act itself.

From The Tale: Chapter 4

The next year a couple arrived from New Zealand to teach at my school - Mr and Mrs Pitman. He taught my class and she taught year ones. He taught us four-square tennis, the haka, Maori songs and folk dancing; all those extra things that make a life a whole and attach boy's feelings to something other than scraping knees and discarded jumpers. Every afternoon he would take out his big white and blue guitar from the closet and teach us songs and my favourite; Red Sails in the Sunset. I remember him telling the others that they were not to call me carrot top and that I had a name. I became a person in that moment – someone to reckon with in the scheme of things. He read to us: February Dragon and Sun on the Stubble.

He also had a kind of infinite patience and I was getting an idea that being in Australia was good and there was a willing adult, capable of seeing me at last. We sang and danced and played new games. I was feeling at home, like the smell of happiness that lasts forever. I experienced learning as fun and the kind attention of being noticed and rewarded for who I was, even

though my difference was felt as distance from others. And nothing really lasts forever, except what others leave behind in us.

One day Mr Pitman was asked to leave - no one really knew - some controversy about his style I think. He was too visionary, too disruptive perhaps, in a system based on finding regularity and forms of recognisable discipline. On his last day, everyone was crowding around. All the kids loved him. I sat at the back, abandoned by circumstance. I never said goodbye to him and I came to regret that - little and big things together. I stood under the lemon gum and cried until my shirt was soaked with loss. I couldn't go back to clay, frozen states of my self-hypnotic and invisible world. He enlivened me and led me to see beyond my private eclipse. Tears and the oceans that feed them are the living and longing embodiment of loss.

So I stood and felt the halfway edge of the stillness that usually owned me. I was unable to move. Yet in that place I could travel the depths of my senses, as the dampened bark, giving empathy to a young and germinating soul. Loss and leaving are part of the same tree. I was the migrant experience again, from an inner, more connected land where I had grown and come to call my own. I'd also come to see myself as a refugee around those who had established regular suburban lives, families that talked and grew love, rooms with a safe past, steady as the wise bone I always longed for. And in him I had accepted the little differences in me that made me boy and calm thing - the liberating heart.

The inherited soul of teaching is the wisdom that accompanies the archetype. And there is soul in this kind of knowing (Hillman, 1981); the soul of self and the soul in education; the heart of our work. The ability to inspire each other is important and this awareness might also include the active roles students take in bringing the teacher into a fullness of opportunity. Teachers take more active roles when

they can 'see' what they might be; a willingness to surrender to deeper experiences. To learn willingly may be an act of vulnerability, giving opportunity a place in a temporal world. And vulnerability is sometimes confused with powerlessness. These are things we've all experienced with groups and within ourselves. And sometimes we just practise what we know is there.

Good teaching thrives on the distillation and sharing of ideas brought into a state of cognition for exploration, with little distance between the functions of *knowledge-giver* and *knowledge-receiver*. The boundaries of teaching are changing and evolving and the magic is in creating the balance of teacher-professional and learner-professional when we present ourselves to students; the story and the storyteller. We validate and emancipate ourselves when we choose to be the things we explore.

The sharing of the teacher stories led to a greater interpretation of self in more vital ways, as the process developed, as the focus on human experience became more intense. Sharing our stories among colleagues, discussing life and teaching experiences and how they seem to meet in space and time, is a seminal affect of the storyteller's act. When I am admitted into another world; when I am taken to a place where I might access another view, filled with feelings that might hold me in the face of adversity, and in the happy moments of simple things, I can say with openness that I have arrived. I have looked at the shamanistic world since I was a very young man, left it, came back to it and left it again, and in the journey of knowing its place in my life, I came to appreciate the connection of how a simple interest in something becomes meaning, even in times when the esoteric mask has its own way.

Writing and Experience as Ritual

We restore trust to its rightful place when we reach for ways to live with integrity, fully and in balance with others, as most professionals

are aware. Living with the literal and symbolic nature of Education requires an acceptance of the passing-through-paradox that lies behind teaching. Wisdom resists possessing anything that supports knowing as absolute. The transitory and ethereal nature of knowing and knowing something intrinsically is borne out through expression. And this is what ritual does (Eliade, 1985). Somehow a more certain life is validated. We are accepted in both the spiritual and temporal moment. This is why ritual serves the inexplicable as well as the ordinary. How do we initiate teachers into the world of 'higher' practice? When individuation is present and integrated into the life-world of social acceptance, we reconcile those often unseen differences of our collegiate selves (Giroux, 1987). The true meaning of relationship, as Ricoeur (1984) suggests, is a past and future discourse that relies on the composition of present meaning.

Michael Tournier's (1989) fictional narrative tells of a married couple who decide to have a party where they would announce their intended separation to a number of friends. Instead, the friends begin to recount their various life stories at the table. The stories influence the couple to reconcile and reunite the human difference. One friend tells a story of when two bodies are discovered, curled up on a beach, entwined and rapped in cloth as statues bonded in sand. As the teller describes it, a seemingly mad dancer appears from a hole:

...then he sprang up and mimed the return of the tide, as if he wanted to accompany it, encourage it, even provoke it by his dance. African sorcerers do much the same when they want to induce rain or drive out demons...

The storytelling friend goes on:

...and so he feverishly sculpted couples in the wet sand just uncovered by the ebbing tide, and both his dancing and his sculpture stemmed from the same inspiration. "I celebrate the pathetic fragility of life", he said...

After all the stories are told and the friends have left, the woman and the man disclose their feelings:

Man: You didn't stand up, you didn't tap your glass with your knife, and you didn't announce the sad news of our separation to our friends.

Woman: Because the inevitability of our separation no longer seems so obvious to me since all those stories have entered my head. What we lacked, in fact, was a house of words to live in together. In former times, religion provided couples with an edifice that was at the same time real – the church – and imaginary, peopled with saints, illuminated with legends, resounding with hymns, which protected them from themselves and from outside aggression. We lacked this edifice. Our friends have provided us with all the materials for it...stories as a panacea for couples in distress...

We learn as teachers that relationships are significant to building identity. This is a crucial responsibility to know not only thyself but the other who teaches next door; who may be striving to find the links of difference, to impart meaning and locate how much of the 'I' is prepared to address curricula. A curriculum should hold the potential for teachers to see its full interpretive face, based on how willing we are to see more of ourselves in what we do. A feeling is a narrative page on which we write the risks worth taking. Many teachers are used to knowing the world this way too. We are used to being the messenger; the Hermes of the classroom. Gadamer (1975) understood the value of hermeneutical discourse as an interpretive act; as a language of personal context or as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, as a waiting discourse for teachers willing to position themselves as researchers of hidden agendas.

The Open Page of Mystery

The use of the word *mystery* is controversial, especially in research. Mystery in this thesis refers to its literary and more open, imaginative face; its relationship to narrative in general, and not as a means to escape rigorous scrutiny. Mystery is also part of the shadow we cast. The sharing of story is in knowing what we did not know about what is missing from our own lives, and why it is important to collect our place in the world. What is expected of me? While we may feel that our lives should be our own business, it is vital to share with colleagues the open pages of experience, professional feelings and the stories that make us similar. Teaching can be both: the mystery of how it all came together in that moment (the metaphorical road) and the fact that others can see us at work; unfolding (the masks at work). That's what makes excellence so admirable.

The mystery in every personal journey describes the mirror describing us in the daily lives we live. Turner (1969) describes ritual for instance as a social phenomenon. It integrates action and trust and acknowledges time, place and identity. I think this is the fundamental face of ritual. Can writing the stories of our lives also be a ritual?

Rituals mark time. Is the unravelling of self an initiatory experience? Some things are both an open page and mysterious at the same time. Ideally there should be no ambivalence, but institutions, like people, have a way of creating masks; the shadows others walk in. Marking our most significant moments with a powerful way of experiencing social life, describes another place, where fantasy and ideals meet reality, and where other realities meet (Deally, 2002).

Storying a life is connecting point-of-departure, which might signal the value in facing the world among others with compassion or understanding. And in a way storying is experiencing the metaphors we often forget make us human when we work together. Bruner

(1986) calls for Education to be beyond the normal functional world to create other ways of being in the world. The act of writing self for meaning is a way we can take feelings of ambivalence, trepidation, anxiety and re-direct them. We can do this through a sense of acceptance. However, Gadamer (1975) was aware of the danger in knowing someone from what they do and interpreting that as a mutually defined relationship. The process of connective writing makes the invisible, visible. We reach for a clearer picture of ourselves in the experiences that alter or define our feelings. The light becomes brighter.

I talk to teachers about leaving everyday experiences and accepting another reality, and how this is a function of writing the narrative self, and how this might be a kind of action seeking importance. The fellowship of this experience is a special contract we make with ourselves. We enter the law and edifice of meaningful action. I try to open teachers to the notion of kinetic place and schools as proximal knowledge special members of cultures possess. What if we drew our lessons and asked others to trace the lines of our thinking-feeling state? What is an artist and how do artists describe the world? Is a drawing or print a narrative?

Do we recognise ourselves when we see the marks we make in time? I ask teachers to name the places and moments in their own lives where simple rituals take place. They might name the significant presentations offered in preparing for something special. From there it's a simple jump to the relationship between self and writing and the role of audience. I am also conscious of the importance of immersion through association. I relate this to the power the symbolic has in our lives and how we're all interested in the unknown in some way, especially the disengaged or disaffected in our classrooms. What is it about a visual narrative for instance that has within it the elements of invitation or mystery? What are the universal symbols?



Monoprint 1

I ask teachers to name a time when they faced something unknown and how they felt. Eliade (1985) describes special places where we might establish for ourselves a more permanent identity. Is it possible to comprehend how much we lose in the linear temporality of life? Truly focused writing reveals the simple truths within experiences to unify the self. Both the creator and the witness experience meaning.

And so interpretation is both distance and participation; as an opening experience as Ricoeur (1981) asserts. He may be correct about poetics being the bearer of understanding, as the most enlivening way of existing.



Monoprint 2

Inquiry takes my voice and adds it to the voices of others, whilst narrative takes my voice and gives it another, through metaphor and description; the detail in the redemptive act. Interpretation should not suggest ownership of texts. Rather it seeks the verisimilitude of experience of the other, and interprets that as an acknowledgement of the diversity of personal and professional kinds of ontology; that teachers are the knowledge of themselves. The 'other' is the one I often count on to distract me, to counter the ordinary viewing place, to remind me of the forgotten detail in human contact. Autobiography is the mutuality of writing, among the shared wisdom of narrative.

The Harmony and Balance in Writing the Self

Loyalty to a vocation or system can sometimes mean a divided self. "Loyalty..." as Ursula Kelly (2008, p.43) argues is "...adherence to the demands of identity – can make fools of us all when we fail to consider the grounds on which it is forged, its often simplistic and harmful battle lines, and what it requests of us in the name of being loyal subjects." As a counterpoint to her biology, she infuses biography, to discuss

educational responsibility and to question the “...grounds of identity...” in consideration of the implications of our “...cultural practices...” and “...to study what we might become as much as what we are and were and to imagine.” She continues her discussion on reconciliation in her teaching; her place in the context of the world she teaches (p.47): “Until now, I have resisted writing about ‘my place’ in relation to environmental politics and ecological concerns. My reticence – tangled thread of loyalty that it was – implicated me further in the sorrows at hand.”

In her writing she confronts the complexities and contradictions “...into which I was inserted...a teaching and writing reparative gesture – to rekindle hope, to catch a new glimpse of a dream, and to learn to belong, differently.” This is an echo of my own heartfulness and willingness to respond to reading and writing as a crucial reawakening of my position and my responsibilities, including the conflicts loyalty presents. And in doing so, writing has demanded that I remember too the times when I was irresponsible and forgot my pledge in moments of laziness or those bitter-sweet lessons. Researching any human qualitative context, any postmodernist perspective, offers testimony as meaning, as a kind of “...newly attained harmony...” (Dewey, 1934, p.15), while Conle (2000, p.197) says that her objects “...were the content of her stories.” How does content create harmony and balance in narrative?

My life with teaching, and by extension this thesis, has been a result of a tacit and open adventure to restore harmony. Autobiography is the human data of feeling between self, environment, time and the balance of relations within them, and may even be the auto-ritual of describing the self in narrative; in that it offers a rite of memory, of self ideation that takes the self into the possible. The epistemological validity in interpreting personal story, as Lather (1986) suggests, supplies its own viewing place, its own evidence. The stories are

taken on their own terms, as recordings of memories and experiences. The researcher is also a teacher and has the ethnographic experience to denote the similarities and the differences, to compare and contrast, and coupled to this shared identity, is the writer at work, making meaning in literary and professional ways to evoke another view. This is the empathetic self in the reader; the two worlds of knowing and understanding. And no two personal stories are the same, but as Neumann (1996) says, the dimensions of interpretation are in the ways we collect ourselves in a world that imposes inconsistencies.

Interpretation attempts to explain human endeavour as Habermas (1971) and Ricoeur (1981) describe it; in understanding events in the experiences of others, to see the importance of who we are in what we do. Self-formation is constructed (Guba, 1990) with and around policy; how working with social law constructs the ways we behave, how we personally as well as professionally respond. The four teachers were asked to write their stories in teaching as a response to mine. My offerings speak of a time before I became a teacher, as an identity I formed within its professional life-world.

Evocative conviction means calling on subjective, as well as objective mediums (Gadamar, 1979) and as Ricoeur (1984) argues, human events have characteristics similar to those of a literary text. Experiential tales, as Habermas (1971) suggests, are rational accounts but they are also tales of feeling and mindfulness. Booth (1988) asserts that during a reading of a tale, we are adopted into the native and tacit literacy of the work. Narrative has an ethical power and the researcher must make both ethical and literary decisions with audience in mind. The teachers, who are also the readers, assume the mantle of the writer; to read the study in its educational context. It is not an ethical appraisal of the writer. Any narrative inquiry is a context-dependent venture in ethos; a character's

personal disposition and experience; a character's social disposition. Aristotle used this as a conceptual positioning to discuss rhetorical interpretation. The popular wisdom pronounced by Dewey (1934), informs the aesthetic qualities of experience.

The Impact of Inquiry

Teachers have felt the highs and lows of being human. Inquiry reveals the power of language to move, to heal and to offer friendship. A form of interpretation had already begun in the evolution of teaching and this was its own communal road and reward in this sense. Significant encounters with theoretical and personal discourse (Dewey, 1938; Johnson, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1988), as experiential testimony (MacIntyre, 1984), is a temporal framing peculiar to people who understand what future time means for others (Carr, 1986). Temporal awareness in the context of epistemology affects the teacher as well as the student. The teacher is cognisant of both place and time as it applies to pedagogy, organisational issues and accountability. Teachers hold themselves to account for what they do, to improve the lives of others. What if a teacher was aware of themselves, not just as a person in time but as an action to alter their own experience of teaching in time? What if the teacher could resolve, more completely, the feeling of historical sensing; of a connected feeling to a more profound state of knowing the self in a vocational world keeping; crossing back and forth between what is known and what is experienced? We might offer the opportunity to view themselves as anthropologists, archaeologists, architects, artists, poets and urban historians of their local world. They might view and fill themselves with the profundity such roles offer.

Narrative interpretation is a human investment; to remind and awaken any dormant notions or thoughts to the nature of teaching in a contemporary time. It is often the feeling that transforms. And the

kudos of this self understanding may offer a renewed sense of ideation, of becoming; regardless of age, experience or status; the controlling elements of time. My role as interpreter is not to see what I want, to explain the writer's life or working choice, but to ascribe the moments of human and professional life over time. And this should be without imposition; to keep the sensitive nature of the experience alive for the reader and pose questions about the experience as it relates to the self. Conle's work (1999, p.18) looks at how retelling can make stories more insensitive by removing the feeling within context:

In some of the autobiographical work I have done (Conle 1993), I have noticed how stories "harden" in everyday use. The hardening has to do with the relationship of a story to its contexts. I see this as a cultural phenomenon. In our culture we tend to value what is uniform, consistent, generalizable, context-free, and, in a sense, portable. Narratives generally do not lend themselves to such purposes. They tend to change with every telling. It is difficult to summarize a story into a neat, portable package, and if we try and do this, something happens to the story. It may lead toward a certain type of "hardening."

Teachers knowingly or unwittingly deal with the relationship between knowledge and alterity, having lived a life with a life yet to come. The artist and the poet have a way of transcending time, so that in the moment of active imagining, they lose time to feel at one with the subject (Conle, 1999). Storying does this too because it faces the self with its chosen intention. A life lived in dedication becomes a mirror of what the occupation means as a story, of bringing others into a fullness of themselves. Autobiography considers self in particular settings. It also considers the character of implication which accompanies what we make of these people who have chosen to

educate; lest we forget. So interpretation, especially as Ricoeur (1984) sees it, is also a gesture of offering a colleague good service for their time in teaching, and as Nietzsche says (1911, p.53), twilight is the time “...to re-evaluate all values...”

From The Tale: Chapter 25

I was often told off for interrupting when I was a boy. I think I was trying to detour people with my own versions of things, rehearsing what I wanted to say, instead of learning the art of listening. It's good to write and if there's an interruption, it's only me who gets cranky. Boys have both the spontaneity and impulsiveness needed to naturally distract the moody states of others. And since I'm the teacher, let's have another class, one more bit of borrowed time; one last time. What do we lose when we put away childish things? Boys enact their own forms of dramatic play, to present the scenes in life we often take too seriously. They mirror the conflicts we get ourselves into as adults. That's why they're obvious. How adults interpret these signs is a challenge to us all. Boys remind us that life has a continual sense of awkwardness and frivolity. They contradict the functionary roles we hold so dear, through their sense of playful wildness. We see in them the activated role of the positive trickster, often mistaken as something else. Boys have an internal and unwitting knowing about the wisdom-in-foolishness; to resist abandoning their sense of play. The tragic irony here is that we advertise and market the archetypal hero to boys and young men, as a commercial adventure. Boys who continue to pursue this role are usurped later in life and bought up in the marketplace as another national image. I learned this in the army.

And if we over-judge a boy (or the man with the boy unreleased), he'll see life as a singular competition he can't win or an arranged confinement he can't escape. Journeying to make-believe lands, in a make-belief time, allows boys to take risks, save lives and guide others to safety. He'll accept this as an adventure for the greater good, an immediate response to things like compassion in now time. We need only tell the right stories. He'll see what good he can do for others as the protector in the forest. More often than not, he's hunting for ways to invite a playful confrontation with the parts of his own identity that need to go beyond ordinary living - that validates being the hero among the group.

When a boy uses so much of his energy finding ways to avoid being present, that's a sign he's also using a large amount of inventiveness devising an escape. Some are masters and some are followers - secret agent or dark boy, the spy that hardly ever comes in from the cold. Why should he? When he grows to be a man, the effort that accompanies being accepted, describes itself as ways to keep out of reach. The roles are pre-set and the sacrifice is spontaneity. This relegation may translate as anger, aimed at everything - an unnamed presence. Being an artist has brought me back to the felt state I missed. The adult's role lies in the ability to see the layers of reality that also mirrors the flip side of a boy's life. Adult males model what boys see as important. And there are other voices open to us when we acknowledge the contradictions in being a man, so that gender doesn't become the target of bipartisan bullying or a mother's crusade to set things right.

Boys and men need to see how things work - to see how our position is more complete in the layers of expectation over

time. Good men don't mind this kind of relationship. And emotional support in adult life is crucial - to grow into wisdom, away from the nagging self. We sometimes forget that creating meaningful time will see a boy into a more authentic history, with himself. And the self can be a poor reference point for a real adventure too sometimes. We can all play the good editor as a way to achieve but miss the experiences in discovering what things might mean for us. We just need to leave ourselves alone long enough to sense the quiet pool. That's where we find all our selves, all of our roles, good and bad, right and wrong, black and white, deep and shallow parts of the same truth.

A section from Kate's story:

Yes, I recognise that experience but this part is unfamiliar to me and therefore provides the opportunity to test out how I might have responded to that situation. I am aware of the continuing attempt to make sense of the chaotic collision of events which make up my life's story, your story and the stories of everyone who has ever lived.

I am also aware that for most of my conscious life, I find it more convenient to push away memories, to fight against their noisy intrusion on my neat and present existence.

I returned to school, still a student, but with the title of teacher. I keep the memories firmly under control, only drawing them out when I feel the need to monitor my responses to students. "What would I have thought of that?" I ask myself. "Would I have thought that was fair? From which teacher did I learn the most; the one I liked best or the one I detested?" I also have a treasure trove of insights from other people's stories. They add

to my collection of litmus papers to test for reactions and to measure responses.

Chapter 4

I Am the Other

Perhaps I will dress in wolfskin, sitting in a tree watching the circle, waiting for the next step to be traced in the mud. All these shadows from the unknown. I am ignorant, but soon I shall begin to know. The Stone Door by Leonora Carrington

Now that I have discussed the nature of the research and how it relates to teaching, I invite the reader to see more and feel more of the researcher's life; who I was and became. The purpose is to provide a storying summary to Part A, before the teachers' narratives and interpretation. Chapter Four is also the exploration of voice (Cixous, 1997) and invites the reader to seek meaning in the story of another, and how myth also travels. What are the living metaphors that bring us to see another life, later?

Who am I?

The extensive literature review (as referent voices) and the researcher's voice are intimately discussed in this study, as they apply to teaching and teachers in relation to the storying of self. What seems to be 'unspoken' is the way teachers, who are also researchers, express the self, as teachers and as human beings. We sense a connection to community but what enables us to live that connection? Intimate, in this context, means the seeking dimension of the reflective act as Bullough and Pinnegar suggest (2001, p.15): "*...when self study becomes research by describing the intersection between me, my research, and my work...the self-study moves to research.*" Teachers grow the children of others. And in this temporal nurturing, become the significant other for many, and for many teachers, the only validation of worth they will receive. The thesis is about documenting the human aspect driving the inquiry, driving the narrative, or as Lincoln says (in Conle, 2000, p.13), the inseparability

of self from theory formation as “...*the way we know has powerful implications for the way we live, and vice versa.*”

What is a teacher worth and how can a researcher-writer make this readable? Where is the auto in ethnography as it applies to the place of self in the public domain? What should a body of such a personal work look like? What can I do for teachers now? I am the writer again, to reveal the story of a life (as a referent-device), with the stories of others (as an ethnographic portrait).

The simple fascination lies in the fact that people become teachers, the other paradox of self ideation in the context of others. This may be an epistemological otherness or the ontology of forming the other, as part of a participatory experience. However, change-making also means human responses to curricula. When change is present, one voice often dominates the mood of teaching. And when this happens we lose the clarity in other kinds of knowing. Research then becomes the valued other. The bridge of self and work is a little trickier to negotiate. Teachers need the time to speak to themselves in deeper ways about who they are when they teach. This voice can be transformative, not just for readers of fiction but readers of daily reality in the places where we work. The teacher creates the *possible* of meaning to become part of a greater narrative. This may be the crucial ‘function’ of transformation. Epistemology and ontology are now wisdom based and joined to story.

Worthwhile action among the obstinacies of change takes insight and a willingness to rake among the paradigms of past and present. We must know what matters. Who is qualified to best connect the personal to the experience, to the action of joined motivation? We miss the stories of everyday teachers because we often omit the obvious; when teachers take the time to notice someone else’s story, someone else’s child.

We are often our own worst enemies here as well, through our loss of memory about what we mean to society. We need emotional support as these issues grow increasingly complex in systems where business policies have a tendency to flatten sensitivity. Narrative has always provided this bridge and so we need people willing to write about the particular. We can sometimes overlook the fact that institutions are communal centres tied to what makes identity.

I have written my autobiography, the staging of the writing act for inquiry, in an attempt to uncover in literary form, the person who was and is and who became, someone who teaches. When I look back on my story I can see the bridges and canyons, the many roads and hedgerows I've encountered. And the often used metaphor of journey is still useful to describe the detail in what we do, where and when we did it and what happened. There are voices then, the *auto-voice* or the voice of the personal; the *inquirer-voice* or the voice of the scholar; the professional road and what it means for others who have also travelled similar roads, and the writer's voice; the voice of the literary agent.

We may sometimes feel our lives are mapped and managed, but what happens when we are not planning, when we are left alone to imagine what we might become. The trials and processes of growing are interdependent factors of integration and return. Inquiry writing says how and may even say why. Can we see the teacher, the educator and the researcher in the boy? How is the story of our lives the story of our teaching? This may be the kinds of knowing and feeling states Dewey (1938) describes. When I look closer, I can see how memory has worked to connect me to other experiences that were at work; growing into the person wishing to show and tell; my claim as a human educator. This is coming to kinds of resolutions with ourselves, of becoming; the bridge that supports us when we fear we know nothing, or find ourselves frozen in the face of adversity. Is it possible

to see the continuing metaphor, which has served the boy, revisited, resurrected as the teacher?

From The Tale: Chapter 5

I was growing a little and climbing the dizzy heights of upper primary, along with my awkward attempts to be my self and being different from others. I was feeling the power of quirky foolishness. If I couldn't join them I would entertain them, with a creative and solitary funniness. I did this with great aplomb. After all, I was only being myself. I made friends with two other boys who were also considered outsiders, social lives aside and clumsy like me. But I was detached and moved at a speed beyond rest. I wanted to play, every single moment until I slept. I was also adept at miming anonymity, so that I would never attract attention.

This contradiction lasted for many years. It bred anxiety and the quiet deliverance of a strange and unwanted normality. It was as if I needed to know how far my singular oddness would take me and so I adopted the role of the wild jester, a sort of vague stupor that fed on lightning and enabled me to relive a past life perhaps, that might put an end to my loneliness. It didn't of course. I also became aware it was getting rougher and so I found ways to overcome its lingering and ordinary face.

I made friends with Garth. We shared a kindred funny-bone and co-existed as social freaks, for the most part, left alone. We had a difference others just tolerated because we meant no harm and this was obvious to everyone except the new headmaster, who relieved himself by caning boys he thought were out of or lacked control. We also graduated into another class run by an ex-sailor who fought in World War 2. He worked out that a piece of leather, shaped at one end like a snake's tongue, would give him silence.

The class had learned that scamming would give them a semblance of freedom - from work. Every time we had to do some serious work, a kid would ask him a question that would entice him back into his past and the rest was just sitting until recess, lunch or home-time. The daily battle of wits amused Garth and I and we balanced this tug of war with various games of our own, that got us into trouble. Garth had warts on his hands and he was sometimes hit with this strap and they bled. I hated this man for that. We weren't good at mental arithmetic. We always got less than six out of ten each morning, lined up at the front and hit with this reminder of things that should stick. It was a pain in the bum, or hand, and so was he. I never figured out how this could be condoned but it was a rough school and the boys were hardened by life even at that age, no love and no complaints.

The headmaster put all the extra hard or 'awkward' boys in one class. And the boys disliked school and authority intensely. But we got on with our lives and became witnesses to a larger dichotomy. I was still walking, although I would spend time at Garth's on the way home. We joined the choir and were thrown out for eating chocolate at the back when we should have been singing. I mastered the art of truancy and forging my mother's signature. The teachers knew I was faking and I knew they knew.

I was writing things and giving bizarre excuses for my lateness or absences. Sometimes my stories for my absence were a little surreal. I'd watch the teacher's face contort into a kind of puzzled TV show host, jump back into the seat and release a breath that looked like he was about to collapse. The usual follow through was to thump his elbows on the desk and slap his face with two hands, his eyes studying the lines in the woodwork for a way out.

One week I was really ill and my mother kept me home. I watched TV and drank Glucozade. I stopped by Keith's house, another misfit, to walk to school with him when I returned the following week. Keith was on the Fairsea too, that sailed from Southampton docks years before. He was from Liverpool and idolised The Beatles and I was a Brian Jones fan.

Keith had a goat that I enjoyed talking with, when it was around. I bent over to rub his beard the day I decided to return from my real illness, and the genuine note that my mother wrote, about my genuine illness, fell out of my pocket, and the goat ate it. I tried to explain to the teacher but he didn't believe me of course. He just looked at me, and then at the class laughing, and then back at me, trying to show the seriousness with which I viewed the incident but failing miserably. I'd cried too many wolves and was paying the price of false testimony. But the class loved my stories and dropped everything to hear the next installment of my ready-made adventures. I was disillusioned and beginning to realise that my parents were not really interested in my education or me. They gave me money to start one of those school banking accounts and then one day withdrew it. Not that there was much in it but I saw it as another betrayal. Maybe that's had an affect too in some ways.

I was still being picked last for soccer games played at lunch. Foul you bastards, foul, I would think - kids choosing kids. I was the one left over. I was the one reciting the poetry of the rejected in the line-up, while they picked out the tall, the bold and the beautiful. I was the one left idle, who never got a kick. I was the one reciting a childish version of equity. And that's just the way it was. 'Noch hab ich, die uns trinken, nicht gesehen'. I'd read that somewhere - Rilke I think. I was a little more aware of the Jackboots of my father by now too. It's just who he was, like Jack in a Box; Jack and Jill; Jack and the Beanstalk and Jack-

offs, or the show-off boys at school who knew what the right boots were. Jack this and Jack that. I was too clumsy to dribble and they knew it. And my father never appreciated my dribbling. I can't say we outcasts really cared that much or pretended we didn't.

I can say that I was eventually picked to play for a soccer game at school and my brother gave me his boots to wear, except they were Australian Rules boots and way too big. Someone passed me the ball in my first game ever. I suddenly had one of my gridlocked moments when I couldn't go forwards or backwards. I was never picked again. The ball glided out of my world and into the feet of a graceful other.

People came and went - friends and teachers. I was injected, inspected and rejected in myriad ways. I was told I would become nothing and go nowhere. I was bashed, caught rashes and got fleas. More haircuts with bowls, except the Norman thing was wearing thin now. My brothers and I were still in touch and young enough to include me in their ramblings or at least they wanted to get away from the house and brought me with them.

A pipeline was being built over our beloved creek, next to a hotel my brothers would often drink at when they were older. It was dark and I was clearly a liability. It was night and my brothers were on the other side exploring something or other. I climbed on the pipe, a normal boy practicing his predilection for danger. I fell of course, fate knows how many feet, landing centimeters from a steel pike, pointed just enough the other way. I was unconscious and when I woke, they were kneeling over me, smiling to give me hope. All was well. I felt the blood trickling down my head and neck and recognized its alien warmth. It's a clarity that comes with hindsight and reflection that most of what we need is love, unless I allow myself to believe in the voices of others who say love is a dangerous mind let loose on those who secretly wish for

confinement. I remember thinking I should do this more often. They used to fight, as brothers do, but I preferred peace and seeing them together like this, in synchronicity, brought me a respite of sorts and signaled to me a brief meaning of family.

From The Tale: Chapter 6

Sooner or later we have to cut the ties of primary life and begin the turbulent years of secondary education. The first time I ever shouted at a teacher was to insist that I go to the same high school my brother was attending, which was out of my area but I didn't want to be separated from Tom. James didn't do too well at school. He didn't like school and was heading in other directions. My mother was still a saucepan maker and my father had been sacked for speaking his mind about conditions at the ship building yard. My uncle got divorced and came over from Ireland to stay with us. Each day they would get in the car, my dad, my uncle and James, a black Valiant, and go to the docks to see if they could get casual work on the wharves. There was stress at the house again. I was too young anyway to fathom the extent, and it always seems big when things happen I guess. I felt very small when tension was around.

Tom joined the cadets and in doing so, had met his destiny. He would appear with a 303 rifle they let him take home, minus the bullets and wearing a uniform of olive green. He bought me a rifle once when he was in the army, for my birthday. And later, when I was older, once again, I would follow him to another, more dangerous destination. In the meantime I would practice wearing a school tie. The boys' high school was old, with ivy-covered walls on the main building. Behind it were dozens of other areas, long wooden classrooms, a large parade ground and a very large oval that backed onto a mental hospital.

The patients used to come up to the fence to watch us play. I recognised the movement. They wore the same pyjamas, striped and glaringly obvious, like a uniform too of sorts. They were watching a group of boys learning to lift and throw things. I was following the course of a javelin through the air, silver and sleek, and into the body of a boy, who was also too busy watching the people in striped pyjamas. He jolted, lingered for a moment and dropped. The striped pyjamas were unmoved and staring, another one of those inexplicable moments, stopped in time by circumstance and out of anyone's control or comprehension. The boy died and I learned to avoid javelins until much later in life when I was almost hit by one while I was taking photos for a local newspaper, too oblivious to see it coming.

I went home after school that day and pondered on his death and the feeling of life and loss, again. I didn't reveal things like this to my parents. They had a singularly non-descript response to things, never admitting life, just everyday allowances; the dole queue of family living. I was a good first year student, for a little while anyway, diligent, clean and ironed. I looked nice, had a striped tie and was determined to do well. I could still see the angel at work within me, resting at my bed when the sun went down. I had a Math teacher and I liked him and he seemed to like me. Unfortunately, he used me to answer questions the others didn't want to or couldn't because they didn't like school and so why bother, or maybe they just didn't know. It was another boy-consumed class, complete with resistance and a baggy temperament. My response to this bleaching searchlight was to seek the shadow world again with a vengeance and get things wrong. It was okay though because I fell down a construction ditch and broke my head on the metal bucket attached to the digger. I had a broken arm and leg too.

When I returned he was gone. I was dizzy more often than usual and removed. I made sure I would never be recognised again. There were basic things I had to do: Math, with a teacher who was also a major in the cadets (my brother's commander in the cadets). We had to stand up whenever he came into the room; English, with a teacher who drove a hearse and nobody listened to, who had one of those Cambridge hair-cuts I liked so much, with leather-padded arms on a tweed jacket; Woodwork, with a teacher who threw objects at disruptive boys; Art, with a teacher who could see I had something and then took over whatever it was. Our coiled pot took pride of place in the principal's showcase; Technical Drawing with a teacher who said to the class 'There you see...this boy can do his homework and get it right, even with a broken body...' but it was Tom who did the homework and I took the credit for it, and Sport, with a teacher who thought he was Genghis Khan.

We joined a youth club and hung out at the local deli, playing 'I'm a Believer' on the jukebox. The boxing identity was a distant part of my mythology. My grandfather was a champion of Ireland once in some division or other. Somehow I found myself in a match with a boy from school. I remember looking up and seeing my brothers egging me on, giving me their usual cruel support. I won, only because I imagined him making fun of my mother who couldn't swim. I pictured her in the ocean, trying to stay afloat as she always did. In my mind I saw him laughing at her and so I fought with anger. The next day, I was a suspect of toughness by default and no understanding; an authority on common and improper justice, delivered by accident.

And so I was unwittingly opened to the hard boys again, who nurtured me in their own style. It was a working class, very Australian high school; different from the migrant life-world I had at primary school. This was an old, suburban system. It was also

my first experience with Aboriginal boys; a passport to other Australians. I wouldn't have experienced this if I'd stayed in the demographic of the migrant world, in those bad northern suburbs designed for UK habitation. The Aboriginal boys just accepted me for some reason. I think it was the red-haired and refugee look.

And I was constantly reminded of Tom's good work by the teachers. I was always following him for approval and every boy needs a role model, a template for some kind of personality. Perhaps this was another story about finding my own identity. Secondary high was a short-lived episode of trying to fit in and never really succeeding. It was a very public school, full of angst and the hormones of misunderstanding. I imagined the elite schools were the same minus the poverty and attitude. There were events and situations like any secondary life. By year ten I was never there and my parents never knew. There was no contact either way, despite my attempts to get them to a school opening once in my first year. They simply weren't interested.

My parents saw me as work fodder, not a person with a mind or perhaps they saw me as a mind disturbed and not worth knowing. I don't know. And this was an obvious sign that I could have been anybody. I knew I had a younger sister who died. How she died was always vague; pneumonia or scarlet fever I think. I remember my mother kept her green plastic cat rattle by the side of her bed. In a way I was glad she died. I've often thought they were tired by the time I arrived. Home was a concept, a thing to be suspicious about, un-solid and infected by untruths, not to be trusted. It didn't exist as a unit or unified place. I was a waif with a migrant background, destined to roam on a permanent and incomplete road, linking me to real and imagined places. The best thing to do was reimburse myself in activities less demanding.

So Garth and I bought slug-guns and went to the creek. We shot

slugs at tins, branches and various things and a few at each other once. A white dove appeared on a gum-tree branch directly overhead. I threw up my gun without aiming, without thinking, and hit it in the chest. It fell, like a sign. I stood over it and watched it for a very long time. I saw how soft and white it was; it's little heart slowing and then stopped. I think of that dove and how it returns to haunt me when I neglect the peace in my life. Guns are often the first toys of male children and then a man's last, his personal disaster. They give a false license to a destructive future. They bring the ever-knocking and inappropriate visitor to our doors, the urban and global menace and make a mockery of the daily heroes who defend the human fields of joy. Wars are no longer those battlefields of valor with little choice but to defend our right to freedom. They're now the selected indifference of what each country thinks it can milk from rightness or what it thinks it knows by right.

Children are the casualties now and as a result, the imagination of the world is diminishing - little hands grasping books. I wrote a poem about it years later. I felt in those moments the spirits had given up on me and how much easier it was to give up on the many. Death comes in other forms I discovered.

Dragonfly at My Window

*There's a dragonfly at my window.
It's angry, banging its head against the glass.
I think it's trying to tell me something.
See - it's wearing pilot's goggles.
It must be the last remaining Ace.
It probably thinks I'm Buddha.
I think it's trying to tell me something.
That it's late to name what I have always known.
I shouldn't have killed that dove,
When I was a boy.*

And perhaps the real death is the power we give the opposing sides of our lives; the long, lingering decline that allows inevitability a choice, causing endless confusion and acting from fear or loneliness. Death by degrees is the real killer. It has its place in ignorance, intolerance, the failure to act for something stronger and lack of imagination, the gifted self; to bring a sanity to the world, that may last just long enough for us to see the road ahead. The labyrinth was built to bring complexity to a simple world. I think of Escher's drawings, of both the up and the down, how illusion makes meaning to keep us on the staircase, somewhere in between. And everything dies or falls down; before a new foundation is built. Lies have to end and they do, one sad way or lovingly another.

I'd get on the bus and just pretend to go to school. When the others got off I'd stay on and go into the city and walk around all day and make my way home later. One day I found an abandoned attic in an old corner building in the city and would go there to sit and read. It became my home by choice. It wasn't a particularly tall building, just enough with floors to make no sense of real height. High places have that wonderful sensation of noise drifting up, a feeling of anonymity and solitude. It had a large broken window overlooking a laneway at the side. I'd stare at the passer's by below, their heads and hats in hapless rhythm. It reminded me of some old story; Dickens maybe. I liked to look over the edge, small and unaware of my own presence. I learned about the value of old buildings, old feelings. I wanted to tell my parents everything, not as a voice unable to speak properly but as a boy admitting and begging change. My tiny life was just another case among other earthly experiences.

I've always tried to look closer at the world, seeing as much as my lens-less plastic binoculars would allow. I still leap first and try to work things out in mid-air. I think I've secretly kept those

binoculars, keeping me estranged, somehow ethereal. It was the usual black of a silent and unforgiving late afternoon and I should have caught the bus home. I knew I couldn't fly when I jumped and yet, like an aeroplane, I crossed from childhood to adolescence unseen. I landed on the steel and canvas roof of a slowly moving truck.

My body caved itself into its yielding and miraculous form, waiting for an angel to drop from a higher place and then the sudden impact of a concrete floor. I didn't die and in a way I was re-born; into a life that had other landings. And hospital wasn't so bad. But I imagined a life without pain, without the constant threat of ignition, into a danger I couldn't control or a future I didn't want. Imagine what it must be like to know where we're going and who we are, what we want and love, those who love us - the greatest net.

From The Tale: Chapter 16

I was a little tense on the induction day and I felt like my fish was clearly out of water. I didn't know if this was really what I wanted and it came out of no-where for me in many ways. There were far too many people in one place, all sitting in the lecture theatre, open and shut minds. Maybe everyone was feeling the same. I kept to myself, awkward and introverted. I listened for the back door that would let me escape. What I am doing here?

There were times too when I believed that undergraduate study was for those who didn't want to think for themselves. I had the uncomfortable feeling I was enlisting again.

It was sometimes obvious that the system had a fixed study-role agenda, like any other; labels of how and what teachers should be and who they should be. As time went by I met staff who saw something in me worth nurturing. That was a sign of the power of good teaching. Mostly I remembered my own experiences of

school, Miss Brock and Mr Pitman, the power of memory to nurture and give thanks. There were other people my age who were feeling the same way and this meant bonding and so I became friends with several young men and women.

One day we had a lesson on homosexuals, not sexuality but homosexuals, and their 'daily' lives. I laughed at the film, especially the bit on how homosexuals also liked to shop, just like 'we' did. I guess the lecturer may have been trying to say that homosexuals were also part of the human race and that teachers should be accepting. It was the way it was done. I knew there were gay students in the class and I could see their awkwardness but they didn't offer anything. Timidity seemed to be part of rule. I was attacked for speaking out and left to get a cup of coffee, and ponder.

I was in my first ever production: 'Look Back in Anger' by John Osborne. I played the British colonel and father, just something about me I guess. I couldn't believe anyone would deliberately do that and call it fun. My legs were shaking so much I received an award. People thought I was using some kind of grotesque technique. I went to undergraduate art and theatre parties. I was beginning to see more of my ability to handle myself as a normal person with some awareness. Sarah knew it was taking me away. She disliked going to the student parties and my new friends. There was a lot in what she said.

It was a possessive and selfish direction in many ways but that's what I thought then, about Art, except I didn't know much about that either. Many marital relationships failed there I noticed, one person in and one person out. I don't know if this ever works but I'm sure it can. I'd gotten over my first year disease, trying to save the world from itself and everyone in it. I was becoming something else. We had to do a Sociology assignment. We decided to do ours on the types of graffiti found

in the toilets at tertiary institutions. We convinced the lecturer it would have an interesting outcome. Overall our findings revealed that graffiti in the top and oldest university was more eclectic and global in nature, while other institutions were more conservative: conclusions were based on the types of data being sought, as usual. We received an A. We meant it as satire but got lost in the pedantry of cloistered processes and yet I did learn something about arranging information. I was feeling a little more normal through the medium of daily routine and study.

All this new-found sense of identity had taken me away from past lives in a way and I couldn't go back to who I was. I plunged myself into the task of becoming a teacher as a start to other things and at the same time, removed myself from study life. We were renting a house in another suburb. Sarah brought a lily home one day and put it in a vase. I thought it was beautiful. Her sister said it was bad luck to have a lily in a house. I didn't think much of it. Her younger brother, Arnie, was diagnosed with leukemia that same week.

We went up to her mother's house in the hills every weekend. Sarah's mother used to be a nurse and so I was getting to know cancer and the havoc it causes. I knew that severe bruising or a cut might result in something catastrophic. Arnie was angry and no one was talking to him about death, what he already knew. I observed death as a taker of friends and people I'd met but I could remove myself, as a questioner of its life; uninvolved. This was very different. He was my younger brother in a way. I really enjoyed going to see him, especially when things were less complicated. We both had a great sense of play and he would always laugh at my silly, visual jokes. He was a great boy and the routine trips to the hospital to get chemotherapy showed his amazing courage. He never complained, not once.

He said we should go for a ride on his motorcycle one day. I was

on the back and he was the captain. We were out on a dusty road and going faster. I remember shouting to slow down or he'd kill us. Confusion ignites a dormant, unthinking voice and impulsiveness has its way and out things come. We stopped and sat on the road in silence. I couldn't find the words now - to tell him that I knew he was going to die, that we all knew and felt powerless to help; of how we knew he was suffering, how everyone admired his courage, how much I would miss him, how I could see that he was feeling alone and in this moment, with me, he was not alone. We made it back, unscathed but silent. That week I had to go to Adelaide and stopped by to see a friend. I rang to check in and my mother-in-law answered the phone and told me Arnie had passed away the night before. His death came too suddenly, as it does. The roller coaster of life is bought and paid for and I remember curling up on Arnie's bedroom floor when I returned and cried for us both. He was buried in the nearby cemetery, under some pines and I would visit him. I haven't been for a long time but I always say I'll go - one more time. I wrote a poem to him and left it on his grave the last time I was there.

*...look to the pines and listen
the needles stinging air and
you will also see my open wound
too deep in its other flesh,
fragrant with loss...*

I forget the rest. Things were never quite the same after that. We moved to another place and I was beginning to lose interest with tertiary life, my career choice and with myself. Maybe Arnie was in there somewhere. Everything seemed awkward and I was losing the fundamental reasons for doing anything at all. I was still reading though. During the winter breaks I'd read Hesse:

Narziss and Golmund, Journey to the East and others or The Tin Drum, or books by Mervyn Peake, Thomas Hardy or Mishima's Spring Snow. The love Sarah and I had wasn't there anymore or at least that feeling of relationship, that makes people connect and stay. And I was possessive of my new self, to see where my brain might take me. In the end we parted company. Sarah kept all the belongings and I drove along a quiet suburban Sunday road, heading west, into a summer sunset.

I rented a flat on the beach, like everyone else. I had one cushion, a knife and fork, two plates and a kettle I called Ma and Pa. I wrote bad poetry at 2:00 am and listened to radio pop songs like, 'Turning Japanese'. I read my poems in pubs and various art fringe festivals. My first recital though was in the college theatre when I was still a student. I had lights and a cyclorama and I called it 'Love and Death'. What did I know about love and death? I read Yeats and drank like The Pogues. I gave a recital at an old pub in the city that catered for all and sundry, so it had a mixed bag of locals and transients. The paper picked up on it and said I was setting some kind of trend but it didn't feel like that.

I sat watching the drinkers: men, women, young and old. They were cheering and whistling when I came on, a good bunch I thought. I felt a little solemn and a little like a fraud, so many faces, so much more was needed than what I could give them. And I was always a suspect of my own experience. I told them I wanted to 'talk and play through words' and someone shouted, 'What the fuck does that mean?' I read a poem I'd written a long time before that seemed to suit the occasion.

I liked the way poetry resonated in pubs. It was a contrast to the usual taste of bitter hops, as catchers of an innocent crowd, bouncing uncommon pictures off common walls; story-time for adults. And often it was not really poetry. More like the anecdotes of domestic events. I liked to hear the chuckles or

spurts of momentary intolerance or the conflicted faces, questioning their own history of the poetic form. It wasn't like the poetry I would write when I was reflective of life's bigger issues.

And sometimes I'd get 'No!' from an impatient hearer of words, demanding an epiphany of some kind. But that didn't matter. I saw people smiling. For the most part I believed people wanted the opportunity of distraction; to exercise a little tenderness, every now and again. And then I'd remembered when we were Neanderthals, when smiling was a sign of aggression.

Only bits and pieces were coming together for me. I couldn't afford to stay in my beach hideaway so I moved into a horribly run down, semi-detached duplex on the city fringe with a friend, opposite a park with a lake. He was a dropout from an architect course and very friendly. There were no floorboards in two rooms and the outside toilet was overgrown with ivy and fat spiders. I couldn't stand the bagpiper who haunted the park every Sunday morning. He thought it was atmospheric.

I went on my long-term practicum at a primary school with a teacher who showed kindness and warmth; a loving kindness to her students and just what I was looking for, so I did well. I moved into another semi-detached, run down property on the seedy-side of town. The house was owned by a man who lived in Melbourne and played keyboards in a well known Australian band. They'd come over to visit once in while. I shared this abode with an unknown, local musician who later became famous playing the guitar in another famous Australian band. It was difficult to make a meal at times because the stove was always in use to dry grass for some ongoing experiment they were conducting with time and space, but they were funny and had a lot to say about music; a lot.

They'd sit in the kitchen listening to demo-tapes of themselves all

day, every day. At least the smoke-haze would make them disappear. I'd head off to study after being in the house during one of their sessions and wonder why the Psychology classes were getting more interesting. They were talented, despite their self-obsessed nature. I was thinking of investing in some large spoons.

They thought I was a little weird and/or not in their particular groove. They didn't understand why anyone would want to be a teacher and I didn't try to explain. It wasn't hard to ignore them, although I did enjoy the chess games and the discussions on Marcel Duchamp.

I always found most people's response to teaching a little hypocritical; since most people learned from teachers, somewhere, at some time, for some reason, about something. I ignored the small talk and the singular kind of conversations, but art and artists have ever been thus I think. And I found it hard to accept the obsessive, cool and rationalised, incestuous routine that accompanied the popular music lifestyle. We had nothing in common except our jeans and music itself but that was a topic reserved for a more universal conversation, which meant they had to exclude themselves for a while, so we didn't. Besides, I was undeniably clumsy in the ways of socialised small talk. It always took me a long time work things out or to trust and accept that anyone trusted and accepted me or something like that.

The mess was getting worse. I was ready and willing to leave when suddenly; they did. I was on my own again and feeling better. I didn't mind the music, just the lyrics or was it the other way around. It was or wasn't poetry to me. I couldn't make up my mind because the music would get in the way. I couldn't go to study either. I couldn't listen to endless opinions about why the woman on the beach was wearing a red dress in the Literature class or another Psychology lecturer talk about the correct use of

graphs, spoon-fed Piaget or hear another form of my own silence among others. So I took some time off. I was naturally growing away from study but I knew I was also learning much about the role of a good educator and modeled myself, sometimes with a naïve sense of idealism, on the influences of the past: Ghandi, King, Sadat, Upanishads, Buddha, Thomas Moore and Aquinas, Cicero, Aristotle maybe, the poets of course, Bill and Ben. I was starting to realise I had something to offer as a young apprentice of bigger ideas. I was also doing other things.

I took on large and smaller projects. I still did my assignments except I had to repeat a unit in Psychology. In my impulsiveness and annoyance of its sheer impracticality, I said it was a waste of time; out loud. The lecturer threw a piece of chalk at the floor and stormed out, acting out his own frustration. He went to see the administrators, the local Gods, and I was made to repeat and be a better-behaved student. They might have asked why I felt this way, instead of the tumult they created. It was another mishap that made me question why they didn't; question. On hindsight it was a waste of time. I needed to be somewhere that explored meaning. I also had a way of introducing my own psychosis into public situations sometimes. And I needed to learn that I could receive validation without controversy. As it turned out, he did me a great favour and it afforded me some respite to explore. There was so much to offer about the psychology of education but they saw things then as policy and measurable and used time avoiding the sensibilities and potential of people. And I had my own accidents to deal with.

The car I had from my marriage was written off on my way back from a music concert. I was turning a corner when a nice young man in loud red car slammed into my rear end and so I bought a bicycle. I took to riding bikes again the way fish like water. I was doing volunteer work at a university radio station: 6UVFM Radio

for the Blind. One day I was negotiating my way around a bus that had stopped to pick up some passengers. I didn't have mirrors. A car hit me and my poor, cheap bicycle twisted, turned in the air like a fairground show, and landed somewhere between the pavement and oncoming traffic. It was forty-two degrees that day and I was stuck to the bitumen. But, as fate would have it again, I didn't die. A lawyer stopped his car and gave me his card while I was lying on the melting road. It was all very surreal. Nobody got off the bus to lend a hand. They just sat there, a bus-load of people, just staring.

*Finally, two old ladies came over and held an umbrella over my head until the ambulance arrived. The man who hit me was in shock, standing on the grass, playing with his fingers, counting the possible trouble to come I guess, poor guy. I guess it is a little unsettling to hit someone with a car. The incident took a very small space in *The West Australian*: 'Poet hit by car...' The stay in hospital reminded me of so many others. I ate more this time. And I was seriously trying to count the remainder of my nine lives.*

I was almost recovered when I was asked to recite the winning poem at the National Poetry Prize concert at the University of WA. The poem was 'In the Forest' by Thomas Shapcott. A professor of music was conducting the string ensemble and choir. They looked like they were from heaven - pale and perfectly cloistered. I had one rehearsal. Night came and the famous university hall was packed. I needed this like a hit and run accident. My head began to hurt, the first page got stuck to the second, I forgot the cues, improvised something about a rampant wombat getting burned and how the bush is a dangerous place. I laughed, froze, laughed again, lifted my finger as if going to ask a question and froze again. Lucky no one told me the author was in the audience or things might have gone bad. I could have left out the impulsive

bit, about the rampant, savage koala. This was the national literary prize. Anyway, I snapped out of it, the ensemble had finished and I think I could hear the professor's baton drop. I said 'Thanks...' and froze again, walked backwards to the exit and, ahem, bowed. My stage appearances were often like this. I vowed never to perform in public again.

*However, the Theatre Department decided it wanted to do small scenes from various plays performed by the students. I chose an excerpt from *The Christian Brother* by Ron Blair. I met him later when I was teaching at a university in New South Wales. He was our annual writer-in-residence. I made him and some colleagues a roast one night in honour of his visit, and he said it stank when I asked, 'How was it?' It did, but that wasn't the point. Anyway, I forgot my opening line on stage and to get out of it I threw a piece of chalk (after my Psychology lecturer) at a fellow student I knew in the audience. Method acting wasn't for me. His response was enough to get me a pause and regain my composure. I don't know why I did acting sometimes. I'd rather be stranded on a cliff in sub-zero temperatures, alone in the dark and naked. I don't do it anymore, although I would consider an experimental version of *King Lear* - perhaps in a few more years.*

That was one of my last memories of my undergraduate years; that and my poetry recital in the main theatre and no lecturer turned up; popular to the end. Finally I graduated. I would teach, at last. I had to wait for a placement so I went on the dole to survive. In the meantime I auditioned for a film with the ABC as another way to punish myself I supposed. It was on location - hundreds of kilometers north of Perth. My character was a returned Vietnam veteran with a young son. My wife had died and I was working as a road-train driver hauling freight.

The boy playing my son was precocious and difficult. He had a genuinely difficult life with a single mum. We had to do many

challenging scenes and one was on a river where he's swept away in the rapids. The director was trying to make a name for himself I think. He said I should do what I wanted, to feel the scene and behave according to realism. So I dived in and swam to the racing raft, the crew had apprehensively let go of, to get authenticity. I made it at last, grabbed the unexpected rope, swam back against the rapids, tied the raft to a tree root and carried the boy up the bank. The boy ran off, the director arrived with the crew out of breath, remarked on how great that was and could I do it again. Someone forgot to put film in the camera. I thought he was joking, laughed out the remaining water in my lungs and then froze when I quickly discovered he wasn't. I'd heard about things like this happening.

The boy was kicking one of the camera-men one day, who told him to go away, so he did. He jumped into the river and sank immediately. He was drifting away and I was the lucky person who saw him. I jumped in and dragged him out, spitting and coughing up cold water. I heard the director say: 'Did anyone get that?' The boy got up, kicked me in the leg and ran off. Later I went over to where he was annoying another member of the crew, took a breath and kicked him in the leg. He cried, ran off again, came back, said he was very sorry with an alarmingly polite tone. Suddenly, he was amazingly friendly for the rest of the shoot. I was feeling guilty afterwards of course. His mother thanked me later for 'changing' him. I wouldn't recommend it as a technique, but in a spontaneous moment, some things just work out. Perhaps that's what I needed - a kick in the leg.

Eventually I was offered a position at a very effective and highly regarded senior high school, which was then called a Lighthouse School because it was a beacon for great things. Wonderful things did happen and the light was both very shiny and regular. I grew there and had energy to burn with a drive that scared

even me at times. I had a small and very intelligent dictator as a head of department. I called him Il Dulce Koala. He just looked like an angry koala most of the time. He was rough on me but I always learned something from him and in my own way I was grateful for his knowledge. To balance that, I was lucky enough to get the best principal in the state and the best model educator a young man could have. He was widely acknowledged for his leadership and vision; a good man at last. He had a way of commanding respect, inviting love and enabled me to move forward and achieve what I did. He's dead now and I wanted so much to see him once again. Many years later, at a reunion, I did thank him, for everything. When he attended the school's anniversary, I made sure I went, to say thank you. He died some years back and shall remember him as the great man he was.

I won things, wrote and directed my first play - giant clowns and balloons hanging from the ceiling. It was a quirky, expressionist piece. Soon after I founded an experimental performance group called, The Rib and Lung Movement Set. It was a mix of dancers, actors, one clown, one gymnast and a bouncer. We performed at a variety of places, including a major city cathedral: live koto playing by a Japanese musician and other music. It was sensational and was met with both excitement and indifference, depending on who the critics were. I had to see the faith in myself in the end. And now I did.

The performers leapt across the marbled floor and slithered down huge sandstone pillars as snakes in a sacred world. It scared the shit out of the audience. Naturally this took the diocese by surprise. I was impressed with their obvious faith. I suppose it was a little controversial, especially when one piece was called D-Day or the Death of Christ. It wasn't a religious or anti-religious thing either. It was more about how the images of history carry through time and re-enact themselves in other ways. I guess by

now I wanted to direct and so I thought that was my path - to be a director.

I was employed by the Festival of Perth to do an original work I'd been writing. It was staged in a theatre garden, full of ritual and ceremony with huge puppets and masks. After that it was a punk-rock version of Oliver Twist with taped music by The Clash and original art works. Dickens never had it so good. We built a steel scaffold set on several levels (after Peter Brook this time) and large flats with graffiti like; 'Fagan rules OK!' Very 80's.

There were lots of things I wanted to do and people I wanted to meet. I was feeling better because I had an understanding now of my own worth. I bought a simple double storey, studio-style fibro house in a coastal suburb, two streets from the beach - a home of my own. It wasn't anything great but it was near my beloved school and I always wanted to go to sleep with the sound of waves.

I would sit on the balcony and just listen. And I bought a big American car from a little old lady who lived up the road. I used to put it in D, for drive, sit on the door frame and cruise along the northern beaches, steering it with my left foot. I loved my house. It wasn't flash; a fibro top with a brick bottom and jarrah floorboards. I had the floors polished, the kitchen re-painted and the stairs fixed up. Stuff came down and went up. It had sliding French doors and no mosquitoes. I loved the summer nights there; the gums and soft ocean air reminding me of how beautiful some places can really be.

My long and dissipated struggle was coming to an end, or so it seemed at the time. I was thinking like a successful person, an achiever, and I felt the power in how that generates other positive events. I also felt a lightness I'd never experienced before. It was my time. I'd been telling myself I was just different from other

people. That difference, that artist's soul perhaps, was all I needed and that's all I had, a little difference, a young eccentricity. When someone calls you different that can be a compliment. I also discovered that these things too were just a part of the long and often transient road of being. For me anyway.

Notes on the Muses of Tales

There may not be a single determining factor in autobiography as ontology or an epistemological entity; a pedagogical illumination in place and time, nor is it necessarily a way to determine the manner of transformation or change in practice. Autobiography has deep dependencies inherit within its identity as Lejeune (1989) suggests. In relation to this study, auto transfers itself to community (biography), while remaining a contingent of story telling, to produce consciousness-raising in the reader. It is a tale among other tales, to situate itself as a human literary agent, not just as an abstract concept, but to work among the bones of a peopled life-world. In this way Neumann's (1996) anthropology of autobiography may be more of a digging site to uncover and mediate teachers in a profession worth understanding and not just by teachers.

Autobiography by its very nature still remains a curiosity among human detail, inhabited by other humans with stories that have ancient beginnings (arguably St Augustine's Confessions, AD 397-398 approx). Autobiographies can also tell stories of the human situation while we are alive. And people die and become dust, bones and stars in the sky or landfill in wars. We name things to remember. People are happier when something is named. Research gives names to things; types of epistemology, paradigms or privileged revelations perhaps. It's good to know what Descartes thought, Socrates or Goethe, in knowing the 'I' of self and how this brings us revelation

and takes us beyond our domestic lives as a kind of personal emancipation, as Goethe (cited in Boldt, 1992, p.145) states:

Freedom consists not in refusing to recognise anything above us, but in respecting something which is above us; for by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and, by our very acknowledgement, prove that we bear within ourselves what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it.

And if we know all the stories of teaching, all the ideals of the archetype, we raise ourselves to that image and become within ourselves the bearer of that ideal, not as a social arrogance, but a felt acknowledgement of our own status and worth to the world. Imagine what that would do for the profession? Storying offers us, through analogy, a link to forgotten realities, the opportunity to participate in the adventure that pre-empts enlightenment. The feeling of writing for an intended audience offered the thesis participants a relationship with their own muse that mirrors as identity and metaphor; the door the local Gods often miss. Metaphor always brings us to unification. I understand how challenging it is for many people to just *be* with another's story and ask only what attention prods us to ask. Relationships thrive in discovery.

The potential of process, of reflecting and writing a story from childhood to adulthood, and what we did and didn't do, also lies in the way story come to us. Memories are also the stuff of the future disguised in the ordinary. And yet the meanderings of experiences may become incidents too scrambled for discernment. We are often swamped by remembrance, trying to recall the real discoveries among the tension and detail of life (Deally, 2002). Von Franz (1980) suggests that many of our more important impressions of life leave few memorable images. What are the implications when teachers are prepared to write their stories?

Story builds self-acquaintance, as we construct and reconstruct myth (the poststructuralist hero) through shaping the dialectics of time and place, to question mono-syllabic, singular and positivist historical reactions to development. We re-shape myth when we explore our heritage with self. In an educational sense, this means attending to what teachers interpret about their experiences. Autobiography in relation to auto-ethnography for instance, can be argued as a play within a play, a director of a tale, Shakespeare's blank stage. Teaching, like a story, is open ground if you read it that way. And we read with biases in-tact, our cultural and social prejudices alive and waiting to label change as discrete events.

The qualitative, postmodernist phenomena *to make strange* and tilt the view to a perspective, not just as catharsis, the player of recipient applause to justify our lives, but as emancipation, to want to listen to the iamb that beats as both rhythm and the opportunity. This may bring to the world an original response to life and transform the idle mind that may, in turn, bring light to the muse of our vocation. In our dimness however, we installed a position of status to adults which identified us as human progress, to make us accountable. At the same time we underestimated our longing to be free, of our own adult face; the educational irony of social approval, modelled as efficiency and busy-ness; the measurers of behaviour (Phillips, 1994; Deally, 2002).

Someone to Believe Every Now and Again

No teaching narrative can ever be separated from the learning narrative. Teachers have the privileged position of being the one person in the world who should mean what they say. And most teachers, I believe, are looking for some tangible truths; something that tells them that what they do is noble or commendable as a social force. I teach with confidence when I feel assured of what I mean to

them, as a special person in society who strives to endow a sense of possibility and what the future might do. I feel better when I know who I am; an efficacy that equates itself to me. I have been a teacher for more than thirty-three years. I work at a busy, socially challenging, metropolitan school with over forty cultures (including refugee visa status students) engaged in university, mainstream, indigenous and vocational curricula. Each year is different but the same and it would take a teacher to know what I mean by that.

The difference is what I do or want to do with the curriculum, handed to me from curriculum writers, whose idea of epistemology doesn't always resonate with mine. And I teach in a landscape that has its own complications. For many of the students, surviving the social landscape is a full time job on its own and the economics of poverty means relationships have a totally different set of rules. Those who are disengaged, disaffected or disenchanting in some way, may resist knowing the true relationship they might have with curricula, in favour of the teacher who delivers it; providing that teacher has met the criteria of acceptance. And they have an ad-hoc appreciation of truth which for them can take many forms, and doesn't include the ideals of policy but the idea that surviving is whatever truth they can make at the time. Truth and knowledge are dependents, like the co-dependency many have about what gets them through each day. But if the students like you, you will never have to 'watch your back', as they say, and word of mouth rules the terrain of the relationship they adopt, as part of their home-away-from-home until they leave. Theirs is the lot of survival economics; the ordinary notions of getting through, getting it over with and getting on in life.

There is a presence of a very domesticated, street-wise view of life, with a strong interest in 'useful' knowledge that may not be on the curriculum; something they can make human sense of; especially about relationships. And teachers forget themselves in the busy-ness

of assisting others in transforming a survival psyche. So this is generally where I start. By adopting different 'eyes' I can see them differently and they believe me and I believe them, when we find ourselves without the condition of judgement. I'm in the field of something I know and whatever happens I can try something else; to come back and try again later.

I tell them there are no mistakes in the context of learning; no blame and no fault. If they get that kind of language, they forget trying to survive, to try on the vulnerable self once again; long enough for me to show them something new if I can. Many have been let down in one way or another and so being vulnerable is a hard ask. But that's where the real learning is; when we can make ourselves vulnerable again to see the 'gap' of possibility; to let in something worth knowing. And so on we go; falling and getting up, falling and getting up, in the same boat so to speak. They may want to talk about experiences which have altered or defined their own feelings about life and learning, so I always begin with autobiography. Who are you? I ask them about their experiences with school and we talk about what has happened and what they want from the year and from life. Things are said and revealed and other things are hidden because, after-all, mine is still the voice of the assessor; the outsider.

I try, like all teachers, to make the curriculum relevant; to find a relationship in some way; to experience achievement. And if the relationship with the subject is not there, then there's generally no identification; no adoption. And if the family is not functional, like all teachers, I try to create a 'barrier', to protect them from the potential disasters of life. In a complex world teachers will not 'allow' young people to accept a myth that says: 'It's all too hard' or 'You're no good'. That is our worth; our value to a community.

When we're willing to accept something more profound, we begin to explore the perspectives the world has to offer us in richer detail (Dewey, 1934). I can see they want to know things; especially if knowledge can be tied to something that goes beyond the everyday and connect them to a profound feeling, something about the wonder in the world that takes them beyond the common graffiti of local life. It's about getting to deeper realms of *knowing*. From there it's another jump to the relationship between them and others in the world, other than their immediate family or friends. I ask them to name what learning might offer.

It's that getting started thing again; the great leap of faith in the self to generate a movement forward. And sometimes it's not an easy thing to speak our minds or write something about ourselves other than the daily experience. If we flourish it may be because we had permission from someone who believed in us every now and again.

From The Tale: Chapter 22

Some friends ran a school in Toyohashi and asked me to come over and work with the Japanese staff, to find other ways of working in the context of groups. I did this for a bit, as they say, made my apologies and simply left. I was feeling worn out after China; when the very useful methodology turned to clichés. I was tired. I went to Nara; a place of soft hills, mazes and old wisdoms. I bought two second-hand kimonos at a church stall; one with ants and one with clouds. I walked all day and the next, along paths lined with lush vegetation and granite shrines. I needed to think and feel, although there were times when I'd pollute these moments with worry or allow the past to discourage my present gift.

I was concerned that I couldn't take action for my own benefit any more. Spontaneity had been replaced by daily struggle. I was so confounded by my self that being alone, forever, seemed the likely outcome of my life. I preferred to travel alone but not to travel alone through life; through the everyday world we must all live in; through the fears of time. And yet I could see how time moves us through human portals, struggle and freedom from struggle, wars alone and with others. The shrines tell only the tales of those that were. The detail lives on in us all, same yet separate bones.

When I returned to Kyoto I spent long days just walking. I went to one of the numerous and stunning wooden temples. I touched a shrine, to see if its message was somehow transportable, something I could take back and say I'd transformed, from confusion to awakened soul. And then the wind came up, releasing sounds of ghosts from shafts of tall bamboo, green as the sediment of tea and creaking memories from other times.

I had the scent now of wooded trees, of lemongrass and moistened heat; spilling wild jasmine and ivy leaf. It was getting dark and I was feeling vulnerable - the only rigid thing in the forest. I went to a temple in the hills and walked around its sacred grounds. Behind the temple and further up was a massive gravesite; thousands of vertical granite tablets of people gone and remembered.

I followed the narrow paths and climbed to where the stones met the forest trees that overlooked the city; the sudden, dense shadows of the trunks and foliage guarding the cemetery. I sat and thought: The Thinker in Japan. I thought about how populated cemeteries are, how they always take me by surprise - islands of dead and what we do with dead people to make sure we don't forget, the horizontal or vertical

ways we crowd them together. Maybe we think in this way we are never alone, for eternity. I don't know about death. I'm never sure. I only know about the temporal obligation we have to do something worthwhile before we die, like teaching; to do something that will make a difference to someone and maybe someone will go on to do the same for another and so on – the resonance of good work. I know when I write I think that maybe someone may see the greater story, the greater worth in the words and meaning.

It was getting dark and I couldn't remember the paths I took to get there. I looked at the field of stones, ears and eyes on posts of rock on the vast incline of the hill that held them in peace. If I took the wrong one I could be lost in the gravesite at night and that wasn't appealing. I tried to trace my general direction, the mounds and corners hiding the way. The shadows from the stone posts played criss-cross on the ground so that everything was obscured.

Just then I saw a large black cloud in the distance, heading for the graveyard. I knew from the sounds it was the ravens returning to the forest for the night. In the morning they would fly back to the city to maintain their place as residents. They came in large flocks, small groupings, in pairs and alone, hundreds and hundreds of them. In the trees they became invisible. Only their voices were present, echoes against the granite columns. I had a feeling they knew something I didn't. Perhaps they wanted me to stay, something living among the dead or the other way round. And in a moment a solitary raven swooped down from the trees to land on a grave-stone, a short distance away. I knew I should go. Just start walking I thought. I saw the bird watching me, the only movement in an otherwise immovable place.

I walked down the narrow path and it appeared again to my right. I was at a crossroad. The paths were barely visible now. I decided to let it show me the way. When I moved so did the raven, always landing on a grave roughly the same distance between us. In the quickly fading light it introduced a voice and from then on, the routine was land and call, land and call. In this way the raven became my guide out of the graveyard, to where the paths joined the small gravel track, back to the temple. Sometimes we just have to trust. I waved goodbye as he sang his own lesson, of coming to, being with, and leaving; the haiku of his act, except I always had trouble with syllables. Two birds sit quiet; darkened eyes softly wait; alone one flew off.

I went back to the hotel. There was a message from Takemura-san; a friend of Yumiko's. We had tried to make contact several times without success. He wanted to meet me in town for a meal. He is, as far as I know, still a teaching professor. He studied me with the eyes of a calculator, adding me up and down, a cautious and generous man. We sat and I talked politely about my day. He just nodded and smiled, and sat, softly attuned to his own and my presence; that inscrutable smile, as if this was his story also; of the same path he lost and found again.

The Haiku of Teaching

Language is exact and has within it exacting roles, like certain types or forms of literature. The reader is able to work with conventions to comprehend life and human meaning. I'm conscious too, of the importance of immersion and when to pull back from some conversations with students, leaving the most important syllables at play for them; the single idea that informs the viewing place. I might speak about how kinds of poetry offer us the opportunity to see a

single, enlightened moment of a simple idea. We can experience this moment through association, a different feeling somehow, through a connected release. I then relate this to the power of the unknown in our lives and how we're all interested in the unknown. We want to know what we don't know, especially about ourselves and what is relevant to our future lives? Often we don't know what to ask. People want to know how things work; relationships, love, money, getting a job or better job, what to say and who to say it to, simple and not so simple things, back through the maze of our tiny worlds.

I ask students (and teachers) to name what they know and feel about the unknown. I speak briefly and simply about tacit knowledge, of how we often know more than we can say or put into words. We may talk about how nature features in poetry and how we might integrate nature and creation into our own personal stories. In the linear time of life it may be impossible to comprehend what we're missing.

Some conversations open to the seemingly incomprehensible things in life, to reveal the simple truths. Both the teacher and the witness experience meaning.

Summary

Teachers preserve the life of aspiration and work in the settings of potential. And this is not fiction. We do this in a political environment of perception, reality and the profile of curricula. How should a society honour this role? Who is a teacher? What is a teacher worth? We can't know these things by looking only at what positivist theory portrays. The question of what is knowledge is bound up with the ontological experiences of self and vocation. Where is the nature of teaching in the scheme of social living? What happens when we relegate the profound to the ordinary? How does the psyche of a peopled-system, dictated by accountability and function, meet the reality of being

human in the context of others? These issues are connected to all, as the greater good, and those who serve its human meaning.

My study promotes a higher awareness of teaching, through real not imagined stories, to raise public and system consciousness. How should teachers *be* in the face of constant demands and how do these constraints make teachers change? What types of research might motivate teachers to inform human curricula? How can teachers break the stereotypes that have pervaded personal and vocational experiences? In the world of policy, we often value the literal connection more than the living metaphor, the medium of crossing over, from ignorance to epistemological enlightenment. A qualitative question Barone (2007, p.464) asks: “*Are our purposes as researchers similar or identical to those of authors of imaginative literature?*” I also work in the world of translation.

My current life with teaching is closer to a vocational world than a world of imaginative practice, although I use imagination to interpret curricula. My study is also an existential work, to name the otherness of a life with teaching and explicate the tacit existence of a people bound to the volumes of policy. We are also drafted into roles that present what others name.

My writing attempts to explore experience by offering autobiography as testimony, to let the story guide me in what I should say, or as Conle says: “*The academic and existential road becomes one road*” (2000, p.212). A thesis of this kind must be an exploration in personal development, the role and nature of how rigorous study has meant the unravelling of self, because immersion means the deepening of self. The roads become one. Connelly and Clandinin (1988, p.16) write about the nature of narrative inquiry and stories of experience as development for teachers: “*We believe the most critical question in anyone’s education is to determine the meaning of life’s experiences.*”

And when I reflect on my work, I also think about how a life becomes a pact with knowledge and the relationship we have with meaning, and how goals, as Goodson (1998) says, are not always relevant. The reasoning of the study has been well discussed throughout this thesis: to offer authorship and transformational opportunity; to engage more of the self in the dialogue of teaching through the autobiographical act. Phillips (1994, p.75) suggests that autobiography:

“...confronts us with a simple puzzling question. In what sense is living a life like telling a story? The dream, we should remember, is addressed to oneself; there is no one else who can tell it.”

The study honours the solitary voice of personal experience and joins this voice with the collective diversity on identity. And as Ellis (2004) reminds us, narrative inquiry walks in the shoes of self and someone else.

Part B

Being, Return and What Things Might Be

To speak, to ask to have audience today in the world, requires that we speak to the world, for the world is in the audience; it too is listening to what we say. So these words are addressed to the world... James Hillman

Teacher Stories and Interpretation

Chapters 5 to 8 are the researcher's selected tales and the individual story-responses of the teachers, the other I; woven as inquiry and interpretation in relation to the study's driving questions and intention. The 'others' will appear, the stories of others, and how their life-worlds have impacted on their work, and what their own roads have revealed as universal truths. Here the teachers as writers engage in conscious reflection on the researcher's narratives and their own time as teachers. This is the study as human data, as both reflection on self and the stories of others as the penultimate writing, leading to Chapters 9 and 10 which conclude the thesis. Part B is the exegesis as literary disclosure. Chapters 5 to 8 place the research identity in a living and human context, and 9 and 10 are the closing conversations that offer a kind of coda or research denouement.

Was I aware of their past experiences? No. I know them as experienced teachers who have supported me in the usual, professionally expected ways, nothing more. But this was enough to guide me on who should get what tale from my autobiography. The responses are interpretations in themselves, where one story meets another (intertextuality); the connecting metaphor of the bridge to explicate narrative meaning. I could have given the same tale or chapter to each of the teachers and received varying responses as previously discussed. I did not want to fall into a kind of comparison

of reflections from the teachers, to find myself judging whose response was the most interpretively 'appealing'. The question for me was always: How should I see the stories in relation to interpretation? What kinds of interpretations, my own or the academic eye that informs? Should I adopt the dualist's eye: professional versus personal? In the end I needed to stay with my intention of looking at the stories with multiple eyes, in-keeping with the poly-vocalist method I have used to discuss the research from beginning to end. I am the multi-reader exploring what reveals itself as personal discovery open to other interpretations from other readers, later.

Directly after the stories, the reader is taken into the individual teacher responses to my questions (see Appendix B) which emanated from the stories woven as a text to provide the meta-narrative that informs the reflective act to storying. The responses give the teachers opportunity to connect to and make the reflexive bridge to bring resolution to narrative disclosure. This is an ethical consideration to facilitate closure and consolidate the nature and value of the study for participants with focused observations on the importance of personal and cultural identity (Angrosino and Mays de Perez, 2000). What have you experienced? Who are you?

Chapter 5

The Story I Gave to Pat

From The Tale: Chapter 1

I first used my pink, lens-less, plastic binoculars to look at the red arse of a baboon in the Dublin Zoo. The backside of a caged monkey looked a lot like a misused school jumper, frightened into submission. I've hated zoos ever since. I didn't understand how the world could be that way, to enslave living things; how or why it turned the way it did or why other people couldn't hear dogs talking, like I did.

So I buried things instead; to see if they would resurrect themselves perhaps, my own private statement to do with objects. I don't know for sure. I had a pre-occupation with all things not quite there and this made the art of making friends impossible, so I didn't have any - unless I count the make-believe. Make believe was a good thing because it brushed away the foliage of empty streets, to make them forests. I couldn't break through the solar system around my own eyes and if I was afraid, I would raise my binoculars and go to a distant place; one end strangely attached to the other. My mother's present was both confusing and prophetic.

I was photographed with various animals that day: deer, an elephant, birds and one in front a horse's rump, smiling, as if I knew the joke - backsides, the rear end of things and me trying to move forward. That was the thing in life for me - to get a-head - the one thing that would elude me. The many bumps and knocks I attracted, carried me as a haze, nestling in the here and there; wafting moss and shadows on a



constant landscape, melting into little pots of experimentation.

My journey began and grew on the outer edge of life: sometimes the childish observer, nose against the sweet shop; sometimes the reluctant participant, barely grasping the moments that came so easily to others and sometimes the spaces in-between, fragile and adrift. Many of my early childhood memories are a blur, blocked by circumstance and the monkey of playful neglect. My own personal mural was always at work. I can still see the streets of Dublin or London: my father playing drums in a local Jazz band in black and white liquid, smoke-smothered pubs. My large-nosed grandmother angry at my brother for opening my eye with a billiard cue and telling me it was my fault, and being dressed up as a baby and wheeled around in a well-used pram on Guy Fawkes Night. It was the fate of being the youngest and smallest. There was some kind of gimmick or scam to this theatre-of-the-night but since I had no comprehension of the significance of the ritual, I didn't wrestle with the reasoning.

There were other memories too: my little sister, Jane, who died at the house in London and her green plastic rattle - a cat with big ears, the sound of always, always; the return trips across the Irish Sea to visit my relations, and the icy winds on a black stony beach.

One day I packed my little brown and leather-bruised case and sat on the bottom step of the stairs looking at the front door. My parents were often stumped by indulgence and too preoccupied with the earthly conflicts of life to see a boy leaving home. Tom stopped me; his scuff-kneed persuasion was just enough to keep me from crying and walking out. Where was a four year old boy going to go anyway? I'd become the hedgehog I once kept in a shoe box. It escaped through the hole in the back fence, across the railway lines and away to a slow and spiky freedom.

My sense of decision was just as slow and lumbered by age. My brother was my hero, as many brothers are. After that the sounds of my parents mingled with my own, as echoes in a silent house. I transferred all the childish wishes for a loving world onto my brothers and placed them between me and the two adults who shared the same space but failed to see the wounded bird, gazing on the wire. I had two sisters and two brothers: Jane, who died of scarlet fever or something like that; Mory the surrogate mother; James, who died of liver malfunction and Tom, the unwitting hero.

We used to play in the stream-filled woods and parks nearby. There was a sewage outlet - a large concrete pipe, big and dark enough to swallow small boys. One day Tom hit a rat with a stick, inches from my neck - the monster outwitted. What skill and grace. They told me to go into the black pipe, as far as I could, telling me I'd be rewarded by another magical place at the other end. I went of course. I was well into the trusted darkness, secure in the faith of sibling protection. I could hear and feel the movement of water pushing objects against my legs and the faint shouts of my brothers in the blackness behind, but I couldn't hear the words. The mind has a way of constructing both dream and doubt at the same time I discovered. I had my first experience with involuntary stillness. I couldn't move forward and I couldn't go back. I just froze - every sensory element I had contrived to nothing. It wasn't fear but a type of stuck-ness. And in that moment all the creatures that inhabit shadows witnessed the tormenting immobility that would come again and again throughout my life.

I could feel the water rising and tails of rats around my legs and I could see the multi-coloured breath surrounding me - the light of an inhuman mist, like a sigh, only visible. I was rock and form at the same time. The silken shape embraced me, its own free will

mingling with my own inanimate self. Tom finally arrived and carried me out. My brothers were cruel in their devotion and made fun of me when it suited them; exacerbating my stutter with jibes and mocking revelry and my parents let them. I could never understand their predilection for disparate care and I learned to hide my pain in clownish acceptance, the mask of the longing jester; a role I used many times as a boy as conditioned survival. I thought everything was either fragile or funny. There didn't seem to be anything in-between.

I also learned that love was a word and could be used in any context. My innocence was my curse, my nagging innocence and naiveté, inexplicable, both curse and gift. I had learned to watch and be a part of the lazzi of my sibling and relative world. I was simply too removed to comprehend my position in the state of things and suffered the double-bind of purity and inner loss. What is a mother? Nine months of doubt and driven from the womb by necessity. This is not a passport to immediate care - no initiation to humanity. My mother had the disease of too much selfishness and not enough empathy; the self mirroring Medusa; everything turned to ice: the 'refrigerator mother', as one 1940's psychologist called it. When Jane died, she must have changed but I don't know for sure. I imagined the trauma and distance of her soul. I remember several distinct things about my mother: taking me to a cheap dentist to get a tooth pulled with a scribe-like instrument that hurt so badly I was swearing for days; her tasty lemon meringue and steak and kidney pies, and the time when she left me on the steps of my first school day in London. I had no experience with this - being a home boy and enjoying the freedom of teaching myself the wonderful ubiquity of potato-filled fields.

I stood there and watched her leave, unequipped to play this new game. I wanted to scream for peace but I hardly talked and when

I did it never came out right - introspective and jig-sawed. My mother died of one thing or another, including dementia. I'd ring her up and she would ask me who I was. I was obsessed with objects and things, pre-occupied above and beyond the normal call of childhood attachment. A teacher came out, took my hand and led me to a classroom. I was introduced to the small wee-folk and escorted to the back, where I promptly went to a corner and fingered my way across the maps on the wall. Not a great start.

There's a wildness in the woods that beckons; come near and play with the shadow and bark until the sun goes down. And this was the way of it - of piecing fractured parts in the forests of the self - what I do and don't remember and how the undergrowth and flowering of memory constructs meaning over time. Naming things is an act of revelation, calling things into the open, to give events their place in time only to find worn justice and routine recognition.

I had to go the toilet and I didn't know how to get there: long corridors; hooks to hang things on, cold and unloved tunnels. I took too long and my legs ran a watery brown, the new fashion of the incontinent traveler. Just seconds away. I tried to flush my underpants down the impossibly narrow neck of the toilet bowl. Oh how the un-mighty fall. I looked at them, white and brown sails in the sunset, for what I thought was the last time and left to walk the streets in the rain, holding my pants up as far as I could to wash away the shame. When I got home I took off my shorts and socks and left them on the line for all to see and waited until my sister arrived. She put my clothing in the sink and washed them before my parents saw them, except they did, but as usual said nothing, except with the frowns of prosecution.

The next day the cleaning woman came to my class with a brown paper bag tied with string. She was cockney and loud, a handkerchief hairdo and well meaning. She called out my name

and told the teacher how she'd taken my underwear home with her and washed them thoroughly and something else after that, lots of slow motion laughter, my first exposure to a million eyes and sounds at once. I was alone. My mother had written my name on the elastic inside my underpants – a bold move for her. I never talked again in that class and later I walked home in the dull and fading light of an English winter wondering how to cope with mishaps.

My parents didn't pick up or drop off. I was always in the care of my brothers, and they were their own explorers. Perhaps I had discovered the difference between alone and solitude. I don't know. I didn't know anything but wanted to and friends became the measurement of my worth in many ways. Much later in life my best friend would always exclaim to me, in his drawly-Welsh voice: 'Keeping ya bowweellls open, booyyo?' whenever we met.

It was aimless rhetoric than an actual question of course and some answers are better left to the imagination. And I'd often think loudly about life too, of the shouts of injustice, registered for prosperity, on the record so to speak, loose understandings, recordings of messages repeated; the fading stutters of scraggly vowels or the leaf, long since fallen from the branch, only to annoy the gardener who delays in the raking. Its presence is a nuisance rather than a testimony to the miracle of clarity. Such is the way of humans. It was the season for snow and mute indifference but there was always the comfort of serious injury brought on by the revenge of objects.

We had a brake-free, three-wheeler bicycle, rusty and squealing from too much neglect. I found it dying on a nearby dump. Naturally it was a sign and so we climbed on its sagging limbs and hurtled down the hill, too loyal to obvious silly moments that should have been left alone and like apples picked too soon, the collision with the back of a parked car made no sense at all. I hit

the car window and bounced like a cartoon; James hit the boot and Tom hit something else, gashed his penis open, trickling red down his legs. He went on to father three children so all was well but the colour of blood renders immediate tragedy to the unknowing and inexperienced eye.

*I've found this with teaching too, when blood would rise up at schools to confront us. One day I had to open a girl's mouth when she was semi-unconscious from an accident in the playground, when I was on my primary teaching practicum; lots of broken teeth and bowls of blood. Blood makes the moment more serious of course. James had a broken arm and I had head injuries that gave me a new look for a while, inside and out. In one way or another we invited these kinds of collisions and little did I know that many years later I would suffer part two of *Injuries from Bicycles*.*

And boys just have a way of ignoring important safety tips. Sometimes reckless frivolity just can't be avoided, like being inside an abandoned rain tank that takes you over a cliff. Luckily I didn't drown but I quickly learned another meaning about the dark, waiting to surface; a black and frightening hole and then seeing a distant light and my brother laughing from the top of the embankment, looking down. They were extremely good at leading me to things and letting me sink or sink. My brothers had a way of disarming me in the most impotent of times, so that all I had to do was obey and trust, my gullibility, like a fishing line, always on the hook. For example, there was an old house not far from where we lived, old as in very old, and very dark, mottled trees, hardly alive, creepers and all. There was supposed to be a witch living there and I was a tiny sucker for anything fantastical.

Sometimes I'd stop outside and stare, imagining the contents, the promise of story and other parents perhaps who might adopt me. My brothers, in their usual experimental mode, chose me as the

most available and co-operative guinea pig. They led me to the front door of the house and left me. They said if I stood there long enough something magic would happen; again. And it did.

The door creaked open, as you'd imagine it would, the space between crack and face, obvious and tense. A woman, the witch, came out, grabbed me by the arm and dragged me inside. Just like that. I was scared but distant, a programmed emotion I cultivated from birth. I stood like a tormented statue, wondering what next and what if; all at the same time. I could smell the dust as dampened cloth and airless things. I could see the red and black fibers of the room, a black cat in a black chair, staring at me, another captured boy who didn't make it out, turned into furry servitude I thought. She pushed me down with a grunt; a conclusion, no words except the power of the finger and left the room mumbling witchy sounds.

She returned with a spoonful of cod-liver oil I supposed. She forced it down my throat, strangling my long hair. It happened so fast and I didn't choke and gag at first. Instead I held my breath and turned purple which amused her and so she slapped me across the face. 'Good...' I thought; it's real. Part of it went down my throat and part of it went over the cat, busy being nosy on my lap. 'Look at me boy,' wailing like a banshee who'd just won at bingo. I looked of course and there was a long pause while I took focus on her bulbous nose, scraggy hair and yellow teeth, smoky and appropriate. 'Do I look like a witch?' 'Yes,' I replied, without the childish hesitation. 'That's good, because I am!' And then she danced around the room, like a witch I guessed; howling to a song she may have invented, right there and then.

Her long raggedy-brown dress was a sight to see, bits of it here and there, a whirling Dervish in the ivy and dust-covered sitting room. If it were Playschool I would have laughed perhaps and joined her; my hair and hers, interlocked in some strange reunion

from another time and place, red and black. She was fire and earth at the same time. The black cat sprang to the moment; my eyes were balls of red glass and I was hooked again. And I may have known then, in some wild and confirming way that anything goes and the world was not peace for me but a strange rite, to seek the mysterious and outer edges from now on. She grabbed me by the collar and threw me out.

I was offal on her neglected yard; my hands squeezing the life out of weeds that grew from cracks and bloody knees. My brothers were frozen at the front gate, their own eyes aghast. I turned to the witch who was laughing. Her long neck stuck out and lips the size of bottoms and said, 'Thank you!' She stopped, grumped something in some ancient tongue perhaps, turned away and slammed the door, the sound of finished. My brothers took hold of my arms and we took off, stumbling along the road, running and stumbling, pigtails and dribbling fish oil and me struggling to look back. Everything anybody did always seemed to be right and true to me and this was part of the same truth I took as the way life just is. I always knew witches existed because my brothers would keep up the library of discontent, designed to frighten little boys. And now I was grateful for their prodding insistence; to place me in the forefront of ordinary and not so ordinary magic. In their own way they were merciful. They kept me out of the house a great deal, to roam like bandits on a clock.

We'd go scrumping (as in the verb, to scrump) down the back alley woodlands. This is the artifice of stealing apples from orchards, as all boys know, without being caught. I think it's a medieval term for brewing cider or something. We used our jumpers as baskets, waddling our way, pregnant with green and red fruit. We liked apples from forbidden places. The best, ripest and tastiest were in the orchard that belonged to the mental

hospital, as they were called then, close to where we lived, across the railway line. It was a series of ominous and unkempt buildings, full of empty feeling and rumors on howling winds. I would stop and contemplate the occupants, sensing eyes from small, barred windows.

And one day they were there, walking among the trees, striped pyjamas, like the ones I would see later on television, worn by the poor unfortunates of Auschwitz. I was too young to work out why they were wearing pyjamas during the day and the way they were, but I wasn't afraid. I'd watch their movements, zombie-like waifs, unwoken. I used to gaze at them and my emotions would scramble to feel something so removed, and yet so familiar. I could sense their imprisoned souls. They wandered through the grounds, arms imminent and fingers with minds of their own. I had learned too, that I wanted to rescue and protect, like Robin Hood or a healer of sorts.

There was a mound across the track and down a back alleyway, lined with woods, neglected and overgrown public spaces, with trails blazed by boys and unfit for habitation. It was like a natural movie set and the aim was to capture the mound from the kids of surrounding streets. Our street had won the mound weeks before and so it was our turn to defend it and once taken, it was retaken and that seemed to be the history and cycle of it. We got there first, some kind of pre-arranged policy. I could see them approaching from the woods, fanned-out among the paths. How well they did this I thought, too young to be generals but old enough to find a plan. They were carrying bows, spears and wooden swords in tense hands made for war; warriors in shorts.

Making bows from willow branches was a skill taught by some unknown others and handed down to boys like my brothers and then to me. It was like the rehearsal had already happened and this was the opening performance. Tom shouted at me to get

down and stay down. I remember James shouting at Tom, demanding my whereabouts. I figured this was serious stuff. I looked at the oncoming army, short by age and circumstance and angry at something. Could it be the striped pyjamas or maybe we picked too many apples or maybe it was just the mound itself, a growth that rendered symbols a real consequence of life? I saw the carnage of thumping wood and arrows hitting bodies and scanned the incline for my dear brothers, caught in the milieu.

A boy from the other street was hit in the eye with an arrow, like Harold at Hastings - 1066. I came out from my hiding place and walked among the chaos. I knelt beside him and gently put my hand around the arrow and pulled it out. Liquid spilled like it should and cries I'd heard somewhere before, steadied me. I whispered to him that everything was going to be all right. My hands were soaked in blood and love. I don't remember anything about the mound after that. We came, we saw, we picked, but we didn't have the same feeling for apples anymore, at least I didn't. Only the dark and animated building remains relatively clear, the walking pyjamas, eeriness, foreboding and too many stretched jumpers best used to keep small boys warm.

It was not long after that, at the bottom of the stairway that led up to Edgware Road that I saw a man killed or he looked dead anyway, knifed in the stomach. The man with the knife and more blood looked at me, startled at first and then he smiled, pulling out the shiny blade and stopped. He said quite calmly, 'It's alright, son, it's alright, off you go...' I didn't have the wherewithal so off I went. The man who looked dead was slumped over, held firmly so he wouldn't fall. I remember his eyes were closed and the size of the knife and later put two and two together. Overall there were too many people hurt and maimed around that neck of the woods. We took the uncertainty of too-young independence and sheer boyhood fantasy and

interpreted this into our own form of worldly trouble, mirroring what we saw and what adults did.

We used to play a game called Who Can Die Best? I was great at it and very believable. I had the run down pat, a man shot off a horse when the rider is killed and it rolls on top of him. The other boys used to say how I was always the best at dying, and at ambush. I knew exactly where to hide and where to see things, except the day I fell from a railroad bridge while hunting peas for my peashooter - The Pea Wars. Everybody went to war. We were conscripted, like the Press Gangs who used to drag men off to fight on English ships, for queen and country. Peas can really hurt if you get close enough. I saw the railway bridge, the steel lines underneath, the impossible height and the victory of finding fresh ammunition. My brothers would be proud of me. Of course I lost my grip, trying to reach for a branch, my probable inattentiveness. I don't remember the initial impact, only a vague recollection of an ambulance ride and then my long stay at Middlesex Hospital.

I'd fallen down stairs and other things but nothing prepared me for the pain I went through. My head was split and aching and sleep-walking didn't help. The night nurse at the hospital plucked me from the park across the road one night, in oversized hospital pyjamas, shouting at traffic. I was too young to be a hooligan so she took me back to the ward; yelling some rule I should know about. My family went camping once, another aberration. My father caught me trying to pick a fight with some pigs in a field late at night. I was standing at a fence shouting challenges, as if they knew. Pigs are smart; they just ignored me. I guess that was kind of silly but who really knows what's happening when we're asleep. I hated hospitals and still do to this day, only sometimes I long for rest and patient care.

And then there were the movies: The Lone Ranger and Norman

Wisdom. We used to bunk in the Saturday morning pictures in London. A boy would pay to get in and then make his way to the back door and the rest of us would topple in, all feet and heads. We would creep down on all fours, ant-like to the seats, whenever a dark moment in the film presented itself. I would stay for hours, mesmerized by the sights and sounds of victory, like all boys do. In this way I guess I was normal. Boys long to demonstrate acts of bravery. It must be noble and pure of course; saving someone's life or protecting.

The irony is that James was always on the lookout for trouble. One day he decided that we should raid a sweet shop that had been locked up and was no longer in use. My brothers weren't exactly the best role models that way. They were busy searching for money and all I could see was the chocolates. I stuffed as many as I could down my shorts and we left. I liked Mars Bars and Toblerone. I was once told by a sweet-shop man in Dublin that I was too young for a Toblerone bar so I couldn't buy it. It was a chocolate for adults only. From then on I always wanted one; the long triangle-shaped package beckoned to me. I also liked Cadbury's Flakes, stuck in ice-cream.

James was never given a fair chance when he was a boy. They sent him off to boarding school for other reasons, unknown to us. We used to drive down and see him at the Kent borstal school. My brothers had a semblance of responsibility but they were also too risky at times with me, I know. They were protective as much as they could be and regarded me as the innocent and amusing little brother who would not allow his parents to cut his hair '...in another world...' as my sister would always say.

And when I needed a haircut I had to be held down and gagged while my father put a bowl on my head and cut around it. I was difficult and weird; wild behaviour that would arrest even me sometimes and signal that I had somehow gone astray or a little

mad perhaps. The haircuts were designed to save money but that's how I discovered the Normans and began to read about the Conquests of England. I figured they were all held down to have hair cuts with upside-down bowls. I sometimes think my father should have been born in medieval times. He'd been a boxer, a Jazz drummer and a bicycle maker and we lived poor. He told me that when Count Basie used to tour Ireland, he was the only white drummer they'd jam with. I always thought I had bad hearing because I never got anything anyone said and when he told me this I thought I had missed the word 'scones'. I was never really sure of anything.

He had good rhythm that's for sure. He should have used it to figure out the rhythm of life, like Sammy Davis Junior. Eating well would have been a good start. My parents didn't have any money. At night my sister would stick potatoes over the fire for us and we seemed content. At other times it was bread and dripping. I don't recall being saddened by it but I guess they were. My parents always made sure we had coal for the fire though. I'd watch the men with blackened faces, like masks, with leather heads and sacks full of shiny black rocks and the chimney sweeps with fireplace bags and how the earthy smell of hessian always lingered; until my cousins arrived at Christmas and then it was the smell of girlish hair and my own tremulous disposition.

I certainly didn't say much and I had way too much hair for a human boy at that time and a way of speaking what was obvious to me and apparently not so obvious to everyone else. I don't know what difference that made to anything anyway. I was told by a man when I used to work on a building site, years later, that I looked like Jesus but that was because the sun was behind me and he was in a ditch with too much whiskey to be in charge of foundations, so anything's possible. And while it may

be true that I was kind of angelic, it was also true that I was troublesome and burdened by a fog that bewildered me at every turn. I just didn't get things.

I was born with a naiveté and loneliness that remained a cloud, as the poem goes. My concept of love was only from the position of an arms-length creature, knowing its mask by distance, insecure and nurtured by unpredictability. There had to be a time when start meant go but my parents were locked in their own battles, too dated by their own histories. Victor Hugo once said, 'The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved.' My angel days may have come and gone but there's always the presence of invitation, a sedentary peace perhaps but worth tickling every now and again.

I suppose the acts of burying the few toys I was given was some kind of early sign of something. I took to burying things the way dogs do when they conceal a bone, only I could never remember where because it was always in other people's yards, secretly and at night - the unwanted visitor. I buried a cheque that came in the mail once. My father didn't shout at me that time, just sent my brothers and my sister out to look in the gardens of neighbours for signs of freshly laid dirt. But I wouldn't and couldn't tell him anything. I was being tortured except there was no real pain; all very Walter Mitty.

He was unusually calm about it. Was this a ploy - to get me to reveal what I didn't know? He was like that; even when I burned down his shed with his brand new lawn mower in it. I think he liked change. Actually it was the old abandoned rain tank we rolled home from my near drowning episode at the creek. I saw the flames when I got to the back door but the redness of the glow didn't connect with anything like destruction and so I went inside, a continuation of before.

The fraudulent game of ordinary, everyday events is simply not enough. Sooner or later we turn away from things that keep us the same, in the hope that the horizon will show us something else. And so it is with migration. We stood outside Australia House and I looked at the colours on the PR posters: of open spaces, gum trees and endless coastline. I had to wait outside but I felt something was up; something was going to happen; something big.

Pat's Response to the Tale

Keith was 4 years old. He was pale in appearance, a bit awkward in his movement exacerbated by his pigeon toed and knocked-kneed gait. His eating habits were considered insufficient for reasonable health. He ate a little meat and bread. He played with John and Jeremy the usual games that little boys play but preferred to play alone until he worked things out.

But he did get frustrated when the picture of his internal world didn't match the real world and no one found it easy to placate him. There was no doubt that he was different. Despite all the things that made him different in everyone's eyes he had a stand out quality. He was exceptionally curious.

The questions never stopped, from 'What does this lizard eat?' to 'How does the atom bomb work?' Keith was my 4 year old son, a second child and eventually one of four children. His difference challenged me as a father and his curiosity challenged me as a teacher. In responding to his needs, to the expectation of growing him to be a creative and whole satisfied person, the conservative core that was my upbringing and my teacher training was challenged. I think he won. It wasn't dealing with his perceived differences that changed me, for I did not focus on them. It was the feeding his curiosity that aroused in me a sense that as his father and nurturer I had the opportunity to free him from those restraints and let him use his cleverness to fly free into the world. He has shared his perceptions of that time with me. He felt the frustration and awkwardness that came from his stuttering and from being different. His curiosity manifested itself in ridicule from other students (and teachers in a milder form) because he always asked the difficult question.

He could not work out why the very aspect of his being that made him different and at home even special, was condemned at school as a 'not normal function'. He felt even as a young boy that to conform was to stay in the mundane. His summary of his early primary school days was that he couldn't walk, talk, read or write very well. Now as he has grown to middle age I share with him the product of my input and his cleverness and am rewarded with a wonderful relationship. He is a modern man, fit, strong, with his own family and a world view that is a response to the times and his upbringing.

My conservativeness was paramount in my growing years through to early fatherhood. It was a product of the times and expectations in the farming community in which I grew up. Being conservative does not equip one well for challenges that come from outside the normal range of human experiences. This is the story of how challenges in my life and teaching forced change upon me, like being in an arm wrestle that eventually relegated my conservative nature to the background of my personality.

I grew up on a farm walking with my sister and brothers to the school bus and going to the primary school in the bush. It was the 1950's. At school we lined up, sat in rows and were educated by good teachers imparting knowledge on which we were later tested. It seems in hindsight to be very memory based. Good students were awarded and could rote learn with ease basic tasks like tables and spelling. This education model was based on the old English or Scottish model.

It was supported by our parents and the community. A good student in primary school was recognised in the community and also praised within the family at family gatherings. Parents played little part in the learning process other than giving absolute support to the school and teacher. At home the only books that we ever saw were books that my mother read.

I remember Neville Shute, Nicholas Montserrat and John Steinbeck's East of Eden. These books were read by my mother to ward off the loneliness and depression that came from living in an isolated farming situation with no car. There was no educational gain for us in having these books around. My high school years were in a Catholic boarding school at Geraldton. The

Religious Brothers continued the education of retaining facts and regurgitating them at exam time.

As well there was some exploration in science, problem solving in maths, the odd geography excursion and a few interactive sessions where we would be asked for our input. Generally we were talked to, with boarded notes and our task was to take down the notes and remember them. We had abundant time to practise memorising the notes as we had three hours of homework each day of the week. The time between classes and homework in the evening was taken up with organised sport and exercise. We were not left to be idle as the Brothers believed that idle minds in teenagers were prone to impure thoughts and maybe even deeds. Despite the busy nature of boarding school life this is where I first felt the dread of loneliness and aloneness.

At the school we took in twenty overseas students. It became very obvious to the Aussie kids that these overseas students were cognitively way beyond us. They could explain the maths and science that we found difficult and then talk about, with great knowledge, science topics we had no knowledge of. They seemed to have remarkable conceptual knowledge in Maths and Science and were articulate in written and spoken English.

I watched their cleverness and skill and by contrast felt I was educationally inferior. Nobody had noticed the dyslexic nature of my learning which is surprising given that dyslexia had been known about for at least sixty years and was one of very few learning difficulties known to educators of the times. I left high school with an average grade in seven subjects that allowed me to scrape into University to do a Bachelor of Arts.

My results were merely a reflection of the many hours of repetitive learning in silence at boarding school under the watchful eye of the Brother sitting over us in his raised seated position. I was not prepared for the self directed learning that was required at University. I failed. As I was bonded to teaching I returned to Teachers College, completed a one year primary teacher's certificate, which I also failed, as I was unable to learn to play the musical recorder to the minimum standard.

Teachers' college education was based on the retention model followed by exams of three hours for each subject with a couple of two week 'pracs' where we learnt to teach with the guidance of an experienced teacher. How did we teach? We taught like I had learnt and so the cycle of education continued, with teachers, who as successful students teaching like they were taught. It seemed that there would never be a break in the cycle. This style of education was maintained by a strong system of discipline where the teacher's authority was a foregone, not something to be earned. If a teacher had a good manner, prepared well, and understood about being firm and fair he/she had a good classroom. Discovery, exploration and cooperative learning were to come in the 1970's.

When I was recalled to teachers college following the disastrous year at university in the mid 1960's I underwent a battery of tests along with all the other students. Despite scoring well in the IQ test my reading was in the lowest centile. After a short counselling session I was given a pile of thick books with fine print to wade through. The irony of this was that these books were expressly written to overcome reading problems. I tried hard to read them but the task was beyond me. Still nobody spoke to me about dyslexia and the difficulties that it presents for the person when reading and writing. This knowledge was to come much later. My early teaching years at Marble Bar and in the Kimberly's challenged my orthodox teaching style. I learnt of the need to match the learning to the learners, although the discipline base continued. With expanding life experiences came some maturity and skills in overcoming my shyness and naivety that seem to me in hindsight to be connected to the whole conservative nature of my upbringing.

It wasn't until I returned to Perth in the early 1970's and became interested in the Lance Holt Schools that I challenged the way in which I taught. Lance Holt Schools (three of them in WA) were the Western Australian expression of what came to be known as Open Education or sometimes as Alternative Education. It was a child centred educational approach with student needs setting the pace and student's interests setting the topics. Standard reading for alternative teachers was Summerhill by A S Neill. Other authors of the time who promoted various versions of this approach included John Holt with Freedom to Learn and Jonathon Kozol's Death at an Early Age and

Free Schools; Herbert Kohl's Teaching the Unteachable and Gerry Rosenfeld's Shut those Thick Lips: A Study of Slum School Failure. These books were extremely critical of the education of the time in that it did not meet the needs of the students on the 1970's. It was paralleled by the social revolution of 'peace and love' of the late 60's and 70's.

Open Education ideas were a long way from mainstream primary schooling initially but within years the Public School system was absorbing some of the principles into its spatial planning and classroom methodology. It was an amazing time to be involved in. It was the same time that my son, Keith began asking questions. This was the beginning of an internal conflict between my dreams of a better way to educate and my reality while teaching in a state school.

In tandem with this was the Gough Whitlam era. He came to power with three great ideas for Australia:

1. Equity.
2. Involve the people.
3. Release the talent in people.

All these three ideas were easily expressed in education and he did this through a number of programs, the most influential being the Schools Commission Innovative Grant. For the first time teachers responding to the needs of their local students and their local environments and using their huge store of ideas developed bold innovative learning programs that were fully funded and documented for all teachers to learn from.

It produced excellent learning programs and inadvertently undermined the fabric upon which previous learning styles had been developed over the years. It was liberating and for the first time teachers were challenged to be leaders in education, not merely the recipients of past practises. It had been a roller coaster ride for those who jumped aboard. Although Gough Whitlam was a short lived Prime Minister the impact of his reform on education was profound and long lasting.

At the broader arena the Russians had beaten the Americans into space in the early 1960's. The Russians won the step into space with possibly more

luck and risk taking than having superior skills to the Americans. The Americans took it badly, becoming very reflective and in the process poured huge amounts of money into educational research and practice. Out of this came a multi disciplinary humanities based course using Jerome Bruner's spiralling curriculum and 'Discovery Learning' principles. The spiralling curriculum allowed for the revisiting of concepts about life in ever increasing complexities as dictated by the choice of materials.

As one example the concept of parenthood was visited in the study of Pacific salmon, which spawn and die before the offspring are born and again in the herring gull where the young are nurtured for a short while before becoming independent. The idea was further explored amongst the very social baboons in Kenya where DeVore studied them for years and finally amongst the Netsilik Inuit of Pelly Bay in Canada. Jerome Bruner was able to demonstrate that with careful planning of learning materials complex ideas could be taught to young students. It challenged those models of learning that were built on the sequential development, Piaget models.

As well, the team of developers produced some of the most innovative simulation games and coupled these with a cooperative open ended learning style. For the first time the teacher could involve the students in non prescriptive learning outcomes while ensuring they understood at a deeper or more complex level. Teachers were trained in the materials and learning processes over 5 days and experienced this exciting approach. The three primary questions underlying the course were:

1. What is human about human beings?
2. How did they get his way?
3. How can they become more so?

Unfortunately it challenged some of the conservative ideas of the fundamentalist Christian Americans and English people and was dropped from schools in the late 1970's as too controversial. Despite its short history some of the ideas lived on in education and teaching practice. Australia produced some of its own materials through a program called Social Education Material Project (SEMP). These were also banned along with MACOS, despite their popularity with students, parents and teachers.

I was very lucky to be exposed to all these totally new ideas in learning and the demise of the courses, although seen as a missed opportunity, could not take what I had learnt from them. I felt betrayed in a strange way. Surely students should be able to access the best in education materials and ideas. It wasn't long before I resigned from teaching.

During the 1980's and 1990's I worked with students with disabilities in Special Schools and in inclusive high school settings. General education reverted to a more conservative approach in the 80's with most of the flickering flames of change being snuffed out as the economy took a downturn. The Education Support area was an exception.

Initially in the late 1980's teachers were using the Bud Fredericks task analysis model to teach students life skills. This finely tuned program was supported by emerging information technologies software programs for tracking student progress. One such early program was the KIDMAP program.

But the most influential event of the times for students with disabilities was the creation of the Post Compulsory Schooling Program Transition Program. It was a curriculum package built from the ground up by practising teacher from current best practice in delivering life skills education. It was taken on enthusiastically by teachers and my experience in trialling and using it was one of great empowerment. It is the only bottom up designed curriculum I have ever used and still remains as a standout model. Working with the disabled had a profound and life lasting impact on me as a teacher and person. Many of my previous teaching skills had to be modified and scaled back to fit with the expectations that enabled the students to progress forward towards successful transition.

The legacy of these 25 years of teaching is that:

1. I have great respect for the carers and teachers of the disabled.
2. I have removed the dichotomy of normal versus abnormal to an inclusive view where we all belong regardless of abilities or perceived lack of...

3. I have learnt that every person has a pathway during education and a right to expect that it will give them as much opportunity as the next person to enjoy and be a contributing member of our community. This has become a fundamental focus of education for me.
4. I also discovered that my learning stumbling blocks were dyslexia. Once known this information was of little value, other than to explain the tedious nature of my academic learning experiences. By now I had acquired sufficient success and confidence to bypass the dyslexia.
5. To this day I teach students with dyslexia this important message. It is not a disability, rather just another of the many different ways we use our brain to learn. During the last eleven years of my career I have worked with disengaged youth. The brief for these students was to engage them through learning whereas my past experiences suggested that developing life skills was more important.

The challenging nature of engaging long term disengaged and disenfranchised students' back into the school setting required writing of engaging curriculum materials, refining delivery methods and using a considered personal approach when interacting with the students. Surprisingly these students want to be successful in mainstream settings. There is no doubt that long term failure in the education system is personally destructive for these teenage students and underpins their poor performance and contributes to their fringe behaviours. Carefully designed curriculum materials combined with evenly paced delivery enables students to be successful. These students require me to refine my skills and ideas about teaching and inclusion. I now promote these ideas:

1. Equity requires that each student receives what they need to be successful, resulting in some students taking more of your time or a different type of support to their fellow classmates. Students see this as equitable as long as they feel they have an equal chance to be as successful as the next person.

2. A guarantee is given to the student that if they attend regularly they will be successful. This clearly puts the onus of engagement in learning on the teacher and shifts some of the responsibility from the student.
3. For students who have been overwhelmed by school this seems to be a good starting point for them. The student can expect the support required for this to occur.
4. Ongoing success is the key to re-engaging failing students. There is a myth about failure that does not apply to these students. It is generally believed that failure is a powerful motivator and sharpens the learner's focus. This is true of people who are usually successful.
5. But for the group of students who continually fail further failure does the opposite. It undermines their confidence, reduces their motivation and commitment and ultimately eats away at their core.
6. When problems arise they need to be resolved through negotiation. This gives the student a sense that they are heard and they have some stake in the process.

As I come to the end of my teaching career, I sense that I have moved a long way from the teacher directed, standard curriculum enforced with a strong discipline base, to a negotiating teacher managing the curriculum and teaching by responding to student needs and giving students greater opportunities to be successful. In my mind the way I operated as a young teacher and person seems diametrically opposed to the person and teacher that I am now. I am sure that I could have done many jobs during my working career and I have done some different jobs for a short period, but the journey as a teacher person has been a wholesome and rewarding experience for me.

Teaching Validates My Life

One vital thing strikes me about Pat's story is his teaching life's process in relation to how teaching has evolved, and his awareness of the educational act in relation to his life's journey. He understands

what has happened and the relationship between paradigm and the personal. Pat's identity is deeply connected to his vocational integrity.

During this study Pat suffered a major heart attack. The week before the attack he spoke to me again of the loss of his son and how the study had enabled him to include his thoughts on the more personal aspects of his life. We spoke about how loss can be the 'force' that initiates transformative thinking and how this often results in a new view of the world we inhabit. I was glad Pat emailed me to say he wanted to continue with the study. He is a man who has devoted his life to teaching and young learners. He also possesses a heightened sense of teaching with a natural ability to mentor.

Pat is a good colleague and personifies for me the human meaning of teaching in many ways; devotion, social justice and the intrinsic value of learning and teaching. We can see in Pat's story he is a teacher acutely attuned to life's personal and historical contexts. He has placed these in the context of his classroom world, providing a unique perspective of what he's witnessed and experienced. He proceeds on his conceptualized road as a living process that recognizes those others involved; both the past and present relationships with teaching. It is both a tacit and participatory quest to fulfill his pledge to bring the world to his students through the constant discourse on life's social meaning. He became his own living edifice of learning; to bring his own accounts to settings, the most creative act. Guba (1990, p.27) says: "*It is the mind that is to be transformed not the real world itself.*"

And Pat has done that both actively and as an unwitting bi-product of his dyslexia, which served in many ways to stimulate his drive to be proficient and effective in his work. His multiple experiences have also involved loss which accompanies personal obstacles. His mind defaults to experience and shares itself with skill and compassion to

bring a fuller life to his students. He is very much the human as teacher.

There is no doubt that as my teaching became an accumulation of past experiences, both life and teaching experiences underpinned my day to day teaching. It is as though my teaching was given credibility within my own consciousness at least (it was very familiar to me) and I felt when chatting with colleagues that my ideas were viewed with some sense of confidence. Of course any person who works out the complexities of teaching young people will have an explanation of their actions and these can be based on any number of approaches from trial and error to research.

This explanation or maybe justification always seems to have a ring of authenticity to it. As an aging teacher with a chance to reflect on many changes and morphing throughout a 45 year teaching career, I would hope that some of the explanations that I now give stand up to rigorous analysis.

When I look at Pat's responses there is a felt sense of the teacher wanting a genuine life. His experiences have unfolded almost in direct correlation to his teaching values. He teaches not just from a curriculum but from the heart.

My story sprang from a section of the early chapters that Phil sent me. Of my 4 children, one intrigued me more than the others in the area of learning, right back to when he was very young. Although Phil's description of his early days was quite different to how I saw my son grappling with the vagaries of the interactions in his life and the accelerated learning that he seemed to go through, there was something in Phil's

description, maybe a sense of distance or an inability to make sense of it all that connected it to my son.

In the end Pat constructed his own pathway in relationship with those he knew needed another chance not offered in traditional settings. He can feel things others are feeling; to stretch out and meet them where they are, to offer support willingly, with empathy and hope.

I have always been very lucky in my teaching situations by having a great deal of autonomy. Maybe I sought those out subconsciously and this may have enabled me to be true to myself in my role as teacher. When finally after 45 years I wrote of the life and educational influences that have emerged strongly in my 'teacher being', I began to realise that the process is a growing one and much more significant than I had ever thought. As a teacher I could always explain my actions and the rationale behind the approach. There is a compounding effect as time and experiences go by. But to stop and reflect is not something many teachers have the emotional energy and real time for. Once the first story was written for Phil, there seemed to be a sense of loss or incompleteness.

Reading others stories, although of interest, did not quench this sense of 'unfinished'. It was as if a part of this teacher had been touched and there was a story deeper down trying to get out: a most surprising outcome, especially after the first writing that was quite cathartic.

I believe the study offered Pat a more formalised medium of life expression. He saw the study as an opportunity to describe his life to a real audience in the context of Education. He is the head of a Fast Track group and works with the disenchanted in life; to offer them a

personal way forward with learning. Many of the Fast Track programs delivered in Western Australian schools can thank Pat and his ingenious way of creating highly focused and pertinent programs. He positioned himself so that he could claim some autonomy in his world as a creative force for change. On reflection he asks: “*Has my life been worthwhile?*” His heart attack has also rendered him vulnerable to introspection and reflection. He sees writing for meaning as a ‘saving grace’ now. In Chapter One (of the thesis) I wrote:

The purpose of the study is to reflect on the self as a life journey and as a teacher journey with a personal and professional life; not as a journal experience, but an act of commitment. This would mean finding those other voices that would hold my commitment together as literary mentors; the voices of veteran researchers and writers; muses of the self.

Pat has found the other voice; that critical position of focus where he can see his own terrain more clearly. Now he can offer empathy to this voice the same way he has to others, all his life. Storying is also a cathartic act when the words reach out to a similar place; deeper levels of knowing and understanding. In the context of education, teachers may miss the value in relation to defining themselves or types of reflection devalued or overlooked. Neville (1989) talks about a more natural way of experiencing life and may be the only way of responding to the world. Jung (1969) called this self-realisation and storying is an acknowledgment of our holistic place in the world, including all subliminal and temporal experiences.

Pat later writes:

I found the stories of others extremely rewarding to read. They are stories of people who are a similar age to me. Their very

different life experiences clearly have influenced them as people and teachers. The similarities and differences are as expected. Despite the differences we share many common aspirations for the students we teach and discussions between us seem to highlight our shared visions, much more so than our differences when it comes to education. Maybe the process of education draws us inevitably towards consensus overriding our differences. I like the forums where differences are explored, rather than the PD where we constantly seem to be working towards agreement. In this way I like to know more about others.

Pat senses a loss when he wrote his first story for the study. He says that reading the stories of others left him with an unquenched or 'unfinished' feeling. He was touched by his own meaning, his need to go deeper, although the other stories gave him a sense of validation, of himself as a teacher. There was no escaping the part others played in his story. But he wanted to know more of himself and what the passage of writing might offer him. There is no reward or greater risk. The faith in teaching lies in the only exception good service offers; the consolation in the investment we make in the unknown future of others. In the end, we understand the real discipline in trusting the un-examinable. And the writing of an autobiography constitutes a salient act; to finally recognise the full meaning of a life missed at the time of the living and engage in the substance of self.

Many people and current political rhetoric support the idea of good teachers being the result of sound training and supportive mentoring in the teacher's early years. My poor teacher training (of my own making) and lack of mentoring (due to remote teaching situations) resulted in having to learn to teach by responding to the students. Whether I taught in remote locations, with students with disabilities, or disengaged

students, I have learnt, and still do learn from the students I teach. I see the pressure that the system imposes on many teachers but in a way I have been immune to this. I think this has allowed me to teach for as long as I have.

Pat's 'peculiar' journey of isolated beginnings, has meant he had to find his own ways of connecting to teaching, distant from the kinds of support offered today; an irony that still serves him. He learned to form relationships with students that we often talk so much about in professional development. He became the true bridge for others through real human need. He offers an empathic and very human learning model, the platform for his life, and loss has been a major and transformative factor in knowing others and in offering hope to others. As a change-maker he accepts that vision provides a powerful role in the market-place of institutions, not only about teaching, but also about viewing the perspectives *knowing* endows. Visionaries provide a strong and active voice in the development of self within schools.

I am amazed at the variety of human situations that people live through and their responses to them. I now write family history stories and have spoken to all the old people in the family and written their stories for them. Many lived in a similar time and location within very similar farming homes. All their stories were more than subtly different. Everyone I spoke to said that their story was not worth telling, that their life was ordinary.

But I have never found that one yet. Every story was worth writing and reading. For each of those people they now treasure their story and are quite proud of it. Every story is worth a read.

As professionals we learn how to connect to our own passage of time and this is also a temporal dilemma (Conle, 1999). Teaching how each story is connected to the universal narrative as a universal myth can do that, to return to the whole through narrative and presentation of the auto-self, attempting to find some lasting, filial memory of our own. Personal experiences and their memories 'hold' individuals when the risk of disclosure is present. Bruner (1995) discusses structuring experiences and guiding the memories of present and future lives. We seem to have two common threads in the relationship of teaching and learning, hope for change and the willingness to aspire to something bigger than ourselves. Pat placed more importance on responding to student needs, partly out of pedagogical necessity but mostly out of compassion: "...I still learn from the students I teach." This openness is also a willingness to engage with the compassionate other and now Pat reflects on his 'immunity' from the pressures of teaching by engaging with gratitude for its own sake. For him teaching "...embodies not only my aspirations but also aspirations for those I teach." He is the living gatekeeper of what is possible.

The needs of recognition, of belonging, are in some ways met in this personal interaction we call learning. It is part of the relationship that makes learning successful. Given that the students have taught me most of what I know, works in teaching my story and must be part of this scenario, although I sometimes find myself distant from it. Modern day life is a fast changing scenario and as an ageing teacher I question my ability to stay relevant and in touch.

Only others can assess whether I have been able to keep pace. Maybe my story has become old fashioned along with my sense of what education and learning are.

Pat speaks of his doubts about whether his teaching has remained relevant. He forgets, like most teachers, that what he has accomplished has a resonance even he cannot measure. His natural ability to empathise will never be outdated by age. And the one thing he sometimes forgets is that young people who experience the loss of mainstream education and become disaffected by system policy or curricula will always establish themselves in relationships born from compassion regardless of age. Relationships are home and teaching is home. He speaks about his house and how he will improve it over the Christmas break but he speaks of his teaching as his real home; teaching as a sense of place, as validation, and as he says: “*Every story is worth a read.*” Pat’s own *cogito ergo sum* (Descartes) and autobiography demands the individual be imagined as reality, as Lejeune suggests (1989), beyond the writings of any book.

Chapter 6

The Story I Gave to Jane

From The Tale: Chapter 6

Tom and I went to a primary school in the foothills where lots of migrants settled. I was placed in grade four. I was lucky; my teacher was Miss Brock. She was young and pretty and liked me. My brother and I used to walk the long miles to school and then back again, along a dirt road that was long, dusty and very dry with corrugated sand-dunes in summer; slush, mud and dips that turned to creeks in winter.

I didn't know it then of course but the mother of my child and life-long friend and the man she would later marry were in that very same class. My brothers were still as distant as ever. James was sent to a Catholic school for boys. He would get on a bus and Tom and I would start walking, up the street and onto the yearly bulldozed and shady-brown, corrugated main road.

We had to time our departure so that we weren't late for school. I lived in fear of walking into the classroom in front of others, my red face burned by a thousand accusing eyes. There was no bus to school - just a road that curved and straightened and curved, until it opened to another brand new suburb with other kinds of houses, similar but a little bigger and better designed. It was about an hour and a half to walk there and quicker to walk home, like stabled riding horses sick of people; when they move much faster on the way back. I was angry at those people who owned the paddocks we passed and how they failed to provide shelter for the horses. I got to know those horses and we would chat, mostly about how we didn't understand human beings. We preferred the tales of Pegasus, unicorns and things like that.

We were given second-hand, leather satchels we threw over our shoulders, filled with lines of paper, stapled together to make writing pads. I was also given a torn and wounded book and became an inconsistent reader of words. I liked my satchel. One very hot summer's day, Tom and I were walking home and he could see I was tired and unhappy. A long tray-top truck appeared in the distance, lumbering from a heavy load. It was slow enough for us to throw our satchels on and try for a ride, but too fast for little legs. I watched my satchel drive away and called to it, to look after itself. I prayed later, as an angel, to bring my satchel back to me. The next day the driver was at the door with our satchels. Later, when I was denying religion, I used this story as a lie. I said I didn't believe in God because the driver didn't return my satchel. I don't know why I did that, even to this day. Maybe I'd convinced myself that it was a mistake to bring it back; a way to punish me; a false reason for future hope.

I now have to admit the power of prayer, as a conscious act we invoke to make safe the lives of others. And I'm not praying alone. Stretching my inner senses, my daily living life, is bound to a mystery I don't fully understand. If only we had this intensity as a planet, in a determination to show every day our fragility and secret longings we all share; that one day a truck will come by, slow enough for us all to jump on and be carried home.

One day I wrote a poem the teacher called the headmaster in to see. He just stood there and looked at me, as if by looking I would turn into a noticeable boy. He took the opportunity to give a talk, stating that at least three children in every class would eventually kill themselves; some data he must have read somewhere. And then he went on to talk about how breadfruit was the best thing he'd ever eaten. I had no idea what breadfruit was or where it came from. I thought it must be something like bread; you baked it in an oven until it becomes fruit or something

like that. But then I was suddenly struck by a strange curiosity about what he had just said that seemed to be surrounding just me, alone, the audacity and frightening unemotional link to adulthood in one foul swoop.

Why he said this to a class of children I still don't know. Perhaps he thought if he said it, it would never happen. Perhaps he thought at our age it didn't matter. Perhaps he had an early onset of dementia or something. Strange what we say to people in public places. Or maybe he was a secret-reverse psychologist or visionary, practising on young minds his theories on death. I was in the process of filling ink cups on the desks at the time and, due to my never-ending state of clumsiness, found myself tattooed by a waterfall of dark blue liquid. He looked at me again, turned and walked out.

I really didn't understand anything then and in education I still find myself, at times, in dumbness at some of the things my colleagues say and the voices that practise someone else's state of mind. However, I did have a preoccupation with words, to keep things simple if I could. It maybe part of the same revolution of change that brings the head to the heart and so I became besotted with another poet in the same class called Rebecca. She had red hair and a sun tan; a phenomenon I met as another freak of nature. I think we were aware of our interest in writing bad poetry. I thought hers was better because I loved her and experienced early how a boy's desire for a pretty girl quickly turns to involuntary gratitude, just for being alive and in the same place.

Miss Brock asked me if I wanted to sit next to her and I said, 'Yes please!' But Rebecca responded to my nearness with the silent treatment of indifference, a device for making unease and jelly from otherwise happy boys.

We had to go the nearby pool once a week for lessons and I saw her swimming. I was always a very late bloomer and girls were no exception. I didn't really care. I was watching the others and decided that she was receiving too much attention I couldn't compete with and swam off. I hated the swimming pool visits. It was always cold and my skinny white body was a dead give away, especially since my parents insisted on making me wear things that were either second-hand or way too big, or both. My swimming trunks looked like a badly erected Arabian tent in its own, constant and private desert storm, always threatening to envelop me or drag me into the abyss. Rebecca looked at me and did her own swimming; in the other direction. I was angry enough to write a better poem and won the school poetry prize. I sat somewhere else after that but I'd turn every now and then, when my pencil would fall off the desk, to look around and see her beauty and wished I'd lost.

Eventually my parents took pity on us and bought a second, second-hand bicycle with bullhorn handle-bars facing out, defiant, like we were proud it's all we had in the world, all we owned. The first one just wore out. I would sit on the rack behind the saddle, while Tom peddled us both to school and back each day, over corrugated, sandy waves of dust which made going faster impossible. I'd arrive in the class looking like a very strawberry milk-shake with a horror-story wig. I saw Tom's frantic look when I caught my foot in the spokes one morning and we both fell off. That was the first of many late days to school. And one day he was gone, off to a high school I would later go to as well - where I'd always be the little brother and be forced to hear the never-ending tales of how good Tom was in Woodwork or Sport or Technical Drawing. He took the bike with him.

I was alone - the long, reflective walks that would prepare me for other roads. I knew every turn, every shadow-ridden dip in the

road, every paddock, sour-sob in spring, paddy melon and picket-post. I knew the familiar smell of damp socks and wet leather and the butter my mother would put on my skin to soothe the burning on those hot days when no-one told me about the use of hats. I also knew that I'd be covered in dust from passing cars in summer and sprayed by mud on frozen winter mornings. I was really too introspective to be on that road at times. I measured my emotions in miles and kept a diary of its seasonal constancy in my muddled and tiny brain.

One very cold and dark early evening when I stayed too long at the park near the school, it rained so hard I had to take shelter in the old abandoned structure in a paddock on the way home. It was an old aeroplane hanger. I always thought there was something in there, an inhabitant that hadn't left yet. When I passed by each day, I could sense its eyes, forbidden things, staring and judging. In my life I have always sought the light and the shadow, my dual world of acceptance and rejection. I didn't want to go in there but I had to. The rain was too cold and it was stinging my face and hands so I crossed no-man's land between fence and door and went in, just in at first but then further into the shades of dark and grey that filtered the shapes.

I scanned the size, to see how big it really was. I heard noises and looked for the sounds. I watched the bats mingle and gossip and the spiders patient as nets, waiting in the wind. Creatures know. They're part of the rain; part of the fading light and early dawn. It was getting dark and my senses were intolerant now of the banging metal, creaking lines of cable, rocking back and forth and the wind shouting warnings. I've always been the victim of noises, so I didn't understand why I later became a teacher or a soldier, surrounded by noises of one kind or another; the glaring sounds of authority. I think sometimes that we often gravitate

toward kinds of resolutions until we find the answer to what haunts us.

I headed for the main road and walked along its familiar way until the usual bend appeared and down the hill to the dip. There was a swollen creek now flowing between home and me, waist deep, racing and ominous. It was the place cars had to slow to go down and then try to get up again. It was raining hard, yet in a strange way I was stimulated by adverse circumstances. Maybe that's a boy thing. I was very cold and alone, a wee vagrant wanting sanctuary among the known and familiar. The wind was stronger and rain much harder.

A young local vegetable farmer appeared with his mother. I'd seen them many times coming and going. She never liked me I always thought - a migrant boy every day. She beckoned to her son; a small and determined gesture and he waded in, coming towards me, broad and mute. He seemed so big to me then; twenty feet tall and muscles like large pumpkins. He turned around and his arms went up and I climbed on; my Saint Christopher, carrying me to the other side. The significance of this is with me even today. I share these moments with my other selves, my others within me, populace in my own layers of consciousness, about myth and wonder, especially when I travel.

Sometimes Miss Brock would pick me up in her Vauxhall Viva, a wild, small car, with red vinyl bucket seats and out-of-place fins. I loved the way she sped, always in a hurry to get to school. Always smelling of some exotic perfume. She drove like Francois Sagan and looked like Merle Oberon. I would stare at her whenever I got the chance, admiring her beauty and friendliness and her way of pretending to like my stories. She was my light.

And then one fairytale day I made a friend, at last; a girl who lived on the same street. Her name was Karen. She loved to hear

my stories. I walked her father's greyhounds for a shilling. We would sit in the hallway of her parents squeaky-clean, polished, floor-board house. There was always newspaper on the floor for some reason. Her mother saw me, as a lesser child, granting me asylum in her sparse words. No place like a house. I was the migrant experience again.

I'd come to see myself as a refugee around those who had established regular suburban lives, families that talked and grew love, rooms with a safe past, steady as the home I've always longed for but would never have, except in teaching or words. Karen's friendliness and willingness to listen gave me a calmness I had never known. She grew up quicker than me. The last time I saw her was on the back of a Lambretta with multiple headlights and a coat with a fur-lined hood, heading for a city hangout for Mods. I never really thought about it but she must have been older.

We went to sleep once on the front lawn under the weeping willow, on a camper bed under the stars - together. Her parents came out with some friends and I remember waking to hear Karen's mother being reproached for our crime. Her mother told her friend that we were always close that way. I was content. I told Karen of the time I saw a white figure emerge from my single, chipboard wooden closet. My bed was directly opposite. Tom's bed was on my diagonal right. A figure, a torso with arms and legs - no gender, no clothes, no recognisable eyes, ears or hair, walked or moved over to Tom's bed and stood, just looking down at him. It was liquid, flowing, pale-white shape. I sat up and called Tom's name. It turned and looked at me, startled and fixated. I was frozen. I thought it was going to come for me. Instead, it went back into the closet and closed the door. Just like that.

I would never sleep with the closet door open for many years. I sometimes think I saved my brother's life that night. He went to Vietnam in 1968 and returned. There were times I thought the figure was a sign of his death to come and that by calling his name I drove the possibility of death away, back into the cupboard. I don't know.

When I saw Tom off in Sydney, I gave him my Saint Christopher medallion to keep him safe and may he find his own saviour to carry him across the swollen river of circumstance, if the tide turns. Or perhaps my imagination woke me into another space and time, where everything seemed like the dream we all wish were living. Perhaps death or the covenant is not a black figure with a scythe or the ferryman on the acid shore but a translucent being that appears from a poorly-made closet, whispering to boys while they're asleep; silent messages of endings we might interrupt.

With my sleepwalking and estrangement, it's no wonder no one believed me, but Karen did and that was enough, someone to believe every now and again. I had other stories of a similar nature. I guess I was conditioned very early, in a way, to experience even the most fantastical events as a part of the wonderment and otherness of life; Pavlov's other dog. They were real and I knew that, but my gift from the Gods was that I didn't seem to be, and that no one would ever believe me. I was Cassandra in boys clothing; second-hand and holey.

Jane's response to the Tale

Accidental Teacher

I was the second eldest of the children born to working class parents in Mombasa Kenya. My parents were born in the Seychelles and received little formal education. My father served in the British Navy during World War Two as a seaman and on what he called the 'tall ships' as a young boy.

Growing up in the outskirts of Nairobi in Kenya my life contained no vision for a future. As a child I was born free to wander in the Nairobi game park, building cubbies out of elephant dung, smoking newspaper and collecting treasures. In the wet season we would build rafts by chopping down trees and roping them together to sail to the other side of the river which we could have so easily accessed by crossing a bridge. Life was a day to day experience and did not require much thinking. Attending school was never an option as I was a girl and schools required fees.

My father worked for the PWD and was forced to take his family all over Kenya while he supervised the building of new roads into areas that were being opened up. My memories were those of this part of my life, of hanging on to the back of large pick up trucks and throwing rocks at anyone walking along. Television had not arrived and my only memories of shopping were in small "dukas" (shops) owned by kind old Indian men. The remote areas in which we lived included Kakamega, Navasha, Gilgil and Thomsons Fall.

I made my first white friend when I was seventeen years old. Her name was Irene and she was Polish and older than me. Irene was a kind, caring, young girl whose parents owned a jewellery shop in the city. She was in love with a boy who lived near my family home and Irene often asked me to pass on notes for her to a young boy named David. I did not understand what was going on but I like her and did this every night. We lived in Nairobi West and every evening my father would listen to the BBC news on the radio at nine pm sharp. This gave us the opportunity to sneak through a trapdoor in the bedroom and wander around the bush in the dark.

We were not afraid of the dark despite hearing the adults talk about the feared Mau Mau (today called Freedom Fighters) who killed many thousands of white settlers while fighting for their independence. In November 1961, my father told us we were leaving Kenya. That night I was sent to live with my aunties and other members of the family were also farmed out to stay with neighbours. My ayah asked if she could come with us but was informed that we would never be returning so we could not take her. Very early the next morning, the family were all at the airport and on a

plane to Mogadiscio and then to Aden where we boarded the Oceania to Fremantle. I had a wonderful time on the journey with plenty of food and kind people. We found speaking the language difficult but made many friends who shared this new experience.

Fremantle was hate at first sight. It was extremely hot, there were flies everywhere and we could not understand the people. A kind taxi driver took us to the Salvation Army hostel in Pier Street, Perth, as we had no idea of where we wanted to go. This was the beginning of an adult life for me. My father and I went from shop to shop asking for work. He waited outside while I went in. At Boans Department Store a kindly gentleman, Mr Brown, asked me if I could start straight away and I replied, "Yes". I was too afraid to ask him if I could go and tell my father who waited for me until 4pm.

While working at Boans, I met many friendly, caring and supportive people who took me under their wings and taught me how to be an Australian. For this I am forever grateful. One of my workmates asked me if I wanted to go to Melbourne with her and I said, 'Yes'. I did not realise that I would not be back for some time. I had no concept of what or where Melbourne was. I returned to Perth two years later as I was offered a job at the Department of Defence at HMAS Leeuwin. Here I was swamped with kindness. Working in the Accounts section with older men. I was made to feel very special. I could do no wrong and was spoilt with flowers, food and gifts; never once was their any catch to these acts of support and kindness. When I made major blunders in my work it was all hands on deck to help me sort it out. But I was also made to feel stupid. Being the only woman in the section I was the official tea maker.

While growing up I received no formal schooling so when a friend told me that you needed a "bit of paper" to progress from being the tea maker I decided to go with her to night school and get that coveted piece of paper. I went to a large metropolitan senior high school where there was night school for anyone who wanted to attend. The person enrolling me said that I should forget about my Junior Certificate and try for a Leaving Certificate. This meant nothing to me so I followed his advice. I enrolled in English, English Literature, History, Maths 4, Economics and Art over two years. I

discovered how much there was to learn. I loved my economics teacher and I now wished I had listened to his advice on borrowing more than I needed and investing. I found reading English very hard and writing was even harder. Somehow I completed these in two years with two distinctions in English Literature and Art.

I now had my piece of paper but was none the wiser; I was still expected to make tea for everyone in the workplace. I got married in 1968 and continued working for the Department of Defence until 1977 when I left to have a baby. Home life was a chore and my young sister was sick of me complaining. She came home one day and said that she had enrolled me in university to do a social science degree. I had no idea what that meant but I went along to Curtin University with my list of instructions. The first person I met was David Black and he helped me enrol into my first year at university. The three years of this degree was a daze. I remember learning to read, write and punctuate but most of all I remember the kind and helpful strangers who proof read my work with only constructive criticism. My work was only ever marked in pencil and the comments were always kind and helpful. I went on to do a graduate diploma only because I was told that now we had completed this degree, and we would otherwise have to leave this safe haven of the university.

At the end of the year I received a phone call from the Education Department offering me a position teaching year 12 History and Economics. Again I was thrown in at the deep end but through the kindness of my colleagues I began my teaching career. My first year was the best year of my teaching career. I was learning one step ahead of the students. At the end of the year one of my year 12 students came to say goodbye. I asked what she was going to do with her life and she said she wanted to be a geography teacher just like me! I had to confess to her that I was not a geography teacher but that I had learnt everything at the same time as her. She made me feel very special.

I have taught many different subjects as a relief teacher and enjoyed them all but mainly I enjoy the experiences of learning new things. I have found that I was not only teaching the content of my subject area but life skills.

When I look at the many thank you's I've received, I am amazed that I really have had an impact on the lives of many students. The key words support, kindness, friendship are repeated every year by different students; however, I still love to read "you have made a huge impact on my life and I will never forget it." I have been called incredibly kind and a great history teacher who has had an impact on their lives; however, it is these hundreds of students who have had an impact on my life. I am what I am today because of the challenges of the classroom.

I believe that I am paid to read what I would read anyway and I love telling stories. My life has been one of meeting kind, supportive and caring people. Even today, in my sixties, I still have around me colleagues who will help me do whatever I need. I have brought my life experiences to teaching and I can identify with the issues that many students face in the classroom and in life. I can also say breadfruit is the best thing I have ever eaten but what is the point if you don't know what it is. I don't understand human beings but I know that humans relate to kindness.

A Willingness to Gratitude

Jane is a self effacing person; working in a dogs' refuge every weekend and when at work always trying her best to make students understand the power of History for current change. I think she may be the most widely travelled person I have ever met. I don't think there's a country in the world she hasn't been to. She tends to travel alone and off the beaten track to explore the world intimately. She has a strong sense of human justice and life experience to make change. She's always telling her students of her travels, partly to air the world's face but also to keep them amused in the classroom; to attend to her as a human, even though she'll tell you that she doesn't like humans much. But then she will find ways to get money out of teachers to send resources to impoverished African or Indonesian schools or wherever there's a need. She balked a little bit at the

study's 'requirements' preferring to say she's done nothing much worth telling. But then while writing...

My life experience has influenced every part of my teaching. My first job was as an accounting machinist in a work pool. My boss was male and very strict. Going to the toilet was timed and talking was not allowed. My second job with the Australian taxation department was similar. I learnt punctuality, politeness and respect and these were the keys to working in this kind of environment. As a young woman in the 1960's I learnt my place and realised that status could be attained through education and not marriage. I value education and can see a clear purpose when teaching – that is to make something out of life. My life story motivates my need to learn and impart knowledge.

She came to teaching, like so many of her contemporaries, out of a desire to improve her life situation and so she has a solid determination to do the same for others. Her experiences have directly affected her reason to help others the way she has been helped. Jane has a living, reciprocal relationship with gratitude. Schwandt (2000, p.205) talks about “...being for the other...” and how ethical action is based in meaning and value as “...an internal logic of relational work.” This is the responsibility Jane feels to give back. For her, this brings meaning to her life and work and affords to her the relationship of self to other.

Systems are shaped by what we do and don't do; the defining ethnography of action. Practical solutions are the actions on the ground, and at the chalk face of education, from people willing to remember what created them in the daily sense of the word. Theory can also mislead education. Jane says: “I have found that I was not only teaching the content of my subject area but life skills.” The skills

of life are based firmly in experience and common knowledge and, as Goodson (1998) points out, the response to scientific law came from the symbolic interactionists calling for reconciliation of perception and construction, reality and humans themselves. Jane continues: *“Teaching is a profession where we are challenged every day to conform to society’s expectations. We always try to look the part in our dress and our attitude.”*

Teachers may feel they are amateurs in the experiences of knowing themselves (when they teach) and often miss (or simply do not get the time) that reflection is a vital force for self constructing (Ricoeur, 1984). We tend to place reflection in the context of producing past events (Neville, 1989), as ‘watching oneself’ so that the experience happens without the meaning. Autobiography as reflexive practice is a kind of home-ground agent that can act as image-to-moments when our lives are caught up in things like ambivalence or apprehension. As Carter (1993, p.9) says:

...we fail to see ourselves as storytellers or notice the rhetorical devices we use...but every story has a narrator, a character within a story, separate from the author, who tells the string of events and one cannot escape this effect...

Teachers can sometimes see choices as not their own but ‘relegate’ them to some benign musing of experiences as events or the way we are as the isolated partner of time. Writing the self invokes images that exist and comes from beyond the immediate scene, and yet is often expressed as ‘something else’. Narrative reminds us that there is a story that demands attention to its holistic landscape complete with the woods and the trees. Why that particular story?

The particular story I chose is because I reflected on why I was a classroom teacher and realised that I had not really chosen

this profession. As a woman with no formal education I decided to do further education and enrolled in evening classes. I had no idea what the subjects were and depended on the enrolling teacher who advised me not to do my Junior Certificate but to do my Leaving Certificate.

I needed to have 4 subjects over 2 years. Not being confident I enrolled in 8 subjects just in case I failed any. English was my third language so this was not easy for me. However I made it with English Literature and Art being my best subjects even though I had no idea what they were about. I believe that my experiences are the same as those of the many ethnic students I teach but best of all I have only stayed with the humanities and never touched the Maths and Science. What does that say about my teaching career?

The construction of any narrative serves to 'awaken' the critical faculties we want to enliven in our classrooms. We plan and make judgements on behalf of others. And while this is part of a greater curriculum, it's the feeling states that show us the horizon; Jane's journey to other lands she lives in the present. Teachers are attempting to hold themselves above the every-day, while interpreting the fundamental lives we live, except there's an ever-changing and binding landscape about connected consciousness; who we may want to be in the history of teaching practice.

Reflecting on my profession made me aware of the importance of my relationship with my students. I believe that I could inspire them to feel a thirst for knowledge and to appreciate what education could do for them. The real world outside the school is what I hope students will be able to face after spending a very short time in the classroom. The real world is full of challenges and is very competitive. I know that being second best is not good enough. I know that I have to believe

*in myself because others would put me down if I let them.
Giving up is not an option at school or in the workplace.*

Storying our *selves* counters the tensions of systemised living as Jane remarks. We remember our personal journeys through life and reflect on our multiple experiences. And Jane is a living history of her own making.

Only when I was asked to story myself did I go back and look at my life and reflect on my multiple experiences. I did not reflect on the fact that my life, family, religion, travel or many friendships served to counter the tensions of schools. When I began teaching I saw my role as delivering the content as designated by the Education Department; however, today I see myself as a facilitator. My life's experiences I share with my students helps me to reflect as to why I love my life.

My travel exploits, even at a ripe old age, makes students want to share my experiences. In storying myself I did not reflect on the many strong and lasting friendships that I have made in my teaching career. We try to impart to students that we always "do the right thing" as far as society expects.

Jane is a person who understands the relationship between the local, social and global world and her obligations as a teacher to 'fill' in the missing gaps students experience in growing up, often without the fully functioning roles, models or templates of social understanding, despite the accessibility of technology.

Despite growing up in Kenya – I have taught at many metropolitan schools. The last 12 years I have been teaching at my current school with many social problems. I am aware that many students have no experiences outside the contemporary

urban settings. I am always careful to explain the diversity of life in the rural areas and the many countries outside of their realm of understanding.

Jane brings the world with her; finding things out, interpreting the knowledge of the lived experience, intention, managing time and the rhythm of life she's experienced, and finding a personal balance with work and self are key factors in her life. She is a presenter by definition although she calls herself a facilitator. Presenting is the conscious attention to how we are as professionals portray ourselves, in front of and behind the scenes of others (Rogers, 1970). Jane has learned, through her experiences of life, as a literal historian, to move between and settle herself within the context of personal interpretation. Teaching is evolution; the ways we move with the shifting identity of professionalism and curricula (Elbaz, 1991). Urban life, for instance, can make teaching a temporal suburb, unless we notate what moves us and move to worldliness, the sustaining ground of connected service.

Conle (1999) discusses the issue of temporality in depth. And the personal history of a person's life contains the potential to transform others. As teachers, we also need to keep things in perspective. The edge still exists. And so we may need to attend more to the fragility of our work. It can be said that teaching reveals the actions that are creating us (Hillman, 1977).

The sharing of a story is not always congenial, nor does it make itself readily available, or others available to its content. Conle (1999, p.8) discusses self, history and inquiry, probing the struggle of conditioned reasoning in both her personal and professional life:

One consequence might be that it could also no longer sustain a distinction between a private self and a public researcher-self, nor a distinction between inquiry into self and inquiry

into the world. What kind of inquiry would then still be possible?

Schwandt (2000), in his work on the qualitative paradigm and writers of social research, says all systems happen within a conceptual framework through which the world is described or explained as social construction. He then quotes Denzin (p.200) who says that narrative is “...a method of empowerment for readers...to discuss truths about themselves.” Often when we attempt to move to a different feeling state or state of being, conflict of separation from our own inquiry, the healthy place about an unknown finding, rises to challenge us (Deally, 2002). Ask a teacher to name what consequence has sometimes meant for them in times when the grey areas of choice forced a decision, and they may be able to tell you the importance of knowing the difference. Jane finishes her thinking:

I do think that the writing of my story enabled me to empathise with the lives of other teachers in some ways, yet I don't believe that they would have shared my insecurities when entering this profession. After reading the stories, I have some understanding of someone else's world and I can also see that there are some similarities with my world. I feel in many ways lucky that my life has been full of diverse experiences, some challenging and some easy. I appreciate that I was born in Africa and came here at 17 as part of a family with 10 children.

I did not speak English, and was a strong believer in the Catholic faith. These factors helped me to understand why I am different yet the same.

Chapter 7

The Story I Gave to Frank

From The Tale: Chapter 19

We moved into a 1960's apartment in the city while my partner studied and I went freelance, doing bit parts as they say: undergraduate acting students, pre-service teacher training, workshops, teacher development, profoundly deaf children, occupational health students and a contract at a female, maximum security correction facility. I was tired of young actors asking 'How was I?' at the end of performances; a little frustrated with student teachers unwilling to take risks; too emotionally involved with the deaf children I wanted to rescue and strangely removed from other groups wanting to see how spontaneity might work for them, especially since it was not working for me any more.

The work at the correction centre was particularly draining at times but gave me another slant on life. I greeted the razor wire and uniforms with a slightly pear-shaped attitude on the role they played in the justice stakes. I was escorted through a series of passageways and doors to a space with a bolted-down pool table, where a reluctant group of women stood, waiting, wondering what they'd signed up for and so was I. I was led inside and the door closed behind. There was one small sheet of heavy-duty glass to the side of the door to see through and three very blank walls. I felt like Gary Cooper in High Noon and the train had arrived.

I was at one end of the room and they were at the other, just watching, observing, sizing me up, not like a frontier town; more like carrion waiting in the sun for the dinner bell. Despite the

fatigue, I hadn't lost my ability or skill and that always carried me in awkward moments like these - when I had to put up or shut up. The woman with the tattoos looked like Popeye and tough as boot camp. I looked at her and said hello, gave my name and why I thought I was there. I offered some speech about what we might do, made eye contact with as many as I could and talked about what we might achieve, together, if they were willing to trust the work. As soon as I said the word trust I thought of Liz. I suddenly lost all my sense of integrity and it showed. They recognized the deception. Whenever I had a frozen moment I recalled my time in radio; 'dead air'.

I knew I was concrete and that I couldn't move; not fear and not inability but that unwanted state that disables reality and reunites my relationship with the same nothingness that often doubled as a floor. I had no idea what they made of that moment, like anyone who sees it, but I knew they were in no position to run away. And that was my saving grace. The group began to break apart and I was fighting hard to get movement back into my body. One of the women slapped me on the back, as if she knew something about it. I looked at the group and exercised my old philosophy about action killing doubt stone dead. I had to persuade Rosie to participate. She was the leader, the hard one, or the others probably wouldn't. She was busy rubbing her face. I walked over, grabbed her by the hand and said, assertively; 'Form a circle!' I only need to see movement for me to get activated again and then I was off and running as they say. Rosie looked at me and gave me what I think was a smile. The rest could see her mask drop, enough for her to be human and that was enough. A good end to a shaky start but it wasn't always like that.

Things went okay for a while. I didn't ask why they were there and they didn't offer, except one poor young woman who'd stolen

a stereo, regret and forlorn. I was their escape from another kind of reality and I could relate to that. I didn't judge and I didn't care. I was a healer-scientist, exploring another world or facet of pretending and it was their opportunity to fly away and be the person they'd hoped they would be, for just a little while. Each time I drove up I'd be confronted with my intention, along with large spirals of razor wire, two fences deep, just in case anyone had super powers. The guards were a mixture of women and men with a tension I'd seen before in the army.

I remember one guard shouting from outside, 'Watch out they don't fuck ya!' I felt how wrong things were for the women in that moment, of how the outside quickly becomes the inside. I didn't know what their crimes were for the most part and when he said that, I could see their own self worth relegated to nothing. I quickly changed the moment and began one of my stories about my own trials. I made some limp allusion to how the mind imprisons and how everyone faces the guard outside at some time or other and how this is often a living metaphor for many people - the voice from our own prisons. But I was scrambling for shelter and resting on the edge of bullshit. For them the guard was very real and there to stay. It went only half way; but just then, Rosie came over and put her arm around me and mumbled, 'He's right!' She laughed and I went red and I felt my groin shrivel to the eggs of fleas. I can't be sure but I think I moved my hands over my goolies.

The group broke down laughing, even the timid ones, and suddenly it didn't matter any more. We were all laughing and it was a little embarrassing for me at first but quickly became the kind of release that overcomes insecurity and loss, and places gender and history on common ground. There we were; male and female; prisoner and imprisoned, forgotten and forlorn, laughing and crying. It was a great lesson. The guard didn't return.

Whenever I had to audition at institutions as a part-time practitioner, and had to demonstrate my skill in front of resident staff, I would always remember, 'It doesn't matter!' and I'd get the job. It doesn't work for everyone I guess but it did for me, most of the time anyway. When I didn't care and didn't wear my world on my face, I ignored the preciousness and singularity of those tests. My spontaneity had time to breathe and flourish. I don't have to wear any masks in those moments. A bit of skill always helps too, I've discovered.

My contract was up at the prison, and I had to go. I wanted to go. I said goodbye, disaffected and familiar. Too many people had said goodbye, I imagined. We shook hands and several gave me quick, removed hugs. I knew the opening familiarity of the distant place. I was lost for words but understood the deal. It was the same when I had to leave the profoundly deaf children. One girl hugged me and didn't want to let go. I fought to regain my composure. I melt in those moments like the chocolate-box advertisements offering some form of human comfort. I also see my own birth laid bare.

I always had the feeling that the deaf children had two people inside of them - one is always angry at the other. I feel the pain of the broken, disenchanted and displaced, as a part of who I am or maybe that is the connection, I don't know. In truth, I was relieved to say goodbye to the correction centre, although I had my doubts about how it was confronting correction; my two fears at one time - confinement and unrelenting emotion. Maybe that's the secret fear we all have. I knew what it felt like to be bullied and enclosed. The longer I was there, the more I felt like a hypocrite and disloyal to the system that hired me and I can't hide things like that, even behind the mask and role of professionalism. As I drove away, I thanked any kind of God for what freedom I had and said a prayer for the women.

Eyes that carve the tattoo of help
The signs on skin
A bird outside on the breast departs
The crow yells displeased
Then waits appeased
The safety of a room
The mirror uniformed
The quiet restraint
In the cell alone remains
A stupid thought of clocks as wings
The passport of the worm
The banker turns the key
The sound of noise
A fly turns around
And shadows play to a deafening mind
To crucify alarm.

No poem I've written has done any kind of real justice to anything real. Words are strange birds. History's champions used words as strength and volatile weapons to move and cause revolution. Now, a car ad owns passion and words become the servants of the franchised achiever - the soft and hard sell. Freedom, like confinement, can be a wary framing of the world.

I was generally tired from experience and it showed, for better or worse. I had developed that veteran look; two eyes elsewhere and slightly deranged. Maybe I'd become those that resembled

me. I rested for a while but not really caring what the future held. I was content just to be an itinerant something or other.

I got a phone call from the Department of Education, not long after. They were always good at being needy when it suited them. They're part of the buyer/seller market in this way. A teacher of English was dying of asbestosis and I was asked to take his classes, in the sad interim. I talked up the great things he did and what teachers do, who they are as people winning and losing in life, just like everybody else. I invited the students to write to him - stories of praise and gratitude. I hoped he'd died reading those letters. That was the beginning of the return for me, back into the system, like a beached whale I used to say. It was part-time work for me at first. I also had a job as a cleaner at night, in big city office blocks. It was hard work but I needed the money. I didn't need to think. I was lost and if it wasn't for my partner then, I would've been totally lost.

Over the many years to come, I'd go about as deep as this state demanded. I went to see a well-respected psychotherapist about my sliding dilemma. She'd worked with her husband at Columbia in New York researching autism and those who are distant from the world, in a variety of ways, as they say. She said I needed to have scans and certain tests done but I didn't get them. At first she said I may be on some kind of spectrum (I recollected my experience at Myponga) but for now, she could plainly see I was mentally and physically exhausted and my psychological safety was in jeopardy. I didn't feel manic. I had to have complete rest and regular therapy. But I couldn't do that. I needed money and I thought it was just me in the end.

I took a regular position as a teacher in a popular senior school - to get a regular and rote livelihood. I was tired but had the energy that goes with creative know-how and a degree of expertise I could still share. I put the mask back on and hid my

life behind hard work again. When I first began teaching, many years before, my affirmation was: 'I must work harder...' and I did but I paid a heavy price. I used to write it on paper every day and read it out loud. I put on some productions and received a small respite, a grant, to tour several educational and theatre institutions around the country.

My first stop was Brisbane, to work one-on-one for several intense days with the then president of the Australasian Psychodrama Association. The work was very intense and individualized every day. I was exhausted. He said some very encouraging things - another good man. I was trying to find a place to eat on the last night when a man on a motorbike ran into a parked car. I didn't see the collision, just heard the noise and saw the sight of the man and the bike lying on the road. His helmet was split and choking him. I took it off very slowly. Blood and head fragments ran liquid over his shoulders and chest. I breathed and talked as much life into him as I could until the ambulance arrived. He was barely coherent but alive.

I poked around inside his mouth to make sure he wasn't swallowing his tongue or something else, even though I kind of knew this wasn't really possible, but I did it anyway. He was barely breathing. I wasn't sure what I was doing in a way. It just comes in those moments. I held his hand and kept the blood out of his eyes and face. I talked quietly, very quietly. It triggered something deep inside me. These incidents always did. It was the way he looked; the clear difference between life and death and his momentary life in my hands - the soft bird.

No matter what had happened before that moment, what his life had been; in that instant he was an angel to me and I was holding my other world, my other self, human and in need.

One moment, one loss of focus and there we are. I think about

him from time to time. Later, I thought about whether my angel had lost sight of me. I went to see Ian Fairweather's exhibition the next day at the gallery. He was one of Liz's favourites and I spent time looking at the one she loved the most – 'Ave Maria' – just looking. My next stop was Sydney to visit Open Ground; a creative and self-development school. People would pay to learn things and make discoveries found in movement, voice, poetry, art and sculpture, as a vehicle for personal expression; very powerful and very worthwhile.

I had a few other stops in Melbourne and back to Adelaide, to places like Carclew, where I used to stare at windows set in old brick when I was a part-time caddy for my dad. I was inattentive though for the most part but I wouldn't get help, not yet. I tried to brazen it out, like a normal person would. Moving on with people and places sometimes seems like the infinite décor of the same room. I searched for the right door, but tiny and severe collisions with people and things not seen, were like the white-outs I imagined arctic pilots experience or mountain climbers, washing time to a standstill and enveloping the senses. We work overtime to see the difference, except the blinding reality is too big, too white. And something fails to name, reach out and claim an attachment in some silent and profound way. Days go by and I accepted the illusion and put my trust in redemption.

And hope turns to time and time turns into hope - the drug of lost and longing souls. I moved to an old forties apartment owned by a well-known couple I interviewed about The Wizard, the apparition at Myponga, that turned out to be very real. It was information for John who was writing an article for a New Zealand paper.

And then I moved to a pagoda-style sixties apartment block full of characters and the stories of other lives. I went to school like a good boy, did my homework and paid the rent on time. I went to

Melbourne to visit a friend and relax - nice pubs with fires. I'd just got out of the taxi when I came back, caught the elevator to my floor, put the key in the door and the phone rang. It was my sister-in-law. She told me my brother James had died and the funeral was the next day. I called another taxi. The airline had kept the plane waiting. I didn't use credit cards then and my bankcard was missing somewhere - the conspiracy of natural events. I was angry with the airport staff but planes don't wait. They were indifferent. I sat in the same taxi back to the apartment. I don't remember much else. I did remember that I'd stopped by to see my daughter the day before.

We had been waiting outside the hospital, for a taxi, while my brother was inside dying. I didn't know. We hadn't seen each other for a long time; circumstance and situation - the twins of sad and synchronistic experience. It's the debilitating duality of entrapment and negligence; and the challenge of reconciliation is always out there waving its potential. It's also the idle search for forgiveness and postponement; what we all know we should do and should have done, after the final door closes; as parents, siblings, friends and lovers, and teachers.

Life went back to its usual state. I met an elderly gentleman, Jacob, who owned an Edwardian terraced mansion up the hill. One of the few left in the city. He lived upstairs and the downstairs area had been made into a separate house. He asked me if I'd like to rent it. It was huge, with bowling alley hallways, chandeliers, concertina doors, floor-to-ceiling windows and marble fireplaces.

The front door was only a stone's throw from the main city park, that overlooked the city and that's where I spent many summer nights, gazing at the lights and river below, wondering who I was and where I was going - the usual stuff.

Jacob was a Jewish Latvian immigrant who had arrived years before, to start a clothing business with his family. All he asked for was privacy and honesty and that was a small price to pay for the privilege of living there. I offered him friendship too and he received it in the way men with integrity do. As it turned out, I did have a green thumb. I transformed the garden into a miniature park and watched it grow as the vicarious personality.

I left teaching for post-graduate studies. Two years of this and that. I saw types of labeling and judgements about ability and worth I hadn't seen for a long time. There's a tension to tertiary life I think that doesn't exist anywhere else. When it's good it's excellent and when it's misguided, it's divisive. I did very well with some distinctions. I learned to discipline myself, staying up all night, writing what I thought would make a difference. It offered me kind of impetus to write scholarly papers once again.

I was a good student but I caused my fair share of unwitting controversy - always in the Arts. I was trying to be anonymous again. The department was trying to bring Art into line with accepted functional thinking while burying the public perception; that anyone can make art. It had an over-dictated academic rigour that increased the distance between knowledge and possibility. They over-did it and caused students to question why they were there in the first place.

I'd worked with and experienced the contemporary ways assessment should be and it wasn't happening there. The lecturers had removed their presence and coveted the gifts that were extended to them, to impart their own brand of ideas about a world they didn't want to inhabit themselves. The creative act itself was the one thing that kept me from leaving. I knew its identity well enough to see that while it was being explored, the lecturers didn't really have to establish anything that resembled a relationship with students.

I sold all my post-modern furniture and other collectables to pay for my living expenses. I didn't want to work. I got to write my own course in the end. The one they gave me wasn't for me. The university governors were very supportive and I studied more about the things that really counted. I worked for various institutions and people, taking time out to paint and print. I was igniting my thinking as an educator again, someone who might benefit others, again.

One night, doing one of many brainstorming activities and I was thinking: perhaps I needed my own home again and some security. The phone rang. It was Hermes, disguised as my sister. My father was dying of cancer in the same untouchable hospital as my brother. I caught the next plane and arrived an hour before he died. It was a pokey, severely depressing, dark and window-less little room, clinical and designed for endings. The nurses came in to take out his support lines, cold and routine. I got onto the bed and held him in my arms, knowing in moments, he'd be gone. I looked at his closed eyes and listened to the last breaths with complete attendance. I felt his warmth and tried to see him as the man who bore me and raised me. I knew somehow he could hear me. I told him I loved him. I told him to let go and give up his life - that it was okay; I was there now and I'd see him again. And then he did, and that was that.

His death brought me a different kind of frailty I hadn't known before, of knowing once and for all, my own end would be part of my future. I was never prepared for death. It always came too soon and with it a feeble protest.

And death is the greatest irony, I sometimes think - the only reality that drives us, perhaps, or at least drives the knowing. I remembered Arnie's courage and his calm deliverance. My dad's death also brought me honest tears, a reminder of the unity that abides in accepting my own human fate. And like an unfair

judgment, the death of my father reduced me to a childish state, wanting more but not the same. I looked at his small, pale body, so much life, so much history to contemplate, until the time comes when I must travel the same road. Father, hold me once more on the concrete sand. Protect me from those who would hurt me. Man playing drums; worker, welder, brutal force, caretaker, isolate, carry me from the dark ditch, maker of my path.

In that tiny aluminium bed lay the man who had now become the quiet boy, alone and gone. I should have said more. I should have given up my precious self to eat at his table. I remember one Christmas he'd prepared a carefully arranged platter of crayfish. He knew how much I loved it, when he used to take me to the golf course and buy me a crayfish roll. Yet I had removed my presence, as the truculent punisher. I couldn't stay. I wanted to be with friends. If I could change anything I would change that moment. Yes - I'd be glad to share your meal.

I stayed in the hospital room until I couldn't see my father's body any longer. The lights went out and I went to my mother's house - small talk and nonsense. A nurse told me he'd rung her from the hospital days before but she wouldn't take his call. What did he want to say - forgive me, look after yourself or thank you maybe? It's been hard for me to put that to one side. I've been on the receiving end of the cold and distant voice that says: 'I can't talk to you right now.' When we remove our presence, everyone suffers. I wanted real answers, not as the seasons change in another's world, but like the sun setting to shine on someone's life, somewhere else.

I'd never delivered a eulogy before and I knew my brother and sister didn't want to do it. They were always copping out. I stayed up all night writing things. In the end I tried to remember him as a humorous and kind man, who took it upon himself to say goodbye to darkness and cross the fragile sea to another

land - to give his family another chance. I said he liked to dress well when he could; when he'd take me to the trots to buy me chiko-rolls and I'd watch him in his great looking charcoal-grey overcoat, urging the horses on, as if by shouting they'd win. Strange what we remember. I didn't mind those cold nights and long hours watching the horses; synchronised, constrained movements - leather and legs. I liked him better then, even when I was getting hit in the knees by golf balls.

I remembered the time I'd fallen down that ditch and lay there for hours, next to the bulldozer shovel, as the monster in the waiting forest; until a woman found me and ran to fetch him. I remember him scrambling down the bank: 'I'll carry you out, son...' father and saviour, but I was too broken to be moved. Eventually the ambulance came and some of the neighbours helped to carry me up the embankment. There's nothing like a boy in a ditch to bring people together. And all this was racing through my mind, competing for first place. I stood in the pulpit, looking at a crowd I didn't know. My brother and sister were in the front row and that's all I knew. I spoke about things, about his humour and couldn't go on. My nephew came to stand beside me. This was a presentation no training had prepared me for.

We carried my father to the gravesite and laid him to a kind of rest, another coffin in the ground, next to my brother. At least I was there. I inherited my father's old beat-up Ford and stale fridge and my brother claimed his money. My father had been living with him and his wife at the time. I gave the fridge to my niece and kept the one thing I didn't really want.

Another chapter was beginning; the one where I get to see my own life expectancy; where I get to think about how it must finish one day - morbid but inevitable when death's around. And I also thought - this is simply normal. But I just wanted to go home and breathe the air that gave me strength, the lingering autumn air

and the solitude of the ocean; except I had no real home to speak of. Women, like men, need attention and an attentive companion but I didn't want to know, not for a while. I needed isolation and it became a permanent part of my life from then on.

I caught trains and buses and enjoyed the winter walks and time to think but not about what would make me happy. I was a recluse now, the perennial hermit - again. I needed to live and that meant making money. I was working part-time with mature-aged students. I needed to pay more attention to others. People had their own lives too with their own agendas. I also needed to include how emotion works again and why it wasn't anymore. Empathy is a powerful thing but to get it, I needed to give it, not just in gifts or presence but real and connected. My challenge was to find those ways and somehow by-pass everything I'd known about myself, without caring about what was wrong or why I was the way I was. People are simply more present and intimate when I acknowledged how they felt, their moment-by-moment states.

It was easy for me to forget or distance myself, like a haze, about who people were and what they meant to me. Connection is powerful and when it's alive it's tantamount to caring. No matter how hard I tried, the connection was faulty. And I was getting a good indication that people didn't see me either. I'd taught myself invisibility and this included people from the Department who overlooked me as someone with valuable experience. The students saw me, as different, something they weren't expecting and perhaps that's why I stayed.

And that's what I seemed to want; a dream, the intangible adaptation, a fool's understanding of part and partial existence with enough illusion to maintain the distant place. But dreams are immutable and I knew the other place, where loss gathers to bring false meaning, somewhere hence. Consistency is another

jip of life I sometimes think, unless I was in my role as teacher, 9 to 5. And that was becoming more difficult to sustain.

And then Jacob died one day. He was ninety five. The old man who gave me the form of home and a deep friendship was gone. I went to his funeral carrying flowers and standing on the wrong side of the crowd until someone told me to stand on the male side. I didn't know much about Jewish funerals. I went back a little while later and placed my favourite stones on his simple grave, and thanked him for his trust and faith. His family sold the house and I moved out after nearly ten years. That's life; the straight and sudden reminders of how time connect us to change. I should have written his story, of birth to death and the experiences that gave him a kind of integrity I rarely see today. I miss him, even those frightening trips in his car when he'd drive on the other side of the road. I would always tell him to let me drive in future but the elderly don't need reminders of the frailty that imposes the loss of freedom.

The Department put me on a stressful rotation roundabout when I returned from my post-graduate studies, nothing permanent, nothing secure - their own form of exclusion. They wanted highly competent and qualified professionals but made things unwittingly difficult for those who wanted to improve; the removal of presence again. I worked in six different settings in as many years. I was stressed and intolerant; a state they helped to arrange but failed to acknowledge. Policy is not a human condition, although it's intended for human consumption.

I guess the trick was to create a more livable history; memories that would carry me into a happy future.

Frank's Response to The Tale

It was not my intention to spend most of my life teaching. Throughout my teaching life I have often wondered if I would be happier doing something else, especially after dealing with the stress of attempting to instil discipline. Dealing with difficult students unhappy to be learning what I consider to be the most important aspect of education causes me heartache and headache. It still does, even after thirty nine years of 'standing in front' of teenagers. I need to be in control of my surroundings. When my efforts do not run to plan the bees start to buzz in my brain. And yet I continued to teach because ... it seemed too much effort to break away. Maybe I fit the adage: those who can't ... teach.

I did break out of teaching, once, for three years. I did this to escape the buzzing in my head mostly caused by my failed efforts to impart to inner-city London teenagers any knowledge, or skills, or the desire to learn. I attempted selling. My father was considered to be one of the better agricultural implements salesmen in Rhodesia. Maybe I could sell as well. The Sales Trainer convinced me that most selling is akin to teaching and that, as an ex teacher, I would do well as a Medical Representative.

The pharmaceutical industry calls its products 'ethicals'. I soon learned not to teach the doctors and psychiatrists about my products. I had to improve my sales to earn more than I did teaching. Like many representatives I veered to the unethical in order to make a quick buck. I began to loath my life. I loathed wasting my time sitting with the sick and the not so sick in G.P. waiting rooms.

I often felt that the excitement I wanted out of life would be better gained fighting the war back in Rhodesia despite the fact the unfolding civil war there was one of the reasons for exiling myself in the first place. And I only received 2 weeks of holiday as a Medical Rep! On my Medical 'Repping' rounds I often found myself exploring the lanes of southern England rather than seeking out sales. Sitting in my parked company car in a lovely southern Surrey lane on a rare sunny day checking my diary for my next appointment I noted I was opposite a manor house in spacious grounds that advertised on the gates it was a boy's school. Oh to teach in such surroundings. "I wondered if they require a teacher..."

I was told that they would indeed be requiring a teacher for certainly a term, maybe more. And so I re-entered teaching, from the frying pan into the fire. It was a school for maladjusted teenage boys. That was the term they used in those days for students at risk. These students were at risk of ending up in a borstal. Starhurst was one step away.

At Starhurst I learned much about myself and teaching. I found I could 'teach' some of the oldest teenage boys about to enter the workforce. I had ten in my control. I learned that to engage most of them it was easier for me to take them outside where they preferred to be. I learned to bring the outside inside. A nature corner of the classroom was established. Through studying the local environment I could get some learning to occur.

The Headmaster saw much value in allowing the boys to each own a vegetable patch, and keep their own pet rabbits. The rabbits returned an unconditional love. The boys learned commitment and to love nature. I learned that there is an innate love of nature in humans. I much later learned it is called Biophilia. It became a bit easier to teach basing my lessons around nature. I felt more confident teaching something I enjoyed.

I involved the boys in a Prince Charles 'Better Britain Schools' Environmental Competition'. The boys built an island in the middle of a desiccated wetland. It was one of the driest summers on record. Rain eventually filled the wetland. The boys could see that they had provided a haven for water birds safe from fox and cat. They were proud of their achievement and received a highly commended certificate. This spurred them on to find other projects.

My father could not afford to send me to university. Mr Hartzenberg, my Afrikaans teacher, knew that I had a desire to become a Game Ranger. The Game Ranger entry qualification was a double major in Zoology and Geography. I must have mentioned it in an Afrikaans essay. Mr Hartzenberg already knew of my family's circumstances. In fact, it was Mr Hartzenberg who called me out of an English class the year before to put his arm across my shoulder and look me in the eyes to say how sorry he was to hear about my mother. He was the only teacher to mention my family situation and to commiserate with me about my mother's brain cancer. That light shoulder

squeeze and the sorrow, mixed with kindness in his voice has stayed with me ever since.

It was Mr Hartzenberg who must have overheard us Form 6 (Australian equivalent, Year 12) Afrikaans students discussing our possible further education. He knew that some of us had fathers who were unable to finance three or four years at a South African university. “You boys! You know how you can get to university to get the degree of your choice? You take out a loan, a bond from the government, but you will have to complete a Post Graduate Diploma in Education, and teach for two years.

You will also have to pay back half of what you owe. Then you are free to leave and follow your chosen career. And you, Falconer (teachers back then addressed students by their surname), you will be snapped up by National Parks and Wildlife, young man, with your double major in Zoology and Geography. Now, look here. I think you four boys should find out if teaching suits you. I will organise a roster so that you can each take a lesson ... teach my Form Ones some Afrikaans. It will also be good practice for your orals.” I remember no fear, nor butterflies, when I entered that Form One Afrikaans class. The feedback Mr Hartzenberg must have obtained from those twelve year olds led to him suggesting I might find teaching ‘up-my-street.’ On arrival at Rhodes University in the far Eastern Cape Province of South Africa my romantic notion of being a Game Ranger evaporated in minutes.

“Who the hell in Rhodesia said you could do Zoology?” asked the hard-nosed elderly Professor of Zoology during registration/orientation day. “You cannot possibly do Zoology. You have not done Chemistry. You need Chemistry for Zoology! It is a pre-requisite.” I do not think I had ever heard the word, “pre-requisite?”

“You could register for first year Chemistry, but I warn you that of the about 40 students last year who did Chemistry for the first time ... only 4 passed. You have a ten per cent chance of passing!” A tear trickled down my cheek. Friends at school informed me that Chemistry had the logic of maths. I saw very little logic in mathematics.

With exasperation in his voice the Professor dismissed me. “Go and see the Dean of Students...along the corridor, up the stairs and along the corridor.” Professor Chapman, Dean of Students, calmed me down. I did not wish to return to Rhodesia with my tail between my legs, especially after the extended family send-off: the first in the Rhodesian extended family to get to university. “Now, young man, wipe away those tears. Let’s look at all the other subjects you could possibly major in, along with Geography, to help you in your teaching career.” I chose History. I remembered enjoying history in my ‘O’ Level Year and doing well in it. I only enjoyed aspects of my three year university course in History.

The most interesting, and therefore enjoyable, was in my third year when we began to study southern African history. I came across a colossus of the recent South African past. Jan Christiaan Smuts. I read all I could find on him: his commando tactics during the Boer War against the British; his politics and philosophy, his love of nature. I came across his writings on Holism.

He coined the word. He espoused a whole approach rather than a reductionist approach to systems, especially to environmental/ecological systems and also to the school curriculum and even to the pursuit of peace. He was an enigma because he at first had a strong belief in racial segregation. He was one of the master minds behind the formation and design of the League of Nations. He wrote the preamble to the United Nations Charter. And yet it was the United Nations that chastised and put pressure on his Government to include South African Indians as fully fledged voting South African citizens!

Then, I also learned about Gandhi in South Africa and his policy of ‘satyagraha’; his policy of non-violent protest. Over those first three years I slowly became more politically aware. In my fourth year I made an attempt at activism, but a lack of commitment and fear of breaking the law and suffering the consequences reduced my efforts to a whimper, especially after a visit by the ‘secret police.’

Living in South Africa with Apartheid taught me about injustice. It was not in the History curriculum. Our History curriculum ended with the formation of the Union of South Africa after the Boer War. In my fourth

year, my post-graduate teaching year, I indirectly learned how the education curriculum was manipulated to suit the mindset of those in power. The extreme right wing government was pushing a Christian National Education curriculum. In a tutorial with the Afrikaans Professor of Education (there were two professors; one English, one Afrikaner) I innocently queried something about the new Christian National Education. I immediately suffered a tirade of invective from Professor Gerber that chilled me with embarrassment and more than a tinge of fear. The professor obviously heard my query as criticism.

“You Rhodesians come down here to be educated, and you are partially subsidised by us South Africans, because this university gets grants from the South African government, and you have the temerity to ask such questions ...” This taught me much about the politicisation of curriculum. I informally learned that the objective of Apartheid education, established by Afrikaner nationalists, was a practice of maintaining the status quo and indoctrinating their supremacist attitudes.

On a visit to nearby Fort Hare University, I met, for the first time, educated blacks. I listened to a nervous account of one black man’s beatings from the fists and batons of the South African police for daring to organise a protest against inequality. My greatest shock was being confronted by a black Jesus on the cross there in the chapel. I always was taught or thought he was white!

Back in Rhodesia I taught for my two bonded years. Teachers were revered back then. Many a time upon hearing that I was a teacher, the public, especially ‘the blacks’, would show deep respect. My self-esteem was high. The political system was nowhere near the Apartheid of South Africa, but institutionalised racism was inherent. I began meeting educated blacks and coloureds (the southern African term for those of mixed race). I began to empathise with their feelings of injustice and frustration at the system.

The Form 6 History curriculum was based on nineteenth century European history. I remember in my first year of teaching, 1969, a ‘eureka’ type moment while teaching the 1848 revolutions to a class of very bored girls. I saw parallels to the then present day in Rhodesia. In an attempt to make it more interesting, I set the revolutions in the then present day context and

suggested that the disenchanting in Europe had the same feelings and motives being felt by many of our 'natives', especially the educated ones. The next day a girl's father sent, via his daughter, a message that I was preaching sedition and best desist. He was the local magistrate.

That and other incidents, plus my father's drinking (more than probably as a result of the stresses of: keeping together a large family (I am the eldest of seven children); a paralysed wife; plus managing an agricultural implements business) made me realise that it was best I left, if not for good, then at least for a few years. My desire to be a Game Ranger had long since dissipated, but I always maintained an interest in conservation.

I eventually found myself as a Supply (Relief) teacher in inner London. That put a temporary halt to the possibility of making teaching a career. My self-esteem collapsed. Teachers were less than revered. They were the enemy to many of those students in those large, unsmiling comprehensive schools after three years of teaching at the school for maladjusted boys, I found myself as Head of a large Humanities Department in a Comprehensive school in leafy stock-broker southern Surrey.

Teaching was pleasant. I preferred teaching Geography and taking my students outside on all important fieldtrips. Managing nine teachers created other stresses I preferred to do without. A section in the 'O' Level Geography curriculum was called 'World Problems.'

I could see my students' slump further into their chairs as lesson after lesson I pushed yet another problem into their heads. I mentioned my concern at a meeting of Heads of Geography. Many agreed with me that the curriculum ought to counteract this gloom and doom with solutions. One teacher mentioned that he felt most concerned. At his school, twin girls had committed suicide. In their suicide letter they felt that it was better to die now rather than wait for a slow lingering death as confirmed by their parents' cult that predicted the end of the world in the very near future. In the letter they also mentioned their Geography teacher who confirmed for them that the world was indeed a bad place in which to live. At about the same time I read that, one of the United Nations Commissioners for the Environment stated that we were a profligate generation squandering our resources, and that future generations would ask why nothing had been

done about it. I wish I could find the exact quote. I was galvanised into finding solutions.

I came up with a few solutions. Planting trees along the banks of the Thames in my neighbourhood was one. The only educational solution I could come up with was teaching the concept of Zero Population Growth. I registered with the United Nations Population Concern and involved my students in an overnight sponsored 24 hour famine. We were one of the top ten schools who raised the most money for Population Concern. I received An Atlas of the World resource. I still have it. I still have the Geography exercise books of one my top students of that year, 1979/80. I must have found an article in The Observer and asked my students to write notes on it. It was about the increasing atmospheric carbon levels and the prediction of Global Warming and Climate Change. I cannot remember whether I asked the students how we could come up with solutions to this problem. The student certainly did not write them down.

With my wife and our two young boys, we migrated to Western Australia for the opportunities, the blue skies I missed so much and the wide open spaces. It came as a shock to learn that I had brought our boys to one of the highest per capita environmentally degraded regions of the planet. What sort of future had I brought our boys to?

My drive to rectify this through my teaching has driven me ever since. I often wish I never had this drive, this guilt, this push for a more sustainable and equitable future. It devours most of my teaching life and beyond. We must give our children hope for the future. And thus I 'preach' sustainability across the curriculum...The Jan Smuts holistic approach.

I teach the students the 'Power of One'... how even the so called insignificant can be a force to change the world. I try to follow Gandhi's policy of non-violence and passive resistance in persuading the education system that a new approach to education is required if future generations are not compromised by present generations. And in my last few years of teaching I continue to push. Through my pushing I was invited by the Geography Teachers' Association of Western Australia to talk at the 2011 Geography Teachers' Conference about sustainability and the teaching of it through the new Geography curriculum. And to think I was drummed out of

the Geography Teachers' Association back in 1992 because they could no longer tolerate my constant pushing for a change in the curriculum. I was seen as the dark greenie! My farewell present was a box of chocolates wrapped in dark green crepe paper!

My teaching methods have changed considerably. I marvel at the differences from the beginning of my education to the system I find in the present day. There are some positive aspects that I consider we, in government education, have lost over the time: the cross-curricular and extra-curricular approach I love to get involved in.

I well remember the first school play I was involved in as a student. All the teachers and their various learning areas appeared to be involved in the production. I know that the Art teacher and her students together with the Woodwork department made the sets and magically transformed the stage into the deck of a ship. Physical Education students were selected for their rope climbing abilities. The play was based on 'Treasure Island'. I was the parrot's voice off stage; "Pieces of Eight!"

In my penultimate year at school I was involved in the musical 'The White Horse Inn'. Nearly all the teachers were involved. Mr Hatzenberg, the Afrikaans and Music teacher, assembled a small orchestra from 'us - students- on- the - wrong- side - of - the - tracks.' In my last bonded year I ended up teaching at the very school where I had been a student. We teachers and students put on a Revue. We called it 'Funny Bone'. In one skit, Percy Hartzenberg was the classroom teacher and the teachers were the students. This brought the house down. What fun! The gates leading into Cranborne Boys' High School were dedicated to Percy Hartzenberg. I saw them for the first time three years ago. As a result of Mr Mugabe's maniacal policies the rest of the school buildings were looking old and dishevelled. But the Percy Hartzenberg gates stood proud. I owe much to Percy Hartzenberg. I was recently approached by the Manager of Sustainable Schools Initiatives (I was on the steering committee instructed to introduce this into Western Australian Schools) and asked if my school could help celebrate Sustainability in 2011. Over 400 schools have committed to educating for sustainability. My school was an inaugural member. To illustrate how holistic/cross - curriculum approaches in

education can be a very strong reinforcing learning tool, I suggested to some of my students we could put on a short play. “On what?” They suggested the Botswana parable as re-told by the Kenyan, WangariMaathai.

This is a parable my year 11 Geography students heard told at a recent Sustainability Forum. WangariMaathai was the first ever female Nobel laureate from Africa, for her environmental activism. She was also a human rights activist who led a group of mothers and other women to strip naked in a bid to force the KANU government to release political prisoners at what is now known as freedom corner at Uhuru Park.

I collected mainly African students, many of whom I did not teach. I asked our budding year 12 play-write to rework the Botswana parable based on the Power of One. In this case it is a little sunbird that galvanises the savannah animals into action. Our play-write is an ex- Zimbabwean whose mother fled Mugabe’s wrath. There were three other Zimbabweans in the play. The other African-Australians originated from: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. I was so proud of them all. It seems light years away from my teaching days in Africa to ‘whites only’.

Story Reflects an Action to Heal

Frank’s responses to teaching and his own experiences through life are deeply related to the problems of the world. His curriculum is also the curriculum of humankind and connected to the issues of the planet. He feels a personal responsibility to improve the world for others. He has also had his fair share of loss, including a fright we had in 2006 when an ambulance came to take him to hospital. It was at the Christmas function at the end of the year. Everyone was happy that another challenging year had ended. I saw them take him to the ambulance on a stretcher. He still works too hard I often think, and he is remembered every year by his students for his special way of seeing the world. He speaks of the inequality he has witnessed:

My drive to rectify this through my teaching has driven me ever since. I often wish I never had this drive, this guilt, this

push for a more sustainable and equitable future. It devours most of my teaching life and beyond. We must give our children hope for the future. And thus I 'preach' sustainability across the curriculum...the Jan Smuts holistic approach. I teach the students the 'Power of One'... how even the so called insignificant can be a force to change the world.

Frank re-defines his world as eco-education in how he sustains a truly fertile setting he cultivates because he understands classroom practice as a landscape for a better yield tomorrow. Frank's life has been the constant search for answers, on how to bring the message of sustainability and non violence to others. He feels for the planet, often to his own detriment. And if he is feeling this way, it is likely that other teachers feel this way too. Dedication goes to the heart of a human teacher. Who we are is related to who we have been and want to become (Pinar et al., 2004) and this also takes its toll. How do we sustain ourselves in the face of overwhelming integrity; the calling to be ourselves at any cost? Why should this translate as guilt? We make guilt our own and we make the global living hell or heaven on earth.

I try to follow Gandhi's policy of non-violence and passive resistance in persuading the education system that a new approach to education is required if future generations are not compromised by present generations. And in my last few years of teaching I continue to push. Through my pushing I was invited by the Geography Teachers' Association of Western Australia to talk at the 2011 Geography Teachers' Conference about sustainability and the teaching of it through the new Geography curriculum. And to think I was drummed out of the Geography Teachers' Association back in 1992 because they could no longer tolerate my constant pushing for a change in the

curriculum. I was seen as the dark greenie! My farewell present was a box of chocolates wrapped in dark green crepe paper!

His son has followed in his footsteps and has a degree in Environmental Science. Frank has been a role model to his students too and a supportive colleague. His life experiences have led him to his current life-world. He speaks of the planet with compassion and loss. He struggles with the dilemmas of teaching like everyone else but his love for his students coupled with his desire for human transformation in serving the needs of the environment, has enabled him to sustain his own life-world with teaching.

The fact that I have taught in 17 different schools, ranging from 'top' private schools to state schools difficult to staff, in 4 different countries, with significantly different education systems, has given me ever increasing confidence in my teaching of the Humanities at all secondary school levels. My three year experience in the commercial world as a Medical Representative has given me a much better understanding of commercial/economic machinations from which I have been able to draw on for teaching and for my student advisory role as an advocate. Yes - teaching has been my life for 40 years. I must have experienced nearly every teaching situation that can be possibly experienced.

These experiences are drawn upon and assist me to confidently handle any teaching/classroom situation. Coming from a 'disturbed/dysfunctional family background, I am able to better empathise with students from similar troubled backgrounds. I know I appear to most of my students to be caring and empathetic. I hasten to add, I am! Just last week I had a student (a refugee from war torn Africa) blurt out that I am the grandfather she never had. I liked that. My concern for the

environment and my activist and volunteer actions within it have allowed me to draw upon these experiences to enthuse most students in to believing that any little action is better than none at all. I consider that I reached the peak of my teaching ability in the last ten years, but in the last two years I feel I am beginning to slow and pace myself. I am now ready for retirement.

Any system will want something done better or want the teacher to do more or different, as I have discussed in other chapters. But the original issue, concern or matter may remain until some catalyst 'forces' a meta-dynamic shift. The need to sustain innovation becomes a system conflict unless we have the human means to interpret this conflict as part of the necessary struggle with meaningful endeavour. Frank's life has been a succession of experiences that reveal his intimate connection with a temporal mortality. Development happens when growth happens, and by tuning ourselves to these 'stages' of our lives (Hillman, 1977), we come to know the feeling of moving forward as reasoned phenomena. The first of these journeys should be with self, in the association of past, present and future understandings. Frank acknowledges this in his statements to those who have enabled him to envisage a better world. His story is the story of an-other, and the intimate passing of the 'power of one'.

My story hinges on one teacher, Mr Percy Hartzenberg, who saw potential in me and suggested I might enjoy teaching even though he knew my ambition was to become an animal conservationist in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Maybe I did drift into teaching. However, I found I did enjoy it, mainly because there is never really a dull moment in teaching. Teaching has allowed me to lead a comfortable life and has taken me around

the world. I certainly would not have been able to do this as a Game Ranger in Zimbabwe.

My conservationist and environmentalist ideals have allowed me to use these in my teaching, especially when promoting the necessity of ensuring sustainability initiatives are made across the curriculum. My story was a letter of thanks to Mr Hartzenberg (long since deceased). By writing my story, it did awaken me to reflect upon how my life has surely assisted in making me a 'better' teacher.

Teachers live in a world of constant repeated experiences and this is often rewarded as the kudos of worth, when the self is ignored among routine and accepted work. We can also rationalise our lives, unwittingly, to avoid the discomfort of insecurity, so that nothing happens by way of personal and self development. Safety is an essential element of the contemporary world we must attend to; the well being of the teacher. The world wants what it sees as passion from our educators; to work at our peak, all of the time. It is the children of other people we teach, the parent's investment; the social demand to be the constant narrators of the world's most effective means.

There have been occasions in my career when I have considered leaving teaching. I am a very intense teacher (just today I was accused by my lovely year 12 Geography students of being 'Ditzy but Cute!' – whatever that means! Is this my personality, and is this because I am no longer concerned as to what my students or colleagues think of me? I put much energy into teaching. This has led to episodes of 'burn out'. When constructing my story/narrative I considered mentioning these negative episodes. But the causes behind them were complex, and I considered better left out. Upon reflection I should have

included them in my narrative because having come through them I realise I became a stronger and better teacher as a result. I am very comfortable in my role at my current school, the last 11 years being the best in my teaching life. I enjoy enthusing my students about the sustainability cause (and getting results).

Frank's willingness to story his life in teaching is also a reflection of his personal trials and how the call to reflect is also the call to remember how much time he has devoted to relationships. When we remember ourselves we note how much we have contributed to the world as teachers. Frank has 'rested' his life on the ethos of experience and he sees the correlation between the personal and the professional. Writing has enabled him to see more of himself; the action to heal and telling his own story has also mirrored to him how he might bring his cause to a wider audience, since we dwell in both time and language, as Heidegger (1962) reminds us.

Telling my story has made me want to continue and 'write a book' about my life and educational experiences. This may not be for the reason to confront systemised living but for my desire to explain to the world what made me the way I am and the way I think. I have a strong need for my students and my teaching colleagues to accept me and embrace my strong desire to promote the cause of sustainability. I am more successful in the teacher-student interface...to make our students aware of these things is to make our students aware of the urban geographical woes we face.

These woes will surely impinge on future generations and I consider it our duty as teachers to instil in them hope through answers to these woes. My frustrated desire to be a conservationist in a rural setting from my late teenage years

has never really left me. I am still driven to seek more sustainability initiatives in contemporary urban life and to instil these initiatives in students.

The drive to effective teaching has its own price. Efficiency often acts as the stimulus to working harder and longer, that saves us when we feel the pangs of doubt. It may also be a sign of resistance, a habitual compulsion to avoid the potential of trust in attending to who we are in the face of experience. How do these experiences evolve and how they are felt or sensed in the actions of teachers? How does this state serve, in turn, to shape the views of experiencing? Frank has been invited to speak to scientists and academics at a global conference on Sustainability in Education. He has come to understand himself and rest in his collegial world, at last.

It is interesting to read about the lives of other teachers to understand 'how they tick'. Teachers are not prone to discussing their lives. It has given me understanding and empathy. It has allowed me to better understand myself. 'Oh, so now I know what makes them tick - I think!'

Chapter 8

The Story I Gave to Kate

From The Tale: Chapter 3

We landed in Melbourne. We walked around the streets to see if this was where we should settle. My father declared it a place not to be. It may have been the weather or the grey buildings, reminiscent of where he left; the rain and the choice of bad streets. So we got on another train - this time to Adelaide. We were shunted to a camp for migrants, not far from Port Adelaide, called Finsbury Hostel. We thought it was great to start with. I was still running on adventure but it must have been very different for my parents. It was a fresh start for them and they were smiling and not so many arguments for a while, only for a while. From now on we would be immigrants - the floating world of assimilation.

The hostel was unnaturally full of migrants come together to experience what it meant to be processed and crowded in huge, curved, aeroplane hanger-style dormitories made of galvanized iron, sectioned off to house whole families. We lived in shared, corrugated huts, painted letters of A to Z, rows of look-a-like hangers, with tubular-steel bunks and concrete shower blocks at the end of long, concrete canals with small bridges over sediment. Camps are for people wanting a second chance, crammed together by a thousand same eyes, with the same, private longing. Iron is also very cold in winter and very hot in summer. The toilets and showers were like miniature Suez Canals, I thought.

I suppose what's ahead of us should be seen as better than what we want or need to leave behind; only then can we sustain the emotion that puts one foot in front of the other, enough to face the fears that abide in risk and doubt.

All meals were in the communal canteen – the same huge, hanger-style, iron dormitory without the dividers. We had to queue up for meals and sit anywhere that was free, on very long tables with benches, with a million salt and pepper, sugar and sauce shakers made of plastic. It was like the biggest chicken coop I'd ever seen. All you could hear was the clanging of knives and forks and the clucking of migrant tongues at a hundred miles an hour. I would always eat fast just to get out. I can still remember the noise and the smell of bad tea, brewed too long. It reminded me of the smell that comes with well-used ports, where water takes on the film of oil and tide-driven, mutated sea-garbage that gives off the pungent odour of unwanted vegetation. During the summer we used to swim in it and be thankful we could at least be cool.

We'd find our own way to the docks and jump off the wharves into the dark-green layers left behind by the hulls of ships and sailors unaware of sanitation. Later on, after our hostel lives were over, we'd hitch rides to swim every summer. Kip, my Jack Russel 'terror', would leap into my arms and we'd sail off the end of the wharf and into the water, together. He was my own little catastrophe and hero on four legs. He'd go anywhere that dog, even down long dark pipelines, filled with rats and other things. He would run after the car when we'd pile in to go to the beach. He'd run and run and never give up until we stopped and let him in, pushing his way to the open window.

I used to watch the staff at the hostel wheel around watered-down orange juice in the hot summer months on carts and on cold winter days, hot watery chocolate. I think it was chocolate, anyway. Each hangar had sections that were divided, one room for adults to sleep and one for the kids. We slept in double bunks made of aluminum tubing. It wasn't so bad I thought and it wasn't as cold as home but it was really hot in summer. The hangars would heat up to suffocate us and in winter the rain ran down its sides, to make vast

pools of water I could play in the next day. And the canals would fill up too. It was like having our own river at the door. The mosquitoes loved them and the flies loved them and we hated both.

Sooner or later we had to go to school. It's just the way it is. We were placed in Finsbury Primary School, where all the migrant kids went, mixed with others, born in the local suburbs. They were hard kids who suddenly had their community invaded by pale-skinned foreigners with strange accents. The older brothers and sisters were Rockers, with BSA and Triumph motorbikes, sporting adoring, chewing-gummed widgies on fake leopard-skin seats. The fathers were wharfies and factory workers - Brylcreem and desert boots. I can still remember the first day in the temporary primary school. I was yelled at by my teacher for not speaking and was made to stand up in front of the class. It triggered my regular sojourn from reality. I was somewhere else suddenly and the 'other' place was a heightened diversion with time once more. I'd embarked on my journey into distraction again. I was in my stillness place, unrecognizable to the ordinary eye. I could hear shouting in my distance, like a slow-motioned movie, but I had no sense of what happened; a one way conversation with the principal, I think; a chair in a corner and the like.

And on the first day I was also beaten up by angry local boys, for being a migrant or different; a redhead with too many freckles and big ears, I supposed. Or it might have been my disheveled duffle-coat they used to pull me down into a new muddied land - the little white, sunburned Riding Hood in a colonised forest. I don't know. On the way back to the hostel, they grabbed my hood, kicking and punching me until I ran red again; my most familiar colour. I was a target already, experiencing the first of many incidents as a migrant or different - a redheaded foreigner in someone else's backyard. The kids didn't know my brothers were a small way behind me though and were chased away.

I went to my special place near the hostel playground and cried, not because I was picked on or that my new shirt had another colour, but a kind of familiar loss. Suddenly I didn't know why we were there or what the purpose was for leaving what we knew and for traveling so far. The adventure was over. No flowers grew in that moment; no seed was waiting to grow in a promised land. In that moment, I was simply a layer in another scheme, wet, alone and vulnerable. I was getting worse and not attending to anything that required me to be with others, and as always I never said a word in public.

The truant officer found me one day playing on the swings. He was kind and reassuring and left me to myself when he knew I wouldn't talk. Shortly after that my parents sent me to the cubs. The moment I saw the other boys I left, went outside and waited until dark before I went back. The man in charge came over to our hangar and told my parents I wasn't showing up, even though I was happy to get a cap with a wolf badge on the front, and a toggle. Later in life I would seek out other kinds of badges, uniforms and symbols.

Memories illuminate wishes, fraudulent moments born from circumstance, quickly dissolved into sameness. My naïve state and gullibility would also be a strange kind of savior and my constant companion. The world was a puzzle with a key I couldn't find. Each day became a kind of test and a new beginning of things others already knew about. It wasn't just survival but my usual silent hiding place of something called unchartered resilience. My brain didn't quite grasp real time. I was involved in a deep relationship with tunnels I named as foggy idleness. Time, I discovered, was a cruel escape as much as a moving abstraction.

This was my struggle - to co-exist with an acute sensitivity to multiple experiences of myself or a kind of multiple, sensory overload of who I thought I was. I thought I was invisible and it was always a shock to discover I wasn't. I didn't know that my life

would be a labyrinth, piecing and formulating an identity but unable to see its shape, seeking out understanding through a gentle wildness, observed as estrangement. No-one knew and I couldn't define its colours. I liked the darkened light and even if I sometimes felt its insecurity - in dreams where I may not be, there was the 'other', as in a prayer, that seemed to cushion me.

My father got a job as a welder with the Port Adelaide Steamship Company and my mother worked in a factory making saucepans. They bought a cheap second-hand Fiat and on hot Sunday afternoons, we would drive to Semaphore Beach for a swim. This was the beginning of my relationship with the oceans of Australia. We all wore the burgundy-coloured, woollen bathers from the homeland that stuck to our skin when we swam and drooped like dead bags. So I took them off and despite the chasing and the yelling, my family eventually realised I wasn't going to conform and left me alone.

I learned to swim from the brotherly catapults I endured and then through doggy paddling; a crazy type of movement that kept me afloat and gave me the incentive to find something better. I persevered, sometimes from the dragging and drowning by siblings and at other times because I could see the endless potential in being supported by crystal loveliness. I found that part of me was a fish and marveled at the cleansing smoothness of a sandy bottom. I could touch the sun-rays gliding as light, to meet the rivulets of a trillion, tiny beads of silken-white earth, beneath a ceiling made of blue water. I could see my hands bend like music and afterwards the smell of dried salt on burnt skin and my body's after-glow, memorised as the odour of sensuous playfulness. I was protected and free and discovered that it was possible to have both. I loved the summer now; the hostel cinema and the night air, being adopted by older girls as the cute little boy and held.

I played on the swings during the day and by night I would stalk

the camp alone, smaller than a cat. I learned many things at the hostel. I learned to check slippery-slides for protruding pieces of metal. A girl went down before me and tore her leg open. I remember the severity of the long, open cut, how deep it was, the spraying blood and her scream. I put my hands over the canoe-shaped gash, trying to pull the skin together so it wouldn't bleed so much. A man ran over and carried her away; screaming. I stood and watched her go until there was just an empty space and then when darkness came I blinked and was hungry; so I went back. My mother yelled at me for being in an accident again and then she went quiet when my dad told her the blood wasn't mine. From her look I guessed she was sick of red too.

The hostel didn't maintain anything. We were transients in a makeshift world; full of jagged bits and pieces and sometimes the soft aroma of warm skin, open to the balmy air. And then I was put into a Catholic school for my sins. I disliked the inscrutable manner of the nuns and was told I might become a priest one day, so I made an effort not to be somewhere else. My nose used to bleed when it was very hot. I was sent outside and yelled at because it wouldn't stop. I guess this obscurity made some non-sense to me so I didn't go home thinking it was strange. It was true I thought; that any creature who could talk like that to a nose-bleeding child shouldn't be trusted. They had habits of their own and I guessed that God would be some kind of judge. And anything strange often seemed to make perfect sense to me.

Then one day we were gone. I don't remember the drive from the hostel but I suddenly found myself standing in front of a brand new house with box-like dimensions and a bad number, priced to sell to migrants who came from less than average dwellings, in shivery-Irish and English streets. It smelled of freshly-laid pine floorboards.

It was a new, estate-like settlement, fashioned from sand, in the flat surrounds of a suburb that began its life in the early 1900's: lots of space to move around. This was the 'new' part. My dad made a gravel driveway but he was continually frustrated by the betrayal of our old bicycle on the stones. I came home once from wandering along a nearby creek and he yelled at me for the grooves I'd made in the driveway. So, my father got to work cementing everything, except his relationship with the family; backyard and brick-walls, anything that could be stuck together with cement. He went kind of cement crazy I think. He made us work every chance he got. He made his own cement mixer and I turned it while he shoveled in more stones and my brothers carted things in the wheelbarrow he had also made. I would have been okay with this, had it been some loving kind of game or the toil of a loving family.

We had six almond trees in the backyard too and he made us pick those damn and wonderful almonds every year, bag them and wheel them to a nearby market. We were put to work to make what we could out of that sandy wasteland called home. And he was tricky. My father had a way of turning my happiness into sadness at a moment's notice. Boys grow into men and we remember. His mood swings were ways to enforce entrapment. We were always wary. Children need to know what's around the corner and my parents were unpredictable and sullen. Consistency is not a reliable human trait I think but it was sometimes nice to know that certain feelings were going to be present and counted. And because of this my brothers and I were close then and they didn't mind me hanging around, at first.

We'd go to Cows' Paradise - the name we gave the local paddock where someone kept a number of cows next to the creek. We became cowboys. It was perfect - real cows. I got to demonstrate my amazing horsemanship again, without riding a horse. It was in the timing I guess, finding a rhythm. But things were changing

and brothers grow apart. They began to see girls and hang around fashionably bad fish and chip shops at night. I was spending more and more time alone. I spent a great deal of that time in the nearby bamboo grove pretending to be Shintaro, the samurai who couldn't be killed. I used to see him on TV and then, while his movement was still fresh in my body-mind, I'd go outside and pretend I was surrounded by a hundred Coga or Fuma ninja. I had a natural mimic device so precise I had the local dogs in awe. They used to sit in a row and bark or howl or tilt their heads to one side if I did something particularly different or amusing. I'd put on a Japanese voice with the appropriate body language, allowing for the movement of the robe, hip turns and the swing of the swords. I was a samurai, the way kids are; a freckled, red-headed samurai, the same thickness as the bamboo.

My mother would stare at me while I practised the art of never-being-able-to-jump-backwards into-tree-branches or up to the roof. It looked so doable on TV. I'd jump from an almond tree and then try to re-capture the movement. I kept her amused for hours, while she slaved away at the kitchen sink. I guess in a way, I was doing my bit for household harmony. The only sanity for me in this was that I could also do a similar gig as a Greek warrior; a detective, a saint, a soldier, a pop star etc. I spent a great many hours in those delusions. I was a Method actor and didn't know it - a dedication to pretending. I could land on my feet from great heights and cover all the muscular and skeletal changes necessary to fool even me, so that sometimes I really was a ninja, until my father came home and then I was a worker.

My father was always making us make things, small out-houses made of ticky-tacky. We had a home-made chicken coop, made of galvanised iron of course, filled with noisy white chickens with never-ending ticks and two large roosters. They made me get the

eggs. I think my dad was feeding them nuclear power pills or something because they were abnormally large, with heads the size of baseballs and adorned with bright red flaps, so they looked like Roman centurions. They had big, blood-shot eyes that never blinked which gave them the upper hand and a cockiness like they owned the place, which was a good charade considering they were the ones behind the fence.

For some reason the two roosters didn't like me, despite my poetry recitals or because of them maybe. I'd wait at the door and threaten them with all kinds of things if they attacked me one more time. They'd lie doggo until I was right inside, lurking in the shadows for the moment to strike. I tried to reason with them, that the eggs were for the benefit of the family. I told them they were contributing to the welfare of others, but they were indifferent, preferring disdain to any worthwhile relationship. They'd rush at me like some avenging army, scratching and pecking my legs as if they were thin, vertical feed bags. The dust and feathers would fly-up creating a miniature whirlwind in the process. There we were; the two ironic Nazi-birds and me, fighting it out; the eggs versus my freedom. I still had my long hair and it would catch in one thing or another. It was our secret and primitive dance.

I decided I should protect myself when my legs looked the same as the roosters. I found some old cardboard and made some armour, held together with string and tape. I made a helmet too. I painted the dustbin lid and selected a good club. I was ready. From then on I would make up stirring speeches about God, some country or other and justice; and I'd throw myself into the shed, swinging and hurling epitaphs. It didn't seem to matter. Those Nazis were fearless. They even formulated a few strategies of their own. It's not true that roosters have no brains. One would go for my legs while the other would try to peck my head to death, only to get caught in my hair. I'd use this piece of good luck to shake my head from side

to side, flinging the rooster against the door and sides like a handy sideshow ride. I could swear that rooster was laughing. The chickens would run around screaming, citizens fleeing from the city walls. The club was too long though, a case of over-zealousness I guess and so I couldn't quite manoeuvre my famous striking blow, but I had the shield and I used it like a good Spartan at the Hot Gates.

The leg pecking Nazi would back away and head for the shadows, like a scoundrel should. The other would just drop, too dizzy to know where it was I think. Those roosters didn't know what hit them, except they did of course. Afterwards I'd head for the house and do a stock-take. Good cardboard was getting scarce.

Things were quiet for a while. The storm troopers would just stare, using their infamous guttural sounds to frighten me but it didn't work any more. They'd look at the bits of brightly coloured cloth I found to rope myself together and shuffle backwards to the corner. I almost felt sorry for them – the way I did with humans. The trouble with being the conqueror was the fine line needed to exact both firmness and benevolence. It was tough being the leader of the shed. I took to feeding the chickens with selected bits of left-overs. They were the perfect freed peoples of the world. Winning over the populous was an important tactic.

I felt sad when my dad cut the head off one of the Nazis for dinner though. It ran around the yard, looking for its head. I should have spoken German, had I known any. I would have yelled, 'Ich lieber dich!' or something equally inappropriate. It was uncanny how the decapitated chicken seemed to know where it was going, until it came to where the head was and turned the other way, just like me. It must have had radar in its bottom. I wished in that moment of death and athletics that we could have talked more.

I didn't eat the chickens. It didn't seem right to chew on a fellow adversary despite his politics, but he was a Nazi so I got over it fairly quickly. I used to bring extra bits of food to the other Nazi who'd taken to stalking the citizens, as if it was their fault. It was angry and I understood. And it wasn't quite fair that he should also endure separation, so I'd read my bad poetry to him. He'd sit and listen until he'd had enough and then go inside the shed and sulk or pace around the fence. Maybe he was changing. Maybe he was becoming the isolated poet instead.

I think it's a lie to put away these things, as children abandoned to singular adulthood, to deny a life without play. We learn, after Aristotle, the way of the eironeia: the ironic mask - to fool ourselves that getting older should mean the relegation of memories to paper boxes. But through the wisdom found in foolishness, we may be redeemed, I think. Most of his writings on the tragedies survived, but we lost his comedies, somewhere over time; perhaps in the Great Library of Alexandria when the Romans set fire to it. Maybe the Romans thought it was a very large chicken coop. I wonder if Aristotle collected his own eggs.

Kate's Response to The Tale

As I read Phil's story, my mind immediately and nervously turned inward to build connections with my own experiences. I was grasping fragments from his life and pasting them on to my own life story, selecting both similarities and differences. "Yes, I recognise that experience but this part is unfamiliar to me and therefore provides the opportunity to test out how I might have responded to that situation." I am aware of the continuing attempt to make sense of the chaotic collision of events which make up my story, your story, and the stories of everyone who has ever lived.

I am also aware that for most of my conscious life, I find it more convenient to push away memories, to fight against their noisy intrusion on my neat present existence. On my desk I have an invitation to a high school reunion. It annoys me. Why must they bother me with this? All those old people,

searching each other's faces for wrinkles, the stresses of age and the memory of the teenagers we were when we walked down the grassy slope of the school grounds for the last time. Good bye and good riddance, I remember thinking. There were no tears in my eyes. I was ready to walk out into the world.

I returned to school however, still a student but with the title of teacher. I keep the memories firmly under control, only drawing one out when I feel the need to monitor my own response to students. "What would I have thought of that?" I ask myself. "Would I have thought that was fair? From which teacher did I learn the most: the one I liked best or the one I detested?" I also have a treasure trove of insights from other people's stories. They add to my collection of litmus papers to test for reactions and to measure responses.

In the story I read, "*The world was a puzzle with a key I couldn't find,*" the small boy, Philip, with the freckles and red hair and accent, shared this sense of uncertainty with all children. I remember this as being the most frustrating and disconcerting aspect of childhood. I think it holds the first spark of my wanting to be a teacher. If there are rules, children have a right to know them. The rules should not change without notice. They must be fair and even open to negotiation. But none of this was true when we were children and is probably still beyond the reach of most children.

I remember being smacked on the legs by a snarling teacher for being in the washroom at lunchtime. I was thirsty and needed a drink of water. BUT this was against the rules, or so I discovered as the teacher enunciated the rule to the beat of her smacks on my skinny, white, seven year old legs. I didn't care about the smacks but the outrage to my dignity was more than I could bear. Perhaps here, the grain of a thought, "When I am a teacher, I will never take away a child's dignity." When I was in grade three, the teacher, a displaced person who claimed to be a Czechoslovakian Count, who had escaped from the communists, used to hit me on the head whenever he walked past my desk. The better my work, the more annoyed he got. I searched my mind for reasons for his resentment. I found none and my sense of injustice grew. I had already learnt that my parents were different and that my life was more precarious than most nice, ordinary children in

my class with their conservative and respectable parents. My parents were communists and did not hide the fact. This made my life a wobbly journey along a tight rope.

When I told my mother of the regular whacks across the head, she went to see the teacher. I can still see the determined look on her face. The whacks stopped and I am still grateful to my mother. But that is not what I wanted to tell you about the Count. My father, the communist, called him a robber-baron, a parasite. He was appointed the dispenser of discipline in the school and kept two canes in his room. When another teacher found fault with a student, they would be sent to the Count's room for punishment. It usually happened in the afternoon and often towards the end of the week. I came to dread these afternoons with a sense of foreboding that made me feel physically sick. Colin was often the recipient. He was a foster child, an orphan, I think, who lived with a dubious foster father and he showed all the signs of abuse and neglect that led teachers to despise and torment him. Any sign of weakness was seized upon as an invitation to cruelty.

On a typical Friday afternoon, we students in Grade three, would be reading or doing "art" while the teacher shuffled papers. Regularly, a knock on the door heralded the entrance of Colin and an enraged, red faced teacher. The Count would smile sadistically, and assure the teacher, especially if she was young and female, that he would take care of the boy. The canings took place outside the room but I could clearly hear the swish and thud of the cane on Colin's skinny, spotty legs. My stomach oozed acid juices and when the boy came into our room to stand, snuffling in the corner, I would peek reluctantly at the red welts across the backs of his upper legs and count them. The smell of methylated spirits wafted from the cotton wool tuft he held to the wounds. I can still feel the sense of mute outrage and disgust rising until it overwhelmed me. My only respite was to picture scenes of myself comforting Colin and then turning to wreak terrible vengeance on the Count with his own cane. Oh, how I wanted to thrash the smug sadist.

But there was another nascent thought in my eight year old mind. When I am a teacher, I will always be kind. I will fight against injustice and cruelty. I would tackle them from the inside by infiltrating the establishment. I was the daughter of communists.

Time drifted on and I learnt some tricks which allowed me to survive the gulag of primary school. I was creative and funny but I could also put on a very convincing act as a perfectly behaved student. Each year it took a little while for the new teacher to realise that I was quite a nice and compliant student (apparently) even though I was the offspring of the reds, who populated the nightmares of the middle classes. I noticed too, that I was not the only one who was regarded as “the other”. I forged alliances with students with disabilities. I undertook to educate another girl, Wanda, who was mildly retarded. I befriended Margaret, who smelt and had lice. I felt empathy for the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who were regarded with contempt and suspicion. I was friendly with the Italian kids, whose names were instantly anglicised by teachers and whose lunches were the object of ridicule by the other students. I recognised their skills in maths even when they struggled with English. When the teacher laughed at Tony’s attempt to explain something I knew that he was a very clever boy and that one day, he would over-leap these teachers in social status and qualifications. In fact this happened when he had a PhD in Psychology. When I am a teacher, I thought, I will never exclude people from the learning circle and I will value everyone’s abilities and recognise their strengths.

In high school, I fared better. It was a very big school and I was getting excellent marks. I could assume an anonymity which protected me from political persecution. One teacher, uncovered my liberal humanist values, however, and she decided I was dangerous and subversive. It started with my essay proclaiming that capital punishment was wrong and should be banned. This was the very year, I think, that the last hanging took place in the local gaol, which was a stone’s throw from the school. To make matters worse, I had quoted from the Bible, and my devout Catholic teacher, found this unacceptable. She preferred to rely on the interpretation of the clergy, than to go straight to the source. Expecting my usual top marks for my first essay in her class, I was perplexed when she returned my essay which clearly and been crumpled up, torn and then reluctantly smoothed out. It had violent red scratches across it and the word, “rubbish” scrawled at the bottom, next to a mark of 4 out of ten. By this time, I had worked out many of the rules, and I felt an odd sense of delight. I was a true radical. I was worthy of my heroes, Che Guavara, Glenda Jackson and Pete Seeger. And I

knew my words had power. Yes, I learnt a lot from that teacher and I knew when I was a teacher, I would never reject the ideas of students, even when they were antithetical to my own.

I liked the teachers who joked with me, who remembered my name and who thought my ideas were interesting. Academic learning was generally left until I got home in the afternoon when I would begin my hours of diligent study. School hours were a time to learn other things. I know this is often true for my students when moments of social connection for the shy student, or self discovery occur. They are a vital part of schooling. I don't interrupt when I see it happening. It is more important than the knowledge I strive to impart. Does this mean that we teachers, Phil, me and our colleagues, bring to the classroom, our own younger school aged selves? Do we correct and compensate for our own experiences in the way we deal with the students who come and go through the decades of teaching? I think the answer is yes.

A Willingness to Understand Others

Kate has an articulate voice aligned to her childhood experiences which determined her mindfulness in classroom interactions and how she became for others, the living justice she sought for herself. She knew and knows why she teaches and why she teaches the way she does. Her life experiences have provided her with the common eye; to deal fairly with students as human beings because she also knows the value of human nature. She invites the students to feel her truth which is the truth of a thoughtful world in her motion across time.

I was intrigued by the question of why I became a teacher when I originally had several other career directions in mind. I wanted to explore the conflicting possibilities. It was the easiest and safest path or it lent itself to striving for social justice which is one of my strongest values. Perhaps I found it useful to place the experiences I had into some framework with meaning. Instead of random incidents they took on some higher purpose, within my life story.

Kate is the Level 3 Learning and Teaching coordinator and English teacher. Her teaching life is her “...reference point for most of our actions and reactions...” as she says. She has an innate willingness to understand others which she says originated from her experiences in life. Understanding is the key. When we write stories we attach ourselves to something higher than ourselves and she has come to understand the nature of this relationship through narrative which is also her bridge to meaningful relationships in the classroom and with colleagues.

Theoretical and abstract concepts learnt in our education studies provide a framework but our first reactions come from a deeper source which originates in our own experiences. My experiences are my starting point for understanding the experiences of others including my students and a positive relationship between teacher and student begins with a mutual understanding of motivations, attitudes and values. Agreement is not essential but understanding is vital for providing for the needs of the individual student.

And when we re-instate or re-establish the power of self among others we also invite trust, the mirror that shows the difference (Bruner, 1986). The consequences are shared and understood as reflective process and perhaps met again with renewed vigour. Systems unwittingly propagate spurious epistemology about how the self is seen and ‘used’. Voices about the context of self within community are life-lines to experimentation and therefore to the potential of transformative action. They are the layered text Richardson (1994) talks about, of putting oneself into our own texts, into the dialectic of social knowing. We share the same fears and the same confronting social demons; the myths of our lives (Campbell, 1972; Hillman, 1977). The teacher comes to know the shapes of change, how to guide others to resolutions that invite ownership of self direction with

curricula. This is a strength we can practise as we develop our sense of identity within a group. Dewey (1938) reminds us that education is a continuous exploration of self realisation and teaching is not separate from life. Writing self is finding ontology as natural order.

Kate speaks of narrative as critical reflection; to awaken our personal faculties in the “...*purpose and pleasure and perhaps pain of constructing narratives, otherwise they would have no meaning for the writer or reader.*” In this way she finds a connection to thoughts on her life as meaning because “...*narrative imposes an order on events...*” and how order is elusive and in need of reflection through narrative and how reflection is also conflict because “*I find my prejudices, values and obsessions creeping in and at times I have to struggle not to moralise or lecture.*”

Teaching is always on the edge of revelation in some way. It's also seen as the vocation of suspicion, by both the urban dweller and the administrators, who find it difficult to trust in the passing of personal and professional time. We are closer to ourselves than we think. Teaching has always been the ultimate conscious and unconscious way to practise meaning with others. And meaning is also bound to the subconscious; always the scripts at work; seen and not seen texts demanding resolution in some form. This is the duality of work in the fields of human care. We come to know ourselves through the service of human curricula. Keeping a solid self-image is important. Kate talks about a strong inclination to believe that things aren't what they used to be.

To paraphrase Brecht - the grass was greener, the sun was brighter etc. Alternatively we seek confirmation of our own view of ourselves as victim or crusader or all-knowing one or much-put-upon one. It is rarely that we use storying to challenge our view of ourselves and confront our discomfort

or pain. But when we do, it is very valuable and cathartic. Most people find comfort in systematised living and storying can equally accept or confront the tensions which arise.

Story then confronts and appeases. And as Kate says, it is important for a healthy point of view in order to belong. And she explores this as a key element of her story and responses. How do we live our need for belonging and what ways does the need to belong shape our teaching lives? She speaks of belonging as contextual and tenuous:

The need to belong creates a strong tension in classroom teaching and works for and against us. As teachers we stand outside of the student group but we are still vital participants. We have a special role and responsibility which can be quite unnerving. We want to be accepted, liked and included but we must be prepared to forgo this at times when we represent a social authority. We must maintain order and impose structure by leading. This places us outside the group and positions students to be wary of us.

There is a tenuous balance between building a relationship of trust, friendship and mutual respect and representing social rules and norms that restrict the behaviour of students. As a young teacher, there were times when I experienced the disorienting feeling of stepping too far in both directions. I recall wanting to be accepted so much that I failed to carry out the requirements of the system in terms of discipline and I recall at other times zealously upholding the rules and creating structures which impinged on individual wills and created resentment. Once we find the balance, teaching ceases to be stressful. Age helps with this. And sometimes it places us immediately at a distance and at the same time,

removes the sense of competition. Our need to belong diminishes.

Kate implies that teachers 'move toward' what they think about teaching, realising their thoughts in functional ways. There is a kind of 'adoption'; an association with the industry of education. Kinds of knowing, kinds of professional development about the self are essential, so that we might observe and face the fluctuations of secret self-labelling, or judgements that pervade or obscure the desire to know deeper, more profound realities with more conviction (Deally, 2002).

Story connects social times with social lives. Teaching is a 'calling' for many and this has an impact on feelings. Kate teaches from a feeling state and unites her experience with practice. She is the quintessential connection to understanding for her students. Sustaining our development as we travel with others is the ideal of personal growth. The *journey* for example, although often talked about, is still a motif that will serve to carry the teacher in times of doubt; that change is likely and imminent.

And change can be misleading at times in commercialised settings. Teachers of Kate's age are aware of the bridge between individual and urban life and how her teaching identity is also a human catalyst for the well being of others. She writes about contemporary life in her story and how her life has been tied to social and urban settings.

My story seems to reflect the way urban settings have changed and how they have been influenced by changing views of social structures and power distribution. Contemporary urban society supports an environment which is so much more individual and lacking in empathy than the conformist and communal society of my childhood. As a student I lived under a regime where one

fitted in, accepted the social order, suppressed individuality and considered others before oneself. The way things had always been done meant that that was the right way to do things. How things have changed!

Our students know their rights and demand that they be upheld. They have the jargon of individuality and self-indulgence. They question authority but often follow trends with meek obedience. They are less inclined to feel responsibility for the welfare of others but will weep for the characters on reality television shows or their Facebook friends.

Just as my teachers imposed conformity and a higher authority on me, as a teacher I accept the norms of the current urban setting and work with, rather than against them. In many ways I find this easy because my resentment of the restrictions of the 1950s and 60s education setting has been resolved in the current setting. The needs of the individual student are paramount and that accords with my philosophy, even though I can see the problems with this as well as the advantages. The problems concern me but at this stage, I find I have to live with the ambivalence. I don't have the answers.

And yet Kate defines the loving praxis of transformative education; the phronesis and axiomatic nature of her teaching life. I have discussed the nature of teaching as irony, ambiguity and paradox and how this in turn reflects the nature of postmodernist theory and hermeneutic understanding. Teachers live within or among this life-world and are affected by the 'objects' within it. To counter this constant nagging and often unidentified phenomena, teachers find their own, more human responses to life and rely on personal experience to hold them in times of doubt or even replace these conditions by calling on teacher skill and marrying skill with human

intervention. Kate models realistic empathy and balances this with an archetypal human response. How does storying a life connect to a contemporary urban landscape and enable teachers to empathise with the lives of others?

It made me more curious and aware of the lives of other teachers. I suppose that's empathy. When I was a young teacher, it seemed to me that most other teachers had the job all worked out. They seemed to have none of the conflicts and tensions that I suffered. I wondered how they were different from me. What did they do in their classrooms? Asking them was little help. They would talk about being strict, laying down the law, imposing discipline but what I wanted to know was HOW?

I didn't want to be a dictator with power; I wanted students to exercise their own control. Later I met teachers who became friends and were prepared to share concerns and truthful stories and found that all teachers experience similar challenges. My story is actually quite critical of teachers or of past teaching practices. I remain critical of teachers and of myself and have high expectations of our profession. I felt reassured by the stories I read. I enjoyed reading the stories as I always seek answers to questions of how other people have lived their lives.

Kate reminds us too of the need for caution when we reflect and the seduction of 'writing ourselves' in ways we would prefer others to see us. She is acutely aware of the temporal world of teaching.

Reflection can easily become justification and rationalisation. We might remember in ways that reshape experience and validate our own actions. It prevents us from confronting

aspects of our lives and psyches that create barriers to living a self-fulfilling life in the present. If you listen to people you have known for many years and their recall of events of the past, which you may have knowledge, you might be surprised to see how they interpret those events. We may have a strong inclination to believe that things aren't what they used to be.

Reading this response, I see more about how fears and solutions are part of the same mask and often manifest in compliance. Problem solving becomes a way of reducing risk. Habit turns to confront us. Writing self, as a way to confront what's not there often reveals what is. Kate is a living reminder of this. Fears are both real and imagined and subjugate the potential of our lives, to keep us separate from the curriculum we teach, which then becomes *them* and *us*. And narratives answer human questions as discussed throughout the chapters of this study. Story offers empathy and, at the very least, a feeling that we are not alone. We are reassured, as Kate says, and this brings acceptance in our otherwise tremulous existence.

Reading the other stories gave me reassurance, respect and empathy for those people but then I already considered them to be excellent teachers. I formed this opinion a short time after meeting them and listening to what students said about them. More often than not, these days, discussing teaching with colleagues reinforces my belief that most teachers really want to do the best job they can and constantly strive to improve. I am reassured by these stories; that good teachers are very fine people from diverse backgrounds and experiences and that teaching, at its best, is a noble profession.

Chapter 9

Anything Worthwhile is Worth Repeating

When I read the stories I am filled with mixed feelings, pride and gratitude, and a little sadness perhaps, that people may never know the many thousands of teachers who bring others into *being*. We should know the qualities of these people who choose to teach. We should try to understand why they teach and the experiences that have made them who they are. And we should remember they have given their lives to teaching, and think of the many that will. What am I then proposing from what I have learned? The answer to this is both simple and complex and is another dependent, as the road is to the vehicle.

We know the teaching world is more complicated than it has ever been, and therefore is the need to fully recognise and to affirm the roles teachers now play in bringing people, young and older, to fulfilment in their lives. My role as writer-researcher was to explicate or draw out the life of the teacher and to invite the presence of a more profound life; to 'see' the stories through the eyes of a fellow writer (empathy); artist (who sees the aesthetic nature); poet (who interprets a life as natural metaphor); facilitator (mediator of cultural identity); colleague (resonance); and philosopher (the politic and profundity of reason). This is a conflation of thought, of what is known and unknown in the language of constructed meaning; Gadamer's (1975) role of the interpreter.

Interpreting the stories was not about judging the nature of a life. They were not co-researchers initially but participants in a collective process, connected by profession. During the course of the process they became the shared authors, who became more involved in what makes a story a friend. The teachers sought to understand

themselves, and each other, through revelation.

They were surprisingly open about their experiences and liked the idea that someone else would read their tales. They could feel the enacting power of language in its contextual sense; the storying ability to include the other and the impact the stories had on their temporal felt-world. They were free to write and read the stories, relating to other tales of life and teaching. In this way they were curious co-participants in a bigger story; the one that tells of how teaching has empowered identity and how the rite of teaching embraces any story told, of and by its inhabitants (Hillman, 1983).

The chapters I gave to each teacher inspired them, to tell their stories as teachers and to tell them in partnership with the creative self. As I read the stories, I came to know these people as writers too, as well as the human being I didn't fully know, their feelings and emotions and what moved them about their work. The friendship's ethos was at work; the responsibility of shaping the partnership offered through autobiography. The teachers began to share their stories with each other. They were engaging; conversations about themselves at first, through their 'exploits', but then about what things meant to them. The 'other' that accompanies autobiography is appreciation of a life, which brought them together as writers with unique, yet similar tales they could feel through resonance, or as Derrida (1976) observed, as evocation and transference, as a felt experience akin to an acknowledged ontology of place and time. My role was to serve as facilitator of story as the first step, allowing the time for busy teachers to tell their tales as they saw fit, making sure I removed the tensions of judgment about skill and correctness, and placing the importance on the experiences as the fundamental backdrop for the interpretive work.

The stories evolved: how they are, who they were and are now, what they did and said, and how they saw the world then and now, recording their own worlds. My inquiring function, like a fictive

account, utilises the context of literary meaning for disclosure and reader enlightenment. Inquiry asks the interpreter to serve in roles which enable the full and possible worth of a story. And so I acted as a guide in providing the opportunity to write and then responding with reflective questions to facilitate more inquiry, without interrupting the original intention; to serve as a facilitator of meaning cognisant of Heidegger's forgetfulness of being. Conle (2000, p. 206) writes about this phenomenon when she says: "*I only began to recognise forgetfulness of being as a negative state through the experience of its opposite.*"

What were the original questions I hoped to answer? The questions stemmed from my proposal in 2009: How is personal identity constructed socially? How can we reconcile past and future with present work? Where do we belong? What are we manufacturing when we separate the self in teaching (Goodson, 1991)? How does story create relationships; with self and others (Ellis, 2004)? However, what I have since learned is that writing a thesis generates many more human and social questions due to its inquiring nature.

The questions still remain a 'call to adventure' (Campbell, 1973) and do not constitute an end to the thesis story, and my literary companions bear this truth along the way. The teachers knew their stories would be read by others. They read my interpretations of the questions, woven into the text of the thesis to see if they agreed or I had misinterpreted their tales and comments. All were supportive or pleased with the voice I had used and the meanings I had attributed to the tales and comments. And, like the conversational situation, the participants needed to explore their own feelings and meanings as they applied to the questions. This is part of any resolution. There should be closure to revelation and a feeling that the story has made a valuable contribution. This sense of contribution has been a huge

part of their individual teaching lives; a resolution to the work; that the auto-ethnographic experience reflects a meaningful life.

What I needed to maintain and retain was the need to align the work to a creative identity, and not a dominant, more intellectual face. My critical fear was also the constant and nagging research self, invading the role of revelation, to supplant the purpose with 'findings' that would bring other types of responses, rather than a work of reflective, literary worth and value for the reader. The real value of the work is, in many ways, dependent on the reader's interpretation, like any narrative. The answers to questions are part of the thesis, as a part of the observational eye of the reader, like any book. The stories should not be, therefore, an onerous task of analysis but a reflection on the value of people who are human, who are also teachers. A story is always the hermeneutic key and the writer will always be the messenger of self inquiry. The response is the *object* (Ricoeur, 1981).

Personal writing of this nature, description and memory, does not necessarily guarantee any academic worth but it does hold within it the empirical inquiry of teacher worth. Personal writing is difficult to evaluate in relation to any social profundity. Story is its own research, its own revelation for the reader. These social narratives are difficult to ascertain for precise benefit. What matters most is in the key element of autobiography, as a descriptive facilitator of ethical, social worth. This has been the major goal of the thesis. That and what stories can do as motivators of memory and exploration; to inspire others to write and reflect.

Autobiography, in the context of ethnography, is the best way to know what something means for someone; life's meaning. And although the stories are kinds of summaries of what teaching has meant, they are also testaments to the kinds of human qualities necessary to make socially valuable and enduring figures of teaching.

The stories have conflict and resolution, and the necessary reflexive quality of revisiting meaning. They open us to further readings within the narratives, to continue the exploration of emerging themes. And interpretation can be endless, in what something might mean. I have aligned myself to the characteristics of literature, and in this way we must allow for the spaces in between, allowing for the shadow and what the reader sees as important or enlightening. The stories are also informative, locating personal identity among the changing historical backdrop of lives.

And one thing is sure; the stories enabled the teachers to speak with a more profound stance on teaching. They wrote what they wanted to under the thesis offering. They wrote about teaching in its most global sense and what it has meant to them; the reflexive act. What is also clear is that the participants also wrote with voices grounded in reflection: *“I began to realise that the process is a growing one and much more significant than I had ever thought.”* And why teaching is so important. The stories of the teachers were already there, waiting, for the tale.

The writer is also a colleague and this has limitations for participants; they know me as a colleague. However, they are not people who have avoided life’s challenges. They see teaching as a global and social responsibility; of the human teacher allied to human issues. I did not set myself against their experiences, nor did I try to relive experience for its own sake, recounting my life, to persuade them of the value of narrative for audience. I made myself available for conversations throughout the study; to talk about anything they felt was relevant. I didn’t try to invade their privacy with how to write or what to write. They were completely free to write whatever they wanted to in response to my tales and questions, and the key informant identity inherent in the tales. What I had said was enough. I have drawn on my reading to expand experience and

experience to provide meaning, as a poignant factor of the human curricula of teaching.

I feel privileged to have written this work, this study, and privileged to have the acceptance that enabled me to enter the personal and professional life-worlds of a very special few.

Critical Endings

There is something worthwhile in the discussion of an ending that summarises a life with writing a thesis. In this case it is the discussion of my initial research questions and human goals and the repetition may come with bringing the reader's attention back to the writer's purpose. Nevertheless, all good practice requires kinds of summaries that revisit what is valuable. All the stories demonstrate the spine of data revelation and, through the writing, it is clear that so many other questions were raised. I reveal what I have learned throughout the text of this work. I was and still am the cultural referent for the work through the auto of the thesis, the 'ethnographic I' (Ellis, 2004), and this was the foundation of the work, to reveal how a life becomes a professional life and how, in turn, the professional life turns to collegial understanding (resonance and empathy). Data is emergent and stays true to the multi-paradigmatic nature of postmodernist methodology.

The work is literary in nature and so many of the questions, both hidden and revealed, are in the eye of the reader as I have said. Throughout the chapters I have examined the nature of writing to serve as the literary referent, as inquiry into the auto-ethnographic nature of narrative, as writing, and as a living practice for understanding others; the social epistemology and ontology of literary, worthiness. The 'findings' of the study reflect the voices of the literary companions (Booth, 1988). What I have learned is just the

beginning of a greater awareness about narrative inquiry and story, to bring insight and offer a more open and holistic world to teachers.

The research literature, along with the stories of the teachers, my own autobiography and the discursive act are the data, and together they have resulted in the deep contextual identity of the thesis. The literature informed my work and became the critical thoughtfulness of the study; the major reasoning, theory into practice into process, which became revelation and the transformation of the writer. I have developed an enormous sense of the value and worth of such a study and the implications of the questions, not only for teachers within schools, but also for the 'view' it offers to the general public and for people entering the hallowed halls of academia, wishing to undertake such a career in partnership with a university. In this inquiry I sought to understand how story constructs a personal and communal bridge that connects teachers' lives, and offers a transformative door to greater awareness of both self and the 'other'.

The critical theory of selected writers assisted me to identify my own road to self discovery and mindful writing in the context of research. Freire (1970) and Habermas (1987) discuss how social authorities seek to control us and how language needs closer scrutiny when attending to the ethical ways research can also be used; Denzin (1989), van Manen (1990), Ellis (2004) and Conle (1999) on the very existence and value of writing narrative for social change and how this changed me as I progressed with the work; that there are ways of knowing, as Polanyi (1969), Hillman (1983) and Grumet (1990) testify, and ways of being with writing, as Olney (1998), Polkinghorne (1988), Lejeune (1989) and Ricoeur (1984) suggest, and how research and self are directly aligned to the very nature of system and self development, as Clandinin and Connelly (1990), Goodson (1998), Bruner (1986) and others write; and how life cannot be separated from the living. I learned that from Dewey (1934).

These and other writers cited in this thesis have taught me that narrative research is fundamental to social meaning and that systems need to view themselves in the context of human change.

My questions formed the basis of my inquiry and helped to guide me along a greater road, a greater landscape of emerging questions. I was also acutely aware in my writing of how I became a teacher, what kind of teacher I am now and what it has meant to me to be a teacher, and finally, what teachers mean to the world. I have discussed what I have learned already but through story, my own and the stories of others, and through the net of researchers, I have come to understand how a life brings identity and how crucial it is to accompany that journey with ethics, a verisimilitude of work and a bigger view of the world. What does it mean to be a teacher and a human being? At the risk of concluding something that simply cannot be concluded, because it evolves, I think it means the ability to see beyond the ordinary life, to a life that is so connected to the greater good that it must be scrutinised, to see who these people are who choose the challenging world of bringing others into a human condition, of knowing and of being, as Polanyi (1969) says.

I offered myself another voice in time and connected that voice to the voices of others, known and unknown through a life with research. I made myself the vulnerable inquiry-interpreter and linked that to the precarious nature of disclosure and scrutiny. In many ways the storying helped the teachers to become theorists; the way Connelly and Clandinin (1990; 1994) suggest, through critical reflection in the construction of self.

The four teachers came to realise more of their own selves through their time with storying, what teaching has meant to them, and to carry this as the mantle of the writer with greater stories yet to come. They realised they are still becoming, even at this stage of their

teaching lives. What the data meant to them was the story of how all teachers need the time to facilitate the theory of understanding the self in the context of reflection; the personal theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1987). Without this kind of reflection, as my research shows, teachers can so easily become another; the systemic body of circumstance without the ability to create meaningful action for the benefit of others (Carr, 1986).

My research has given rise to my own critical and conscious reflective voice which I have attempted to reveal, as part of the exegesis-style story of my self in the work. It is therefore an emancipating act, not just for me but for others, and hopefully for the many others who may read this work. The voices of the four participants will allow others to answer for themselves the crucial questions: Who am I and how did I become who I am? Who do I want to be now? The narrative inquiry method presented in this thesis gave the teachers the opportunity to feel the past in the present. I noticed how confident they felt after the storying and conversational process had 'ended' for them. They also began to ask their own questions about who they had become and how much of themselves is revealed in practice. And, like any writer, I hope the reader of this text has felt some presence of transformation, in that when we invite others to reflect in such a way we also invite the potential others have to see what may be missing.

How and what we remember has been guided and inspired by the writer's experiences, and the responses are from people who carry an authoritative voice on Education. Each voice of experience also reminds us of the roles we play in the very human fields of endeavour, and that human teachers are capable of great understanding and empathy; the resonance of human action from experience. The study sparked a willingness to describe themselves and what they bring to the landscape of teaching. Describing and

questioning are elements of inquiry. Something has been discovered, as Cixous (1997) says.

My four initial enquiries became many but still remain the founding parents of this thesis; reconciliation, belonging, the separation of self in teaching, and creating relationships with others. These may be the corner stones of a vibrant and sustainable community. I believe I have written about teachers, with the help of my companions, to the best of my ability. This inquiry has enabled a template of interpretation to occur for readers everywhere, as models of attainment, through dedication and real service to the truth in the archetype of teaching, as the original service to humankind.

I initiated a study that encompassed looking deeply at who I am and have become. I have learned also that empathy and compassion go hand in hand with storying, and that may be the feeling from readers about teachers in general and why people become and stay in teaching. But like many creative journeys, the 'I' is in the beholder. What can I say about my professional development? I have gained kinds of literary and personal friendships as a kind of validation. My autobiography flowed like the good ride I always wished for when I was younger. That act of being alone, the feeling of freedom that accompanied me on the long road, was reflected in the writing of the chapters; being alone, except this time others walked with me.

I have learned to converse with significant others. Carolyn Ellis's reply to my early email was a good way to think after so much reading, note-taking and early journal writing, which became the work itself or the writing road. The writing then, as I have so often described in the study, became my contextual framing, along with the stories of others. Tertiary life brought to me the eyes of others too, like Peter Taylor, who once said, in response to my own, very personal story: "*A rich source of your underlying values as a teacher.*"

Always generous. And this was all I needed to get going, as they say, to seek that illusive consistency in the work we often talk about as teachers, colleagues and as parents. Telling any personal tale is daunting if the writer is being honest and open, always watching the self fraudulent acts of cover-up.

The self often wants to escape too, I discovered, like being in the overcrowded classroom when all you want to do is hide. Teaching never let me hide and that was a good thing. And research is like that. We can't and shouldn't hide. Research demands its own face aligned to purpose which sometimes strays like the cat in search of other bowls. And sometimes it just amazes; a memory finding a word that finds a phrase or an unselfish response; always giving back, its duty to humankind. That's what I learned too.

Several fundamental faces have emerged, significant discoveries from the life stories of others. I am not alone after-all, not just as a person who teaches others and who is a teacher among others, but that writing is the only thing that has been consistent in an otherwise fairly inconsistent life, even with a '9 to 5' existence. This is also why so many people teach; to find in themselves a socially honest home (Jackson, 1995). I left home when I was fifteen, to find the roads that have led me to teach others, not always successfully and not always well. I also acknowledge that teaching brought to me a real sense of self, of identity. It was in the action of gratitude, of thinking more about others that brought me a resolution I had never known. There is something about teaching that enabled me to see how I might be with my self, and take the kinds of creative risks that would serve a greater good. Teaching also served as the bitter-sweet mirror to what was missing in my life search for integrity (Grumet, 1988).

Like the writing act, teaching brought, gave me, a kind of confidence aligned to social change. Writing this thesis, my argument of the self,

has been a journey unlike any other I have taken. I can say I know the power that abides in reflection as a vehicle for transformation. I can see how I have become the scribe in cloistered and public eyes. And it was not without conflict, the tensions that accompany writing something that may have some bearing on someone's life, somewhere hence.

We need something more than our suburban identities; something that enables us to climb above the streets and look over to a hopefully greener future, to realise that what and who we are is a congregation of our lives with work. I discovered that teachers respond to invitations to write as people who were dying of thirst; nobody had stopped to give them water, to really listen. It was as if their stories brought them their own home, a validation of their own worth, someone to 'read them' at last.

The teachers also saw the value in research and what qualitative research of this kind can do for others. That was, and still is, one of the greatest aspects of the study. They felt too that they had become the responsible practitioner through participating in something bigger and, in doing so, could reinvent the sensed and real world of self among others. In this way the work became soulful; a very fragile reminder of our tender lives together and what we often miss in the curricula of economic gains, but we so often cast out as an opportunity to re-discover the garden once again. The living teacher often becomes the only redeeming factor in the ministry of education.

Critical to all teaching is the subject of the teaching; the learner. I must never forget what the students gave to me through their own presence, the centre for my life's work as a human conditioned to tensions that beckon to risk. They are a source of awareness, to question our beliefs and place our consciousness on higher ground, and in doing this, my own place, my home, is the feeling of knowing

transience too, not just as the constant of accepting loss but also of the waiting, kindling collective social action yet to come. Home takes on an internal and safe structure for building lives. And sometimes we resist the future, for fear of finding nothing, a perspective we were clinging to and valued but may not exist.

Systems often align themselves to security, the one thing the middle class of social work value the most, and so home is also in the ordered environments of vocational choice. Yet among this seemingly pessimistic view there is the forgotten place we often see in fantasy and name as fiction; Mezirow's (1991) possible and postmodernist dialogue of uncertainty.

Yet hope is always the builder of another reality and the stimulus for what is possible. One of the key issues presented within the discussions has been loss; of self, place, temporal awareness and purpose, which so often accompanies leaving one place for another and then finding a sense of reflexive peace again through recollection, and what might be different in the future. This kind of study enables teachers to explore risk and resonate with other roles; let's say, saving the planet from itself. Is teaching not also a noble adventure? And my own transformative experience has come from my work here, as a writer placing a life and learning in perspective, and how writing brings a consciousness crucial to action, as well as the memories of lives, good and bad. Offering the writer's self, as a paradigmatic device, has accomplished a reuniting of self with history. And much of this thinking is aligned to what we all become, as humans in the curricula of the new; the possible world.

The willingness to seek awareness, to invite identity, is a lesson in another kind of history with our-selves. And inquiry is often at the forefront of this 'movement'. And what else have I experienced? The feeling of pride I felt when I first read the stories. I am a colleague

who recollects and initiates meta-cognitive experiences; the curricula of humankind; to encompass the human right of expression.

From The Tale: Chapter 21

I know what it means to be ill at ease - a jigsaw on shaky ground. And somehow, in the small and vacant block of my head, I always knew I wasn't alone. I needed space and went to a nearby park. I watched as the music professor from the nearby university played his stringed erhu. His shadow-song enveloped me while I sat and pondered my life. And as he played, an old man was relaxing in the movement of Tai Chi in another frame. It was hot and calm, the musty Beijing haze clouding old sighs with new feelings.

I didn't have to be anywhere or tread my usual tension's edge that accompanied my heavy mind. I was in the presence of another understanding. My senses opened once again. I'd felt this before when I traveled - the high of the anti-domestic, non-routine observer. It was about being away, an absence of vocation, about who I thought I was. It was also The Moon Festival; a yellow ball on autumn nights, the smiling old woman who would wave to me from her window in the old French quarter; tea and bamboo scaffolding; the constant sense of public play; mother and child, and a soft wind through the shadows of trees.

I was reminded of how small I was in the bigger scheme of things and how connected we all are through what we do. There was a sense of the possible again and I felt the golden bough stretch my way. I knew that I'd only tasted what others had lived, like all the bits and pieces of life. I'd met others who'd lived overseas, who talked about what they didn't like. I was content because I knew I'd accomplished something else and undefined.

This thesis acts as a continuing service to teachers everywhere; to confirm the agreement we make with teaching. What have you learned, as a reader, from this thesis? What would you change? The answers must come from those who are willing to change their perspectives, to shape-shift their ground to include, as a social need, the roles teachers play in the world when we personify the human experience through action; the paradoxical abandonment of our stories that were.

A long time ago I spoke of this place as the *safe darkness*, a place to begin again, as the space in-between, something artists often experience, as the lone archaeologists of faith. Writing this thesis has made me whole enough to see this as reconciliation, of both self and purpose, and perhaps this is the major objective of human inquiry.

Sometimes I have been accused of ‘disrupting’ the view of curricula. My response has always been to remain loyal to experience; to help others find their own way ‘out’, as a place for exploration. Reflection has always enabled me to see past, present and possible future with a more authentic view of my location and social demographic. It has been my constant heuristic leveller. My writing has reunited me with the other I had ‘lost’. It’s not an epilogue just yet, since the archetype continues as another irony I sometimes miss. Storying was an opportunity to give something back, as the gatekeeper of experience. And what I have learned takes on the voice of a tacit and inquisitive person, who is also a teacher.

Chapter 10

Resolution

...and if some child had dared draw a house or a dog it would have been erased in just the same way in the midst of curses and threats. In the city people no longer knew too well which side fear was really on; maybe that's why you overcame yours and every so often picked the time and place just right for making a sketch. In some way I had to say farewell to you and at the same time ask you to continue...imagining that you were going out at night to make other sketches. Graffiti by Julio Cortazar

In this final chapter the conflation of writing provides the connection needed to understand analogous and discursive construction central to this inquiry. I revisit, as a resolving discourse, the argument of social standing and the writings of narrative researchers to close an ongoing social and human story. What can the *personal* tell us about the *cultural*?

One common thread connects story to people and this is the universal motif of the journey. When I brought our paper to Salzburg (2013) I could see the journeys of other writers. I spoke about the link between writing and how we write ourselves into understandings about self in the context of others, and in this way we come to know more of ourselves. And in this thesis, someone had finally asked the teachers to share their own roads; leaving and finding other worlds, other stories. I took the responses as another measurement of the study's purpose. And other human issues are being played out and still emerging, like the increasingly multi-social, cultural and emotional domains of contemporary, complex and shifting classroom identities. Is it important then to know thyself? And how does the self remain in-tact when so much is given and so much demanded? Information also constructs attention, while discriminating,

unwittingly, unknowingly, against other parts of our human *being*, much like curricula itself.

Teaching happens in the contexts of learning, and it is the writer's experience that people show greater interest in those who 'exhibit' a wider sense of *themselves*. What can our life experiences offer others? We have a habit of forgetting who sits next to us sometimes. What may be worse is the possibility of forgetting who we are. Generally, we know what the mantle of teaching requires and the responsibilities that accompany vocational choice. This includes the 'masks' of professional life, layered over time, to 'protect' *ourselves* from the intrusion of fallibility and admittance that something else may be at work. Sustaining the self among systems has important implications for teachers. It's just as easy not see people as to see them. Storying the self is still in need of review (Ellis, 2004). Jackson (1995, p.161) writes about the continual experience of ambiguity, of our identities, and how identity participates in this human dichotomy:

A human life is never a seamless whole, a single story. Our imaginations set free in us other selves that seldom see the light of day. We lead several lives in the course of one. There is a perpetual discrepancy between who we are to ourselves and who we are to others. And our experience covers both a sense of ourselves as individuals and as belonging to a collective.

We also make emotional meaning and bring, offer or impose emotion; right and wrong, good and bad; the evocation of vulnerability (Behar, 1993). The teachers became ethnographers of themselves, to empower and act more profoundly among others, to work as Ellis and Bochner suggest (1996, p.760), "*...through the barriers of unfamiliarity, distance and difference toward a spirit of collaboration, understanding and openness to experience and participation.*" The study invited four teachers to explore the life of the writer as the

vulnerable agent; to show that stories tell us we have a choice and they continue to:

...emphasise that we live within the tensions constituted by our memories of the past and anticipations of the future. Personal narrative, the project of telling a life, is a response to the human problem of authorship, the desire to make sense and preserve coherence over the course of our lives.

The challenge that we face as narrators is the desire for continuity, to make sense of our lives as a whole. The work of self-narration is to produce this sense of continuity; to make a life that sometimes seems to be falling apart come together again, by retelling and restorying the events of one's life.

Ellis and Bochner know why narrative matters in storying the lives of others (2000, p.746):

...what is at stake in our narrative attempts to achieve a coherent sense of ourselves are the very integrity and intelligibility of our selfhood, which rests so tenderly and fallibly on the story we use to link birth to life to death.

There is plenty of evidence on the complexity of story and how our experiences inherit who we are and what we experience (Freeman, 1993, Kerby, 1991). What is my relationship to myself and why am I here? Cognisant to this are the questions: Who am I being and what am I really doing? How do I meet doubt, circumspection and creativity, and be a human being when I teach?

PD: *Why do you teach?*

Teacher: *I must be making a difference to somebody, to someone's life, in some way. Like that job I was going to go for recently, remember? What would happen if I'd got it? I'd have to quit teaching. It's who I am I guess.*

We remember that teaching also exists in the context of settings; with people wanting change, seeking activation or resolutions, with or without resistance, some kind of alteration of experience, and ironically, it can be all of these things on any given day. Teachers can so easily go from key makers to self-constructed wardens of curricula.

Curriculum and policy may act as saviours to the indecisive mind and oppress what is left. Teachers should make curricula in accordance with phenomena, as Goodson (1998) advocates. What kinds of human curricula will spring from this work and how will the world benefit? A little ideal perhaps, but Neumann (in Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p.181) plays with the real characters of life, taking their stories into his own research: *“They occupy a place in my stories so I can imagine myself as part of their world.”* Good teaching resonates, as the wings of the proverbial butterfly, as the fractal waves of causality, across time, to find its place in the lives of others and otherness, *“...because he goes into the world looking to ‘solve’ something of himself.”* And Freire reminds us too (1970) that transformational action is impossible unless people are active participants in the reflection of their own lives. What should be explored is how these experiences have evolved from constructed acts, to how the self is felt or sensed and how this serves, in turn, to shape views of experiencing humanness. Blumer (1969, p. 2) offers a generalist human perspective:

Human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings and everything a human being may note in his world...and the meaning of such things is derived from interaction...and meanings are modified through an interpretive process with things he encounters...

The significance lies in the shaping of the writing to resonate with the verisimilitude of critical thoughtfulness (Taylor, 2003) and render epistemology with humanness. The inclusion of a particular teaching

process below serves to inform readers of a method of using time, place and skill, and how this makes that difference in the world we often talk about.

The Intensive Language Centre Experience (DET reflection for Level 3 Classroom Teacher status):

I identified an opportunity for the Intensive Language Centre (ILC) students and mainstream Drama students to collaborate on a project involving the narratives of young people newly arrived in Western Australia. Many of these young people and their families come from war and refugee experiences in Europe, Africa and the Middle East (many had one or several family members killed, missing or 'disappeared'). Several students had been child soldiers. Their 'known' world was turned upside down. They were alienated, estranged or lost. The time frame of travel was intense and suddenly they were in an alien metropolitan school, where life is completely different. Emotions were high as expected.

It was the role of the ILC to understand these issues, concerns and circumstances and deliver programs related to the mainstream learning ahead of them. It was a unique and highly successful centre with a talented and culturally diverse staff. I arranged for ILC staff and students to meet with mainstream drama students to share their stories in a safe and empathetic environment. Using tableaux techniques taught by the Drama students (see Boal's technique of images, 1995), the students presented their experiences which the mainstream group collated as written evidence and shaped them in writing exercises that were then re-told and presented as images using simplified, non-threatening 'play-back' techniques.

A great deal of pre-storying, ethics-based issues were discussed with mainstream students before this stage. The ILC students provided the authenticity as shared offerings. Many of the ILC staff were usually present, often fascinated by the process.

Gradually, a common thread emerged that provided a sense of hope and universal nature of loss, the mainstream students could relate to in other, more generalised and local ways. We needed to work out the process that would eventually shape other stories.

Storying (enactment) acts as a buffer zone for emotion and places significant moments in the context of similarities and the same 'I'.

Mainstream students researched material concerned with trust and community building. Together we devised a larger story that explored the events and journeys and the various issues faced in being 'homeless', displaced and alienated. One girl had been a machine gunner on the back of a makeshift jeep in Somalia. She showed me her diary entry. She wanted me to read her experience. 'I remember walking over the dead bodies of my family who had been killed the day before...with little sister...trying to reach another village. We had to move quickly in the night and very quietly...'

Like the prisoners I worked with in correction centres, I didn't ask any more questions. They had their own, more private stories to tell. People will feel it's the right moment to disclose, or when I arrange that moment for trusted revelation. Trust is a key issue with no fear attached to the telling, except that sometimes memory gives rise to feeling and sometimes doubt. Stories exist to let others know we are not here to supplant or take, but to be at peace with our social psyche that sometimes oppresses our wish to find the right words. As a consequence of their past experiences in other lands, these young people are hyper-sensitive to any form of injustice, and this is something we must all be conscious about when we teach from an

‘inclusive’ curriculum. Storying reciprocates through the role of narrative, as the gatekeeper of experience.

Many of the students did not share their experiences in colourful or textured ways, the way the mainstream students did; hyperbole or embellishment. These were flat, simple statements of fact often seen by White suburban teachers as fantastical, but the intensity of the experience makes it a matter of fact, rather than a layered story. This is often difficult to digest as truth by those whose experiences of loss are solely personal, interpersonal and urban, but no less significant. These are also the feelings of grief and universally shared.

The young people’s narratives were tempered with gratitude too, to be away from severe tension, and so their offerings were gifts of a shared world; to make others understand and raise our conscious awareness that such things do exist everyday, for many people, who do not have the luxury of acceptance and time.

A kind of transformative experience happened or was emerging; from a place of fixed and unrepairable loss to a feeling that life would go on, in a different and welcoming form. They were no longer confined to immovable memories. At the same time I needed an efficacy of my own experiences; a home again, and in doing this I came to realise the illusion of calling teaching a job. Now I know it is a kind of portal; a door to a special place. What did I notice? That the more I read, the more I discovered those profound voices; the more I discovered those voices were in need of audience. The voice turned to something more. People become the authors of self.

Epilogue

When I was young I learned the ‘tricks’ of the road, through necessity, the mother of survival. I knew what to look out for and things to avoid, the need to pay attention and observe, which kept me in good stead, most of the time. The road often brings us lessons we need to learn. And memory is often the greatest illusion. Sometimes I’d miss the detail of the feeling, in the moment, when I was cold or alone, watching the sun set in a quiet place, trying to quiet my stomach, reminding me of how small things can get.

Sections from The Tale:

I was in a kind of canyon, a blind spot for cars but I could see the road beyond if I climbed to the nearby boulders shadowing the road. The sandy road looked vacant, deserted by time and very, very still. And when the long day came and went, in the fading light, I would pick the spot where I would sleep and rehearse in steps its exact position, so that I could find it in the darkness. I chose an overhanging ledge with a large wall of rock behind so I could see over the bush and was protected. I had no idea about what creatures came out at night in that part of the world. The light was changing and shaping other colours, more subtle and majestic.

I wasn’t looking forward to another long night alone in the deepening quiet but I was tired. I would lay some brush on the ground before it got dark, to cushion me and let the air flow underneath to stop the damp and cold. Eventually only the blackness was visible and nothing else. I rustled my feet in the bag to make sure I was still there. I would go in and out of open and closing sleep.

How uncommon I was in the fauna of my chosen habitats, thinking of belonging. And then the dawn. The morning was a small miracle of fresh sounds and light. I made my way to the road and sat. I loved the way the cold would leave my body by degrees, replaced with the kindness of the sun. Some nights I'd just lay awake and listen to things moving around or try to imagine what was out there, listening to me. I didn't want to move in case something heard me and had me for a last supper. And I always woke very early to appreciate the quiet and lie very still in the chilly morning air; a boy in his bag, on a long, long road.

I have seen uncertainty as a force for change and, in writing, a person's potential for social action, later. And sometimes the antithesis in serving, serves only to amplify an insistence to hear what is disconnected. The home of our work is felt as so many empty rooms. Home was supposed to be the smell of freshly mowed lawns on Saturday mornings. In some ways it became the simple sense of what made me the cripple of longing. It may be that I was not supposed to see what I had seen, to be where I was not supposed to be; on long roads at night, in deserts and the cold streets of cities, homeless and hungry. I used to think that a spell was cast upon me to keep me silent to these experiences; to make me acceptably alone, from appealing to any earthly powers that might listen to a boy, who came to be a man, gifted with the doubt of life. I was the loud mute, not to be entrusted with anything that smacked of sanity and future; to trace the expanding lengths of flattened paths, for some strange reason. I have a voice now, such as it is.

What I had seen or didn't see is just what I was supposed to or not. These are my two silent heroes, my most ancient resolution. Is this the trust then? The road was all too short to know the mystery by

name and far too long to say I know anything for sure. Mine was a pre-occupation with both the tempest and placid lake, depending which side of the road I was on. My eyes are as wide as they'll ever be. And perhaps I looked too long or not long enough; my plague of in-between.

But the more I saw, the more I felt; the more I became part of the story and journey, and the monuments of memories I created became the resonant house. And like those who have gone before, all the writers and artists, all the researchers of time's holy ghosts, I have inhaled the decades and brushed my hands over the cracks and crevices, beams and stones of thoughts; to touch, to feel and sigh, a nightingale or cricket perhaps; how lonely I might have been and sensing others had passed that way, or may. From The Tale:

I wish my father would wake, to tuck me in to some horizon's bed. He could read to me about love and grace while I dream of laying my binoculars, pink with the faded blood of red tears, to rest. I live in a world between the two ends now, real and imagined, near and distant awareness, and ready to be my own teacher of patient time. And if I ever get to see another spaceship, if that's what it was, I'll offer myself as the willing recorder of human kind never to return. I didn't know about the power of the exacting mind; the darkness or the forms things would take, as the spectrum swings. And sometimes I would rather have held the narrow pass, while my brave and wounded self escaped to freedom, the other, holding off the similitude of enigma, an enemy with feelings I could only shoot at in the dark.

In this study I have felt extraordinary opposites I can't and shouldn't try to explain. I walked along the long road of this thesis; the heat and no wind in walled corridors and suddenly an icon or massive

courtyard, open to dead and living words. And then out through the gate to a contemporary world, reminding me about how myth carves memory.

I tried to sense and see all that had gone before and how small my own world is at times in relation to past, present and future thoughts. When I first started my thesis reading, I thought about how removed from the spectacle of life I can sometimes be, and how in my own teaching world, division and experience are often the rented twins of contradiction and conflict. No wonder I felt at home. And then I remember how I am when I wander the paths of my creative self, unafraid of the questions that may trouble me; when I let time take me. From my thesis proposal 2009:

Writing has been my constant companion when human beings are often too removed to notice the outstretched hand of a poem, a line of wisdom spoken from the shelf; I should say soul. And now I am enrolled again, as testimony to the recurring nature of something worth knowing. I am longing after-all, the desirous peace in maybe. Curtin University has given me a place, my seminal home for the time being, and this is the partnership, as a teacher struggling for life's answers and a human being struggling for life's answers.

I drink coffee in the Business School café, filled with the blessings of other students and me, trying to converse with the academic voices I hear in books, writing notes that sometimes make no sense at all. And sometimes they do.

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Appendix A

Research Consent Form

**Curtin University of Technology - Science and Mathematics
Education Centre (SMEC), Perth, Western Australia**

My name is Philip Deally. I am currently a PhD research candidate at Curtin University.

Title of the research project

The Curriculum of Humankind: A narrative-inquiry on what it means to be a teacher and a human being

Purpose and requirements of this research participant project

I am undertaking a research project into teacher identity through narrative writing – the storying of teachers’ lives and the meanings of experience in teaching. I am seeking answers to questions such as: How and why is a life a whole experience? What roles do teachers play when they are faced with system agenda? What role does experience play when this happens? What other roles do we play when we teach? What is a teacher worth? These and other social and political questions are key underlying issues posed in the research project.

1. Read a small section of my own life story.
2. Respond to several questions by writing a short story of your own (around 1500 words). Respond to the questions provided by writing a short story of your own, allowing the questions to guide you in what you write and what you want to say about your life experiences.
3. Write a reflection on your story (~200 words) discussing the reasoning behind why you focused on that particular part of your life.

4. Participate in 30-40 minute conversations throughout the duration of the study with me about your writing and research identity.
5. Read the draft of my response to your work and edit any part or section as you see fit.

Consent to Participate

Your involvement in the research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any stage without prejudice. The detail you offer is entirely up to you and will depend on how comfortable you feel about sharing it. Participants are respected colleagues who will have access to any information or part of the study at any time. When you have signed the consent form I will assume that you have agreed to participate and to allow me to use your work in the research. Participation will also mean allowing me to use online discussions (email) that may take place between us during the project, if appropriate.

Confidentiality

The unique information you provide will be separate from your personal details and I alone will have access to this. No identifying names, addresses or places of work will be included in the research thesis or subsequent publications. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants.

Further information

This research has been reviewed and given approval by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number: SMEC-23-10). If you would like further information about the study, please feel free to contact me in person or by Email:

phillip.deally@det.wa.edu.au or my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Peter Taylor on 08 9266 7501 Email: p.taylor@curtin.edu.au. Thank you

very much for your involvement in this research. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Consent check list

- I understand the purpose and process of the study.
- I understand that the process is narrative data to be utilised as interpretive writing by the researcher.
- I have been provided with a Consent Form.
- I understand that the process is a narrative device to add data to the peculiar interpretive nature of the research.
- I understand that my involvement is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that no personal identifying information (name, workplace and address) will be used and that information will be securely stored for five years at SMEC before being destroyed.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Appendix B

Research Questions

Curtin University - Science and Mathematics Education Centre (SMEC), Perth, Western Australia

My name is Philip Deally. I am currently completing research for my PhD degree at Curtin University.

Title of the research project

The Curriculum of Humankind: A narrative-inquiry on what it means to be a teacher and a human being

Purpose and requirements of this research participant project

The project questions are generated from the stories written by the teachers study group. Responses are the answers themselves and also explore how the teachers see the nature of writing narrative and autobiography in the context of teaching.

Consent to Participate

Your involvement in the research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any stage without prejudice. The detail you offer is entirely up to you and will depend on how comfortable you feel about sharing it. Participants are respected colleagues who will have access to any information or part of the study at any time. When you have signed the consent form I will assume that you have agreed to participate and to allow me to use your work in the research.

Participation will also mean allowing me to use online discussions (email) that may take place between us during the project, if appropriate.

Instructions

Post story questions.

This is your final commitment to this part of the study. The following questions offer you the opportunity to reflect now on your own story and the stories of others – your colleagues.

Your writing – your answers – will be included in the study as auto-ethnographic and narrative data. Feel free to explore the nature of the questions.

There are no right or wrong answers – you're your own, professional and personal reflections about the process. Use a fairly informal voice, as if in an interview.

Post story questions

1. How do you feel your life experiences have 'carried' you throughout your teaching? Can you sense your life story working when you teach?
2. Why did you choose that particular story to write?
3. The construction of a narrative serves to 'awaken' the critical faculties of reflection and [a] comparative life education. Do you connect in any way with this statement and if so describe/explain your thoughts and feelings.
4. Storying our *selves* may serve to counter or confront the tensions of systemised living. We remember our personal journeys through life and reflect on our multiple experiences. What can you say about this statement?
5. How do we live our need for belonging in the teaching setting? In what ways does the need to belong shape our processes in our daily teaching lives?
6. How does your story meld with the identity of contemporary urban settings?
7. Do you feel the writing of your story enabled you to empathise with the lives of other teachers? Do you want to know more about them?
8. How did you feel after you read the stories?