

Interlude – Part C to Part D

In Part C, *Action Research, Play and Practice*, the focus on these three areas has been deepened by a fuller account of the literature and also through commentary on my journal describing Silver Street-2, a cooperative inquiry with front line staff.

In Part D, *Making a Difference*, I now draw together the main themes of difference that being and working in this way make for others, as well as for myself.

The act of writing this thesis has been one of self-discovery and re-discovery. I have lived over an extended period with the discipline of expression and reflection, as thesis drafts have shifted and changed like tectonic plates. Now I feel a resolution of the sense of separation between my own aesthetic life and the work of the last twenty years or so. Play and poetics were there to be re-discovered as transformative processes in every encounter. Through participation with Silver Street I have also discovered the value of expressive aesthetics in the re-storying of experience for greater human flourishing.

The writing in this Part is arranged in the following way.

Chapter 13, The News of Difference in Silver Street-3

Re-connecting with Bateson and his concept of the news of difference, I offer a commentary on the differences from which learning sprang in this, the last of the three Silver Street projects. Its purpose was to develop work and training opportunities for people with learning difficulties; their inclusion as very active participants in this cooperative inquiry had a significant influence on the intrinsic aesthetic of our sessions as well as our purpose and direction in inquiring together.

Another feature of Silver Street-3 was the integration of expressive media throughout, as participants used a variety of art-based methods to record and learn from their work.

Rather than tell the story sequentially I have chosen journal extracts in the form of a fieldbook and arranged them to address and draw together the main themes of the thesis. They are grouped under the following headings, – the intrinsic aesthetic, the expressive aesthetic, poetic artefacts, play and friendship, and action research.

Chapter 14, Conclusion and coda

I introduce this final chapter to the thesis, on a note of aspirations and dreams. The group in Silver Street-3 had declared their dreams for future employment. I see the list that they produced as a metaphor for all aspirations for change and difference in lives, including my own.

I examine the main dimensions of change in perspective and practice that result from greater attunement to the aesthetic. I do this by referencing writers who have most profoundly influenced my understanding of the difference that working within this epistemological framework makes to living and working.

I consider in what ways I have experienced aesthetic process in cooperative practice as transformative. Then following Gadamer (1975) I explore the notion of the temporality of the aesthetic and the way in which we are given back more of ourselves in self-forgetful participation. Referencing Midgley (2001) and Rorty (1989), I consider how through the use of the imagination we envisage and enact change. Poetry and other of expressive aesthetic forms are seen, in Rich's words (2006), as ways of re-discovering 'a future forgotten'.

A short coda concludes the chapter; in it I dream about my future life and practice.