

Chapter One

Living Inquiry

Throughout this thesis I refer to my inquiry practice as *living inquiry* and I offer narratives, “messy texts” (Denzin 1996) of my inquiries into my life as a man, my struggle to find happiness and fulfilment in loving relationships, my search for healing, and the shift in my professional identity away from mainstream policing towards an educative role. These texts show rather than tell you, the reader, the purpose and scope of my inquiries, the standards of judgement and practice that I bring to bear in living my life as inquiry, my methodology, my forms of sense-making and the nature and extent of my contribution to scholarship.

In this chapter I reverse this emphasis (telling rather than showing) in order to make my claims in each of these areas more explicit though, as I indicate in *Turning for Home*, creative intuition and conscious structuring are not mutually exclusive activities and I shall continue to call on both my imaginative and critical faculties as I set, justify and assess my thesis against its own original criteria and in relation to the ideas of others.

As I inquire into the practices and meanings that I associate with the term *living inquiry*, I shall pick up some of the incidental reflections and speculations from subsequent chapters, adding fresh insights and a further level of reflection and theorising. In my use of theoretical resources, I adopt Richard Winter’s dictum as a warrant for my own approach:

Whereas academic research is set up as a carefully designed response to a body of theory as it exists at a given moment, action research, having initially established the scope and significance of its provisional topic by reference to general intellectual and professional debates, then becomes a relatively free-flowing dialogue with various bodies of theory as the progress of the work brings new aspects into significance. Action research, therefore, does not aim to make an initial “comprehensive” review of all previous relevant knowledge; rather it aims instead at being *flexible* and *creative* as it *improvises* the relevance of different types of theory at different stages in the work. (Winter 1998) (Emphasis in the original)

Also, without denying the value or significance of academic literature, I shall not place such narrow limits around my theoretical resources. Story, art, poetry and drama have much to offer and have also influenced my understanding and my practice. Where they seem relevant I shall draw upon them freely. By way of illustration, let me offer the following story, which I take from the Zen Buddhist tradition¹, to suggest something of the flavour of what I mean by the term *living inquiry*.

Many years' ago in Japan, there was a warrior – one of those itinerant Samurai known as *ronin*. He had an ambition to find fame and fortune as the finest archer in the land. In pursuit of his dream, he travelled the length and breadth of the country looking for a master-bowman to help him improve his technique. Few of those he encountered had much to teach him but he continued searching and eventually, just as he was about to give up, he chanced upon some dilapidated farm buildings far from other habitation. All over the buildings, in the most unlikely and inaccessible places, were hundreds of hand-painted targets, each with an arrow at the exact centre of the bulls-eye.

The Samurai knocked at the door and begged the occupant to share the secret of his uncanny accuracy. A bargain was struck and the master-bowman offered to demonstrate his craft. Pausing a few moments to slow his breath and meditate, he nocked an arrow onto the string and – in the classic stance – drew the well-worn bow. With the sudden gentleness of a young child releasing its hold on an adult's finger, he loosed the arrow towards the barn where it came to rest, planting itself into... a perfectly blank stretch of the wall.

“You missed,” said the Samurai.

“Not so,” replied the bowman, stepping up to the barn, picking up a paintbrush and marking a target round the quivering arrow. “Every time, a bulls-eye.”

“But why do you do this?” asked the stunned warrior.

¹ This is my re-telling of a tale, which I first shared with colleagues at the CARPP Conference in September 2000 as an “example” of action research. I have loosely adapted it from Eugen Herrigel's classic text: *Herrigel, E. (1953). Zen in the Art of Archery. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.*

“Because I am intensely curious to learn where every arrow lands,” said the bowman.

In that moment, the Samurai was enlightened. He forgot his dream of fame and fortune and became the master-bowman’s pupil in the art of Zen archery.

I have loosed many “arrows” in the course of my living inquiries. It is about time to paint some targets!

Questions of purpose

If, as I have asserted, the overarching question that this text seeks to answer is: **What does it mean for me to live my life as inquiry?** then *living inquiry* is the term I use to represent both the sense I have of living my whole life as inquiry (“the one”) and the separate, though interrelated, inquiries that I undertake from time to time (“the many”). I did not coin the term. I think it is likely that Bill Torbert can take credit for that (Torbert 1991) though his usage of the term had dropped out of my mind when, writing in my research journal in May 1999, I juxtaposed these two words to indicate that, for me, the process of inquiry needs to be alive and vital, and that I seek to live with an inquiring spirit. Recognising this twin aspiration, my usage of the word *living* in this context has a double meaning, as both verb and adjective.

Having indicated what I mean by the term *living inquiry*, I am conscious of the need to respond to the question that Peter Reason (Reason 1996) suggests should be fully explored in every research proposal and every PhD thesis: “What is the purpose of my inquiry?” I began to address this issue early in the thesis when, in the *Prelude*, I asked myself (and responded to) three related questions: What sort of inquirer am I? What inquiries do I want to write about? How do I want to write about my inquiries? Paradoxically, I think I am better able to answer Peter’s question directly now, having written about my living inquiries in some detail, than I would have been at the outset. I think it is important to look at the purpose(s) of my *living inquiry* both in terms of “Why do I inquire?” (That is to say, my reasons or motives for living life as inquiry) and in terms of “To what ends do I inquire?” (That is to say the goals of my inquiries). In the opening paragraph of the *Prelude*, I declared “I inquire because I must” and in the course of an hour-long tape-recorded dialogue about the nature of my *living inquiry* at the

September 2000 CARPP Conference, in response to Peter Reason asking me to say why living my life as inquiry matters to me, I said:

The only way I can make sense of my life is in terms of finding meaning through... inquiry. The strongest sense I have of who I am is being a seeker, being someone who constantly pushes wherever I am. What is the boundary? What is next? What is beyond? And tries to find meaning... I have a deep hunger for meaning.

These are impassioned, heartfelt statements that reflect a basic existential choice. To understand and articulate this choice more clearly I turn to Victor Frankl, whose book *Man's Search for Meaning*, (Frankl 1984) based on his experience of life as Prisoner No. 119,104 in a Nazi concentration camp, has profoundly influenced my thinking. His conceptualisation of the *will* to meaning as: "the striving to find a concrete meaning in personal existence" (p106) resonates with my own felt experience and I find myself nodding in agreement as I read:

Man's [sic] search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own *will* to meaning. (p105)

There are times too when I can identify with what Frankl calls "tragic optimism":

That is, an optimism in the face of tragedy and in view of the human potential which at its best always allows for: (1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life's transitoriness an incentive to take responsible action. (p139/140)

Though I believe that there are also grounds for an optimism born of joy, for following what Mathew Fox describes as the *via positiva*: "a way or path of affirmation, thanksgiving, ecstasy" (Fox 1983, p33). My existential choice is therefore one of optimism, of doing my best, of striving to make things better or to make the best out of any given situation – for myself and with others.

When I turn to the goals of my living inquiries (the ends to which I inquire) I find that I want to undermine too instrumental a view and I am reminded of the relationship between the goal and the opus in the great work of alchemical transformation. Carl Gustav Jung (Jung 1976) expresses this beautifully:

The goal is important only as an idea; the essential thing is the opus which leads to the goal; *that* is the goal of a lifetime.

And yet, I know that I am not detached from the ends to which I inquire, even if I am not fully aware of them beforehand. Let me explore this further, using a framework devised by Peter Reason and Judi Marshall (Reason and Marshall 1987). They suggest that one can think of research as:

For me: “The motivation to do research is personal and often expresses needs for personal development, change and learning.” *For us:* “It is a cooperative endeavour which enables a community of people to make sense of and act effectively in their world.” *For them:* “For the community of scholars of which the researcher is a member or potential member.” (p112)

Reading the transcript of the tape-recorded conversation I quoted earlier, I see that I am making claims in respect of each of these areas for my *living inquiry*.

For me

Geoff: I’m calling this thing *living inquiry*. I’m quite close to what Judi [Marshall] writes about in terms of living life as inquiry although I feel that mine is less consciously lived as inquiry – much of it. I guess what I want to do is seek to articulate and claim validity for that less- consciously framed inquiry... as important, and natural, and human, and what we do. And that it matters to live one’s life in an inquiring way. It matters that I’ve done it for me and it matters that people do... live life as inquiry.

For us

Peter (Reason): I’m just wondering what it’s like when you say you are a passionate educator. Do you also see other people not living their lives as inquiry and do you want to stir them up? Is that another side of why it matters?

Geoff: I don’t necessarily want people to live a particular kind of life. I want to help people live the lives they want to live and be the people they can be.

For them

Mary (Casey): Can I ask you one other question? If the third person stuff is about the broader community out there, why do you want to write a PhD about something that is so personally first person?

Geoff: Because I believe that every life matters. I believe my life matters and I believe that any life lived as inquiry is important and I believe that my life lived as inquiry is important. And I want to claim that in this place (I mean this world, and this academic world) which so often tends to deny that.

Peter (Reason): So you have a third person purpose in writing about it?

Geoff: I have an agenda which is to claim [academic] legitimacy for a life lived as inquiry, in particular my life lived as inquiry but [also] for *a* life lived as inquiry. It seems to me important to do that.

All well and good, I hear you say, but how are these aspirations actually manifested in the course of your living inquiries? Let us look, briefly, at each of the four main strands of inquiry in this thesis. In *The Men's Room*, I present narratives in which I explore my masculine identity and seek to influence men's development in organisational and non-organisational settings. The underlying question addressed by the text might be expressed as "How can I live well as a man in the world?" The inquiry is *for me*, in the sense of meeting my personal development needs as identified in the extract from *Navigator* (Traeger, Daisley et al. 1999) which describes the ways in which I claim my involvement in menswork has influenced me. It is *for us*, in terms of my membership of men's groups and other developmental events for men that I have facilitated or co-facilitated. It is *for them*, in terms of my attempts to communicate my learning from these inquiries through speaking at conferences, publishing articles and raising the issue of men's gender conditioning and masculine stereotyping in the police service through my application for a Bramshill Fellowship.

In *Postcards from the Edge*, I present narratives in which I examine my conduct in loving relationships to find living standards of renewal during and after separation and divorce. The underlying question addressed by the text might be expressed as "How can I enter more fully into loving relationships?" The inquiry is *for me*, in terms of my struggle to

find happiness and fulfilment by leaving an unhappy marriage and re-engaging with my children in a loving and positive manner. It is *for us*, only in the sense (I think) of its eventual outcome of an amicable relationship with my ex-wife and close and loving relationships with my children. I acknowledge in the text that one might characterise the breakdown of our marriage as a failure of “second person” inquiry. It is *for them*, only in the sense that I offer the text publicly in this thesis in the hope that sharing my story may help others towards a deeper understanding of their own.

In *Healing Journeys*, I present narratives in which I describe how I am sharing what I am learning in my journey of self-healing with others by co-creating “transformative spaces” for our learning and healing. The underlying question might be expressed as “How can I find healing for body and soul?” The inquiry is *for me*, as I create and tell stories to move beyond “narrative wreckage”. It is *for us*, as I co-create “transformative spaces” such as those I describe at Hazel Hill and Bramshill for ritual and for storytelling. It is *for them*, when I share my learning about story with wider audiences through publishing *A Winter’s Tale* (Mead 1997) and running workshops for researchers and students in academic institutions (Middlesex University MSc in Personal and Organisational Development, Bath University CARPP, Bath University MSc Responsibility and Business Practice). I also intend to write papers on *Self and Story* and *Transformative Spaces*, based on material in the chapter *Healing Journeys*, once I have completed my PhD.

In *Reshaping my Professional Identity* and *Police Stories*, I present narratives in which I discover and extend my educative influence during twenty-eight years in the police service and reshape my professional identity away from mainstream policing towards an educative role. The underlying question might be expressed as “How can I exercise my educative influence for good?” The inquiry is *for me*, as I find the image of the five-barred gate and come to realise its significance in defining my sense of purpose in the world. It is *for us*, as I work with others to design and deliver various educational programmes in the police service between 1998 and 2001. In the text, I show how each programme has moved more strongly in the direction of collaborative inquiry. It is *for them*, as I seek to influence the police service and wider social formations through publication (Mead 1988; Mead 1990; Mead 1991; Mead 1995a; Mead 2001) and through my influence on the design of the Cabinet Office’s recently launched Public Service Leaders Scheme.

I believe that there is sufficient evidence here to claim that my *living inquiry* (in terms of both “the one” and “the many”) achieves a reasonable balance between *me, us* and *them*, though not all are present to the same degree at all times. I feel confident that my *living inquiry* meets the standards implied by Peter and Judi’s stricture:

We regard it as unfortunate and degenerate if any one of these three purposes of enquiry becomes dominant and overwhelms either one or both of the others: all three are authentic and complementary aspects of the research process. (Reason and Marshall 1987)

I also feel confident that what I have to say about the purposes of my *living inquiry* (particularly in the holistic sense of claiming legitimacy for life lived as inquiry) makes a useful contribution to wider debates on the purposes of human inquiry.²

Finally, I would like to close this section by adding my voice to the many voices supporting the claim made by Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (Reason and Bradbury 2000) in their introduction to the *Handbook of Action Research*, that:

... the purpose of human inquiry is the flourishing of life, the life of human persons, of human communities, and increasingly of the more-than-human world of which we are a part. (p10)

Questions of scope

Perhaps I can now take this exploration of *living inquiry* a bit further by considering its scope. I have already said that I use the term to represent both the sense I have of living my whole life as inquiry and the separate, though interrelated, inquiries that I undertake from time to time. But what does that mean in practice? What are the dimensions (and limits) of my inquiries and of living life as inquiry? The four main strands of inquiry are quite apparent in the text, each with its own chapter; *The Men’s Room*, *Postcards from the Edge*, *Healing Journeys*, and *Reshaping my Professional Identity*.

I could simply point to these but that would only be part of the answer. Yes, the content of these inquiries does reveal some of my pre-occupations, areas of my life in which I

have inquired deeply (and publicly) but they do not, by themselves, constitute the whole of my *living inquiry*. I am arguing, in this thesis, that there is something more, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and that this "something more" lies at the heart of my contribution to a scholarship of inquiry.

In adopting such a holistic view of inquiry, I must acknowledge my personal and intellectual debt to Petruska Clarkson who was my teacher and mentor for five years (1991-95) as I trained in Gestalt psychology and organisational consultancy. The more I explore my own inquiry practice, the more I become aware of her influence and of the ways in which she encouraged me to see the world. In a brilliant article *2,500 Years of Gestalt: From Heraclitus to the Big Bang* (Clarkson 1993) she traces the strand of holistic thought from: "the beginning of time in the Western tradition, to the current frontiers of the scientific enquiry of our current world" – from Heraclitus (Guerriere 1980) through Fritz Perls, Ralph Hefferline and Paul Goodman, the founders of Gestalt therapy (Perls, Hefferline et al. 1984) to modern interpreters of quantum physics and complexity theory such as Fritjof Capra (Capra 1983), Danah Zohar (Zohar 1990) and David Bohm (Bohm 1983).

Clarkson puts it in a nutshell when she describes this world view as one of an "ever-changing dynamically interconnected whole" (Clarkson 1993) and offers the concept of the *fractal* as a metaphor for the many ways in which fragments of our lived experience encode and enfold the whole of our lives. During our dialogue at the September 2000 CARPP Conference, colleagues helped me to tease out how this aspect of *living inquiry* is manifested in practice. I have just described my separate inquiries, and Mary asks:

Mary (Casey): Who are you when you are inquiring? Are you the teacher doing a programme for one part of it, the policeman for the other part? There was so much that you were doing that I was just...

Geoff: Yes. That's a pattern. I do a lot and I seek to synthesise, I seek to connect but I realise that in writing [about what I do] I'm pulling apart in order to try and make some sense about different bits. Who am I? I don't know really... At one time I would have said that I was distinctly different people and I feel there has been a considerable convergence. That's a very helpful question. In fact, one of the things that has helped me converge, that has been really important to

² See, for example Reason, P. (1996). "Reflections on the Purposes of Human Inquiry." *Qualitative Inquiry* 2(1): 15-28.

me... Perhaps why I am doing a PhD, is that it is helping that process of convergence. It is helping me to synthesise and make sense of the whole. In one sense it is about seeking to be whole...

It is in these ways, through a sense of myself as an “ever-changing dynamically interconnected whole,” through discovering over time that what I learn in one part of my life has relevance (even if not immediately obvious) for the rest of it, that my *living inquiry* embraces the apparent paradox of the many and the one.

If the first dimension is that of the many and the one, my second is that of “inner” and “outer”, by which I mean a concern with the inner life of the psyche as well as the outer life of working for good in the world. This dimension is similar to one identified by Bradbury and Lichtenstein in their recent paper on *Relationality in Organizational Research* (Bradbury and Lichtenstein 2000) in which they draw a distinction between the “interior view – tacit, non-visible” and the “exterior view – explicit, visible” (p556). They make the point that these merge into each other though I would go further than that and say that the two are inextricably linked.

My sense is that “inner” and “outer” interpenetrate and contain each other as in the Taoist symbol of yin/yang. As I follow the inner path I find that I am inevitably faced with questions of identity and purpose in the world – as, for example, with the image of the gate that encourages and supports me in my practice as an educator. As a passionate educator, engaged with others and seeking to influence social formations, I am inevitably confronted by myself as a “living contradiction” when I negate deeply held values and beliefs in practice (Whitehead 1993) and drawn to consider my deepest values and assumptions.

It seems to me that this is where our sense of vocation comes from – the meeting of our own passion and the world’s need. Perhaps this is what mythologist Joseph Campbell has in mind when he exhorts us to “follow your bliss” (Cousineau 1999) or, as the German poet Novalis puts it:

The seat of the soul is where the inner world and the outer world meet. Where they overlap, it is in every point of the overlap (Bly 1995)

In each chapter of this thesis, you will find that I range across “inner” and “outer.” I speak freely of my imaginal life, of the soul, of emotions, of relationships, of ideas, of my

work as an educator and police officer and these concerns are reflected in an equally wide variety of presentational forms; analytical writing, narratives, self-stories, poetry, images, even sculpture. These “messy texts” (the nature of which I explore in *The Men’s Room*) invite you, the reader, to engage with my *living inquiry* not as a detached observer but as a participant, opening yourself to your own inner and outer lives as you read.

Associated with these two dimensions, is a third: that of personal and professional. Again, I recognise that it can be helpful to distinguish between them but I do not regard them as completely separate – indeed, personal responsibility for maintaining and improving standards of practice has long been considered a defining characteristic of being a “professional” worker. In that sense, I am a person in a professional role. I am expected to exercise personal initiative and responsibility and to bring my whole self to my work. Richard Winter (Winter 1989) goes so far as to say that:

The development of understanding and the initiation of innovative practice are... a possibility and even a responsibility for professional workers *in general*. (p4)

But there is also a longstanding convention in much academic writing that personal means “private” (therefore to be avoided) and that professional means “public” (therefore open to scrutiny). However, we only have to look at the stories told by writers and academics such as Carol Gilligan (Gilligan 1993) and Judi Marshall (Marshall 1995) to see that the personal, the political and the professional cannot be so readily disentangled. It is no accident that we have feminists to thank for breaking down such artificial (and stereotypically male) barriers.

In this thesis, when writing about my professional practice, I am conscious of myself as a whole person and when writing self-stories I am generally looking to make wider connections. So, for example, in *Reshaping my Professional Identity*, when I speak about the values underpinning my educational practice, I cannot separate my core beliefs about people and about educational processes and about the educative relationship. I do place some limits on what I am prepared to make public (there are some private aspects of my “personal” and “professional” lives). That is not to say that they are excluded from my *living inquiry* but that I choose not to write about them. As I say in *Postcards from the Edge*:

Some stories are simply not mine to tell and some that are have no place in this thesis. I need to balance their relevance and contribution to this discourse against their potential to cause harm to those I love (and their right to a degree of privacy).

The fourth dimension (there may be others but four would seem to be enough in a three-dimensional world accustomed to one-dimensional research) borrows from Bill Torbert's (Torbert 1997) conceptualisation of research as *first-person*, *second-person*, and *third-person*. There is clearly a relationship between this framework and Peter Reason and Judi Marshall's notion of research as *for me*, *for us*, and *for them* (Reason and Marshall 1987) which I used earlier to explicate the purposes of my *living inquiry*. However, I think the *first-*, *second-*, and *third-person* typology is more helpful in mapping the domains or scope of the research. I refer to this model briefly in *Reshaping my Professional Identity*, drawing upon Reason and Bradbury's succinct formulation from the preface to the *Handbook of Action Research* (Reason and Bradbury 2000). Now, I want to take a wider view of my research practice in each of these three domains.

First-person research

First-person action research/practice skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness and to choose carefully and to assess effects in the outside world while acting. First-person research practice brings inquiry into more and more of our moments of action – not as outside researchers but in the whole range of everyday activities (Reason and Bradbury 2000)

I think that my passion for first-person research is evident throughout this thesis, from *The Men's Room* (for example, the activities and events described in the poem "Childhood's End" and in my narrative "In Search of Spirit"), through *Postcards from the Edge* (for example, my use of divination and creative writing techniques in "All kids are beautiful" to help me understand how to move forward) and *Healing Journeys* (for example, my exploration of "self-stories" as a way out of "narrative wreckage"), to *Reshaping my Professional Identity* (for example, in my commitment to five year's personal therapy, in part to support my work as an educator). This has helped me develop a high level of what Peter Reason (Reason 1994) has called *critical subjectivity*:

Critical subjectivity means that we do not suppress our primary subjective experience, that we accept that our knowing is from a perspective; it also means that we are *aware* of that perspective and of its bias, and we *articulate* it in our communications. Critical subjectivity involves a self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing. (pp326/327)

Most of these examples are what Reason and Torbert (Reason and Torbert 2001) call “upstream” first-person research/practice and there may be less evidence in the thesis of “downstream” first-person research/practice involving:

... critical examination of day to day behaviour, drawing on qualities of mindfulness and self-awareness to critically notice the congruence of one’s behaviour with purposes, espoused theories with theories-in-use, and the impact of one’s actions in the wider world.

I’m curious about the paucity of evidence of “down-stream” first-person research/practice in the thesis since I hold strong values about authenticity and integrity, which often cause me to challenge myself about the congruence of my behaviour. I self-monitor to a considerable degree but in a rather taken-for-granted, undocumented and undisciplined way. I explained this process in email correspondence with Peter Reason last year (June 2000) in relation to an account I had written of dealing with the aftermath of the suicide of a close work colleague:

Geoff: Peter, I get the impression that you expect my self-reflective practice to feature quite a sophisticated and contemporaneous internal dialogue. But I don't seem to operate like that - especially in crisis situations. Either I don't think in those ways or I don't have access to those ways of thinking at the time. Rather, I rely on a more kinaesthetic sense of rightness. I just “know.” Of course sometimes I “know” wrong and sometimes I don't “know” at all.

Much of my internal processing is at the unconscious level. I mull, allow thoughts and ideas to compost, and wait until answers appear rather than working things out. Guy Claxton (Claxton 1997) contrasts this "tortoise mind" with the more actively rational "hare brain." He argues that it is the patience and confusion of the former rather than the rigour and certainty of the latter that are the precursors to wisdom. This is my experience too and my preferred method of inquiry. I do, I notice, I mull, I wait, and I “know”.

Sometimes the knowing presents itself as metaphor or image, sometimes as a deep - almost ineffable - sense of the grain of a situation or as a physical sensation of ease and lack of resistance. Often I can only articulate the knowing later - particularly when I speak or write about past events.

Peter: My experience of reading [your accounts] was of being taken into the experience to quite a large extent. I found the two parts complementary, the second part being more reflective, a bit more outside. Indeed, it could be so, while the first part is more “in your face” with the experience. I think the immediate reflection, the pouring out onto paper is important, but so also is the standing back (I don’t see it as contrived). Then there is a further standing back in the introduction you have written to me [above], which gives me a “theory” of practice “I do, I notice, I mull, I wait, I know”, and also some “theory” of inquiry – e.g. the paragraph about the metaphor.

I don’t see how you could be more systematic about self-inquiry in these kinds of situations. You will be overtaken by the situation, and keeping a record of “contemporaneous internal dialogue” will be difficult... On the other hand, I do think that you can be more systematic in more “normal” situations, you can track ways [you] repeat old patterns both in the moment and in reflection. These practices of action inquiry, the reflections and the experimental actions build the skill of reflective action both for regular life and for these moments when so much is asked of us.

I include our exchange here because I think it says something important about my process of self-reflective inquiry and, given its origins, supports my claim to live the whole of my life as inquiry. I have omitted the original accounts because I do not think they are necessary and to protect the privacy of my late colleague’s family. Peter makes the point that a more disciplined practice might hone my self-reflective skills and I have to agree that this is an area for development. Later, when “positioning” my research practice in relation to the field of human inquiry, I shall look more closely at how these aspects of my *living inquiry* relate to the ideas of three *first-person* action-researchers whose work has influenced me considerably; Judi Marshall, Jack Whitehead and Bill Torbert.

Second-person research

Second-person action research/practice addresses our ability to inquire face-to-face with others into issues of mutual concern, for example in the service of improving our personal and professional practice both individually and separately. Second-person inquiry starts with interpersonal dialogue and includes the development of communities of inquiry and learning organizations (Reason and Bradbury 2000)

My engagement in second-person research/practice varies widely across the different strands of my *living inquiry*. I have already acknowledged that, in hindsight, one aspect of the breakdown of my marriage was a failure to maintain a “joint inquiry” into our future. As I withdrew psychologically, I limited the scope of the inquiry until my wife and children were excluded. The effect (and probably the intention) was to minimise their influence over me as I left the family home and the marriage came to an end. Elsewhere, inquiring with others – albeit often in an informal and unstructured way – has been the norm.

In *The Men’s Room*, there are narratives about men’s retreats, men’s support groups, a co-operative inquiry into men’s development in organisations, and (closest to my heart) *Driftwood and Dogmeat* – a story of friendship, which as Peter Reason and Bill Torbert say: “[is] maybe the most fundamental form of second-person research/practice”. All of these are places where we: “engage[d] in conversations with each other which enhance[d] our respective first-person inquiries” (Reason and Torbert 2001). The inquiry into men’s development in organisations in 1995 was my first exposure to more systematic second-person research/practice of the kind articulated by Peter Reason and John Heron (Heron 1996; Reason 1999) which I took as the basis for my work with the *Developing Ourselves as Leaders* project in the Hertfordshire Constabulary and which I write about extensively in *Reshaping my Professional Identity*.

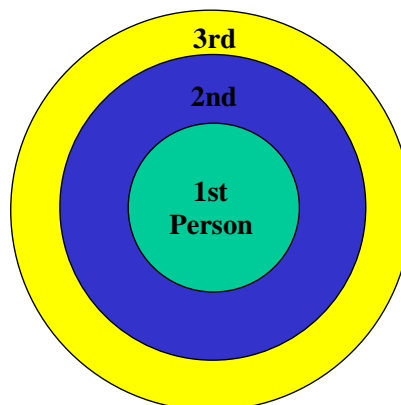
Even renewal and recovery from “narrative wreckage” by the creation of new self-stories requires a social process of inquiry. As I say in *Healing Journeys*: “Perhaps then the self is a telling. If so it comes into being in communion with others for there can be no telling without listening.” Taken as a whole, this thesis demonstrates my growing understanding of the philosophy and theory of second-person research/practice and competence as a practitioner. It is certainly a feature that permeates most of my *living inquiry*.

Third-person research

Third-person research/practice aims... to create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face (say, in a large, geographically dispersed corporation), have an impersonal quality. Writing and other reporting of the process and outcomes of inquiries can also be an important form of third-person inquiry (Reason and Bradbury 2000)

It is in this arena that I make the most modest claims though it is increasingly where my energy and excitement is moving me. I am very conscious of making my inquiries public through this thesis (especially those parts of it that already appear on the Internet)³ and, as is apparent in subsequent chapters, have published several articles on menswork, storytelling, organisational change, supervising executive coaches, and leadership development. Latterly, I have been taking more direct action to influence “social formations” through the Cabinet Office’s new Public Service Leaders Scheme, for which I have designed (and will supervise for the next three years) a series of facilitated Action Inquiry Groups based on principles of co-operative inquiry and drawing on the work of the *Developing Ourselves as Leaders* project. I hope this will have a positive effect on the quality of public service leadership from which we might all benefit in the long run. If my claims to third-person research/practice thus far are modest, I place no such limits on my aspirations.

Finally, in relation to this dimension of first-, second-, and third-person research, I want to claim that my *living inquiry* embraces all three domains and seeks to integrate them in my practice. Reason and Bradbury (Ibid.) suggest that: “the most compelling and enduring kind of action research will engage all three strategies.” I agree with this view and, having begun this chapter with the story of a Zen archer painting targets where his arrows fell, suggest that this is also an appropriate image for the relationship between these three research strategies.



Relationship between first-, second-, and third-person inquiry

Reason and Bradbury (Ibid) explain the relationship in this way:

First-person research practice is best conducted in the company of friends and colleagues who can provide support and challenge; such a company may indeed evolve into a second-person collaborative inquiry process. On the other hand, attempts at third-person research which are not based in rigorous first-person inquiry into one's purposes and practices are open to distortion through unregulated bias.

I put it somewhat differently in the *Prelude* but I think it amounts to pretty much the same thing:

I am... always conscious of myself at the centre of any inquiry. This is not to say that I do not value second-person and third-person research or that I neglect the "we" and the "they". Rather, it is that I begin and end with "I". Begin - in the sense that I am motivated to inquire by my own discomfort with a situation or my desire for change or improvement. End - in the sense that I seek to be congruent in my own practice with what I might hope for in others.

Questions of epistemology

How I inquire both shapes and is shaped by questions of epistemology, of how I come to know and make sense of my being and doing in the world. These are important issues for, as Nancy Goldberger and her co-authors say:

Our basic assumptions about the nature of truth and the origins of knowledge shape the way we see the world and ourselves as participants in it (Goldberger, Clinchy et al. 1987)

I touch upon some aspects of sense-making when discussing "downstream" first-person research/practice in *Questions of scope* and demonstrate many different ways of knowing throughout the thesis. However, a more systematic examination of my epistemology is an essential part of understanding and articulating the nature of my *living inquiry*. First, I want to acknowledge the influence of two related strands of post-positivist epistemological thinking; *participatory knowing* and *multiple (or extended) epistemologies*. In the light of this, I will then present some prominent features of my own

³ See www.actionresearch.net under *Police Stories*

participatory/extended epistemology, paying particular attention to the forms of sense-making that I employ and of my attempts to balance and integrate them in this thesis.

Participatory knowing

In *Participation in Human Inquiry* (Reason 1994), Peter Reason explores the notion of “participation” in human consciousness. Though he is at pains to disown a straightforwardly linear process, he traces the development of three major world-views or paradigms (Kuhn 1962) which he calls “original participation”, “unconscious participation” and “future participation” - the first representing the undifferentiated, embedded, unreflective consciousness of pre-modern societies, the second characterising the modernist Cartesian separation between conscious human subject and what it sees as the less-than-human world. The third term he reserves for a potential resolution of the dialectic between these two modes of perception and thinking as:

A form of consciousness rooted in concrete experience and grounded in the body; characterized by self-awareness and self-reflection; experience is ordered through a sense of pattern and form rather than by discrete objects; there is a much deeper appreciation of the alienating power of conceptual language and more active and aware use of imagination and metaphor. (Reason 1994)

More recently, supported by writers such as John Heron (Heron 1992; Heron 1996), Richard Tarnas (Tarnas 1991), David Abram (Abram 1997), Henryk Skolimowski (Skolimowski 1994), Mathew Fox (Fox 1983), and Charlene Spretnak (Spretnak 1991) he takes this further, arguing that:

The participative worldview stands in contrast to both the positivist paradigm with its mechanical metaphors which underlies the modern worldview, and also the various forms of relativism which characterize the postmodern metaphor. (Reason 1997)

I am very conscious that my highly selective use of these extracts does not do justice to the power and persuasiveness of the case for such a view. Nevertheless, let me make it quite clear that I am nailing my epistemological colours to the participative mast. My knowing emerges from my participation in and from my relationship with “other.” As you read on, I think you will agree that this quality permeates the text. In particular, you

will find it exemplified in *Chapter Six: Living Inquiry (Reprise)* in my imaginary dialogues with Jack Whitehead, Peter Reason and Judi Marshall, my tutors at CARPP.

You will also see the developing participatory nature of my learning as I engage in actual (as opposed to imaginary) dialogues with Jack Whitehead throughout the process of writing the thesis. In the early stages of our supervisory relationship I was frightened of being overpowered by what I saw as Jack's superior knowledge and intellect and I reacted by containing him/them within the metaphor of an anvil – on which to forge my own ideas⁴. Now, as the thesis nears completion, I am better able to articulate my notion of *living inquiry*. I no longer need the security of this metaphor and I allow myself to respond more fully to Jack's invitation to engage in mutual learning. Our relationship has become more dialectical in the sense of being both oppositional and interdependent. I began as a novice researcher "thinking against" Jack's notion of living (educational) theory whereas the mutual interplay of later supervision sessions and correspondence suggests a more collegial sense of "thinking with" and learning from each other.

Multiple epistemologies

As John Heron says: "Worlds and people are what we *meet*, but the meeting is shaped by our own terms of reference" (Heron 1996). Furthermore, because I encounter "worlds and people" in many different ways, I have many ways of knowing.

Many writers have argued for the existence of, and need for, different ways of knowing and forms of knowledge. Peter Reason and Bill Torbert outline their own typologies and summarise others including schemas developed by Jurgen Habermas (instrumental, practical and emancipatory), Ken Wilber (emotional/soulful, rational/theoretical, and intuitive/spiritual), Peter Park (representational, relational and reflective) in their review article, *Towards a Transformational Social Science* (Reason and Torbert 2001). Although aware of their existence, I have drawn little inspiration from most of these sources. I have found Bill Torbert's "four territories of experience" useful in conversational moves (framing, advocating, illustrating and inquiring) but am otherwise put off by his (to me) frequently impenetrable language.

⁴ See section entitled: *Imaginary Friends* in *Chapter Three: Postcards from the Edge*

There are, however, two frameworks that have significantly influenced my own thinking about multiple epistemologies. The first of these is a feminist analysis of “women’s ways of knowing” (Belenky, Clinchy et al. 1986; Goldberger, Clinchy et al. 1987) which opened my eyes both to the gendered nature of knowing and to the underlying epistemological growth metaphor of “gaining a voice.” With Carol Gilligan (Gilligan 1993) they challenge the predominantly masculine assumption of psychological development as a journey towards greater autonomy, independence and abstract thought, contrasting the development of attributes “typically associated with the female: interdependence, intimacy, nurturance, and contextual thought” (Goldberger, Clinchy et al. 1987). Their research with a group of 135 women revealed five major epistemological perspectives; Silence, Received Knowledge, Subjective Knowledge, Procedural Knowledge, and Constructed Knowledge.

As I read the accounts of their interviewees, I found myself resonating with aspects of each of these perspectives but identifying most strongly (through what I describe as my *living inquiry*) with those women who told the researchers that:

Their current way of knowing and viewing the world – the way of knowing we call *constructed knowledge* – began as an effort to reclaim the self by attempting to integrate knowledge that they felt intuitively was important with knowledge and methods of knowing that they had learned during their formal education... They described the development of a new way of thinking that emphasized not the extrication of the self in the process of knowing but a “letting the inside out and the outside in” (Ibid. p216)

I want to stress that my attempts to construct my own forms of knowledge represent an aspiration rather than an achievement. It would be insensitive, untrue, and stereotypically male to claim this most developed of “women’s ways of knowing” for myself. Rather, I express my gratitude for the pioneering work of feminist scholars that (as some acknowledge) increases the range of possibilities for both women and men.⁵

The second influential framework, which I see as complementing rather than competing with the above, is the fourfold model of experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowing developed and widely used by John Heron and Peter Reason (Heron

⁵ I am far from the first male Action Researcher to express such views. See, for example, Winter, R. (1994). “The Relevance for Action Research of Feminist Theories of Educational Development.” *Educational Action Research* 2(3): 423-426.

1992; Reason 1994; Heron 1996; Reason 1997; Reason 1999; Reason and Torbert 2001). I have known of this model and worked with it consciously in various aspects of my inquiries since reading about it in *Feeling and Personhood* (Heron 1992) shortly after publication. Though it is from Reason and Torbert (Reason and Torbert 2001) that I draw the following brief descriptions of the four forms of knowing. There is evidence of each of them in all the chapters relating to the four main strands of inquiry in this thesis but I will restrict myself here to a few examples.

Experiential knowing means direct encounter, face to face meeting: feeling and imaging the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing. It is knowing through participative, empathic resonance with a being, so that as a knower I feel both attuned with it and distinct from it. It is also the co-creative shaping of a world through mutual encounter. Experiential knowing thus articulates reality through inner resonance with what there is, and is the essential grounding of other forms of knowing.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of this form of knowing is my encounter with spirit during the ritual men's retreat at Gaunt's House. In *The Men's Room*, I allude to the quality of this knowing through narrative, sculpture and poetry but its essence is, and will remain, tacit and ineffable.

Presentational knowing emerges from and is grounded on experiential knowing. It clothes our encounter with the world in the metaphors of aesthetic creation. Presentational knowing draws on expressive forms of imagery, using the symbols of graphic, plastic, musical, vocal and verbal art-forms, and is the way in which we first give form to our experience. These forms symbolize both our felt attunement with the world and the primary meaning it holds for us.

There are many instances of such knowing in the text. Perhaps the *enso*, the Zen circle, in *Healing Journeys* with which I seek to represent something of the qualities of "transformative space" will suffice as an example.

Propositional knowing is knowing in conceptual terms; knowledge by description of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing. This kind of knowing is expressed in statements, theories, and formulae that come with the mastery of concepts and classes that language bestows. Propositions themselves are carried by presentational forms – the etymologies (e.g. language as tongue-ing), the sounds, or the visual shapes (e.g. topology)

of the spoken or written word or number – and are ultimately grounded in our experiential articulation of a world.

It seems to me fitting (as I indicated in *Postcards from the Edge*) in any branch of human inquiry, and particularly when mining one's own experience, to theorise sparingly and make modest claims to knowledge, and then only on the basis of a substantial process of inquiry. Given that stricture, my attempt to articulate the contributory features of *A Ritual for Separation* is a clear example of propositional knowing.

Practical knowing is knowing how to do something, demonstrated in a skill or competence. It presupposes a conceptual grasp of principles and standards of practice, presentational elegance, and experiential grounding in the situation within which the action occurs. It fulfils the three prior forms of knowing, brings them to fruition in purposive deeds, and consummates them with its autonomous celebration of excellent accomplishment.

It is not easy to demonstrate a skill or competence directly in a written thesis (other than the skill of writing) so, I might direct your attention to the tape recording of my presentation *The Future for Men at Work* at the *Women and Men: Working Together for a Change* conference as indicative of my competence in communicating my learning about men and masculinities to a large audience.

John Heron (Heron 1992; Heron 1996) generally shows the relationship between these forms of knowing as an up-hierarchy, arguing for the primacy of practical knowing as the consummation of other forms of knowing whilst being grounded upon them. Although following the logic of this argument, I think it can be taken to valorise agency and action in the world as opposed to communion and being in the world and would be happier to endorse a greater equality between them. Thus, I prefer his more complex “medicine wheel” diagram⁶ to the more commonly used pyramid diagram⁷ though, paradoxically, I do share his sense of the need for a solid experiential base as a well-spring for sense-making and action. Ultimately, I agree with Reason and Torbert (Reason and Torbert 2001) when they conclude that:

⁶ See Heron, J. (1992). *Feeling and Personhood*. London, Sage. Figure 8.1 (p158)

⁷ See Ibid. Figure 8.3 (p174)

What is most important is simply the acknowledgement that there are multiple ways of knowing and the further development of one's research/practice... with a commitment to engaging and interweaving more than one mode of knowing.

In light of this, I shall move on to consider some of the qualities of my own participatory/extended epistemology as practised in my *living inquiry*.

My ways of knowing

As is apparent in the narratives of my inquiries into my life as a man, my conduct in loving relationships, my search for healing and my practice as an educator, my knowing ranges freely across the four domains of John Heron's "manifold" model. For the most part, my sense-making follows its own path rather than the well-worn track of prescriptive cycles though, over time, one can detect an underlying pattern – an ebb and flow of action and reflection. Within this pattern, I claim that my ways of knowing exhibit certain qualities that, taken together, might be said to represent their distinctive signature.

The first of these qualities is the significance I attribute to **personal knowledge**. I mean this in the sense that Michael Polanyi used the term to account for tacit knowing, for our capacity to know more than we can tell (and incidentally to be able to tell more than we can write). In *Knowing and Being* (Polanyi 1969) he puts it this way:

It would indeed be self-contradictory if knowing included a capacity to specify completely what we know. But if all knowledge is fundamentally tacit, as it is if it rests on our subsidiary awareness of particulars in terms of a comprehensive entity, then our knowledge may include far more than we can tell.

I also agree that a commitment to personal knowledge has significant ethical implications for how I use my knowledge. Thus, again with Michael Polanyi (this time from *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*) (Polanyi 1958):

[I have decided]... that I must understand the world from my point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising his personal judgement responsibly with universal intent

This is not to say that I seek to make sweeping generalisations from my own experience. The logic of *living inquiry* is not inductive. Rather, my knowing rests on the power of the particular. I believe that I influence and am influenced less by the transfer of abstract principles and more by the evocative power of stories of lived experience. This credo is well expressed in a remark attributed to Carl Rogers⁸ that, when you travel to the unique heart of a person you find yourself in the presence of universal truth.

A second quality is that my knowing is often **metaphorical** or **imaginal**. I write about this aspect of my inquiry process at some length in *Postcards from the Edge*⁹ and acknowledge my intellectual debts to James Hillman's work in the field of Archetypal Psychology (Hillman 1983; Hillman 1983; Hillman 1996) and to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson for their groundbreaking work on the metaphorical basis of language and mind (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Rather than repeat myself, I can perhaps best make my point by offering a fresh example of this way of knowing in the form of a

⁸ Quoted in Reason, P. and B. Goodwin (1997). Complexity Theory and Co-operative Inquiry. University of Bath Unpublished Paper.

⁹ See section entitled *Imaginary friends*

poem I wrote shortly after a ritual men's retreat in March 1996. At dusk, on a wonderfully snowy day, alone in the darkness, each man entered Jordas' Cave – an ancient site used for initiation since Viking times. The spirit of the legendary giant Jordas is reputed to inhabit an underground waterfall which serves as an oracle.

There are many ways to enter the cave,
In supplication, in awe, in fear
Of meeting its millennial inhabitant - for
This is the home of Jordas the Viking.

Soul-tired and wearied by my life's journey,
Seeking a new direction, longing to be different
Yet fearful of change, not knowing in what
Direction to turn, I have come for guidance.

Turning my back on the grey skies, I return
To the earth's womb in prayerful silence,
Groping my way round the dark chamber
Onto the stone lip of the oracle.

Water crashes into the pool at my feet,
Spraying unseen droplets in the blackness.
His spirit enters me and I grow taller, until
My body outreaches the crystal waterfall.

*“Jordas, in the name of Father Odin.
What is my purpose? Give me courage
To know the truth. Give me ears to hear,
Eyes to see and a heart to receive you”*

I know that he has heard my question
And that my answer is waiting outside.
It is snowing as I leave the entrance to
Climb the rock-strewn hill behind the cave.

Following the beaten track, criss-crossed
By footprints, I feel the urge to strike out

To walk in virgin snow, to find my own path.
And, doing so, realise that this is Jordas' answer.

My true purpose is to find my own path.
It will take many steps (not just one leap).
Sometimes with others, sometimes alone,
Each step needs judgement, truth and courage.

To mark this moment and bless my journey
I anoint my head with water from the icy stream.
It is time I stopped pretending to another's crown
It is time for me to become king in my own realm.

A third quality of my knowing is that it is deeply **embodied** in my being and doing in the world. By this I mean both that my sense-making draws upon rich veins of experiential knowing and that it directly affects my practice (as a man, friend, lover, parent, healer, policeman, writer, storyteller and educator). I think this is evident from the range and depth of my experiential inquiries and from my accounts of how my practice has changed (and is changing) in all of these fields. I try to embody the values of authenticity, integrity and joy and an ethic of care for others in my daily living. I judge myself by these standards, knowing that I often fall short in my behaviour and strive to improve my practice, driven by a sense of myself as a “living contradiction” (Whitehead 1993). This is particularly clear in *Reshaping my Professional Identity* where I present accounts of my educational practice since 1988, showing how it has developed in response to my core beliefs about people, my educational values and my understanding of a healthy educative relationship.

Fourth, my knowing is **complex** and **emergent**. I am using the word “complex” to distinguish it from “complicated.” An Atlas rocket with over five million parts is complicated – it can be disassembled into its constituent parts and reassembled into the same rocket using a linear logic, first A, then B, then C, etc. The relationship between the three astronauts depicted in the film *Apollo Thirteen* was complex – innately unpredictable, susceptible to exponentially divergent behaviour and self-created in, and by, a non-linear system. My knowledge of complexity theory is merely that of the informed lay-person but it strikes me as an important (and relatively new) metaphor for knowledge creation in the field of human inquiry. Sense-making in a complex

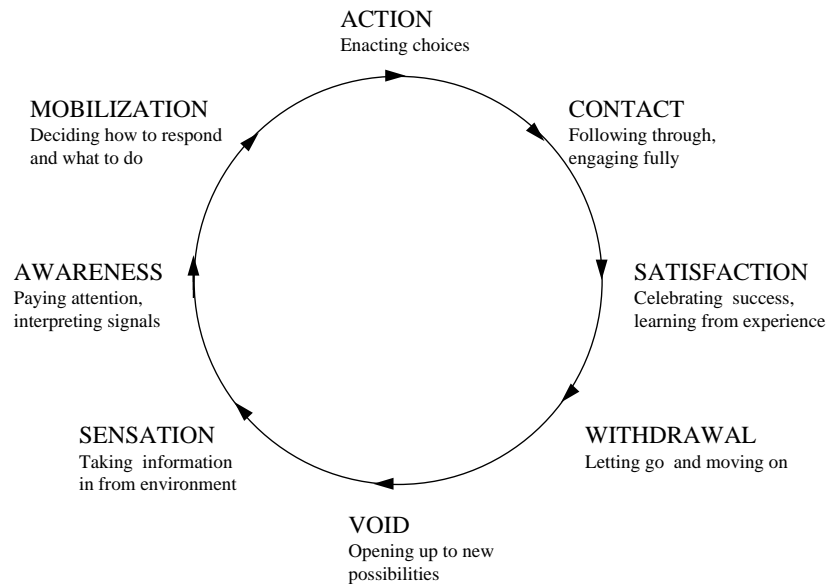
environment has less to do with controlling variables and predicting outcomes than with noticing the emergence of new patterns of meaning – watching where the arrows land rather than aiming for a target. Jon Kabat-Zinn puts it beautifully in *Wherever you go, there you are*¹⁰ when he says:

Inquiry does not mean looking for answers, especially quick answers, which come out of superficial thinking. It means asking without expecting answers, just pondering the questions, carrying the wondering with you, letting it percolate, bubble, cook, ripen, come in and out of awareness, just as everything else comes in and out of awareness. Inquiry is not so much thinking about answers, although the questioning will produce a lot of thoughts that look like answers

Fifth, and linked to the above, my knowing is also characterised by **uncertainty** and **unknowing**. I am using these words in a micro and macro sense to denote both the dissolution of old patterns of understanding to let new patterns appear and my willingness to step into the void – whether that of being buried alive at Gaunt’s House, of leaving my wife and family, of exploring the healing potential of “transformative spaces”, or of reshaping my professional identity. I am influenced here by my training in Gestalt psychology, which premises an eight phase cycle of creative adaptation to our changing environment.

This is shown in graphic form in the figure below, which first appeared in my Gestalt Diploma Paper (Mead 1995b) adapted from a version by Petruska Clarkson (Clarkson 1989). New meaning emerges during the “contact” phase, but all phases are integral to the process of knowledge creation. It is in the void of “unknowing” that new possibilities for sense-making arise.

¹⁰ Quoted in Benz, V. M. and J. J. Shapiro (1998). Mindful Inquiry in Social Research. Thousand Oaks, California, Sage. (pp38/39)



The Gestalt cycle of creative adaptation

Murray Stein, whose book *In MidLife: A Jungian Perspective* (Stein 1983) has been a frequent source of inspiration to me, uses the term “liminal space” to describe this void and offers Hermes as our archetypal guide at such times:

Liminality, Hermes’ home, occurs: when the ego is separated from a fixed sense of who it is and has been, of where it comes from and its history, of where it is going and its future; when the ego floats through ambiguous spaces in a sense of unbounded time, through a territory of unclear boundaries and uncertain edges; when it is disidentified from the inner images that have formerly sustained it and given it a sense of purpose. (p22)

My own experience as a mid-life inquirer (as I described myself in the *Prelude*), some of it presented in my stories of *living inquiry*, lends support to his statement:

At midlife a person runs into a period when the liminality that is produced by external facts such as ageing, loss of loved ones, or the failure to attain a dream of youthful ambition combines with the liminality that is generated internally by independent shifting intrapsychic structures, and the result is an intense and prolonged experience of liminality, one that often endures for years.(pp49/50)

As I approach the end of researching and writing my PhD, I feel my energy being drawn back out into the world and sense that, for the time being at least, I am leaving the liminal space of midlife behind me.

There is one further quality of my knowing, one that has pre-occupied me throughout the writing of this thesis, and that is my attempt to balance and integrate **mythos** and **logos** – two distinctly different forms of sense-making, two modes of thought which, I will argue, are reflected in the university's twin criteria for the award of a PhD: originality of mind and critical judgement. In the closing paragraphs of the *Prelude* I voice my intention to use both my creative intuition and my capacity for conscious structuring¹¹ to bring *mythos* and *logos* together in ways that keep the mythic element fresh and the logic clear. As the writing has progressed, I have kept this intention to the forefront of my mind, exploring possibilities for creative encounters between imagination and reason, determined to honour equally both forms of sense-making. This is such an important dimension of my epistemology (with such substantial implications for issues of validity) that I want to look at it quite closely.

As a starting point, let me both define and demonstrate what I mean when I use the terms *mythos* and *logos*. First a lexical definition from Gisela Labouvie-Vief whose exploration of this issue in *Psyche and Eros: Mind and Gender in the Life Course* (Labouvie-Vief 1994) has greatly enriched my understanding of how this duality might eventually be bridged:

Western intellectual tradition has brought us a separation of two aspects of mind and self. On one hand, there is the realm of *logos* – the realm of logic and objectivity, of all that can be stated in terms of rational truths, of our hope that life can be reduced to laws that are mechanical and precise. On the other hand, there is the realm of *mythos* – the realm of all that is felt and organic, of that which is private and imaginative, of all that appeals to the inner world of emotions, of our tendency to leap out of the constraints of analytical precision and to seize the novel. (p1)

¹¹ Borrowing these two phrases from the introduction to Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* Heaney, S. (1999). *Beowulf*. London, Faber and Faber. (pxi)

I will return to Labouvie-Vief shortly, but before I do so let me offer a contrasting and complementary mythic representation of these two realms with an extract from a poem by Federico Garcia Lorca¹² entitled *Home From A Walk*:

Assassinated by the sky,
between the forms that are moving toward the serpent,
and the forms that are moving toward the crystal,
I'll let my hair fall down

I first came across this poem at a workshop run by Noel Cobb in 1994 and was struck instantly by the images of the crystal and the serpent as archetypes of the fixed and the formless, of the sharp, lucid power of logic and the shadowy, sensuous mystery of the imagination. A few days later, I painted this picture of a snake encircling a piece of crystal as an attempt to bring them together.



Labouvie-Vief traces the history of this dichotomy in the Western mind from the pre-Athenian Greek myth of *Psyche and Eros* to the present day and challenges the predominantly masculine model of the “vertical mind” in which logos is privileged above mythos. Instead, she draws on Jungian notions of *animus* and *anima* to suggest the possibility of a “playful dialogue between different forms of knowing and ways of being” (Labouvie-Vief 1994). Thus:

¹² From Bly, R. (1973). *Lorca and Jiminez: Selected Poems*. Boston, Mass., Beacon Press. (p145)

The concept of an integration of logos and mythos, often personified by the image of the marriage of the masculine and the feminine...offers an important new metaphor for the mind and its development (p14)

As I read more widely, I find these ideas reflected in other fields including cognitive psychology, linguistics, philosophy, and anthropology. I refer several times in this thesis¹³ to Guy Claxton's book *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind* (Claxton 1997). He shows how the sense-making process of our conscious intelligence differs from the slow knowing of our unconscious intelligence. The former, which he also calls *d-mode*, "sees conscious articulate understanding as the essential basis for action, and thought as the essential problem-solving tool" (p7). Whilst the latter, a slower mental register, "is often less purposeful and clear-cut, more playful, leisurely or dreamy" (p2). Both, he argues, are essential and each has particular strengths but it is the cultivation of *tortoise mind* that encourages the growth of wisdom and insight. This is what I am speaking of in my email exchange with Peter Reason (in *Questions of scope*) when I refer to "just knowing" – "I do, I notice. I mull. I wait, and I 'know'" – though I do have the grace to admit that sometimes I "know" wrong and sometimes I don't "know" at all.

Another psychologist, Jerome Bruner alludes to the same dichotomy of mind in his classic article *Two modes of thought* (Bruner 1988) when he says:

There are two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality. The two (though complementary) are irreducible to one another. Efforts to reduce one mode to the other or to ignore one at the expense of the other inevitably fail to capture the rich diversity of thought. (p99)

And he gets to the heart of the implications this has for questions of validity when he paraphrases the views of contemporary American philosopher, Richard Rorty:

Perhaps Richard Rorty is right in characterizing the mainstream of Anglo-American philosophy (which, on the whole, he rejects) as preoccupied with the epistemological question of how to know truth – which he contrasts with the broader question of how we come to endow experience with meaning, which is the question that preoccupies the poet and the storyteller. (p100)

In a similar vein, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) from the field of linguistics, identify opposing “myths of objectivism and subjectivism” arguing that both have value and that neither is a sufficient explanation for the qualities of human understanding.

The fundamental concern of the myth of objectivism is the world external to the individual. The myth rightly emphasizes the fact that there are real things, existing independently of us, which constrain both how we interact with them and how we comprehend them... What legitimately motivates subjectivism is the awareness that meaning is always meaning *to* a person. What is meaningful to me is a matter of what has significance for me. And what is significant for me will not depend on my relational knowledge alone but on my past experiences. (pp226/227)

Bemoaning the either/or mentality that sees it as impossible to encompass both at once, they offer a third perspective, a possible transcendence of the duality, which they call the “experientialist myth.” They call the logic of this third position *imaginative rationality* and define it loosely in terms of its “interactional properties.” They fall short of articulating a full-blown “participative worldview” but provide a useful linguistic grounding for its subsequent development.

In their own way, all these writers identify and describe the complementary worlds of mythos and logos but the radical anthropologist Hugh Brody (Brody 2001) goes much further when he suggests a plausible explanation for the origins of these two forms of sense-making in the different lifestyles of hunter-gatherer and farming communities. The archaeological evidence seems to show conclusively that hunter-gatherer communities were the cradles of humankind and that the development of agriculture (followed by our industrial and post-industrial societies) is a relatively recent phenomenon. Brody, who has lived and worked among surviving hunter-gatherer peoples for thirty years, believes that the practice of farming required a different logic relying on new forms of sense-making:

The skills of farmers are not centred on their relationship to the world but on their ability to change it. Technical and intellectual systems are developed to achieve and maintain this as completely as possible. Farmers carry with them systems of control as well as crucial seeds and livestock. These systems constitute ways of thinking as well as bodies

¹³ See, for example, *Postcards from the Edge*

of information. The thinking makes use of analytical categories that are independent of any particular geography, and not expressive of any given set of facts. (p255)

How different this form of knowing is from that of the hunter-gatherer:

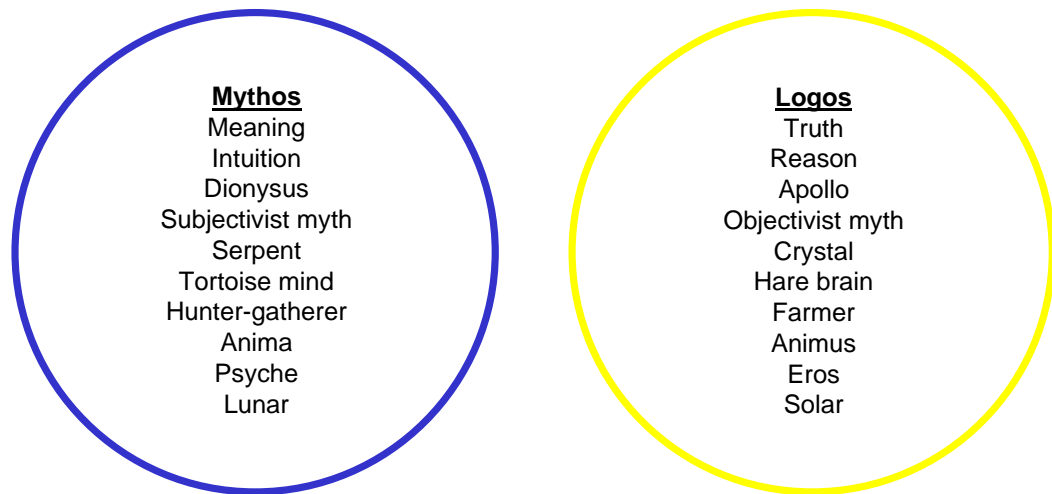
Hunter-gatherer knowledge is not dependent on absolutism or dichotomies. It is inductive and intuitive; its conclusions emerge by allowing all that has been learned to process itself. Reasoning is subliminal, and therefore has the potential to be more sophisticated, more a matter of assigning weight to factors, than can be the case with linear logic. It is a way of gaining and using knowledge that also seeks for continuity and renewal. (p269)

Even though I do not live close to the land, by temperament I am an epistemological hunter-gatherer. This way of knowing, so readily dismissed by “civilised” people, lies deep in my bones and demands expression alongside the logic and the propositions of rational argument. Brody too recognises our capacity to access both forms of sense-making:

Yet these different ways of thought are, as potential, within everyone. Human beings can reach into themselves and find two versions of life, two ways of speaking and knowing. Internally, many people are torn between these two ways. Individuals are born into one or the other society, and therefore to learn its particular skills and disposition; but nobody is born to *be* either. The potential for language, and therefore for thought itself, is a shared human characteristic. (p307)

To summarise: there is considerable support from many disciplines for the existence of two complementary categories of sense-making, which I typify as *mythos* and *logos*. I have gathered together some of the contrasting qualities of these two worlds in the diagram below. The lists are neither comprehensive nor definitive – and I am conscious that by categorising them in this way, I am following a logocentric mode. For a further imaginative exploration of these two worlds, one could not do better than to read D.H.Lawrence’s poem *Snake* and Italo Calvino’s short story *Crystal* or David Wade’s fascinating inquiry into the interaction of energy and organisation in nature and art *Crystal and Dragon: The Cosmic Two-Step*.¹⁴

¹⁴ See, respectively: Lawrence, D. H. (1972). *Selected Poems of D.H.Lawrence*. London, Penguin. Wade, D. (1991). *Crystal and Dragon: The Cosmic Two-step*. Bideford, Devon, Green Books.



Some contrasting qualities of mythos and logos

Maybe it is possible to synthesise these into a third form of knowing. Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) suggest that it can be done through the “experientialist myth” and I think that “relational” and “participatory” knowing are also groping towards this possibility. In my *living inquiry* I embrace both these forms of sense-making and wonder if, perhaps, they come together when the gate is unlatched and we pass between worlds: in those “aha” moments that unlock old patterns of understanding and behaviour and open up new meanings and thus new possibilities for choice and action.

Complexity theory suggests that autopoiesis, self-generated creativity, occurs at the boundary between order and chaos. Mythology offers Hermes as the messenger between Psyche and Eros. As an action researcher, I can explicate my embodied knowledge through narratives of inquiry and practice. At the very least, it seems to me that an inevitable challenge for those of us working in the field of human inquiry is to find ways of doing justice to all our ways of knowing - and to offer distinctive standards of judgement and criteria of validity to substantiate our claims to knowledge and meaning.

Questions of validity

As I turn to address these issues, I can hear a clamour of conflicting questions from Jack Whitehead, Peter Reason and Judi Marshall, my tutors at CARPP “What are the values

Calvino, I. (1993). Time and the Hunter. London, Picador.

that underpin your living inquiry? asks Jack. “How do you determine and define rigour and discipline?” says Peter. “Can you articulate the qualities and practices of your inquiry process?” queries Judi. “Wait a while,” I reply. “These are good questions and I will return to them ¹⁵ but if I am to be congruent with what I have said about the need to offer distinctive standards of judgement and criteria of validity then I must first explain them in my own terms.”

I think of *living inquiry* as creating the form of my life. By “form” I mean the shape, colour and texture of my life. Striving for “good form” means striving for congruence between the substance of my life (my sense of purpose, identity and ethical values) and its appearance (my actual behaviour, my being and doing in the world). In this sense, living life as inquiry also means living “artfully” with an aesthetic appreciation of quality and fitness for purpose. This metaphor also allows me to look critically at my life, not to find fault but as an art critic might, to deepen and enrich my understanding. From this perspective, I claim the following attributes for my *living inquiry*.

Breadth and Depth: The former is evident in the many roles and parts I play in my life; son, lover, father, friend, storyteller, healer, policeman, educator, consultant, researcher, writer, artist, poet, traveller, homemaker, cook, sailor and Morgan sports car enthusiast! My interests are wide-ranging and I have consciously inquired into many aspects of my life. Honouring this diversity is important to me and I was not prepared to take the easier route of focusing this PhD on a single area. In terms of the latter, researching and writing this thesis over the past five years, I have deepened my inquiries considerably in some areas: in menswork, storytelling and leadership development, for example.

Duration: I have sustained my inquiries over time. Now fifty-one, I have been consciously living my life as inquiry since my mid-thirties. I marvel at my longevity (my father died at twenty-eight) and middle age is bringing me the opportunity to follow the tracks of some of my inquiries over many years. The four major strands of inquiry in this thesis are still significant aspects of my life. I am working with a small group of men researching positive masculine role models for leadership. My children have returned to the centre of my life (particularly Tom, whose recently diagnosed disability makes my loving attention even more important). I am collaborating with a woman friend, Jules to run a “Healing Journeys” storytelling workshop in September. And I am currently

¹⁵ And do so in *Chapter Six: Living Inquiry (Reprise)*

preparing the material to train and supervise the facilitators of nine Action Inquiry Groups for the Public Service Leaders Scheme. In all these areas, my energy is moving out to engage collaboratively with others.

If these attributes, breadth, depth and duration might be said to represent the “extent” of the work of my *living inquiry* then perhaps the following attributes might be said to represent its “merit.”

Experiential Grounding: As an integral part of my being in the world, my *living inquiry* is firmly anchored in the bedrock of my experience. This goes much further than being a “reflective practitioner.” I have actively sought new experiences and pushed my boundaries considerably in doing so, whether it be ritual menswork, separation and divorce, storytelling performances, or creating and delivering large-scale educational programmes for the police and other public services. In Gestalt terms, I have enriched the “field,” the ground from which new figures (*gestalten*) emerge. Without such experiential grounding, I believe that action research remains as speculative and “theoretical” as its reductionist cousins. A life well-lived will be rich in experience and, with reflection, as Dewey¹⁶ tells us, rich in experiences too. For it is reflection that differentiates the continuous flow of experience, identifying and giving coherence to what is significant.

Passion and Reason: I find that my *living inquiry* flourishes when open to both the zest of passion and the guiding hand of reason. If you will allow me, a favourite quote from Kahlil Gibran:¹⁷

Your reason and your passion are the rudder and sails of your seafaring soul. If either your sails or rudder be broken, you can but drift, or else be held at standstill in mid-seas. For reason, ruling alone, is a force confining; and passion, unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction. Therefore let your soul exalt your reason to the height of passion, that it may sing; And let it direct your passion with reason, that your passion may live through its own daily resurrection, and like the phoenix rise above its own ashes.

¹⁶ Dewey, J. (1958). *Art as Experience*. New York, Capricorn Books.

¹⁷ Gibran, K. (1926). *The Prophet*. New York, Alfred A Knopf.

John Heron might refer to these two modes of inquiry as Apollonian and Dionysian. I think we would agree that both have potential merit and that the limitations of each become apparent in the absence of the other. What I am concerned about here though, is simply to make it clear that, in living my life as inquiry, I embrace both my passion and my reason.

Courage: Living and inquiring are risky enterprises requiring moral and, occasionally, physical courage. There is the constant risk of loss of the comfortable and the familiar as our *living inquiry* challenges and transforms the questions we live by, forcing us to “unlearn” the old in order to move into new ways of being and doing. It takes courage for me to push my experiential boundaries, and to put so much of myself into the public domain in this thesis. It even takes courage to write like this, addressing you from my centred “I” for, as you judge this work, you are judging me too.

Living life as inquiry means being willing, on occasion, to “feel the fear and do it anyway,” to step forward when you would rather hang back or to “stand in the fire” when you would rather run away. Peter Reason speaks somewhere about the need

for magnanimity, greatness of soul, and I think that courage is an element of this.

Change and Transformation: I think of change as differences in outward form (doing different things) and transformation as an inward shift in our being (doing things differently). Both are essential attributes of *living inquiry*. The narratives of inquiry and practice in this thesis reveal some of the significant changes and transformations in my life. The writing of this thesis itself has been an initiatory process, an opportunity to discover the project of the rest of my life – and a timely one too, as I prepare to leave the police service next year, to earn my living as a consultant, writer, storyteller and educator. My personal and professional identity has been reshaped during this period. I have learned to love myself and thereby love others. I am becoming an elder, am healing the split between animus and anima in my self. I am learning the transformatory power of storytelling and I increasingly see myself as an educator whose purpose in life is to help people “unlatch the gate” for themselves.

Self-generated Creativity: Coupled with change and transformation, is the question of claiming our own originality. *Living inquiry* is an innately creative process, drawing upon the gift of imagination and teaching us to value our unique creativity. At the highest level, my self-generated creativity is expressed in the evolving “form” of my life and, within that, through individual and shared acts of creation – from parenting to painting and poetry. It also means not just resisting the “crippling mutilations of objectivist thought,” but also claiming the right (within bounds) to live the life I choose. I recognise that is an extravagant claim but I exaggerate to make the point that we can too easily allow convention to become a straitjacket thereby denying our existential responsibility for our own lives and blaming others for the limits we place on ourselves.

As I say this, I can hear Jack Whitehead laughing gently at my frequent protestations that “I am not doing another bloody living educational theory PhD” whilst simultaneously soaking up his ideas and influence. Yes, you could frame my *living inquiry* in those terms – but I need to forge my own thesis on the anvil of my own lived experience.

Reflection and reflexivity: Socrates, on trial for his life before the court at Athens, declared (according to Plato) that “the life which is unexamined is not worth living.” *Living inquiry* both demands and generates a substantial degree of self-awareness. Some of this comes from interaction with others, words spoken in love, puzzlement or anger;

comments from co-inquirers; insights from therapy; and some from solitary reflection on experience. I have sought to extend my awareness of “the ground upon which I am standing” and to bring that reflexivity into my research and writing. To the extent that I know them, I have laid bare my biases for your perusal. I imagine that reading this thesis from your own perspective, some of my “blind spots” will also be apparent to you and I welcome your constructive feedback. Sometimes I wish that I could translate more of my contemplative self-awareness into what Bill Torbert calls “consciousness in the midst of action” (Torbert 2000) though, paradoxically, I spent years in Gestalt therapy “losing my mind and coming to my senses” in order to develop a more spontaneous and less self-conscious way of being.

Relatability: I am using this word in a similar way to Michael Bassey (Bassey 1995) who uses the term *relating* to indicate that although situations may differ, the research findings resulting from the study of a singularity may still be of interest to others if there are sufficient similarities for the situations to be related to each other. He contrasts this with *generalising* which assumes that situations are so similar that research findings can be directly transferred and applied by another. I argue in the *Introduction* and in *Healing Journeys* that it is the personal and the particular – not abstract generalisations – which enable us to relate to each other and to connect with the universal. Mine is a passionate and personal text that makes no claim to speak for another - yet I believe that it does speak to the human condition. I think there are times too when my stories connect with archetypal themes – as in *The man who lived as a king*¹⁸ – and assume “mythic resonance”.

Textual Quality: Writerly conceit demands a well-written thesis. As I say in the *Prelude*, my aim is to create a text that is interesting and enjoyable. I strive for an open and accessible style in which my meanings are clear and the images rich and evocative. If you find the text difficult or dull to read then I will have failed. I agree with author Barbara Tuchman¹⁹ that “The writer’s object is – or should be – to hold the reader’s attention...” and like her “I want the reader to turn the page and keep turning to the end.” In seeking to convey aesthetic, emotional and spiritual dimensions of meaning I have not confined myself to conventional (academic) prose. Thus assessing textual quality must

¹⁸ See *Healing Journeys*

also include a judgement about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the many “alternative forms of representation” (Eisner 1993; Eisner 1997) – drawing and painting, photography, sculpture, poetry, creative “freefall” writing and the spoken word – that are also integral to the text.

Epistemological Balance: This quality is demonstrated by the extent to which my different ways of knowing are acknowledged and represented in the text. In particular, I am concerned to redress the conventional academic imbalance between (undervalued) *mytho-centric* and (valorised) *logo-centric* forms of sense-making. I declare myself to be an “epistemological hunter-gatherer” by temperament but strive to integrate and synthesise *mythos* and *logos*, seeking to create transformative spaces in which we can “unlatch the gate” to unlock old patterns of understanding and behaviour and open up new meanings and possibilities for choice and action. As I say in the *Prelude*, it demands “a combination of creative intuition and conscious structuring” to keep the mythic elements of the thesis fresh and the logic clear.

Critical Judgement: Whilst originality of mind is an obvious dimension of several of these attributes, the quality of critical judgement demands further consideration. The application of critical judgement is implicit in the “conscious structuring” of the text and embodied in the choices I have made in many aspects of my *living inquiry* – particularly in developing my practice as an educator. However, as the author of a PhD thesis I need make this explicit by using these very attributes as standards of judgement to critically evaluate my own text. I do this by adding a critical commentary to each of the four narratives of inquiry: *The Men’s Room*, *Postcards from the Edge*, *Healing Journeys*, and *Reshaping my Professional Identity*.

There is much more that could be said here about validity. It seems to be an obsession amongst action researchers: a “fertile obsession” (Lather 1994) for some, a “futile obsession” for others.²⁰ I am unapologetic about my claims for the legitimacy of *living inquiry* in the academy and have offered my own standards of judgement and practice, not as definitive canons of validity but as exemplifying the qualities and practices of my

¹⁹ Barbara Tuchman, *New York Times*, February 2, 1989. Quoted in Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of Inquiry. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, Sage: 516-529.

²⁰ See, for example, Judith Newman’s challenge to the whole notion of validity in action research in Newman, J. M. (1999). *Validity and Action Research: An Online Conversation*.

inquiry process. These standards are embodied in the narratives of *living inquiry* running through the whole of this thesis. They have evolved over many years, are partial rather than comprehensive, and provisional as opposed to definitive. They are ontological and epistemological standards that guide my living and inquiring self.

Let me settle for these attributes. There may be more ²¹ but twelve is enough to be going on with. These are the attributes I am choosing to claim for my *living inquiry*. When framed as questions (i.e. to what extent are these attributes actually present in how I live my life as inquiry) they can also be considered as standards of judgement and criteria of validity to substantiate my claims to knowledge and meaning. There are others but I think these probably constitute the distinctive standards and criteria for my *scholarship of living inquiry*.

Questions of method and position

As I begin to draw this chapter to a close, I am conscious that I have yet to “position” my *living inquiry* in relation to the wider fields of Action Research and Human Inquiry. I see this as an important aspect of reflexivity, being aware of the ground upon which I stand as a researcher. I shall attempt to articulate my contribution to an emerging scholarship of inquiry by acknowledging some intellectual debts and claiming originality for some features of *living inquiry*, rather than by means of a comprehensive literature review.

Perhaps the first thing to say is that I find the whole idea of “having a position” quite problematic. I recall a slightly surreal conversation on this subject with a fellow delegate at an academic conference on *Gendering Management Learning* at Manchester University last year (2000):

“What is your position?” he queried.

“I’m sorry, I don’t understand what you mean,” I replied.

“Well,” he said, with some asperity. “I’m a pro-feminist, post-structuralist. Don’t you have a position?”

“No,” I said. “I don’t think so.”

“Do you think you might have one when you have finished your PhD?” was his tart response.

“I hope not,” I shrugged and turned away.

I was surprised by how important it seemed to my interlocutor to be able to claim membership of a particular and clearly labelled academic “club” and I admit that my responses were somewhat teasing if not downright disingenuous. Now, as I face the prospect of submitting my thesis to the academic judgement of internal and external examiners who may not accept my frames of reference, I am more sympathetic.

However, I still think that identifying oneself so closely with a narrow philosophical or methodological school of research is unhealthy and self-limiting for any scholar. In contrast, my work is characterised by philosophical inclusivity and methodological promiscuity. Let me expand these points as I seek, not to establish a single fixed position for my *living inquiry*, but to acknowledge a variety of affiliations and influences.

First: I lay claim to the appellation “research” using Lawrence Stenhouse’s meaning of “systematic inquiry made public”(Stenhouse 1980). Although, as I said elsewhere in the text, it can take many years for the underlying systemic patterns of my *living inquiry* to become apparent. I embrace both Apollonian organisation and Dionysian energy though, as I describe in the *Prelude*, I have come to adopt the metaphor of Eleusinian inquiry (based on the myth of Demeter and Persephone) to connote its slow cyclical processes and alternating seasons of visible growth and subterranean hibernation (Otto 1955).

Second: My *living inquiry* is a form of action research. Not in any narrow technical sense of the term but within the broad definition that Jack Whitehead offered, during a supervision session in February 1998: “making sense of your present practice through an evaluation of past learning with the intention to create something better than exists at the moment”. I have seen many other definitions and frameworks to describe action research but none that expresses its essence so pithily. I am an action-researcher too, because I am a practitioner-researcher, equally committed to developing understanding and improving

²¹ For example, see *The space between* for a discussion of “ironic validity” which though relevant, I do not consider to be a distinctive attribute of my *living inquiry*.

practice. I am not interested in (nor convinced by) research about people that purports to be objective or detached.

At the *viva voce* examination on 22nd March 2002, my examiners asked me to make it quite clear to the reader that the thesis itself enacts a form of Action Research. As described in the *Introduction*, writing about my inquiries involved a sustained and rigorous process of action and reflection through which each chapter of the text was subjected to my own and others' appreciative engagement and critical judgement.

After this period of learning through the writing, came a subsequent phase of learning from the writing (described in *Interlude I*) as I engaged in a three-month long correspondence with my supervisor Jack Whitehead and other CARPP colleagues about the draft, which resulted in a re-ordering of the thesis, the addition of critical commentaries to each of the narrative chapters, and a deeper and more precise understanding of the nature and significance of the contribution it makes to an emerging scholarship of inquiry.

The final phase has been one of learning through the process of preparing for and undergoing *viva voce* examination by Donna Ladkin and Professor Helen Simons, during which I have learned to articulate and defend my thesis in terms of appropriate standards of rigour and its contribution to knowledge.

Third: Picking up this point, my *living inquiry* is clearly situated within the wider field of Human Inquiry. I like this term and the meaning that Peter Reason gives it (Reason and Rowan 1981) as “about people exploring and making sense of human actions and experience”. I am also happy to acknowledge the influence of its ethos of “doing research with people, not on people” on my own research practice, whether it be inquiring “with myself” or “with others”. Human Inquiry too, promotes a fundamentally inclusive and participative view of action research. It is a broad church that encourages dialogue between different methodological approaches and welcomes a multitude of techniques, forms of sense-making, and ways of knowing.

Fourth: As a form of research, my *living inquiry* constitutes the study of a “singularity”. Sometimes I inquire with others, and I showed in *Questions of scope* how I traverse first-, second-, and third-person research, but this thesis is essentially an account of my own learning. I am neither a case study nor a sample of one. I make no claims to inductive

generalisations. There are no average people and I cannot reduce my learning to probabilities or otherwise transfer it to you, though perhaps my stories of *living inquiry* may resonate with and support your own “will to meaning”. I think this is very close to what Michael Bassey has to say about studying a singularity:

A singularity is a set of anecdotes about particular events occurring within a stated boundary, which are subjected to systematic and critical search for some truth. This truth, while pertaining to the inside of the boundary, may stimulate thinking about similar situations elsewhere (Bassey 1995, p111).

As a storyteller too, I have learned that the universal wisdom of stories lies in the power of the particular and in our ability to empathise and identify with “other”.

Fifth: Since Thomas Kuhn popularised the notion of scientific paradigms in the 1960’s (Kuhn 1962), it has become fashionable to speculate about the possibility of a new worldview, even a “new age”. As traditional positivist scholarship has come under attack, research practices have multiplied and fragmented to the point where scholarly discourse has, all too often, been “balkanized” (Donmoyer 1996) into separate and competing camps unwilling to acknowledge the value and validity of any approach other than their own. I hope that my *living inquiry* avoids the worst of these excesses, though I would be naïve to claim that it is entirely non-paradigmatic, having already “nailed my epistemological colours to the participative mast”. I do not want to reify *living inquiry* as yet another school or method of research – I assume that we each have our own forms of living inquiry and I have no desire to establish mine as any kind of orthodoxy.

Sixth: Methodological promiscuity does not mean doing sloppy research. Rather, it means that I draw on many different approaches without wedding myself to any of them. Thus, in my narratives of *living inquiry*, you will see that I have adopted (and adapted) ideas²² from, amongst others, action inquiry (Torbert 1991), co-operative inquiry (Reason and Rowan 1981; Reason 1988; Reason 1994; Heron 1996), narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000), naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba 1985), mindful inquiry (Benz and Shapiro 1998), living educational theory (Whitehead 1993), and living life as inquiry

²² See *Chapter Six: Living Inquiry (Reprise)* for a more detailed discussion of ways in which I both draw upon and push at the edges of these approaches to realise my own *scholarship of living inquiry*

(Marshall 1999; Marshall 2000), as well as creating original forms through storytelling and “transformative spaces”.

There is also a serious methodological point about refusing to be constrained or confined by particular research methods which I was delighted to find articulated in Paul Feyerabend’s provocative polemic *Against Method* (Feyerabend 1975). Arguing for a pluralistic and counterinductive approach to science as a practical necessity, he says:

There is only one principle that can be defended under *all* circumstances in all stages of human development. It is the principle *anything goes*. (pp18/19)

I invite you to judge my *living inquiry*, not in terms of my adherence to any particular method, but by the unique constellation of qualities and practices that together constitute my inquiry process.

Seventh, and finally: I claim that this thesis contributes to an emerging scholarship of inquiry. In doing so, I am building on the ideas of two distinguished scholars, Donald Schon and Ernest Boyer. In a paper written towards the end of his life, Schon (Schon 1995) considers the “new forms of scholarship” presented by Boyer in his *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer 1990) and argues that:

... if the new scholarship is to mean anything, it must imply a kind of action research with norms of its own, which will conflict with the norms of technical rationality – the prevailing epistemology built into the research universities (p27)

He describes three new forms of scholarship envisaged by Boyer in addition to basic research, which he labels the *scholarship of discovery*.

- The *scholarship of integration* – putting isolated facts into perspective, making connections across disciplines
- The *scholarship of application* – applying knowledge responsibly to consequential problems
- The *scholarship of teaching* – transmitting, transforming and extending knowledge

To these, I would add another – the *scholarship of inquiry*, in which the focus is on living the questions rather than seeking answers. My *living inquiry* contributes to this form of scholarship through my openness to experience, creative and imaginative forms of representation, appropriate and well-grounded theorising, and action to improve my personal and professional practice.

My originality of mind has enabled me to bring living and inquiring together as an integrated practice and to synthesise *mythos* and *logos* as forms of sense-making and aspects of my being.

My critical judgement has enabled me to engage critically with my own experience, with narratives of my inquiries and with the ideas of others to create and apply my own distinctive standards of judgement and practice to substantiate my claims to knowledge and meaning as I live my life of inquiry.

Furthermore, I have committed myself to *living inquiry* as a lifetime practice within which I have, for the past fifteen years or so, explored questions such as; How can I live well as a man in the world? How can I enter more fully into loving relationships? How can I find healing for body and soul? How can I exercise my (educative) influence for good?

These are eternal questions to which there are no ready answers and ones, I venture to suggest, worthy of a life lived as inquiry.