

**Applied Theatre and the Promotion of Spiritual Wellbeing: A Critical
Examination of Ten Years of Creative Practice with Young People
(2004-2014)**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of
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Abstract

The thesis introduces a new vocabulary to the field of applied theatre in order to better articulate the relationship between applied theatre as a creative practice and young people's spiritual wellbeing. It presents findings from a critical examination of a decade of professional applied theatre and creative practice with young people (2004-2014). This ten-year period of work is analysed by means of a 'reflective practice' methodology, and in particular, a new method to reflective writing, focused on the exchange of letters, developed for this specific research project. Through my research I identify and describe how an applied theatre ethos manifested itself in my own practice in order to promote and support young people's spiritual wellbeing. I use Viktor Frankl's logotherapy as a critical framework for exploring the concept of spiritual wellbeing and as a lens through which to analyse the research findings. A period of reflective writing practice undertaken as part of the study – comprising a number of creative writing processes including journaling, writing imaginary letters to and from Viktor Frankl and blogging - clarified a focus on 'applied theatre ethos' and 'spiritual wellbeing' as key concepts providing the foundations of my research. I argue that both terms are under-explored and under-theorised within the field of applied theatre and creative practice with young people more broadly. In response, I designed and undertook a process of exploring these key concepts in 'negotiation,' examining how they appear and are intimated in applied theatre, creative research, and across a collection of letters exchanged between myself and staff, practitioners, and young people with whom I worked closely between 2004 and 2014. This method placed key people involved in the practice, and my relationship with them, at the core of the meaning-making process.

This thesis is made up of a portfolio of work comprising: an introductory chapter; a literature review focusing on creative practice with young people, young people's wellbeing, and logotherapy; and a research article in which I first introduce and work with one of Frankl's key terms – the 'noetic' – and describe a bounded research project exploring logotherapy with a range of actors. These are followed by a presentation of the thesis research project that emerged from the earlier period of professional work, including a methodology chapter focusing on reflective writing and two core chapters analysing the negotiated meanings arising from the letter-writing exchanges which, taken together, articulate the concepts of an ethos of care and spiritual wellbeing that I argue are important to understanding the relational value of applied theatre and creative practice with young people. The first chapter looks at applied theatre practice as a practice of care, and the second explores a creative initiative with young people, drawing on Viktor Frankl's logotherapy philosophy as both a language and a set of principles, and as a practice concerned with spiritual wellbeing. The concluding chapter looks at the implications of my findings for research and for practice in applied theatre and creative work with young people.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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In order to be able to sustain a seven-year commitment to intensive study during adult life you need a truly formidable network of family, friends and colleagues. That is precisely what has enabled the production of this thesis. I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Dr Jenny Hughes for such considered support and for her ability to engender enthusiasm for all aspects of the research process. I have also benefited greatly from the insight of Professor James Thompson as a co-supervisor and Dr Alison Jeffers as my post-graduate advisor. My research journey has been further enriched through interaction with fellow Professional Doctorate candidates and University of Manchester staff at bi-annual residentials and conferences. I thank all of those colleagues and young people who have participated so generously in the research projects detailed in the thesis. Thank you to my circle of friends near and far who have regularly asked about progress and encouraged me to keep going. I would also like to thank my in-laws for their unwavering support and their invaluable help with childcare on a regular basis. My partner, Tom, has supported in a multitude of ways throughout the seven years and our son and second baby (due within days of submission of this thesis) have provided both another layer of challenge and the best possible incentive to complete the research project. Finally I am doubtlessly indebted to my parents for encouraging a deep love of learning from an early age and for supporting me wholeheartedly in this endeavour. This thesis is dedicated to my father whose love for knowledge, debate and action has inspired me for life.

The Author

In 1998 I was awarded Bachelor of Arts in Film TV, Literature and Theatre Studies from the University College of Ripon and York St. John. In 2000 I went onto study for a Masters degree in Theatre Directing at Goldsmiths College, London alongside work supporting young people's theatre groups at The Half Moon Young People's Theatre. My first full-time professional post brought me back to Yorkshire; as Community Director at Interplay Theatre I worked with the Artistic Director to create multi-sensory touring productions and established a range of alternative curriculum programmes for young people excluded from mainstream education which complimented and interacted with Interplay's professional work. From 2004 to 2012 I was part of the team that established and developed Creative Partnerships across the region; as Creative Programmer in Bradford and subsequently as the Director of the West Yorkshire programme. As the Founding Director of Orangebox Young People's Centre (2012-2014), I worked with young people and vulnerable young adults to form effective, inclusive governance and management structures, and to launch the centre. In our first two years we ran a Unitas Summer Arts College programme with Calderdale's Youth Offending Team, 4 theatre performances, 2 music festivals, 2 enterprise competitions, a silent rave, an open evening, a dance show in the skate park, a digital dance event involving a live-link to Paris, 2 club nights, a rooftop firework display, and the launch of the Piece Hall Trust.

I am a former board member and Chair of the Arts Development committee at The West Yorkshire Playhouse (2010-2013), Chair of Chol Theatre (2008-2012), Governor at Guiseley Secondary School (2007-2011), Trustee for the Manav Kalyan supporting a special school in Gujarat, India (2006-2012) and member of the organising committee for The Society for Theatre Research New Researchers Network (2015-2017). I am currently self-employed working with a range of arts companies across the North of England.

Chapter 1. Context and Defining Terms

This thesis focuses on UK creative education practice with young people in formal and informal education settings and is aimed at an applied theatre audience interested in these contexts. The research questions how creative practice operating from an ethos of applied theatre can promote young people's spiritual wellbeing and claims that spiritual wellbeing is missing from applied theatre discourse. Viktor Frankl's logotherapy is a key source used in the thesis to open up an exploration of applied theatre and spiritual wellbeing. Frankl views the will to meaning as representative of the spiritual dimension and the human spirit.¹ For Frankl people are not defined by their physical dimension, their psychological dimension or even a combination of both but fundamentally by their spiritual (noetic) dimension. The noetic dimension contains freedom of choice, intentionality or decision of the will, conscience, inspiration, the capacity to be awed, artistic and creative interests and the understanding of values and love. This dimension contains the core of our humanity.² Frankl's emphasis on meaning making in relation to spiritual wellbeing opens up space for a direct relationship to theatre practice.

The argument that is presented here has been developed through a critical examination of 10 years of my own practice (2004-2014), with this practice constituting the core material or 'data' that, with appropriate theoretical underpinning, provides the foundational evidence for the thesis. It aims to introduce a new vocabulary to the field of applied theatre in order to better articulate the relationship between applied theatre as a creative practice and young people's wellbeing.³ My starting point is a supposition that many forms of applied theatre and creative practice can be seen as practices of care that address young people's spiritual wellbeing, and over the course of the thesis the reader will be introduced to the idea of theatre as a 'life practice' underpinned by concepts of the noetic and the non-autonomous self. This introductory chapter outlines my career narrative in more detail and looks at the policy and wider political context in which this narrative unfolded. The aim here is to provide a foundation for the thesis by scoping out the relationship between cultural practice, neoliberal ideology, and spirituality, the key conceptual orientation points for my research.

In the midst of working on Creative Partnerships⁴ (2004 to 2012 in Bradford and then across West Yorkshire in the North of England), the world's best funded creative

¹ V. E. Frankl, *The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of Logotherapy*, New York, Meridian, 1988, p.124

² A.V Graber, *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy: Method of choice in ecumenical pastoral psychology*. Ohio, Windham Hall, 2004, p.44-45

³ Throughout the thesis I am using the unhyphenated formulation of wellbeing but when citing others it appears how it is presented in the source.

⁴ Creative Partnerships (CP) was New Labour's government's flagship creative learning programme established in 2002 to develop young people's creativity across England. It is

education programme to-date, I found myself fighting a losing battle to re-focus the creativity agenda on life fulfilment, enrichment, and wellbeing and away from economic, standards, skills, and capacities agendas. I did not seem to have the vocabulary to articulate what I saw as an imperative for activities that create meaning and value in a world of rationalized violence, exploitation, and marginalisation and I started to search for a more effective form of professional practice through which to support young people's wellbeing. In 2012 I became the Director of Orangebox, a new Young People's Centre with outstanding artistic facilities based in Halifax in the North of England, a post in which I felt I could better support young people's wellbeing directly. Instead I found myself embroiled in dysfunctional partnership arrangements and subject to deeply unrealistic income generation targets. Two years later, I left to work freelance and complete my PhD research project. As such my research became focused on an endeavour to re-frame a decade of my professional practice, to find ways of freeing the wellbeing agenda from the increasingly reductive and limiting ways in which it was becoming conceptualised and managed. The impetus for undertaking the research project was a sense of building frustration with, and a set of questions stimulated by, my professional experiences. These frustrations in essence related to the way in which I felt a neoliberal education and wellbeing agenda were clashing with my own aims as a practitioner: researching and practicing in the broad field of creative cultural practices, with a strong core of theatre practice and training; and interested in the meaning and value of that experience as it exists beyond the instrumental (third way) and economic (neoliberal) cultural policy continuum that I was working in during this time frame (a more detailed examination of these policies follows on pages 11-23). This brought me, over the course of the research, to a definition of 'spiritual well-being' that is presented in this thesis. But I want to start by sharing two extracts from a reflective journal sustained throughout the research period. My aim here is to unpick the career, cultural, and economic policy framework for the investigation:

Extract 1:

[In the Creative Partnerships context] playful practices took the shape of whole school experiments and experiences often involving the wider community of the school including catering and caretaking staff. For example, an entire staff team of a Bradford primary school was involved with a series of elaborately scripted tricks

estimated that the programme worked with more than one million children and 90,000 teachers in more than 8,000 projects across over 5,000 schools in England between 2002 and 2011. CP is to date the biggest creative education programme to have been funded by a government anywhere in the world. <http://creative-partnerships.com/about-creative-partnerships/> (Accessed 03 August 2018).

which the pupils would experience when the artists came to school. Initially the children had been involved in recruiting the artists with whom they would work over a three year period. They selected a poet, a theatre writer, and a local radio company and as such no doubt expected to be doing something along the lines of poetry and scriptwriting for broadcast in their first sessions. Instead they arrived at their classroom to find that their teacher had disappeared and the key to the room had been lost. On visiting other classrooms to enquire about the key and their teacher the children came across unusual responses from staff such as “I’m sorry, please don’t disturb us; we are busy preparing for X Factor auditions this afternoon” and eventually found their classroom key (planted) in a jar of jam in the school kitchen. On another occasion they arrived at class to find all of the furniture missing. These ‘tricks’ were designed by staff and artists to develop team working, divergent thinking, and reflective capacities over the course of a number of academic years. The introduction of a standardised planning and evaluation framework seemed to quash these playful, whole school endeavours because they were more difficult to justify in terms of the standards agenda with which the school needed to align. Ironically, when the class mentioned in the example above got to taking their Year 6 SATS test⁵ they exceeded all expectations and achieved the best English and Maths results within both the city of Bradford and the local authority district. The head teacher, however, had only ever entered into the programme because she was concerned about developing pupil creativity. It had never been envisaged as a strategy to impact directly on SATS and in the end it is always difficult to single out the exact factors that bring about good exam results. In the early stages of Creative Partnerships it felt possible to explore diverse approaches to creativity. Artists, teachers and pupils came together to: re-think what a school was for and how it could be; to plan lessons around narratives such as a lost key and the disappearance of all furniture; to collapse the curriculum for a day so that the whole school could play their own reality game unfolding across the city; and to establish secret studios and other creative experiences for school staff. Gradually these approaches were overtaken by efforts to standardise creativity as we sought to align ourselves with shifts in education policy. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) were commissioned to look at the impact on young people’s attainment⁶; a national evaluation methodology, framework, and database was established; and a local obsession with implementing quality assurance processes took root. Perhaps this was all

⁵ Standard Assessment Tests, a formal process used to evaluate children’s educational progress in English Maths and Science at the end of Year 6, the final year of primary education in England.

⁶ <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/CPS03> (Accessed 29 March 2017).

inevitable given that CP was born out of major political economic concerns about the nation's ability to creatively compete on an international scale? (Researcher's reflective journal 2014)

Extract 2:

[In the Orangebox context] these playful practices took the form of holding the multiple spaces open to young people's interpretation. On one of our first evenings of offering up the building to young people I watched an elaborate role play of the Jeremy Kyle show⁷ unfold in the huge atrium space at the heart of the building.



Image 1: Inside Orangebox

⁷ The Jeremy Kyle show is a controversial British talk show presented by Jeremy Kyle, broadcast since 2005. The show features live confrontations between families and lovers and attempts to solve their complex issues in real-time.

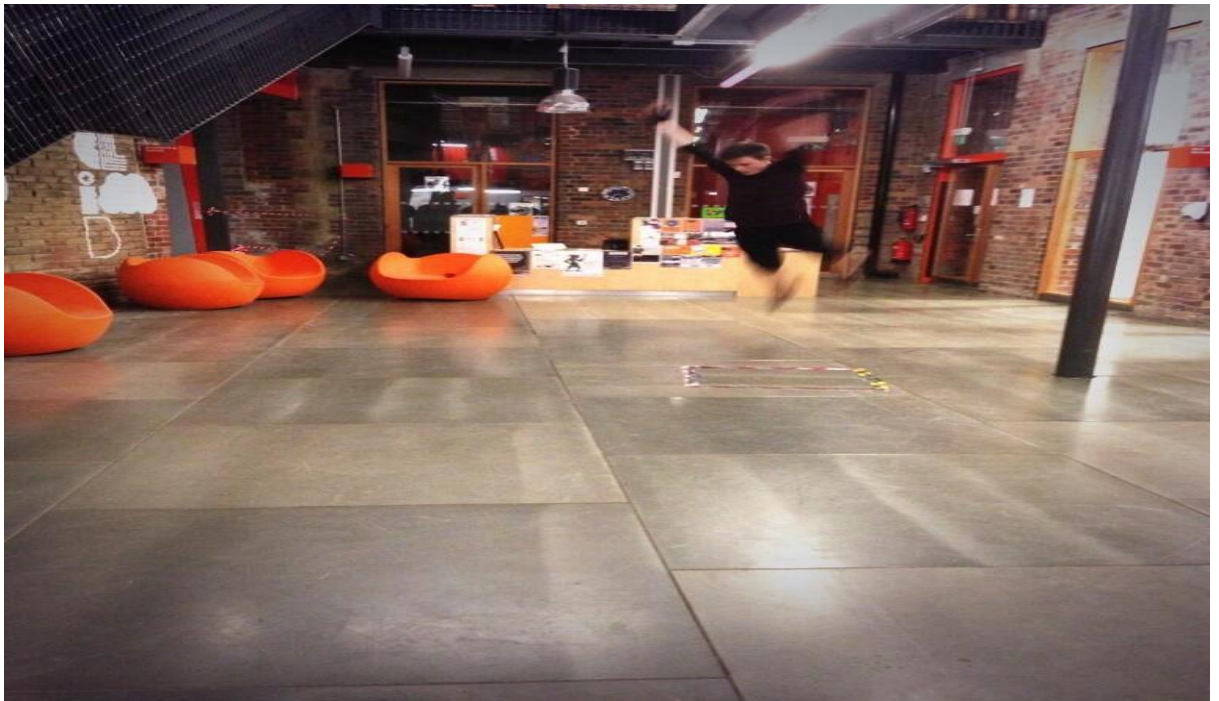


Image 2: The Orangebox atrium

Young people were taking it in turn to play Jeremy, making grand entrances round the balconies and down the staircase into the atrium speaking into a wireless microphone whilst a 'studio audience' gathered. From time to time the skateboarders would venture down from the rooftop skate park to get a drink and watch with amusement at what was taking place. On a performance level this was a powerful happening as it saw young people from the socioeconomic group regularly demonised by the Jeremy Kyle show satirising the programme, its host, and his deeply insensitive approach to intervening in people's lives. Another evening saw a group of young people playing for a long time with a collection of cardboard boxes in a scene that would be more commonly associated with the early years⁸ rather than teenagers and young adults. I really wanted to find a working practice that would hold these spaces open for young people to continue to respond creatively and playfully to the building, to constantly redefine what the spaces could be used for and for that to determine how we developed as a centre. I wanted their activities to be read and understood as forms or expressions of learning, of development, of legitimate youth work, of education and wellbeing. However, other adults (primarily members of the steering group, staff from the local authority youth service and the Arts Centre managing the project on behalf of the consortium) looking in on these early developments did not think that it looked sufficiently productive and wanted structured activities to be programmed and for

⁸ Early Years is a British term referring to the first 0-5 years of a child's development

us to apply for funding that tied us to delivering a set of prescribed outcomes and outputs as soon as possible. Those looking in interpreted what I saw as healthy creative behaviours--play, dreaming, and resting--as a lack of productivity and insufficient people being put through programmes. Perhaps this could be read as increased managerialism quashing playful practices? Perhaps it was inevitable given that Orangebox--and The My Place Agenda⁹ behind it--was born out of neoliberal logic to place young people and culture at the centre of key policies to rebuild the economy and to shift the emphasis from production to consumption in former industrial areas? (Researcher's reflective journal 2014)

These reflections capture a sense of my career story to date as one of diminishing space--space, that is, which enables and invites a holistic understanding and exploration of what it means to be creative. This could also be read as a microcosm of the rapid subordination of creativity "to social and economic ends"¹⁰ as part of the continued rise of neoliberalism within UK cultural policy during the decade on which the research focuses. The decade 2004 to 2014 spans the shift in the United Kingdom from Third Way to austerity politics and raw neoliberal policies. The 'Third Way' is particularly associated with Tony Blair¹¹ in the UK. It was an attempt to bridge the gap between state intervention in the economy and more 'liberal' economic approaches. Blair saw this as a centrist approach, concerned with social justice but distinct from older notions of socialism. Understandably the Third Way was criticised from both left and right but Blair did win three general elections.¹² In the context of modern Britain, 'austerity' has been used as a relatively neutral term for the planned reduction of the welfare state and cuts to other forms of public expenditure based on an argument that the country cannot afford to live beyond its means. Critics argue that government intervention would raise growth and that austerity is a smokescreen for a more ideological attack on public spending.¹³ The historical moment that marks the transition between these two approaches was the financial crash of 2007/2008 which paved the way to a shift from the Blair/Brown Labour government to the Coalition government of 2010 and then the Conservative government of 2015.

⁹ The Myplace programme was launched in April 2008. Following 3 competitive bidding rounds, a total of 63 capital grants of between £1 million and £5 million were awarded for the development of world-class youth centres (some of them multi-site) in some of the most deprived areas of England. By the time the programme was complete in 2013, around £240 million of central government capital funding was invested in the programme by the Department for Education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/myplace-programme/myplace-programme-information> (Accessed 25 June 2017).

¹⁰ R. Hewison, *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain*, London, Verso, 2014, p. 89.

¹¹ Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997 to 2007. Leader of the Labour party from 1994 to 2007.

¹² J.K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 2006, p.106.

¹³ M. Blyth, *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

The period on which the research focuses starts seven years into the New Labour government and covers a further six years of their rule (from 2004 to 2010). The last four years of the decade in focus (from 2010 to 2014) sees the Conservative / Liberal Democrat Coalition government in power, by which point a very reductive form of wellbeing was being promoted. Under austerity, wellbeing is only important because if more people are well then services could be taken away. Wellbeing was a key focus initially for David Cameron's¹⁴ government. From April 2010 the Office for National Statistics were instructed to ask people to rate their own wellbeing, with the first official happiness index published in 2012 and planned to be updated annually.¹⁵ At this historical point, there was an impulse towards enhancing the resilience of the 'individual,' which is needed to make neoliberalism work. This was quickly dispensed following the financial crash and outright austerity emerged as harder form of neoliberalism. Historically neoliberalism, albeit multi-faced in nature and taking softer and harder forms, became the predominant economic policy from the late 1970s and it is the historical context for Third Way and austerity.

The term neoliberalism was coined at a 1938 Paris meeting of academic economists, historians, and philosophers. From this meeting the Mont Perlin Society was founded. Heavily influenced by Austrian political philosopher Friedrich von Hayek, the society members saw themselves as liberals because of their commitment to ideals of personal freedom and human dignity. Political theorist David Harvey suggests that the founding figures of neoliberal thought were wise in choosing ideals that were so 'compelling and seductive.'¹⁶ As such they perceived their values to be legitimately threatened 'not only by fascism, dictatorship, and communism but by all forms of state intervention that substituted collective judgements for those of individuals free to choose.'¹⁷ They comfortably conceptualised Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Britain's welfare state as being forms of collectivism on the same spectrum as Nazism and communism. The Mont Perlin Society adopted the free market principles of neoclassical economics in favour of the classical economic theories, including those of Karl Marx, and pitched themselves in direct opposition to prominent state interventionist theories such as those presented by

¹⁴ Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 2010 to 2016. Leader of the Conservative party from 2005 to 2016.

¹⁵ A. Self, J. Thomas, and C. Randall, *Measuring National Well-being: Life in the UK* [website], 2012, Office for National Statistics, November 2012. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105183326/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/first-annual-report-on-measuring-national-well-being/art-measuring-national-well-being-annual-report.html> (Accessed 03 August 2018).

¹⁶ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2005, p. 5

¹⁷ Ibid.

John Maynard Keynes. They saw the hidden hand of the market as ‘the best device for mobilising even the basest of human instincts such as gluttony, greed, and the desire for wealth and power for the benefit of all.’¹⁸ According to David Harvey, however, this commitment to individual freedom and trust in the hidden hand of the market meant that for neoliberalism to work, all forms of social solidarity need to be dissolved ‘in favour of individualism, private property and personal responsibility.’¹⁹ Gradually a transatlantic infrastructure supported by millionaires, activists, think-tanks, academics, and journalists was established to spread the doctrine of neoliberalism. Between the early 1950’s and mid to late 1970’s this network experienced a period of being on the margins but it was quick to re-mobilise--or as Daniel-Stedman Jones suggests ‘neoliberal ideas were “waiting in the wings”’²⁰--in order to capitalise on the falling apart of post second world war politics and to heavily influence the next set of US and British administrations. The political mainstreaming of neoliberal ideas in the US and Britain really set in under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher’s governments as the values of private enterprise (incentives, profit and loss, and customer satisfaction) were adopted to drive public service in order to justify the crushing of trade unions, deregulation, privatisation, outsourcing, and competition. In his analysis of neoliberalism Stedman Jones pays particular attention to how it developed politically and in so doing demonstrates that neoliberalism became commonplace across the political spectrum in Britain and the United States and was then exported to many other countries following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In short, as David Harvey states, neoliberalisation has meant the ‘financialization of everything including daily life.’²¹

In discussing neoliberalism it is easy to fall into the trap of using it as a catch-all term for general anxieties about the current state of the world. It can be described as an impulse, an attitude, an economic system, and as a logic. But increasingly there are compelling calls from a number of cultural theory and cultural policy scholars to refer to it as an ideology, albeit one that has cleverly positioned itself as common sense. Wendy Brown describes neoliberalism as ‘a peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms, quietly undoing basic elements of democracy.’²² Robert Hewison too suggests that, rather than an economic theory, neoliberalism is best understood as an ideology—‘a system of ideas that achieved cultural change through its appeal to a powerful and specific set of values’²³--because ultimately a theory could not

¹⁸Ibid., p. 20

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 23

²⁰ D. Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2012, p. 331.

²¹ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 33.

²² W. Brown, *Undoing the Demos Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*, New York, Zone Books, 2015, p.17.

²³ R. Hewison, *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain*, London, Verso, 2014, p. 4.

bring about the cultural change that enabled the mass penetration and privatisation of the public realm. For the purposes of my research I am interested in how this ideology might have created the sense of diminished space for diverse forms of creative practice with young people, as described above. I will look for clues through investigating cultural and youth policy developments that took place between 2004 and 2014 and in relation to creativity, subjectivity, and wellbeing.

Neoliberal UK Youth policy 2004-2014

A similarity can be traced between New Labour and Coalition policies in terms of their reductive and economised constructions of youth, albeit with different kinds of inflections. New Labour's focus on the surface was on inequality and social responsibility whilst the Coalition were less covert in framing youth policy in relation to economic policy. My argument is that in this historical context attention to spiritual wellbeing was much needed but was being increasingly marginalised.

The notion of 'New' in New Labour connects with New Times theory coined at a 1988 seminar organised by Marxism Today. Out of this seminar emerged the argument that 'the world has changed, not just incrementally but qualitatively, that Britain and other advanced capitalist societies are increasingly characterised by diversity, differentiation and fragmentation, rather than homogeneity, standardisation and the economies and organisations of scale which characterised modern mass society.'²⁴ Margaret Thatcher's response to this notion of New Times was to replace post-war social democratic consensus and Keynesianism with neoliberalism.²⁵ When New Labour came into power, instead of trying to reverse the Thatcherite approaches inherited or to reinstate the old policy instruments of the Left which Thatcher had rejected, they were seen to have simply 'continued the neo-liberal response.'²⁶ Globalisation discourse was positioned to support the notion of New Labour's Third Way with Blair suggesting that 'no country is immune from the massive change that globalisation brings'²⁷ and that new ends would need to be found to achieve Labour's old values.

During their time in office, the rhetoric of 'social exclusion' became increasingly central to New Labour ideology and policies. The term 'social exclusion' originated in a policy context with the European Commission, where it was defined as 'the social rights of citizens ... to a certain basic standard of living and to participation in the major social and

²⁴ S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds.) *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s*, London, Lawrence and Wishart Limited, 1989, p.11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²⁶ A. Oakley. 'New Labour and the continuation of Thatcherite policy', *POLIS Journal*, vol. 6, Winter 2011/2012, p. 4.

²⁷ Blair 1999 cited in J. Newman, *Modernising Governance: New Labour, Policy and Society*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd., 2001, p. 48.

occupational opportunities of the society.²⁸ New Labour, however, established the term in the British political context by firmly placing an emphasis on 'economic disadvantage focusing on the poor, those without regular employment and its associated income.'²⁹ Following the 1998 publication of the Social Exclusion Unit report, 18 Policy Action Teams, comprising representatives from Government departments and experienced practitioners, were established to look in 'joined-up' ways at the problems of poor neighbourhoods. Policy Action Team 10 (PAT 10) focussed on Arts and Sports reflecting the expectation that cultural policies would align with other major policy areas. Chris Smith, then Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), opened the PAT 10 report by declaring that 'art and sport can not only make a valuable contribution to delivering key outcomes of lower long term unemployment, less crime, better health and better qualifications, but can also help to develop the individual pride, community spirit and capacity for responsibility that enable communities to run regeneration programmes themselves.'³⁰ The report went on to state that:

- Arts and sport are inclusive and can contribute to neighbourhood renewal.
- Arts and sports bodies should acknowledge that social inclusion is part of their business.
- Arts and sport are not just an add-on to regeneration work.³¹

Social inclusion objectives were thus incorporated across the whole of DCMS and with that came demands for hard evidence from the cultural sector to measure the impact of their work in relation to employment, health, education and crime. Meanwhile in September 1999 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) launched its £60million Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) with the aim of re-engaging hard-to-reach young people aged 13 to 19 with education, employment, or training. The NSF was delivered through 650 voluntary and community sector (VCS) projects at neighbourhood level in 40 of the most deprived areas of England. Project delivery was overseen by three Managing Agents: the Community Development Foundation (CDF), the National Youth Agency (The NYA) and the Learning Alliance (comprising four major charities i.e. NACRO, YMCA, CSV, and Rathbone).

²⁸ G. Room, *National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion*, Second Annual Report of the EC Observatory on Policies to Combat Social Exclusion. Brussels: European Commission. 1992, p.14.

²⁹ J. Long and P. Bramham. 'Joining-up Policy Discourses and Fragmented Practices: the Precarious Contribution of Cultural Projects to Social Inclusion', *Policy & Politics*, vol. 34 no. 1, 2006, p.136.

³⁰ Pat 10 report, p.2: Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/pat_report_10.pdf 1999 (Accessed 25 June 2017).

³¹ Ibid., pp. 5-6

Subsequent New Labour youth policy, outlined in *Transforming Youth Work* published in 2002, represented a stark shift from supporting young people to participate in the cultivation of political and civic society towards an emphasis on delivery with young people cast as consumers (of positive activities) and potential workers rather than citizens. This shift was imminently evident in *Youth Matters* published in 2005 which articulated government's desire for 'more young people to take part in these activities by empowering them to shape what is on offer.'³² It was suggested that young people would do this through the activities they consumed. They could 'shop around with their opportunity card and buy what they want ... undermining any concern with fostering social capital and civic society. It is consumption and activity that matter - not association.'³³ This reductive conceptualisation of youth work was further compounded by DfES 2003 *Every Child Matters* framework which prioritised five outcomes for children and young people--be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being--and offered a rather 'limited vision of what makes for human happiness.'³⁴

Under the Coalition government UK youth policy was moved from the Department for Education to The Cabinet Office, into the portfolio of Nick Hurd, the minister for civil society (2010-2014). Hurd also had a focus on developing new models of public service delivery and encouraging more active citizenship. The move potentially undermined the educational nature of youth work in favour of placing young people at the centre of key government policies to rebuild the economy. Said policies preferenced a conception of contemporary youth practice as a process of delivering outcomes and outputs within the framework of *Positive for Youth* (2011).³⁵ The new emphasis on 'Positive' conceptualisations of youth was clearly influenced by ideologies of market economics and neoliberalism. Arguably, this focus on 'positive' is similarly reductive. In policy terms, it understands youth as resources or assets that can be crafted for exploitation in the economic domain, in the process obscuring fundamental social and economic inequalities that may lie behind *negative* youth behaviours. In response there has been a growing concern within youth work that young people's access to citizenship is now limited to consumerism; that the 'culture in which children are invited to participate is becoming increasingly individual and commercial; and less social and civic.'³⁶ In former industrial towns (like Halifax in which Orangebox is based) that are rapidly attempting to redefine

³² Youth Matters, Department for Education and Skills, July 2005.

³³ http://www.infed.org/youthwork/green_paper_2005.htm (Accessed 25 June 2017).

³⁴ http://www.infed.org/youthwork/green_paper_2005.htm (Accessed 25 June 2017).

³⁵ <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/Positive%20for%20Youth/b00200933/positive-for-youth-the-statement> (Accessed on 09 June 2013).

³⁶ C. Carter, 'Growing Up Corporate: News, Citizenship and Young People Today', *Television & New Media*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2008, pp.34-36, p.34

themselves as valid members of information and knowledge societies, marginalised young people can easily form what Manuel Castells describes as resistance identities: 'Global networks of information and wealth often do not respect the values of historically rooted identities, and has generated a situation in which dominant values threaten other cultural identities. This creates instability and potentially fundamentalist reactions ... and resistance identities'³⁷ which play out, but can potentially be addressed, in contexts such as Orangebox.

Neoliberal cultural policy, creativity, subjectivity and well-being

Significant cultural policy developments in the UK during the period with which this thesis is concerned include: the creation of The Big Lottery Fund out of the merger of New Opportunities Fund, the Millennium Commission, and the Charities Board (2004); the establishment of The Taking Part Survey (2005); London identified as the host for the 2012 Olympic Games (2005); the launch of YouTube (2005); the formation of the Cultural Learning Alliance (2007); Arts Council of England's Theatre Assessment (2009); McMaster's report on Excellence (2008); the formation of What Next Movement (2011); and the 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games in London. This period also saw a range of publications focusing on creativity as a key component of the nation's identity. These included, optimistically, Sir George Cox's *Creativity in Business* (2005); *Creative Britain: New Talents for The New economy* (2008); *The Work Foundations' Staying Ahead* (2007); *Cultural Manifesto: Creative Britain* (2010); and more pessimistically, NESTA's *How Creative Britain Lost It's Way* (2013); and *Rebalancing our Cultural Capital* (2013). All of these developments, including cultural policy and practice throughout the period spanning the New Labour era and the austerity measures of the Coalition government in its entirety, are usefully contextualised by Robert Hewison's *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain*. Hewison clearly demonstrates that under both political parties, arts and heritage were integrated into a system of government that "continued the neoliberal programme established by the Conservatives."³⁸ The influence of neoliberal ideology on cultural policy was accelerated by New Labour's mainstreaming of the arts and can be read as a summoning of culture "to repurpose places and their people as contributors to cultural consumption."³⁹ New Labour rule was followed by what Hewison describes as 'an even purer experiment in neoliberalism as the Coalition abandoned any expectations of

³⁷ P. Nymas, M. Lassander, and E. Utrainen (eds.), *Post Secular Society*, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2012, p. 56.

³⁸ R. Hewison, *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain*, London, Verso, 2014, p. 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

arts-driven social regeneration and withdrew its support for publically funded culture in the hope that the market would provide.⁴⁰

Hewison looks in detail at how Tony Blair played on the neglect the arts had experienced under the previous government to make them complicit with his proposed transformation of Britain as an epicentre of individualism and entrepreneurialism. 'Culture,' argued Hewison, would be 'the means to achieve this transformation of Britain: liberated from old bureaucratic procedures, lifestyle would govern a new politics of 'choice' that changed the individual's relationship to state and stimulated permanent innovation.'⁴¹ Out of this kind of rhetoric reported by Hewison came a significant policy shift that embraced 'creativity' and triggered unprecedented investment in the sector. Here, cultural policy quickly became part of economic policy. As such New Labour went onto 'install a regime of targets, funding agreements and measurements intended to make the economic and social outcomes of their cultural investment predictable.'⁴² This served to construct creativity within one kind of discourse relating to individualistic forms of entrepreneurialism and productivity, thereby demoting more socially inclusive forms of creativity and creating the kinds of pressure on the ground of creative practice exhibited by the two extracts above. For Hewison, with this emphasis on productivity comes a shift in language to that of 'profit, efficiency and consumption replacing that of citizenship, solidarity and service.'⁴³ In turn this put the cultural sector under pressure to model entrepreneurialism and for artists to become entrepreneurs focussing on growth, productivity, and profit. In attempting to align practice with more neoliberal constructs of creativity, practitioners risk playing into the hands of what Helen Nicholson sees as the predominant form of instrumentalism in the arts in the 21st century – 'the harnessing of the arts to neoliberal ideas of self-care by accepting that cultural participation promotes wellbeing and self-entrepreneurship.'⁴⁴ Jen Harvie has explored in detail the implications of how artists, arts, and culture have being 'instrumentalised as economically important'⁴⁵ and suggests that there are three particular problems associated with this pressure: 'its emphasis on celebration of self-interested individualism; its implicit acceptance that an inevitable by-product of innovation is creative destruction; and its emphasis on productivity over other potential values.'⁴⁶ All three of

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴² Ibid., p. 6.

⁴³ D. Stedman Jones. *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2012, p. 344.

⁴⁴ J. Hughes and H. Nicholson (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 251.

⁴⁵ J. Harvie. *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 64.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

these problems are also implicit within the pressures described in relation to the creative practice indicated by the two opening extracts.

Within creative education practice these problems are mirrored in the foregrounding of the skills agenda which brought a shift in terminology from arts education to creative learning. Helen Nicholson distinguishes between the two in terms of creative learning's association with the 'acquisition of marketable skills ... whereas arts education adds the dimension of social engagement and cultural understanding.'⁴⁷ Creative learning became common currency in UK schools with the advent of the Creative Partnerships scheme in 2002. Creative Partnerships (CP) was New Labour's government's flagship creative learning programme established to develop young people's creativity across England. It is estimated that the programme:

worked with more than one million children and 90,000 teachers in more than 8,000 projects across over 5000 schools in England between 2002 and 2011; CP is to date the biggest creative education programme to have been funded by a government anywhere in the world. CP delivery developed across the country in three phases between 2002 and 2005: by 2006 there were 36 delivery organisations funded through Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) via Arts Council England.⁴⁸

Creative Partnerships emerged in response to the 1999 *All Our Futures* report produced by The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCE), established in February 1998 by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, the Rt. Hon David Blunkett MP and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt. Hon Chris Smith MP. The committee was charged to make recommendations to the Secretaries of State on the creative and cultural development of young people through formal and informal education; to take stock of current provision; and to make proposals for principles, policies and practice. The group was chaired by British Educationalist Sir Ken Robinson who champions educating for the creative economy. Robinson has argued that the British education system is constructed around the needs of nineteenth century industrialisation as opposed to twenty-first century global capitalism. The NACCE report argued that a national strategy for creative and cultural education was essential to the process of unlocking the potential of every young person to ensure Britain's economic prosperity and social cohesion. What was needed, the committee suggested, was 'the

⁴⁷ H. Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 102.

⁴⁸ <http://creative-partnerships.com/about-creative-partnerships/> (Accessed 03 August 2018).

creativity, enterprise and scholarship of all our people.'⁴⁹ The report presented creative education as 'forms of education that develop young people's capacities for original ideas and action.'⁵⁰ This was a conceptualising of creativity as a skill not bound up within the arts but instead associated with broader abilities being sought by employers--problem solving, questioning and making connections--and with creative entrepreneurship. Ultimately this rooted Creative Partnerships in an 'instrumental justification for creativity ... creativity equals profitability.'⁵¹ New Labour's emphasis on education for skills and its individualised theories of creative learning brought about a migration of various theories of management and innovation from the private sector into the education arena. Notably notions of personalisation were favoured by government in order to encourage self-motivated learners who could presumably go on to become self-regulating employees--this being the key to profitability within increasingly flexible working cultures.

Let us turn specifically for a moment to applied theatre scholarship as a critical body of work that I am drawing on and which provides the foundation for the thesis. According to Helen Nicholson, in developing modes of practice that align with individualism and the skills agenda, applied theatre (as a form of creative practice with young people) can be reduced to a mode of personal and social problem solving 'in which predetermined goals are realised and this can mean that applied theatre is conceptualised in ways that serve neoliberalism well.'⁵² The emphasis on productivity is also problematic for applied theatre practice because it can assume that transformation is a quick and linear process and it leaves no room for acknowledging or exploring the notion of precarity which has been well theorised in the field.⁵³ Productivity implies rapid and significant change but in applied theatre change on a large scale is understood, for example by Kathleen Gallagher, as 'a staged process built from micro encounters.'⁵⁴ This understanding is important as it potentially serves to enable applied theatre practice to resist modelling or adopting top down or banking type transformation processes. As Syed Jamil Ahmed points out, in educational terms, such processes leave no room for 'Freirean dialogue ... as the practice

⁴⁹ NACCE report, p. 4 Available at:

<http://www.tracscotland.org/sites/default/files/Creativity%20Culture%20and%20Education%20intro%20and%20summ..pdf> (Accessed 25 June 2017).

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵¹ H. Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 95.

⁵² J. Hughes and H. Nicholson. 'Applied Theatre Ecology of Practices', in J. Hughes and H. Nicholson (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 4

⁵³ See 'Precariousness and the Performances of Welfare' focussed edition of *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2017

⁵⁴ K. Gallagher, 'Micro-political and the Socio-structural in Applied Theatre', in J. Hughes and H. Nicholson (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 245

of freedom.⁵⁵ An emphasis on productivity implies a pressure to work and bring about transformation on a large scale. This diminishes the value of relationality and of paying attention to the smaller scale of everyday life which applied theatre scholars, such as Helen Nicholson for example, have begun to position as a means for applied theatre to 'retain its traditional commitment to social justice and equality.'⁵⁶ Nicholson's focus on a relational ontology of applied theatre recognises that change, or specifically pathways to social agency, are created 'not only through overthrowing structures of power but also biopolitically, in performative flows and rhythms of human and non-human interaction, and the spatial, temporal and material habits of everyday life.'⁵⁷

The sense of radical interdependence evoked through such concepts is in direct opposition to the individualism at the heart of neoliberal ideology. My experience of diminished space in professional practice can also be attributed to being caught between these two opposing notions of transformation and their expectations regarding scale and pace of change. Analysed through this lens of relational ontology, in casting what they saw in Creative Partnership projects or at Orangebox as 'mucking about', those looking in missed the point that change can be an 'an affective, situated and embodied practice as well as a cognitive process ... and how the affective and temporal qualities of lived experience might become politically active.'⁵⁸ In both contexts, the onlookers also failed to see the value of enabling participants to experiment with the production and reproduction of space collaboratively and the fostering of creativity through 'networks of social relationships.'⁵⁹

Neoliberalism can also be seen to diminish space in terms of subjectivity which in turn has implications for applied theatre and creative practice with young people. Neoliberal doctrine champions the 'supreme worth of the individual above all else'⁶⁰ but it relies on a very specific idea of selfhood in which the 'social forces of capitalism have become internalised and embodied as part of people's personal aspirations.'⁶¹ In Foucauldian terms then, neoliberal ideology depends upon forms of self-governance rather than state imposed controls, not least as a means to justify the dismantlement of social welfare

⁵⁵ S.J. Ahmed, 'Applied Theatre and Climate Change in Bangladesh' in J. Hughes and H. Nicholson (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 158.

⁵⁶ H. Nicholson, 'A Good Day Out: Applied Theatre, Relationality and Participation', in J. Hughes and H. Nicholson (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 265.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 250.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 252.

⁵⁹ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 129.

⁶⁰ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 21.

⁶¹ H. Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 98.

structures. In turn the neoliberal project has 'encoded the social domain as a form of the economic domain such that cost benefit calculations and market criteria'⁶² are being applied across all facets of human decision making and care of the self replaces social responsibility. As Helen Nicholson's relational approach has indicated, applied theatre scholarship allows for more diverse conceptualisations of subjectivity and relationship, including notions of the body and narrative as sources of selfhood.⁶³ My own contribution to this area explores how theatre and creative arts practices enable the 'self' to be continually created and recreated through interaction with others--an argument that is founded on an articulation of a relationship between applied theatre (and creative practices with young people more broadly) and spiritual well-being. As Nicholson notes, this way of thinking moves the focus of attention away from 'the inner qualities of the autonomous individual and towards the significance of responsive, reciprocal and compassionate relationships between participants within the specific context in which the work is taking place.'⁶⁴

The reductive versions of freedom, creativity, and subjectivity upon which neoliberalism is built contribute to constructing a very limited definition of wellbeing, one that remains framed by and rooted in market ideology with no recognition of social or spiritual dimensions of the self or of the socioeconomic realities of human experience. Although they might start from an acknowledgement of a need to improve people's quality of life the resulting policies remain committed to frameworks that effectively seek to market and commodify human life. As such people are conceptualised as income units and cultural institutions as profit generating sites. Practitioners and organisations responding to these agendas out of a fundamental concern for and commitment to wellbeing in a broader sense become trapped in forms of market-influenced instrumentalism--attempting to demonstrate, quantify, and trade in currency of efficacy, outcomes, outputs, and social return on investment. By focusing on concepts and constructs that align with neoliberal agendas of individualism and privatisation, we are distracted from the notion of social engagement as the potential antidote to consumption. My own career narrative is testament to the sense of entrapment this context can bring about and I now share it to elucidate my arrival upon the need to find a language for discussing wellbeing that challenges neoliberalism's proposition that 'human wellbeing can be best advanced by

⁶² T. Lemeke, 'The birth of biopolitics: Michael Foucault's lecture at the College de France on neoliberal governmentality', *Economy and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 190-207, p. 200.

⁶³ For body and selfhood see: H. Nicholson, 'A Good Day Out: Applied Theatre, Relationality and Participation', in H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 257.

For narrative conceptions of selfhood see: H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 65.

⁶⁴ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 129.

liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms.⁶⁵ Such a language might help to articulate the deeper resonances and meanings of what happens within forms of creative practice that are undervalued and misunderstood within the neoliberal context.

My career narrative: from theatre methods to centre management

I consider myself to be an applied theatre practitioner and regard the clearest and most contemporary definition of applied theatre as that offered by Helen Nicholson as ‘forms of dramatic activity that primarily exist outside conventional mainstream theatre institutions, and which are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities, and societies.’⁶⁶ My own training and professional expertise is in the field of theatre-making - I took up my first professional full-time appointment as Community Director for Interplay Theatre⁶⁷ in August 2000 and during the period on which the research focuses I was also Chair of Chol Theatre⁶⁸ and The West Yorkshire Playhouse’s⁶⁹ Arts Development Sub-committee. The role at Interplay was funded through New Labour’s Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF), which, as described earlier, was launched in September 1999 and aimed to re-engage disaffected and disengaged young people aged 13 to 19 into education, training, or employment. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) provided £60 million over three years to fund over 660 NSF projects in 40 disadvantaged areas in England, with the aim that at least 15,000 young people would participate annually in NSF activity.⁷⁰ Interplay, established in the early 1960’s, is based in Armley in Leeds, once home to the world’s largest woolen mill but by 2001 more commonly known as a ‘relatively disadvantaged area on the western edge of Leeds’⁷¹ and for its category B local prison (or “the castle” as it is referred to by locals). When I took up post in 2000 there were two secondary schools serving the Armley district. Both were struggling with behavior, attendance, lower than average numeracy and literacy levels, and higher than average proportions of pupils on the school’s register of special educational needs.⁷² Through the NSF funding we designed a programme called Tools For The Trade for young people at

⁶⁵ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 2.

⁶⁶ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 2.

⁶⁷ <http://www.interplayleeds.co.uk> (Accessed 01 July 2011).

⁶⁸ <http://www.choltheatre.co.uk> (Accessed 01 July 2011).

⁶⁹ www.wyplayhouse.com (Accessed 01 July 2011).

⁷⁰ NFER Evaluation of NSF programme: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR366.pdf> (Accessed 01 July 2011).

⁷¹ [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/layout/set/print/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/36878/\(as\)/108073_197287.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/layout/set/print/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/36878/(as)/108073_197287.pdf) (Accessed 01 July 2011).

⁷² West Leeds High School and Wortley High School Ofsted Inspection reports November 2001 and December 2000

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/layout/set/print/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/36878/\(as\)/108073_197287.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/layout/set/print/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/36878/(as)/108073_197287.pdf)
[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/layout/set/print/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/8931/\(as\)/108072_223796.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/layout/set/print/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/8931/(as)/108072_223796.pdf) (Accessed 01 July 2011).

risk of exclusion from these two schools and for those who were often to be found hanging around the vicinity of the theatre who had clearly already fallen through the mainstream education and welfare nets. Over the course of an academic year Tools For The Trade participants worked alongside artists and industry professionals to develop skills and tools they would need for the film, music, and theatre trades by creating artistic product. At the end of every art-form module participants would get an opportunity to showcase their product in a professional venue. It was a difficult challenge to design and facilitate the programmes, to secure purposeful partnerships, and to reconnect the young people with a route back to training and education. We experienced a high degree of success attracting extra funding to extend our reach (Interplay still ran Tools For The Trade for a further ten years after the initial funding stream closed) but with little recognition from the schools that referred pupils to the programme. Intrigued by my growing frustration at why such approaches and processes could not be acknowledged by or embedded within mainstream education provision, I took up the post of Creative Programmer when Creative Partnerships (CP) Bradford began in 2004.

CP Bradford was a phase-two CP organisation. We were a team of four (Director, Programmer, Operations Manager, and Team Assistant) who chose to be housed in the Education Authority offices, rather than a cultural venue, in order to establish ourselves within the district's strategic education context. At its outset CP had a strong identity as a campaign and a movement. Later the emphasis shifted to action research and by 2008 it had become an established national programme with its own systems independent of the Arts Council and managed centrally by the new organisation Creativity Culture and Education.⁷³ When starting out in Bradford we had what now feels like a huge degree of freedom as to how we shaped Creative Partnerships in response to local needs. By 2008, the 24 Creative Partnerships area delivery organisations were regionally rather than locally focussed and recruiting schools to standard programmes: the change programme in which schools worked for three years to develop a whole school creative culture; and the enquiry programme through which individual teachers worked with a creative partner for an academic year to explore an enquiry relating to an aspect of creative teaching and learning. Standard audit and evaluation frameworks were adopted across the country and related data reported through an online system. In 2008, newly appointed as the Programme's Director, I led the first CP-demerger from Arts Council England to a new area delivery organisation, CapeUK,⁷⁴ and expanded the programme to serve the West Yorkshire region (comprising 5 local authorities). Funding for CP ended in September

⁷³ <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/> (Accessed 25 June 2017).

⁷⁴ <http://www.capeuk.org> (Accessed 25 June 2017).

2011 and CapeUK went on to become the Arts Council Bridge organisation⁷⁵ for Yorkshire and the Humber. On receiving the news that Creative Partnerships was to end I recall attempting to enter into discussion with our Arts Council Relationship Manager about the best way to handle closure with our local schools. Her response was, “why don’t you work on ensuring all former CP schools apply for Artsmark,”⁷⁶ thus following the broader sweeping under the cultural carpet of the entire Creative Partnerships movement and knowledge base. In November 2012 I left to take up a post as Director of Orangebox, a new world-class young people’s centre for 13-25 year olds. At Orangebox I aspired to create an environment in which young people could develop the skills and capacities required to cope with life in the 21st century context; somewhere in which they could realise their ideas and realise themselves; somewhere that implicitly supported and developed spiritual wellbeing.

Orangebox is based in Halifax town centre, within the borough of Calderdale in West Yorkshire, and it was the penultimate Myplace centre to be built. The Myplace programme was launched in April 2008 and in total 63 capital grants of between £1 million and £5 million were awarded for the development of world-class youth centres in some of the most deprived areas of England. The Big Lottery, on behalf of Department for Education, managed the capital programme through to its completion in April 2013. The Government expected the centre to

- drive the ongoing transformation of local services for young people aged 13 to 19;
- involve young people in decision making and engaging with their local communities to promote young people’s positive role in society;
- focus on early interventions with the most vulnerable young people, including those aged up to 25 with learning difficulties and disabilities; and
- leverage private investment from local businesses and corporate sponsors.⁷⁷

Orangebox was developed from two adjoined buildings--one a former museum store and the other a workshop and store for the markets service. The assets were transferred to Square Chapel Centre for the Arts who oversaw the capital phase of the programme on behalf of the voluntary sector and with support from a partnership team comprising representatives from Voluntary Action Calderdale and Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council. Orangebox was designed by young people, for young people, with facilities including: a climbing wall, skate-park, recording studios, art room, rehearsal spaces, and a

⁷⁵ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/children-and-young-people/bridge-organisations> (Accessed 25 June 2017).

⁷⁶ Artsmark is a creative quality standard for schools and settings awarded by Arts Council of England

⁷⁷ <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/b00213818/myplace/about> (Accessed on 28 April 2013).

rooftop garden alongside counselling and support services. The centre housed two long-term tenants--a voluntary and a statutory youth organisation both working with young people who are not in, or who are experiencing barriers to accessing, education, employment, or training. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation awarded a grant to Square Chapel to fund my post and that of the Centre Manager for our first three years of operation. The centre is adjacent to The Piece Hall--a Grade 1 listed Georgian market square originally built for the trading of wool and cloth--which has recently been successful in securing Heritage Lottery Funding for a transformation project. Square Chapel Centre for The Arts, five minutes immediately down the hill from Orangebox, had also been successful in raising funds to create a new performance space and improved visitor facilities connecting to the Piece Hall's new Visitor Orientation Centre. Within the same two-year time frame a new town centre library was created including specialist facilities for children and teenagers. As a former industrial town Halifax has seemingly re-inventing itself through an emphasis on artistic and cultural provision. It is within this physical context that Orangebox evolved, initially under the umbrella of Square Chapel Centre for the Arts until it was in a position to become an independent organisation.

Calderdale takes its name from the upper part of the River Calder that flows throughout the borough. The borough was formed in 1974 (under the Local Government Act 1972) by the merger of six local government districts: Brighouse, Elland, Halifax, Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge, and Todmorden. Halifax remains the administrative and commercial centre of the borough, hosting council offices, busy train and bus stations, a further and higher education college, and the central police station. 62,100 children and young people⁷⁸ live in this sprawling borough encompassing rural and urban environments. In terms of a town or city centre, many young people within Orangebox's target age range (13-19) just as easily relate to Leeds, Manchester, or Huddersfield as to Halifax, yet Orangebox needed to serve young people across the borough. The 2010 Indices of Deprivation revealed that 21 areas within Calderdale are within the national worst 20 percent but child poverty is not evenly distributed across the borough with a higher proportion in the town centre and several of its neighbouring wards. The borough suffers from a higher than national average number of young homeless people, and a higher than regional average number of young people in care and subject to child protection plans. In 2010 Calderdale was named by Ofsted as one of twelve poorly performing councils, particularly focusing on inadequacies relating to the safeguarding of children. In short Orangebox exists within and between the stresses and strains of these local voluntary, statutory, artistic, and youth cultures and against a national backdrop of neoliberal

⁷⁸ <http://www.calderaleisna.org/children-and-young-people/children-and-young-people-demographics/> (Accessed 28 April 2013).

dominance. Our initial steering group comprised: those who were professionally operating and accountable within the framework of *Positive for Youth* and other then current government policies; people from organisations that were being re-invented; people who were in the throes of creating new governance structures within the health sector; Trustees from The Square Chapel Centre for the Arts; independent members retired from lengthy professional stretches within voluntary and statutory youth work; and four young people representing Orangebox's Youth Board. As Orangebox Director, I saw the need to channel this energy and experience (and deflect certain agendas and projections) in order to support and facilitate young people and the organisation to find their own way, to discover their own ideas, to develop and grow on their own terms and in response to the evolving local, national, and international context. I recognised that to achieve this and to find ways of looking at young people's personal development and quality of life outside of market influenced frameworks, I would have to go beyond current youth provision and policy conceptions of practice to incorporate an emphasis on spiritual, as well as physical and mental, wellbeing. Unfortunately I quickly realised that local and national political constraints and financial targets were not conducive to this ambition or to my own wellbeing.

In their attempts to make a conjunctural analysis of the present, Doreen Massey and Stuart Hall discuss how neoliberalism has become common sense and emphasise the need to see this moment as a philosophical and political crisis, not just an economic crisis, in order to understand how an alternative political project might seek to produce a different settlement.⁷⁹ In their analysis of the social, political, economic, and cultural contradictions of the neoliberal moment, they introduce the notion of an ideology of erasure, a cleansing of the political discourse:

... the public interest, public ownership, common goods, equality, the redistribution of wealth, the stubborn facts about poverty and inequality, etc., all became 'unspeakable.' Thatcherism made it part of common sense that you can't calculate the common interest. 'There is no such thing as society.' All you can calculate is individual self-interest, and then the hidden hand of the market will make that work for, or trickle down to, society as a whole.⁸⁰

They go on to describe how this has become integral to individual people's philosophy: "you can't do anything about it, it's the market, isn't it?" It's right at the heart of the way in

⁷⁹ S. Hall and D. Massey, 'Interpreting the crisis: Doreen Massey and Stuart Hall discuss ways of understanding the current crisis', *Soundings*, vol. 44, 2010, pp 57-71

⁸⁰ S. Hall and D. Massey, 'Interpreting the crisis: Doreen Massey and Stuart Hall discuss ways of understanding the current crisis', *Soundings*, vol. 44, 2010, p. 62

which we look at the world.'⁸¹ Accelerated by New Labour's logic of spin, this turn detaches 'concepts from their previous associations shifting them to new meanings ... these shifts of language were ways of deconstructing a form of consciousness which had governed political thinking on the left for a long time.'⁸² This ideology of erasure is a helpful and significant concept for defining the backdrop to my professional practice and to my research project. In education and youth work terms it translates to a suppression of broad conceptualisations of creativity and wellbeing in favour of more reductive definitions linked to individualism, instrumentalism and economisation. It is evidenced by the adoption of business speak and market logic that has enabled neoliberal ideas to take root within our educational, youth and cultural institutions and spaces. In Foucauldian terms these new emphases reframe care as self-care and entrepreneurship as self-entrepreneurship. They do not allow for responsiveness, debate and change, or trust between adults and young people or for equality to be normative--all of which are essential components and characteristics of creative work with young people.

My own sense of diminished space is in keeping with what others in the fields of education and youth work have articulated in relation to the neoliberal restructuring of social policy and how it can lead to forms of practice that are actually incongruent with supporting the development of young people's wellbeing or quality of life. At the heart of this incongruence lies the erosion of proper care brought about through neoliberal regimes. A 2014 *Youth and Policy* article examining the mirrored experiences of community and youth workers from the North of England and those they engage with reports that both were encountering:

Feelings of disempowerment, caught in the bind of a 'double jeopardy,' a construct which highlights service users needing to feel cared about and workers wanting to care. The austerity cuts applied by the neoliberal regime impede this relational process through decreased resources, which in turn means that time is taken up with monitoring and evaluating funded outcomes, eating into time of the actual work of 'what needs to be done.'⁸³

The researchers identify that community and youth workers have little space to discuss and engage with the feelings they experience as a result of this disempowerment or to explore what might be done. They suggest that there is potential to generate a new social movement around the shared interests and values of critical academics, community and youth work practitioners, and young people themselves:

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ G. Hughes et. al., 'The State of Youth Work in Austerity England – Reclaiming the Ability to "Care"', *Youth and Policy*, Issue 113, 2014, p. 2.

This movement could provide fertile ground for generating a new language and new ways of thinking about how to measure the worth of community and youth work, and what it really means to 'care.' This would include generating a counter discourse to that which pedals a deficit model of youth and youth workers, both similarly pathologised for failing to successfully embrace the challenges presented by market fundamentalism. It would include generating new measures of success in community and youth work, where 'caring' is reinstated as a central ambition in preference to cost-benefit, and where practices that decontextualize and homogenise young people and their communities' needs are resisted.⁸⁴

From the point of view of those critiquing the rise of neoliberalism, and attempting to advocate for a focus on care in education, creativity remains key:

To say that education involves nurture is important. Education involves encounter between persons, and that encounter involves care. Learning from a computer is not education; the machine does not care. Learning from a person behaving like a machine is not education; that person's capacity for care is being suppressed. It is care that is the basis of the creativity in teaching, at all levels from Kindergarten to PhD supervision, as the teacher's practice evolves in response to the learner's development and needs.⁸⁵

Connell recognises that the consequences of the neoliberal turn on education have not yet been fully assimilated. He suggests that educators need to understand neoliberalism and to 'think about the nature of education itself, as a social process of nurturing capacities for practice. Education itself cannot be commodified; but access to education can be. Markets require a rationing of education, and the creation of hierarchies and mechanisms of competition.'⁸⁶ Significantly he believes that bases for alternatives exist that have 'not yet found institutional articulation.'⁸⁷ Within youth work, education and creative practice, the need to generate a new language to describe these deeply caring ways of working with young people is positioned as a crucial tool for mobilising ideological, system, cultural or institutional change. After all the words used by neoliberalism often conceal more than they elucidate. Applied theatre has much to contribute to an articulation of what it really means to care, and is particularly knowledgeable in relationship-centred care--care that is about relationality and the sense that life is 'defined by a network of relationalities with the human and non-human world.'⁸⁸ In this context care is understood as an 'intuitive and reciprocal process of exchange.'⁸⁹ These practices of care take us beyond the limitations of the neoliberal construct of wellbeing, and in this thesis I argue that this opens up the possibility of acknowledging

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁵ R. Connell, 'The Neoliberal Cascade and Education: An Essay on the Market Agenda and Its Consequences', *Critical Studies In Education*, vol.54, no. 2, 2013, p. 105.

⁸⁶ R. Connell, 'The Neoliberal Cascade and Education: An Essay on the Market Agenda and Its Consequences', *Critical Studies In Education*, vol.54, no. 2, 2013, p. 105.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ H. Nicholson 'A Good Day Out: Applied Theatre, Relationality and Participation', in H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 258.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.257.

that our lives and relationships possess spiritual significance, and of articulating a relationship between applied theatre, creative practice and spiritual well-being. My contention here is that the relational approach--described above by vocabulary that evokes openness, the unknown, an intuitive level of experiencing, and sense of value for material and immaterial forms of life--implies a spiritual dimension that is as yet unexplored. However, applied theatre research and creative education scholarship more generally does not yet have an explicit language to discuss spiritual wellbeing. To provide one is the project of this thesis.

It is worth opening this part of the discussion with a proviso. If we are being particularly attentive to language we cannot assume that notions of the spiritual offer the counterweight to (damaging) neoliberalism. They might instead be part of the same historical impetus--both new age spirituality and fundamentalist religion exist comfortably within the neoliberal turn. In response to the growing use of spirituality as a 'brand label' contemporary religious scholars have provided a useful genealogy of the term 'spirituality' and articulated concern at how this use serves capitalist structures.⁹⁰ Jeremy Carrette identifies that in the neoliberal context, with its emphasis on the autonomous individual, spirituality's association with inner life can easily become understood as detached from a socially engaged perspective or appreciation of interdependence. The consolidation of this privatising trend is bound up with 'the emerging cultural force of psychology in the twentieth century and its involvement with the rise of new forms of life linked to the capitalist reorganisation of European and North American societies after World War Two.'⁹¹ However from this same historical context Viktor Frankl's logotherapy emerges, the key source used in this thesis to open up and ground my own exploration of spiritual well-being. Logotherapy places an emphasis on spiritual wellbeing through self-transcendence, responsibility, and acknowledging the social dimensions of spirituality and the self that Carrette argues have been 'neglected within mainstream psychological discourse.'⁹² Despite Frankl's moving in Freudian and then Adlerian circles in his early career, the tenets of his logotherapy are rooted in rejection of fundamental concepts from both schools of thought in placing the will to meaning (rather than pleasure or power) at the core of his theories. Where theology scholars such as Graham Ward position the church as 'providing the ground of a missing metaphysical mindfulness'⁹³ within the neoliberal context, Frankl offers a concept and practice of spirituality that is materially and

⁹⁰ See for example W. Principe, Toward Defining Spirituality, *Studies in Religion*, Volume: 12 issue: 2, 1983, pp. 127-141

⁹¹ J. Carrette and R. King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2005, p. 41.

⁹² Ibid., p.33.

⁹³ G. Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Post-Material Citizens*, Grand Rapids MI, Baker Academic, 2009, p. 317.

socially embedded but non-religious. My research project explores if and how this framework offers a suitable language for articulating the ways in which creative practice can be seen to be supportive of young people's spiritual wellbeing.

Overview of the thesis

The thesis is structured into two main parts: two chapters that follow situate the thesis in its relevant scholarly field and investigate Frankl's concepts in more depth, followed by three chapters reporting on a letter-writing reflective practice research project carried out as part of the thesis. These are comprised of a methodology chapter and two chapters reporting on research findings. The literature review that follows this introductory chapter focuses on creative practice with young people, young people's wellbeing, and logotherapy. The reader will then encounter a research article in which I first introduce and work with one of Frankl's key terms--the noetic--and describe a bounded research project exploring logotherapy's main ideas with a range of theatre actors. Following the innovative model of the Professional Doctorate process, this research article was completed early in the research process, and is envisaged as a discrete, albeit related, piece of work that focuses on small-scale research project leading to a publishable research article. Unlike the rest of the thesis the research article explores drama as a therapy and represents the first stage of my attempt to explore and better articulate some possible connections between theatre practice, and logotherapy.

Chapter 3 describes key methodologies that embody the thesis designed to explore the concepts of an ethos of care and spiritual wellbeing through carefully constructed encounters by letter. Then follows the findings structured under two key chapters that look at applied theatre practice as a practice of care leading to the detailed presentation of the use of Viktor Frankl's logotherapy philosophy as a language and a set of principles to reframe my practice as one concerned with spiritual wellbeing. The closing chapter looks at the implications of my findings for research, for policy and for practice.

Via this thesis research, I identified a sense of my own professional practice being underpinned by values and ways of knowing and doing that have been honed through theatre and applied theatre experience. I eventually arrived at a description of my own professional practice during the period 2004-2014 as a form of creative practice guided by the ethos of applied theatre for the purposes of promoting and supporting young people's spiritual wellbeing as it is understood within Viktor Frankl's logotherapy. Frankl's work is a source I was drawn to prior to undertaking the PhD and I went on to use the research process to interrogate it further. My subsequent research methodology was designed to

extend and interrogate Frankl's ideas drawing on a range of scholarship on wellbeing, young people, creative education, and applied theatre, as well as an original advanced research project embedded in my own professional practice. Through locating a definition of spiritual wellbeing within Viktor Frankl's concept of logotherapy I have co-constructed, with colleagues and young people, ways of illuminating the ethos of applied theatre that is perhaps neither language nor practice. We have found ways to refer to the somewhat indefinable element of applied theatre and present aspects of practice as being beyond instrumentality. We have rehearsed this new language by re-framing the practice in which we were involved as one concerned with promoting and developing young people's spiritual wellbeing.

Chapter 2. Conceptualising and Historicising ‘Spiritual Wellbeing’ in Creative Education with Young People

The second chapter of the thesis presents a review of scholarly and other relevant literature that is concerned with conceptualising and historicising both creative practice with young people and young people’s wellbeing, and how creativity is understood as being integral to young people’s wellbeing. In the chapter, I draw on sources from creative learning, arts education, and youth studies, particularly from a UK-context, but also referring to international research where appropriate. Applied theatre (as a mode of creative practice with young people) literature is included but given more specific, stand-alone attention in chapter 4 as part of the discussion of what I call an ‘applied theatre ethos’ in that chapter. The review starts by tracing the history of creative practice with young people in the UK from the election of the New Labour government (and the introduction of Third Way policies) in 1997 until 2014--the end of the period on which the research focuses and four years into the Conservative / Liberal Democrat Coalition administration. It then turns to look at literature exploring the links between creativity and young people’s wellbeing. Identified as a gap in the literature is the lack of discussion of spiritual wellbeing, both in relation to creative practice with young people and as a framework that encapsulates creativity. Later the review identifies a series of possible relationships between spiritual wellbeing and creative practice with young people. Here I draw on a key foundational critical source for the thesis and the concept of spiritual wellbeing it proposes as particularly relevant to applied theatre practice, the work of Viktor Frankl. The founder of logotherapy, a form of psychotherapy, Viktor Frankl describes himself as someone who ‘even in the degradation of Dachau Concentration camp retained the belief that the most important freedom of all is the freedom to determine one’s own spiritual well-being.’⁹⁴ I end the chapter by giving a brief overview of Frankl’s key ideas that are then developed through use as analytical tools and conceptual frames applied over the remainder of thesis.

Because this first section of the review is primarily concerned with how creative practice with young people and young people’s wellbeing have been conceptualised and historicised, meta-analyses, literature reviews, handbooks, and policy documents have been prioritised. The review does not work relating to spiritual wellbeing with minority or specialist groups like children in hospital, cancer care, refugees, grief, or disabilities because they are too specific in context or demographic. Rather, this research is concerned with both the broader contexts of creative practice within formal and informal

⁹⁴ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 2004, p. 1.

education and how particular concepts become embedded within those sectors. The review works from the notion of historicity as it is presented by sociologist Margret Sommers; 'a seeking to expose historicity of thinking and reasoning practices ... based on the principle that all of our knowledge, our logics, our theories, indeed our very reasoning, are marked indelibly (although often obscurely) with the signature of time, normativity, and institution building.'⁹⁵ Concepts, Somers suggests, are 'historical objects; successful truth claims are products of their time and this changes accordingly,'⁹⁶ reminding us to think about relationality and situatedness when attempting to historicise concepts. It is important to recognise then that any historicising of creativity and wellbeing will be rooted in shifting modes of understanding about youth, health, education, learning, and development. As F.G. Chalmers states, when making a distinction between history and mere chronology, a history 'will always involve a point of view.'⁹⁷

Between 2010 and 2012 in the UK, Creativity Culture and Education (CCE), the organisation formed to manage the national delivery and development of Creative Partnerships and Find Your Talent, published a Literature Review Series that included reviews of policy documents, think-tank reports, curriculum reviews, websites, and national newspaper articles as well as academic literature. They cover literature and thinking spanning the period from the 1870 Education Act--which represented a commitment to provision of education in Britain on a national scale--up to 2012. Within this series substantial work was undertaken, using an historical approach to review literature relating to the key theoretical areas underpinning my research (notably *The Rhetorics of Creativity* [2006], *Arts in Education and Creativity* [2008], *Culture and Creative Learning* [2009], *Progression in Creativity* [2012], and *The Impact of Creative Initiatives on Wellbeing* [2012]).⁹⁸ This chapter takes that series as its starting point and then looks to the fields of arts and health and youth studies for further conceptualisations and historicisations of creative and wellbeing practices with young people, beyond those articulated in relation to mainstream or formal education.

Creativity and Creative practice with young people

The aforementioned CCE reviews identify and address key questions and conceptual issues within a chronological framework. They present broad patterns in the development of educational ideas and explore how these relate to concepts of creativity. In the

⁹⁵ M. Somers, *Genealogies of citizenship: Markets, statelessness, and right to have rights*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 173.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 173.

⁹⁷ F. G. Chalmers, *Learning from Histories of Art Education: An Overview of Research and Issues* cited in E. Eisner and M. Day (eds.), *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art education*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 13.

⁹⁸ All listed in the bibliography under 'Creative Partnerships' as author

examination of key ideas and concepts there is a sensitivity to the traditions and positions in relation to the historical context or moments from which they emerge. The initial review- *The Rhetorics of Creativity*--was originally published by CCE in 2006 and updated in 2010. It introduces the notion that the idea of creativity is constructed from nine 'rhetorics' (creative genius, democratic and political creativity, ubiquitous creativity, creativity for social good, creativity as economic imperative, play and creativity, creativity and cognition, the creative affordances of technology, and the creative classroom). Notably the authors suggest that within some of these rhetorics the term creativity is at risk of losing its distinctive sense because it could be used interchangeably with terms such as effective pedagogy (within creative classroom rhetoric) or productivity (within creativity as economic imperative rhetoric).

The framing of creativity discourse in relation to a range of rhetorics enables a view of education practice as being situated between extremes of elite and democratic views of creativity. This view has more recently been further compounded by the overlaying of the creativity as economic imperative rhetoric. It also serves to demonstrate the contradictory ways in which creativity is constructed at policy level and highlights the challenges associated with developing creative practice with young people as introduced in the opening chapter of this thesis. Increasingly Creative Partnerships at a national level operationalised the rhetoric of creativity as an economic imperative but at local and project level other rhetorics were often privileged. These included conceptualisations of creativity for which these nine rhetorics do not provide an opening such as vernacular creativity⁹⁹ and creativity as related to internal meaning-making and of innate kinds of value. The creativity discourses presented in the CCE reviews are trapped between two binaries, between the polar positions of utilitarian and liberal views and paradigms relating to self-expression and tradition. One important marginalisation being performed here is the idea of creativity in relation to what could be classed as elements relating to the spiritual dimension of existence and of self. A turn to the kinds of creativity that these polar positions marginalise would have concomitant benefits for schools, youth centres, and arts organisations, helping them become places that nurture wellbeing, a notion which the thesis goes on to explore. First though it is worth pausing here to quickly summarise the findings of the CCE reviews by way of further illustrating my argument.

The first rhetoric presented in *The Rhetorics of Creativity* is that of creative genius. It is cited as having come into being in the late 18th century when the idea of artistic genius

⁹⁹ Introduced to creativity and regeneration discourse by T. Edensor et. al. and referenced more fully in chapter 5: T. Edensor et. al. (eds.), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity. Rethinking the Cultural Economy*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2010.

'began to be articulated in relation to the specific personality traits of "great artists" and their "inspired works."'100 The authors suggest that this rhetoric can be traced back through certain aspects of the Romantic period to strands of European Enlightenment thought. In particular they position Kant's Critique of Judgement as being profoundly influential in shaping this rhetoric through his presentation of genius as mental aptitude 'necessary for the production of fine art, a capacity characterised by originality and opposed to imitation.'101 The authors acknowledge that whilst some contemporary commentary on creativity continues to align with the idea of certain people being more creative than others, the notion of singular creative genius is particularly problematic for educators. As such they then introduce a more democratic view of 'popular cultural taste and, by implication, of the capacity for artistic production'102 as represented by Pierre Bourdieu's sociological critique of Kant. The views of Roger Scruton, a Neo-Kantian philosopher, are then examined as a way of elucidating the take on creativity represented by a modern expression of the belief in artistic genius. Scruton's critique and expressions of despair at both modernism in the arts and creativity in education convey a sense in which 'novelty is viewed as a negative, almost dangerous, attribute when proposed by those who do not possess the requisite skill and inspiration to maintain a link with what is seen to be the best in the past.'103 The authors summarise Scruton's core concerns as being about the debasement of the arts and rejection of training, rules, and traditions. The review then cites examples of others who have been critical of the creative aspects of the modern art curriculum including The Illinois Loop website which has 'mobilised parental concern around what they define as a binary opposition between pointless creativity [for example a 6th grade art project supporting children to make art from shoe boxes] and real learning [the teaching of history and theory in relation to the established canonical figures and their works, as well as what is seen as 'classical art; via discipline and acquisition of a range of skills used by internationally-known western European and American artists from the 15th century onwards].'104 The review suggests that the traditionalist and conservative commentaries encapsulated in this rhetoric dismiss art as self-expression and imply that a craft-based approach to arts in schools results in work that should not be seen either as art or as creative. Negus, Pickering, and Pope are all presented as examples of more progressive commentators on the arts who--through their an emphasis on training, skills, and hard work--share similar concerns but are often stereotyped as being in direct opposition to more traditionalist and conservative views.

¹⁰⁰ S. Banaji, A. Burn, and D. Buckingham, *The Rhetorics of Creativity: a Literature Review*, Newcastle, UK, CCE, 2010, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

The second rhetoric groups together research that highlights the democratic nature of creativity exploring work that privileges the notion of creativity linking to the construction of identity, to cultural knowledge and the arts. It foregrounds Paul Willis' argument that the practices of high art represent forms of exclusion and that the creativity of young people's everyday lives should instead be recognised and valued. It then raises questions as to whether 'all the symbolic creativity found in the everyday life of youth is the same' and how creativity that is seen to be potentially disruptive and anti-social, politically challenging or problematic, can retain these important aspects in highly controlled institutional settings.¹⁰⁵ It is suggested that this rhetoric of creativity does not accommodate the notion of creativity for activity that links to other spheres of life, beyond culture and the arts, and as such dismisses the value of ubiquitous creativity which is the term given to the third rhetoric examined in the review.

This rhetoric of ubiquitous creativity encompasses a view of creativity beyond one associated with the arts to prioritise the skills required to respond to the modern world. The rhetoric is rooted in understanding developed in early years education and has been applied to discussions of creativity in relation to social process and ethical choice. To exemplify the concept the authors draw on two contrasting constructs of creativity as everyday--Anna Craft's 'little "c" creativity, the ability to cope effectively with changing life in the 21st century,' and Negus and Pickering's view that it is the 'dialectical tension between mundane reality and exceptional experience that lies at the heart of creative encounters, whether as producers or consumers of culture.'¹⁰⁶ Although the ubiquitous rhetoric connects with everyday life and challenges market-driven conceptualisations of creativity, both significant notions in this study, it is problematic in that it incorporates two highly contrasting views. Craft's view sees creativity as ubiquitous but relies on 'socially-endorsed notions of adequacy, ability, good behaviour, and wise choices.'¹⁰⁷ The other view, represented by Negus and Pickering's arguments, holds onto a notion of artistic genius. Tim Edensor and his co-authors offer a much more expansive conceptualisation in their idea of vernacular creativity (previously referenced and further explored in chapter 5). Vernacular creativity emphasises the everyday spaces in which creativity happens. Helen Nicholson argues that this recognition is important for applied theatre as it 'affirms the importance of learning environments that value the everyday process of improvisation.'¹⁰⁸ However, these arguments are not accommodated within the rhetoric of

¹⁰⁵ S. Banaji, A. Burn, and D. Buckingham, *The Rhetorics of Creativity: a Literature Review*, Newcastle, CCE, 2010, pp. 25 - 26.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 31-32.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 32

¹⁰⁸ H. Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 108

ubiquitous creativity and as such it does not provide an opening to the kinds of creativity this thesis seeks to explore.

The fourth rhetoric, creativity for social good, is constructed through the triangulation of analysis of the 1999 NACCCE report, critiques of the report, and claims made from within the community arts movement. It presents a view of individual creativity as linked to social structures, emphasises integration of the 'socially excluded,' and encapsulates educational policy of the arts as tools for personal good and for social regeneration. It cites educational and economic concerns as the basis for generating policy interest in creativity. The fifth rhetoric, creativity as economic imperative, positions creativity as the most effective strategy for navigating economic change. It is within the unpacking of this rhetoric that we encounter an understanding of creativity at the root of Third Way and austerity policies and in turn, the political justification for, and significant investment in, Creative Partnerships. It is a view of creativity that prioritises the creation of a more flexible workforce required as a result of the shift from manufacturing-based work to knowledge-based work. It cites literature from the late 1990s to mid-2000s, including commentary from Demos reports, Charles Leadbeater, Kimberly Seltzer and Tom Bentley, David Livingstone and Anthonie Scholtz, to chart a rhetoric that 'annexes the concept of creativity in the service of a neoliberal economic programme and discourse.'¹⁰⁹ This generalised application of creativity is problematised in definitional terms in that 'the danger is that it may simply become a more generous and appealing synonym for "effective," thereby losing its distinctive sense.'¹¹⁰ In contrast, the following two rhetorics are concerned with all that is distinctive about creativity.

The sixth rhetoric focuses on play and the idea of childhood play as the origin of problem solving and creative thought. It explores the relationship with play developed within education and its links to Romantic thought, specifically Rousseau. The seventh rhetoric, creativity and cognition, is framed by psychological and scientific terms drawn from the range of theories of multiple intelligences, the testing of mental creativity levels, and the potential of artificial intelligence. As such it encompasses a range of emphases from 'the internal production of creativity in the mind'¹¹¹ to external contexts and cultures. The eighth rhetoric, the creative affordances of technology, groups together a range of positions, from those 'who applaud technology as inherently improving' to those 'who welcome it cautiously and see creativity in, as yet, undertheorized relationship between contexts, users and applications.'¹¹² The final rhetoric, the creative classroom, is defined by

¹⁰⁹ S. Banaji, A. Burn, and D. Buckingham, *The Rhetorics of Creativity: a Literature Review*, Newcastle, UK, CCE, 2010, p. 70.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 71.

'pragmatic accounts of the craft of the classroom rather than in academic theories of mind or culture.'¹¹³

Three subsequent reviews in the CCE series go on to expand on these rhetorics through exploration of the emergence of the terms and practices of arts education (2008), creative and cultural learning (2009), and assessment of creativity (2012). Creativity is dissected as a 'big idea' and analysed in terms of how it is experienced in society and in schools. The history of arts education is explored by reference to the pre-war period as one which saw 'a lack of attention to the arts in key government publications, an emphasis on education structures rather than on curriculum, the influence of key individual charismatic practitioners rather than official policy and the slow spread of progressive thinking in education which came to fruition in the second part of the century.'¹¹⁴ The post second world war period is contextualised by the key issues of the continued spread of progressive ideas, the discovery of child art as a distinct phenomenon, and an emphasis on creativity largely in terms of self-expression. *The Arts in Education and Creativity* review states that the introduction of the national curriculum in UK schools in the late 1980s marked the start of an era in which schools became preoccupied with accountability, testing and bureaucracy, one in which the arts were never 'directly criticised or neglected in theory but their significance was downgraded.'¹¹⁵ In this context it is suggested that arts educators simply resorted to advocacy.

The review of *Cultural and Creative Learning* sees a complex teasing apart of creativity and their relevance to education. In summary the review details how in the period from the 1940s to the 1960s frameworks for creative practice were sometimes provided by traditions of arts education, sometimes by progressive education and sometimes by right or left wing cultural criticism. It stresses that arguments for creative practice that sought direct economic justification were rare and suggests that it is neoliberalism, as 'the dominant discourse of the age,'¹¹⁶ that has overwritten previous understandings of creativity with a version that emphasises compatibility with economic change. This version of creativity is described in terms relating to self-care, self-sufficiency, and a workforce capable of adaptability and continuous learning (see discussion of neoliberalism in chapter 1). It describes neoliberalism as a discourse that leaves space for the recognition of creativity and one that promises wellbeing to creative subjects--those who can fit its new forms of work and education. Notably the neoliberal construct of wellbeing and its

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 71.

¹¹⁴ M. Fleming, *Arts in Education and Creativity: A Literature Review*, Newcastle, UK, CCE, 2008 p. 15.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

¹¹⁶ K. Jones, *Culture and Creative Learning: A Literature Review*, Newcastle, UK, CCE, 2009, p. 57.

relationship to creativity receives very little further attention or critique in this review or further reviews in the series. This lack of neoliberal critique perhaps reflects CCE's attempt to better align with the Coalition's priorities.

The shifting foci of the titles of the CCE literature reviews is interesting and suggests an initiative swimming in the tides of policy shifts and preferences, performing to agendas in order to survive. In 2012 CCE published a review exploring connections between creative initiatives and wellbeing. In terms of historicising this attempt to connect creativity and wellbeing it perhaps again represents an attempt by CCE to better align with the Coalition's key policies namely David Cameron's concern with the happiness of the UK. This concern was prominent early in Cameron's term of office (detailed in chapter 1), in his election campaign and with the emphasis placed on wellbeing within the Coalition's Big Society ideology. The Big Society framed wellbeing within an idea that integrated the notion of the free market with that of social solidarity. David Cameron proposed the Big Society idea brought 'freedom for local interests to promote activity and wellbeing'¹¹⁷ namely through local people volunteering their time and sometimes their money.

CCE's *The Impact of Creative Initiatives on Wellbeing* review opens by stating that there is no agreed-upon definition of the term 'wellbeing' and that it tends to be conceptualised slightly differently in different disciplinary areas. Also noted as problematic is the fact that wellbeing can be 'used interchangeably with other terms such as "happiness," "flourishing," "enjoying a good life," and life satisfaction, and all these terms carry different underlying meanings and emphases.'¹¹⁸ It also emphasises that learning from studies in adult wellbeing cannot be applied uncritically to children and young people. The main section of the review is given over to examining the correlation between common outcomes of creative education initiatives and aspects of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. The hedonic approach focuses on considering what makes life pleasurable and makes people feel good.¹¹⁹ Hedonic approaches to wellbeing depend on what the person themselves thinks would make their life 'better' rather than any 'objective determination of what others think ought to make their life better.'¹²⁰ The review points out the limitations of this approach to wellbeing, especially within an educational context where it sets up potential tensions between adults and young people in relation to their different understandings of routes to happiness and fulfilling potential. As such then the review favours a eudaimonic approach to wellbeing as conceptualised by contemporary

¹¹⁷ M. Collins, 'Sport, Religion, Wellbeing, and Cameron's Big Society', *Implicit Religion*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2014, pp. 139-165, p. 140.

¹¹⁸ K. Jones, *Culture and Creative Learning: A Literature Review*, Newcastle, UK, CCE, 2009, p. 9

¹¹⁹ See D. Kahneman, E. Diener and N. Schwarz (eds.), *Well-being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1998

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.18

philosopher's extension of Aristotelian notions of eudaimonia as activity expressing virtue to encompass ideas of living in accordance with true self. 'Waterman argues that eudaimonia is associated with personal expressiveness and self-realisation.'¹²¹ Seligman and Csikszentmihayli's Positive Psychology is then privileged. Csikszentmihayli's work on Flow-Theory¹²² is emphasised to demonstrate the link between eudaimonic wellbeing and creativity: 'creative activities can induce flow, and flow is a manifestation of wellbeing.'¹²³

Viktor Frankl's logotherapy is completely overlooked in this review perhaps because it is rooted in less individualistic conceptualisations of wellbeing. Nevertheless, the oversight is particularly intriguing given that Csikszentmihayli's conceptualization of positive psychology practically replicates Franklian philosophy, simply omitting acknowledgement of the noetic (Frankl's term for the spiritual, further detailed in Chapter 2) realm presumably because it does not complement the desire to achieve scientific credibility. The achievement of Csikszentmihayli's concept of 'flow' is based on a very Franklian understanding of self-directed consciousness but rather than attributing this to the noetic realm Csikszentmihayli states that 'consciousness has developed the ability to override its genetic instructions and to set its own course of action.... The strength to persevere despite obstacles and setbacks' [the defiant power of the spirit in Franklian terms] 'comes from an ability to order the consciousness so as to be in control of feelings and thoughts.'¹²⁴ Despite adopting and adapting Franklian thought Csikszentmihayli is explicitly critical of those who think consciousness is related to a spiritual realm. For Csikszentmihayli, creating meaning involves bringing order to the contents of the mind by integrating one's actions into a unified flow. Self-transcendence is understood as 'the last shift in the redirection of energy, having discovered what one can do alone the ultimate goal merges with a system larger than the person – a cause, an idea, a transcendental entity.'¹²⁵ In this context flow becomes a psychic parallel for the noetic process of meaning-making. A turn to look at Frankl in relation to the impact of creative initiatives on young people's wellbeing would expand the discourse to consider notions of the relational and of the spiritual (or 'noetic' as Frankl refers to it), which relate to individual and

¹²¹ A. Waterman, 'Two Conceptions of Happiness: Contrasts of Personal Expressiveness (Eudaimonia) and Hedonic Enjoyment,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 64, no. 4, pp. 678-691

¹²² See M. Csikszentmihayli, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play*, San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 1975

M. Csikszentmihayli, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, New York, Harper and Row, 1990

M. Csikszentmihayli, *Flow: The Psychology of Happiness*, New York, Rider and Co., 1992

M. Csikszentmihayli, *Flow: The Classic work on How to Achieve Happiness*, New York, Harper and Row, 2002

¹²³ R. McLellan et. al., *The Impact of Creative Initiatives on Wellbeing: A Literature Review*, Newcastle, Creativity Culture and Education, 2012, p. 19.

¹²⁴ M. Csikszentmihayli, *Flow*, New York, Harper Perennial, 1991, p. 24.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

individualised forms of subjectivity while insisting on the inherence of the social, sociality, and the individual. The thesis goes on to explore this idea in the subsequent chapters.

Despite the limitations I have outlined the CCE series provides a good sense of the development of creative practice with young people through formal education in the UK and the impact of this practice on wellbeing. However it does not cover conceptualisations of creativity and wellbeing or the historicising of related practices with young people that have emerged from the fields of informal education. A comparable tracing of the strands of creativity thought and practice within the youth studies literature does not yet exist-- here creative practice and creativity are mainly discussed in relation to new media discourse (technology, digital arts, digital creativity and digital games studies), youth enterprise, or in relation to creative methods for researching the lives of young people.

Conceptualising Young People's Wellbeing

In searching for conceptualisations and historicisations of young people's wellbeing I turned to the fields of arts and health, public health, and youth studies. From the field of nursing and health 'social' and 'holistic' approaches to health care research, training and practice¹²⁶ are useful as they extend the definition of wellbeing beyond a material fact by attending to it as a complex social and subjective experience. Recent Arts and Health research has built on this discourse to explore the relationship between arts participation and wellbeing¹²⁷ and tends to focus on arguing against the imperative to do evidence-based impact research.¹²⁸ In *Arts in Health: Designing and Researching Interventions*, Daisy Fancourt traces the origins of the use of arts in health and the development of theory and practice in the field. Fancourt suggests that theoretical developments over the last 100 years, namely the emergence of the 'biopsychosocial' model of health,¹²⁹ have provided a range of opportunities for the application of the arts in health. She identifies how the arts have been shown to have effects at all three levels of the biopsychosocial

¹²⁶ Particularly significant is the Person-Centred Nursing Framework (PCNF) developed by McCormack and McCance in 2010 and 2017: B.McCormack and T. McCance, *Person-centred Nursing; theory and practice*. Oxford, Wiley Blackwell, 2010

¹²⁷ Mike White's work is particularly significant in this regard: M.White, *Arts Development in Community Health: a social tonic*. Oxford, Radcliffe, 2009.

¹²⁸ A. Raw, et. al. 'A Hole in the Heart: Confronting the Drive for Evidence-based Impact Research in Arts in Health', *Arts & Health, an International Journal for Research, Policy & Practice*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2012, pp. 97-108.

¹²⁹ 'Aspects of public health, psychosomatic medicine, and behavioural medicine as well as other related fields such as health psychology are brought together in the 'biopsychosocial' model, first articulated by American psychiatrist George Engel as a challenge to the biomedical model in a paper published in the journal *Science* in April 1977. Engel proposed that the traditional biomedical model did not operate in isolation but was actually integrated with psychological factors and social factors with direct and indirect pathways to health.' D.Fancourt, *Arts in Health: Designing and Researching Interventions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, p.29

model: bio (the brain, physical function, biological markers); psycho (cognition and development, stress anxiety and pain, emotions and mental health, health behaviours, sense of self and illness cognitions); the social (social support, social identity and relationships and social behaviours). Fancourt then goes on to suggest that the breadth of impact the arts have on people's health and wellbeing actually goes beyond biospsychosocial effects and that this breadth makes it hard to draw together related research and practice. Instead Fancourt suggests that the field might be better understood as a 'web of ties between the arts and health.'¹³⁰ Emma Brodzinski, Veronica Baxter and Katharine E. Low helpfully situate applied theatre practices in health within this 'web'. Baxter and Low's emphasis is on charting performance-based health responses paying particular attention to the different challenges to wellbeing that exist within the global north and south and the consideration of the emergence of Theatre for Development's use as a health approach.¹³¹ Brodzinski argues that theatre 'appears to be under-represented'¹³² in accounts of arts in health practice. She suggests that other art forms such as music and visual arts may have proved more popular within health and care settings as are they are more containable and more sustainable – they do not 'need to take up the space and time that the performance of a play or a drama workshop would require.'¹³³

In 2014 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW) was formed in the UK aiming to improve awareness of the benefit that the arts can bring to health and wellbeing. In 2017 the group published a report detailing the findings of their inquiry into practice and research in the arts in health and social care and posed recommendations to improve policy and practice. The report acknowledges that wellbeing has not yet been 'rigorously conceptualised'¹³⁴ and proceeds to draw on a definition of wellbeing which was devised through a Delphi consensus development process involving a range of stakeholders and facilitated by *The What Works Centre for Wellbeing*.¹³⁵ Three dimensions of wellbeing are identified in this definition:

The personal dimension includes confidence and self-esteem, meaning and purpose, reduced anxiety and increased optimism; the cultural dimension includes

¹³⁰ D.Fancourt, *Arts in Health: Designing and Researching Interventions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, p.41

¹³¹ V. Baxter and K. Low, *Applied Theatre: Performing Health and Wellbeing*, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2017

¹³² E. Brodzinski, *Theatre in Health and Care*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p.19

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Professor Dame Sally Davies cited in, *Creative health: The arts for health and wellbeing*, All-Party Parliamentary Group, London, 2017, p.5. Available at: http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf

¹³⁵ A member of [What Works Network](#) created in the UK in 2013 to ensure that the best available evidence on 'what works' is available to the people who make decisions on public services.

coping and resilience, capability and achievement, personal identity, creative skills and expression and life skills such as employability; the social dimension includes belonging and identity, sociability and new connections, bonding and social capital, reducing social inequalities and reciprocity¹³⁶

The APPGAHW report also suggests that it is useful to distinguish wellbeing from quality of life and happiness in order to avoid ‘the pitfalls of individualism to advocate community-based and societal approaches’¹³⁷ to arts and health practice. Despite a focus on health and wellbeing throughout the lifecourse there is no attempt within this report - or other literature currently available in the field of applied theatre in health - to conceptualise or historicise young people’s wellbeing specifically. At the time of writing, young-people-focussed arts and health literature comprises work on the arts in hospital settings,¹³⁸ process and outcome evaluations of arts based initiatives with very specific demographics (such as young Black men living in South London),¹³⁹ and work drawing on research in both cognitive neuroscience and positive psychology to examine issues relating to wellbeing in schools and how creative activity and creative thinking might promote a sense of wellbeing.¹⁴⁰ Within public health literature there exists some considered work examining the impact of participation in performing arts on adolescent health and behaviour but it is entirely outcome-focussed and does not give any attention to the conceptualising of young people’s wellbeing.¹⁴¹ More pertinent to the scope of this literature review is work undertaken in the field of youth studies by Australian scholars, Julie McLeod and Katie Wright. I have privileged this source in the literature review because it comes closest to providing a sense of how young people’s wellbeing has been conceptualised and historicised. More specifically, though, it is an important source because it highlights the polarisation of the individual and the social as unhelpful, providing openings to the relationship between spiritual wellbeing and creativity that I am tracing in this thesis.

¹³⁶ Ibid.,p.18

¹³⁷ Ibid.,p.19

¹³⁸ L. Hastings, C. Finney, L. Sullivan. 'Art On The Ward', *Artsprofessional*, Issue 19, 2009. Available at <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/feature/art-ward> (Accessed on 03 August 2018).

K. Bishop, *From their perspectives: Children and Young People’s Experience of a Paediatric hospital Environment and its Relationship to their Feeling of Wellbeing*, [Sydney Digital Theses \(Open Access\)](https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/3962), Sydney, 2008. Available at: <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/3962> (Accessed on 03 August 2018).

¹³⁹ M. Kemp, 'Promoting the health and wellbeing of young black men using community-based drama', *Health Education*, vol. 106, no. 3, 2006, pp. 186-200.

¹⁴⁰ J. Barnes, 'You Could See It on Their Faces: The Importance of Provoking Smiles in Schools', *Health Education*, vol. 105, no. 5, 2005, pp. 392-400.

¹⁴¹ N. Daykin, et. al., 'The Impact of Participation in Performing Arts on Adolescent Health and Behaviour: A Systematic Review of the Literature', *Journal of Health Psychology*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2008, pp.251–64. Updated by H. Bungay and T. Vella-Burrows to include literature dating up to 2011 in *Perspectives in Public Health*, vol. 133, no. 1, 2013, pp. 44-52.

In 2015 McLeod and Wright brought together a collection of papers concerned with critical perspectives on rethinking youth wellbeing. The themes of the papers are wide-ranging, comprising a focus on the social determinants of wellbeing, pedagogical approaches to health promotion, cross cultural and historical contexts, social-emotional learning, sexuality, practices of the self, and changing educational ideas. In 2016 the pair published a paper examining wellbeing as part of a series of keyword interrogations within the field of youth studies. Broadly speaking McLeod and Wright suggest that wellbeing frames 'social and educational practices, normalizes particular conceptions and calibrations of well and unwell ways of being and, in turn, regulates the circumstances in which youthful subjectivities take shape.'¹⁴² Their interrogation of wellbeing then charts the rise of the self-esteem movement in schools during the 1970's as offering the 'antecedents to and revealing contrasts with contemporary wellbeing agendas, notably self-esteem's connection to social change imaginaries compared to the more overtly individualizing strategies and ambitions of wellbeing discourses.'¹⁴³ It is made clear that although both agendas run the risk of promoting individualised solutions and certain norms about young people, the wellbeing agenda 'appears more focussed on securing the status quo and with adjusting individuals to fit the parameters of contemporary social life, rather than advocating for the kind of radical transformations of self and the social envisaged by the feminist self-esteem movement.'¹⁴⁴ In this interrogation McLeod and Wright also consider the late twentieth-century phenomenon of the adoption of wellbeing at policy level. They argue that it reflects a shift from targeted mental health interventions to those that have a more universal address which are potentially applicable to everyone, and as such cast us all as equally vulnerable. They acknowledge that youth wellbeing arises from the overlapping of an increasingly therapeutic culture with the neoliberal imperatives for responsabilization and the ways in which young people are solicited into this process¹⁴⁵. Here wellbeing is conceptualised as an element of the broader construction of social problems 'as personal problems of self-adjustment and self-affirmation: a nugatory inward gaze toward a self-enclosed world thus replaces any serious attempts to change the external world for the better.'¹⁴⁶ The influence of neoliberalism on the conceptualisation of wellbeing converts structural circumstances into individual responsibilities, or experiences of failure into personal vulnerabilities. Wellbeing in this sense has a very different lineage from 'a term such as welfare, with its historical associations of charity and benevolence,'

¹⁴² J. McLeod and K. Wright. 'What does wellbeing do? An Approach to Defamiliarize Keywords in Youth Studies', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2016, p. 1-17.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ P. Kelly, 'Youth at Risk: Processes of Individualisation and Responsibilisation in the Risk Society'. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2001, pp. 23–33.

¹⁴⁶ J. McLeod and K. Wright. 'What Does Wellbeing Do? An Approach to Defamiliarize Keywords in Youth Studies', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2016, p. 1-17.

and as such the researchers posit that a focus on wellbeing rather than welfare might detract from 'the actual social [and material] determinants of wellbeing and the need to address those – not least of which is enduring social disadvantage.'¹⁴⁷

McLeod and Wright's interrogation of wellbeing goes beyond the connection with the reach of neoliberalism to consider how it has also been shaped by the impact on emotional life by other dimensions of cultural mood, specifically the 'movement of personal feelings--optimism, feeling positive, happiness and unhappiness--into public life.'¹⁴⁸ This cultural mood is identified as a source for both the rise of wellbeing in youth and education policy specifically and a subsequent shift from a dominant model of targeted interventions for young people 'diagnosed with disorders or considered "at risk" of developing psychological problems' to 'large-scale, universal, preventative approaches aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of entire student populations.'¹⁴⁹ McLeod and Wright suggest that while preventing mental health problems is a key aim of the wellbeing agenda in educational policy, the wider ambition is one of enriching quality of life. They position this as part of a broader enhancement agenda characterised by an emphasis on promoting 'positive emotions in children (optimism, resilience, confidence, curiosity, motivation, self-discipline, self-esteem, etc.)' over negative ones.¹⁵⁰ In embracing these ideals of positive psychology, wellbeing again becomes subject to neoliberalism and particularly its commitment to accountability. As such the researchers question if testing wellbeing might become yet another measure of educational success and if it does, they ask, then what might happen to those that 'fail'? They also point to other potential pitfalls of wellbeing practice operating from a privileging of positive psychology as producing short-lived effects and the potential neglect of the physical factors that foster wellbeing.

The literature examined up to this point in the chapter reiterates the reductive versions of wellbeing and creativity that emerge from the neoliberal context as introduced in the previous chapter. The kind of 'reductions' that are performed here relate to atomising both wellbeing and creativity to notions of the individual, or as concepts firmly linked to economic or social productivity. The review also reinforces the need to articulate different and broader conceptualisations of both terms in order to develop more diverse forms of creative practice with young people. Contemporary literature from the field of applied theatre recognises the parallels in the ways in which creativity and wellbeing are

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ K. Wright, 'Student Wellbeing and The Therapeutic Turn in Education', *The Australian Education and Developmental Psychologist*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2014, pp. 141-152.

¹⁵⁰ R. Cigman, 'We Need to Talk about Well-being', *Research Papers in Education*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2012, pp. 449-462.

manipulated by neoliberalism. This literature positions relationality as a key aspect of practice that seeks to readdress the balance between self-care and social welfare, as discussed in the introductory chapter, and taken up again in chapter 4. To a certain extent then the thesis positions applied theatre knowledge as a bridge connecting creativity with notions of spiritual wellbeing in that there is something implicit in the practice that helps redefine wellbeing and creativity through an acknowledgment of the spiritual significance of life. As I go on to discuss in chapter 4, there is scope for exploring theatre as a 'life practice' that is associated with the notions of spiritual practice and spiritual wellbeing, although it is certainly the case that applied theatre does not possess a language for talking about the spiritual or spiritual wellbeing in explicit terms.

Within the field of youth studies, however, attempts have been made to articulate the notion of spiritual development as a missing priority within contemporary UK practice. Writing in the 2008 edition of *New Directions for Youth Development*,¹⁵¹ Peter Benson and Eugene C. Roehkepartain, co-directors of Minnesota's Centre for Spiritual Development in Childhood Adolescence, argue that efforts to intentionally bring spirituality to the centre of youth work marks a return to the historical and philosophical roots of youth work, its appreciation of the whole person including beliefs and values, and that this can lead to light-hearted, playful but deeply meaningful approaches to practice. They suggest that working to extend young people's development often gets eclipsed by the focus on protecting children from abuse and that youth workers feel unconfident to explore spiritual dimensions of development because they fear causing offence in what has become a broadly secular culture. In the absence of a secular framework for defining spiritual wellbeing, Benson and Roehkepartain attempt to develop their own incredibly complex construct which makes no attempt to link with creativity or creative practice.

Further and fairly regular exploration of young people's spiritual wellbeing can be found in the following journals: *International journal of children's spirituality*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Health Education*, *Mental Health*, *Religion and Culture*, *Pastoral Care in Education*, *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, and *Early Child Development and Care*. However, in the main, this work explores young people's spirituality only in relation to specialist areas of practice such as early years education, pastoral care in education, or in the context of explicitly religious and medical contexts. What is lacking here is a systematic exploration of young people's spiritual wellbeing in relation to creativity or creative practice.

¹⁵¹ P. Benson and Eugene C Roehkepartain. Spiritual Development: A Missing Priority in Youth Development, *New Directions for Youth Development*, vol. 2008, no. 118, pp. 13-28.

This review then has discovered a significant gap in the literature--one relating to the exploration of young people's spiritual wellbeing within creative practice and more specifically the need for a spiritual wellbeing framework that encapsulates creativity. It has also identified the potential to make a connection between the notion of spiritual wellbeing and creative practice with young people by identifying that within the field there resides some implicit understanding of what could be classed as elements relating to the spiritual dimension of existence and of self. As noted, in chapter 4 I explore how this lack is replicated within the field of applied theatre research, where there is as yet no language for surfacing or examining spiritual wellbeing. The gap is a linguistic one and my argument in the thesis is that this linguistic gap, if addressed, might open up significant avenues for re-examining the impact of creative education and applied theatre practice on young people's spiritual wellbeing. In the absence of a pre-existing source here, and as introduced in the opening chapter, in this research I turn to Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, and explore how this approach might be used to potentially fill this gap. Frankl views the will to meaning as representative of the spiritual dimension and the human spirit.¹⁵² For Frankl people are not defined by their physical dimension, their psychological dimension or even a combination of both but fundamentally by their spiritual (noetic) dimension. The noetic dimension contains freedom of choice, intentionality or decision of the will, conscience, inspiration, the capacity to be awed, artistic and creative interests and the understanding of values and love. This dimension contains the core of our humanity.¹⁵³

As cited earlier contemporary arts and health researchers such as Fancourt align arts practice and the benefits of arts participation with the biopsychosocial model of health as opposed to biomedical models. The APPG report defines 'wellbeing' in terms that are arguably similar to the definition of 'spiritual wellbeing' in this thesis, particularly in relation to the 'personal dimension' of wellbeing given that it includes 'confidence and self-esteem, meaning and purpose, reduced anxiety and increased optimism.'¹⁵⁴ However this thesis argues that Frankl provides a definition of wellbeing that is more explicit about its spiritual dimensions - he foregrounds the spiritual, placing greater emphasis on meaning making and its importance to spiritual wellbeing – and as such provides a more appropriate frame through which to analyse the practice in focus and in particular, to consider the contribution of theatre practice in health care. In a 2011 paper exploring the relationship between meaning and health, Hanlie Van Wyk states that 'the universality of logotherapy

¹⁵² V. E. Frankl, *The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of Logotherapy*, New York, Meridian, 1988, p.124

¹⁵³ A.V Graber, *Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy: Method of choice in ecumenical pastoral psychology*. Ohio, Windham Hall, 2004, p.44-45

¹⁵⁴ *Creative health: The arts for health and wellbeing*, All-Party Parliamentary Group, London, 2017, p.18. Available at: http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf

and its non-reductionist view of humankind allows for its application to augment current health practices, therapies and treatments in line with the biopsychosocial model'.¹⁵⁵ Logotherapy then represents a conceptual tool that could deepen understanding of the relationship between arts practice and this personal dimension of wellbeing and enable the development of new vocabulary for the field of applied theatre where there are currently linguistic shortcomings. More broadly, and beyond the scope of this study, this could create openings for interdisciplinary work aimed at further understanding concepts of health inclusive of spirit. For the purposes of my research I was drawn to Frankl initially because logotherapy sees the noetic (spiritual) dimension as the repository for our creativity but also because, in its acknowledgement of the social dimensions of spirituality and the self, it connects with applied theatre's 'traditional commitment to social justice and equality'.¹⁵⁶ As such in the next section of the review literature relating to Viktor Frankl and his logotherapy is examined with a view to providing a useful framework for exploring spiritual wellbeing in relation to creative practice with young people--particularly creative practice that is orientated by applied theatre ways of knowing and doing.

Viktor Frankl and logotherapy: a framework for exploring spiritual wellbeing - an invitation to creative practice?

My interest does not lie in raising parrots that just rehash "their master's voice" but rather in passing the torch to independent and inventive, innovative, and creative spirits.¹⁵⁷

Born in Vienna in 1905, Viktor E. Frankl was the founder of logotherapy, the third (after Freudian, then Adlerian) Viennese school of psychotherapy. Frankl was Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Vienna Medical School and served for twenty-five years as head of the Vienna Neurological Policlinic. He received degrees of Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy from Vienna University and went on to hold several professorships in the US (at Harvard, Stanford, Dallas, and Pittsburgh). Frankl's 39 books have been translated into 38 languages and there are now institutes of logotherapy on every continent. However only nine of Frankl's books have been translated into English, all of which have been published in the US, sometimes decades after their original publication in German. Three of these books¹⁵⁸ are collections of Frankl's papers

¹⁵⁵ H. Van Wyk, *In Search of a Revised Model of Health: Exploring the Relationship Between Meaning and Health*, MA Thesis, University of South Africa, 2011, p.20

¹⁵⁶ H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 265.

¹⁵⁷ V. E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, London, Rider, 2004, p. 153.

¹⁵⁸ *Psychotherapy and Existentialism, The Unconscious God: Psychotherapy and Theology, and Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*.

and lecture speeches revised and extended in later publications, and one is his autobiography published in 1997. Throughout his lifetime Frankl published 600 articles, interviews, and commentaries on current topics in psychiatry, psychology, and philosophy and also wrote some poems and a play immediately after the war. His play, *Synchronisation in Buchwald*, was translated by Joseph Fabry and performed at the Graduate Theologian Union in Berkley in 1977.

Frankl's seminal book *Man's Search For Meaning*¹⁵⁹ was written in the first year of his release from World War II concentration camps to which he lost his parents, brother, and wife. Frankl's friends persuaded against publishing *Man's Search For Meaning* anonymously; it has now sold millions of copies all over the world. It describes his experiences and observations in three concentration camps through the lens of logotherapy's philosophy. Frankl did not discover logotherapy whilst in the camps; it was a philosophy he had been developing prior to incarceration through active involvement in Viennese medical movements and as an attempt to escape his own struggles with nihilism in his youth. On pre-empting their fate Frankl's wife had sewn the manuscript of Frankl's early ideas for logotherapy into the lining of his jacket which was taken from him in Auschwitz. In *Man's Search For Meaning* Frankl refers to his ambition to reconstruct this manuscript as a mental resource for survival, the camps having formed a testing ground for his preconceived theories.

Logotherapy is a talking-based therapy in which the therapist aims to appeal to the patient's will to meaning.¹⁶⁰ Philosophically then logotherapy is built on the concept of the human being as a spiritual entity as opposed to a psychoanalytical entity. As a form of existential analysis, logotherapy equates being human with being responsible for one's own existence. Logotherapy sees the will to meaning as the fundamental driver in human beings. As such Frankl describes logotherapy as 'education towards responsibility; the patient must push forward independently towards the concrete meaning of his existence'.¹⁶¹ Logotherapy assumes that meaning must be specific and personal and that every life has a meaning which can be realized by that one person alone. The motivation theory behind logotherapy is self-transcendence: the ability to overcome the limits of the individual self and its desires by finding a meaning to fulfil through serving a cause other than oneself. Frankl sees conscience as the voice of transcendence and, whilst the

¹⁵⁹ Originally published in 1946 under the title *From Death Camp to Existentialism: A Psychiatrist's Path to a New Therapy*, re-titled in 1963.

¹⁶⁰ Accounts of practice mainly infer one-to-ones interaction between patient and therapist.

¹⁶¹ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p. 14.

religious undertone of his writing differs in strength over the years, his concern with conscience is consistently anthropological rather than theological.

In the Italian edition of *Man's Search for Meaning* Juan Batista Torello describes logotherapy as the last psychotherapy that is conceptualised in a systematic way. Frankl describes the foundations of his system through three interlinking concepts: (1) the freedom of will; (2) the will to meaning; and (3) the meaning of life. He believed that humans give meaning to their lives by realizing value: creative values by achieving tasks; experiential values by experiencing the Good, the True, and the Beautiful and by loving another human being; and attitudinal values through the ways we face life and suffering. Meaning comes from being able to actualize as many values as possible. Even a man 'who finds himself in the greatest distress, in which neither activity or creativity can bring values to life, nor experience give meaning to it--even such a man can still give his life meaning by the way he faces his fate, his distress.'¹⁶² Frankl demonstrated that his process of supporting people to develop a will to meaning, to actualize as many values as possible, was the way to spiritual wellbeing. In the first part of his book devoted to the foundations of logotherapy¹⁶³ Frankl reminds us of his conviction that there is no universal meaning of life but only the unique meanings of the individual situations. However it is only really in the 1988 English edition of *The Will to Meaning* that Frankl elaborates on his definition of values in relation to uniqueness of meanings. Here he states that there are of course commonalities in these individual situations and as such there are meanings which are shared by human beings across society and throughout history: 'These meanings refer to the human condition and these meanings are what is understood by values. So that one may define values as those meaning universals which crystallize in the typical situations a society or even humanity has to face.'¹⁶⁴ In order to unpick the problematisation of collision of values and unique meanings Frankl employs the visual metaphor of a sphere to illuminate the fundamental shape of a person's existence. If we think of a person as a three-dimensional being (living in the somatic, psychic, and spiritual realms) then by comparing the alignment of values with a sphere, where values are represented by the circles at the top and bottom of the sphere, we can see that they cannot collide or clash because there is a 'dimension' between them. This is Frankl's much repeated way of illustrating the fundamental spiritual dimension of an individual. In this particular context he uses the sphere as an analogy for the hierarchical order of

¹⁶² V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p.12

¹⁶³ V. E. Frankl, *The Will To Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*, New York, New American Library, 1988.

¹⁶⁴ V. E. Frankl, *The Will To Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*, New York, New American Library, 1988, p.56.

values determined by one's conscience (the conscience being the voice of transcendence as previously cited). The individual has to make decisions for him or herself about the ranking of values.

In 1949 logotherapy was hailed by psychotherapists and psychologists as a 'new start ... that integrated the specific physical and mental suffering this generation had to endure during the last decade.'¹⁶⁵ Following the publication of *Man's Search For Meaning* international interest in Frankl and logotherapy grew rapidly; by 1996 Frankl felt it necessary to devote a lecture to the de-gurufication of logotherapy.¹⁶⁶ In 1979, writing the foreword to a collection of essays on logotherapy, Frankl further reinforces the suggestion that logotherapy is 'not a fixed set of dogmas. It is not a closed system. As I have stated on many occasions, it is open in two directions; open to cooperation with other scientifically established psychotherapies, and open to its own evolution, to the full development of its own potential.'¹⁶⁷ It is in the spirit of this declaration that I see an invitation to practice.

There are two main custodians of Frankl's work and of logotherapy's ongoing practice; the Viktor Frankl Institute in Vienna¹⁶⁸ and The Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy in California.¹⁶⁹ The Vienna Institute, a non-profit scientific society for logotherapy and existential analysis, has recently digitized Frankl's private files--written material, films, and audio files from five decades which will soon be available for purchase. The Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy in California is a membership and training organization founded by Joseph Fabry, a student and 'disciple' of Viktor Frankl. Fabry was also born in Vienna but fled to Belgium, where he was imprisoned in a concentration camp for some time, and then to England and finally the United States. In 1965 Fabry was amongst the audience for Frankl's lecture at the Unitarian Church of Berkeley, California. This proved a life-changing experience for Fabry who subsequently dedicated the rest of his life to study of logotherapy and dissemination of Franklian thought. The two established a professional and personal bond and Fabry worked closely with Frankl to become the North America spokesman for Frankl's theories, specialising in making logotherapy accessible to those outside of the medical profession. The Institute created its own journal, *The International Forum for Logotherapy* (obtained its copyright in 1984, 66 issues to date) which features articles on how logotherapy is being expanded throughout the world in a range of fields: 'counseling, education, medicine, nursing, psychology, social work, and other fields where

¹⁶⁵ P. Polak, 'Frankl's Existential Analysis', *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, III, 1949, p. 518.

¹⁶⁶ V. E. Frankl, *The Will To Meaning*, New York, New American Library, 1988, pp158-168

¹⁶⁷ J. Fabry, R. P. Bulka, and W. S. Sahakian (Eds.), *Finding Meaning In Life*, Lanham, Jason Aronson Inc., 1979, p. X

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.viktorfrankl.org/e/index.html> (Accessed 10 July 2017).

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.logotherapyinstitute.org/Home.html> (Accessed 10 July 2017).

the question of meaning becomes pertinent.¹⁷⁰ It also includes case studies and an updated bibliography detailing recent scientific publications, theses, and dissertations. There is also a substantial archive¹⁷¹ housed at The Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California¹⁷² founded by Robert C. Leslie in 1975.¹⁷³ However, of all the writing on logotherapy, it is the work of Elisabeth Lukas (founder of and former director of the South German Institute of Logotherapy at Furstenfeldbruck) that offers the most tangible account of its practice.¹⁷⁴ She developed a 4-step process for the application of logotherapy clearly outlined in *Finding Meaning In Life* and several of her papers focus on the refinement of specific logotherapeutic tactics and techniques (see research article).

As examined in the next section, Frankl wanted to avoid the easy categorisation of logotherapy as belonging to or stemming from one particular school of thought or practice. I would argue, however, that this has enabled a wide range of individuals and movements to distort the founding principles of logotherapy to fit their own messages and to make evangelical claims about its allegiance to their endeavours. Several studies from the fields of religion,¹⁷⁵ and alcohol, drug, and gambling addiction programmes¹⁷⁶ present a distorted or reductive version of Frankl's ideas in their attempt to align logotherapy with their own practice and ideologies. Contemporary historical critique presents doubts about the accuracy of Frankl's accounts of his Holocaust experience based on the conceit that Frankl personifies Austria's denial and re-framing of its past.¹⁷⁷ Others have looked at how Freud, Adler, and Frankl's individual responses to the Nazi regime shaped their theories.¹⁷⁸ For the purpose of my study, whilst it is useful for me to be mindful of these critiques, I will not be engaging with debate about Frankl's location within addiction studies, survival theory, or the chronology of Austrian historical and political identity formation.

¹⁷⁰ http://www.logotherapyinstitute.org/International_Forum_for_Logotherapy.html website, (Accessed 15 September 2011).

¹⁷¹ Comprising 24 boxes, 4 folios: Original file records, correspondence, manuscripts, photographs, journal article photocopies/reprints, audio tapes (cassette, reel to reel), videotapes, posters, books.

¹⁷² <http://www.gtu.edu/library/special-collections/archives/frankl-logotherapy> (Accessed 15 September 2011).

¹⁷³ Leslie, Foster Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA, (1954-82) who met and studied with Frankl in 1961.

¹⁷⁴ See Elisabeth S. Lukas, *Meaningful Living: Logotherapeutic Guide to Health*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan, 1984 and eight papers in *The International Forum for Logotherapy*, (1973 – 1982) listed in the Bibliography.

¹⁷⁵ A. Tegan, *Search For Meaning As The Basic Human Motivation*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1999
D.F. Tweedie, *Logotherapy And The Christian Faith*, Ada, Baker Book House, 1961

¹⁷⁶ J.C. Crumbaugh, *Logotherapy: New Help for Problem Drinkers*, Chicago, Nelson Hall Inc., 1980

¹⁷⁷ T. Pytell, 'The Missing Piece of the Puzzle: A Reflection of the Odd Career of Viktor Frankl', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 35, No 2, 2000, pp. 281-306

¹⁷⁸ W.B. Gould, *Life With Meaning*, California, Pacific Grove, 1994

Although in his early career Frankl was active in various medical movements in Vienna he was determined to ensure that logotherapy was not aligned to or fully owned by one school of thought. Indeed he actively critiques the notion of a school of thought as being a short-lived incestuous concept.¹⁷⁹ However the literature surrounding Frankl and logotherapy provide clues to influential thinking and departure points from which his theories have developed. In his autobiography Frankl refers to the leitmotif behind all his work as ‘the broader area that lies between psychotherapy and philosophy with special attention to the problems of meaning and values in psychology.’¹⁸⁰ Through broader literature analysis we can trace the aspects of various psychotherapeutic and philosophical traditions that Frankl embraced and those which he rejected. Logotherapy’s positioning within Psychotherapy as the third Viennese school¹⁸¹ suggests a harmonious connection to Adlerian and Freudian thinking which is not exactly the case. The tenets of logotherapy are rooted in a rejection of fundamental concepts from both schools of thought because Alder’s individual psychology ignored the notion of meaning and Freud’s psychoanalysis lacked a human element.¹⁸² When translated into practice, however, this theoretical rejection and deviation is confusing as in many instances Frankl offers logotherapy as a supplement to psychotherapy rather than stand-alone provision. Theoretically then Frankl finds Freudian psychoanalysis reductive in that it is rooted in the will to pleasure rather than the will to meaning. For Frankl pleasure or happiness is a by-product of meaning fulfilment. He rejects the notion of human values being nothing but a subjective design; a projection of instincts in Freudian terms; or archetypes in Jungian. Out of this thinking Frankl builds one of his key principles: the objective quality inherent in meanings and values. For Frankl a person’s values and meanings stem from a sphere beyond and above them rather than from the subject itself. As such he applauds ontoanalysis in helping reinstate the definition of a human person as a phenomenon which cannot grasp its essence in a fully conditioned or predictable thing.¹⁸³ The principle of homeostasis is also problematic for Frankl in that it overlooks the human trait of self-transcendence.¹⁸⁴ For Frankl mental health is based on an adequate state of tension as opposed to complete equilibrium; a tension ‘similar to that which arises from the unbridgeable gap between what a man has achieved and what he should accomplish.’¹⁸⁵ Logotherapy urges patients to explore the dichotomy between what I am and what I ought

¹⁷⁹ J.B. Fabry (Ed.), *Logotherapy In Action*, New York, Jason Aaronson Inc., 1979

¹⁸⁰ V.E. Frankl, *Viktor Frankl Recollections: An Autobiography*, London, Insight Books, 1997

¹⁸¹ H. Hatt, Existential analysis and logotherapy: The contribution of Viktor E Frankl. *Encounter*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1965, 330-339.

¹⁸² See A. Langle and Britt-Mari Sykes, ‘Viktor Frankl – Advocate for humanity: on his 100th Birthday’, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 46, no 1, 2006, pp. 1-11

¹⁸³ V.E. Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, Washington, Washington Square Press, 1967

¹⁸⁴ V. E. Frankl, ‘Self Transcendence as a Human Phenomenon’, *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1966, pp. 97-106.

¹⁸⁵ V. E. Frankl, *The Will To Meaning*, New York, New American Library, 1988, p. 11

to be. Frankl could not settle with Adlerian theory on the grounds that it saw power as the driver of human behaviour and that it would not accommodate the concept of a spiritual subconscious.

Several points of influence lie within Frankl's self-defined positioning between psychotherapy and philosophy, namely concepts from the fields of phenomenology, humanistic psychology, and Judaism. In a broad sense Frankl's thinking is indebted to the historical traditions of western philosophy which, since Socrates, has always pursued existential concerns.¹⁸⁶ More specifically then Frankl is inspired by two branches of humanistic philosophy: phenomenology and existentialism. Philosophically Frankl seems to have a complex relationship with existentialism. Whilst logotherapy is clearly a therapeutic response to existential despair, Frankl is quick to reject certain aspects of existential thought so that he cannot be aligned to this tradition wholesale. His main point of departure is at the level of epistemological theory. He refers to it as being kaleidoscopic in that it prevents humans from being seen as anything but a collection of cognitive 'bits' never reaching beyond him or herself or to a real world. In keeping with his response to psychotherapeutic notions of homeostasis, Frankl rejects the existential idea of subjectivism because it is contrary to his recognition of the need for a sense of tension between human beings and their world.¹⁸⁷ This tension is referred to by Frankl as 'noodynamics' and is the cornerstone of his framework for human spirituality (and given further attention later in the chapter.¹⁸⁸ In most of his writing Frankl explicitly references the influence of Buber's "I-Thou" relationship which affirms the importance of "we" in the spiritual wellbeing of an individual. From phenomenology Frankl was inspired by the work of Max Scheler, providing a broader frame of human analysis than the biological, mechanistic, and reductive science of psychoanalysis in its acceptance of human experience over logic.

In rejecting psychoanalysis and behaviourism the only psychological tradition under which Frankl can sit is humanistic. This is a comfortable fit for Frankl, as it reflects his Jewish faith and his interests in phenomenology, existentialism, and Eastern philosophy, all of which shaped the field of humanistic psychology. Amongst his fellow humanistic psychologists Frankl allies himself with Biswanger, Carl Rogers, and Gordon Allport; argues with Maslow (meaning can be found in difficult circumstances not just through peak experience); and deviates from Rollo May (will to meaning cannot be commanded but must be elucidated). Whilst Fabry is renowned for popularising Frankl's ideas, W. Blair

¹⁸⁶ Stoics, Pascal, Descartes, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre

¹⁸⁷ V.E. Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, Washington, Washington Square Press, 1967

¹⁸⁸ V. E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, London, Rider, 2004, p.105.

Gould provides a comprehensive critical analysis of logotherapy as a philosophical psychology and contextualises Frankl culturally and historically pointing to influencing factors in the process. Gould emphasises that the humanist sensibility to which this third force of psychology belongs is classical, rather than theologically reductive. The classical definition of humanism 'preserves the vital emphases on transcendence, intuitive conscience, the search for meaning and the recognition of the religious dimension in the secular: all combined in the better understanding of the self'.¹⁸⁹ Just as Frankl opened psychotherapy to the spiritual dimensions of human experience it is arguable that his theories might help open up a focus on spiritual wellbeing in other fields. As such I now turn to look at logotherapy as a framework for spiritual wellbeing in more detail.

Logotherapy as a framework for spiritual wellbeing

For Frankl, spiritual wellbeing is born out of the ability to respond to the will to meaning and sees certain forms of neurosis and mental illness as a form of spiritual distress deriving from a frustrated will to meaning. Outside of his own personal faith and within logotherapy 'spiritual' does not have a religious connotation but refers to the specifically human dimension. Here we see again the influence of humanism on Frankl's theories almost connecting him to John Dewey's notion of 'religious' being anything that introduces genuine perspective. However in order to truly escape more traditional religious connotations Frankl borrows the Greek word *noos* (mind) using the term *noetic* in favour of spiritual - terminology I will adopt from here on in. In short, Frankl's conception of an individual sees them living in three dimensions: the somatic, the mental, and the noetic. For Frankl, it is the noetic dimension that makes us human. A two-dimensional conceptualisation of an individual prioritising only the physical and the psychic (as employed by the other two schools of psychotherapy) would see the questioning of meaning in life as a disease or a pathological symptom whereas logotherapy sees this questioning as a glimmer of humanity; the sign of a person ready to get to grips with the meaning potentials of their own life.

Fabry neatly summarizes the Franklian distinction between psychological acts and spiritual acts: psychological acts are motivated by pleasure, power, prestige, and self-actualization whereas spiritual acts are motivated by meaning. 'We act for self-transcendence, for the sake of someone or something beyond ourselves.'¹⁹⁰ The noetic dimension is driven by the self. We are the decision makers, problem solvers, exercising personal choice over who we are and who we can become. In this paradigm human beings are presented as free agents and that freedom can only be experienced through

¹⁸⁹ W. B. Gould, *Life with meaning*, California, Pacific Grove, 1994, p. 125.

¹⁹⁰ J. B. Fabry, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, Abilene, Institute of Logotherapy Press, 1968, p. 18.

the noetic dimension as the body imprisons and the psyche is driven. The noetic dimension does not enable 'freedom from [biological, psychological, or sociological] conditions,' nor 'the freedom from anything, but the freedom to something, the freedom to take a stand toward conditions.'¹⁹¹ Even in limiting circumstances and in suffering we have the freedom to choose our attitude and hence make meaning. So it is that a noetic uplift (an improvement in spiritual wellbeing) can take place through logotherapy outside of conversion to traditional religion. For Frankl the noetic person is at the core of all humanity including the psychotically ill. In fact the noetic dimension of the self has the power to 'rise above the afflictions of the psychophysical illness.'¹⁹² Frankl refers to this capacity as the defiant power of the human spirit.

In Franklian terms, self-transcendence is a power of the noetic realm and is realized through the three paths to meaning: fulfilling creative, experiential, and attitudinal values. Frankl projects a simple, non-religious sense of self-transcendence being achieved through acting for someone or something else. Additionally he does however speak of a superhuman dimension in which ultimate meaning, 'suprameaning,' dwells. We can see the order of this dimension in religious or secular terms: as 'God, Life, Nature or the Ecosystem ... The Suprahuman contains the human [dimension] yet transcends it.'¹⁹³ If we continue to think in non-religious terms, Maslow's parallel concept of peak experience is helpful here (and clearer than Frankl's writing on this topic) in its assertion that everyone can have transcendent experience to varying degrees of intensity and some may choose to repress them (which in Frankl's view leads to illness). Transcendence on this level could be described as feeling part of a whole, a sense of love for humanity, a sense of cosmic vastness, or a heightened sense of a universal meaning. Sensing or experiencing a connection to the suprahuman can bring assurance that order exists; that there is 'participation and relationship in the universe. Our world must hang together or neurosis will result.'¹⁹⁴

Frankl builds on and develops Freudian and Adlerian thinking in taking the role of the unconscious beyond the instinctual and into the noetic dimension. It is the noetic dimension of the unconscious with which Frankl is concerned, for it is through this realm that we can relate to and love other human beings and through which we make decisions about the tasks we will fulfil, thereby highlighting the meaning of our lives. In *The Unconscious God* Frankl states that 'the line between the psyche and noos cannot be

¹⁹¹ V. E. Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, Washington D.C., Washington Square Press, 1967, p. 75.

¹⁹² J. B. Fabry, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, Abilene, Institute of Logotherapy Press, 1968, p. 26

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 153.

drawn sharply enough. The important distinction is not whether something is conscious or unconscious but rather whether it is rooted in our instincts and propels us or whether it emerges from our centre and allows us to make our own decisions.’ The noetic dimension is then conceptualised as the repository for our creativity, our capacity to love, to reach out, to fulfil goals. The root to meaning lies in this noetic dimension. The repression of the will to meaning within the noetic unconscious leads to spiritual distress. As such logotherapy is psychotherapy which recognizes and starts from our spirit; it seeks to bring awareness to spiritual realities and to alleviate spiritual distress. In order to achieve healing logotherapy has developed techniques to make our will to meaning conscious to help overcome existential frustration and feelings of meaninglessness. These techniques are given some detailed attention in the research article.

Only because human beings are aware of meaning can they feel a lack of it. This lack is what Frankl refers to as the existential vacuum into which mental illness can spread and lead to (the Franklian termed) noogenic neuroses. As opposed to neuroses of the psyche which stem from Freudian causes such as sexual repression or past trauma, noogenic neuroses occur in the noetic dimension as ‘value collisions or conflicts of conscience,’ or by the unrewarded groping for our highest value--an ultimate meaning in life.’¹⁹⁵ Frankl perceives that the shift from old to new values in the modern era has led to widespread noogenic neuroses which can be cured by logotherapy. Frankl and his followers have been persistent in their desire to empirically prove their bold claims of the existence of noogenic neuroses and to logotherapy’s clinical efficiency as a cure. In 2005 Anthony Batthyany and David Guttarman published a review of empirical research in logotherapy structured in three sections and analysing over 600 studies conducted between 1975 and 2004. Part I presents findings on the scope, depth, and sources of meaning both in everyday life and in the context of diverse life situations and conditions. Part II presents findings relevant to logotherapy in psychopathology. In Part III studies are listed that address the reliability, validity, and structure of logotherapeutic test instruments or deal in one way or another with meta research in logotherapy. The studies analysed in the third part of Batthyany and Guttman’s review have employed a range of test instruments used to determine the therapeutic value of logotherapy (Purpose In life, Reasons For Living, Life Regard Index, Meaning In Life Depth, Noodynamic Test, Seeking Of Noetic Goals Tests, Logo Test, Life Meaningfulness Scale, Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being Inventory, Purpose Orientation Inventory, Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Tests, Existential Loneliness Questionnaire, The Life Attitude Profile, Psychological Well-Being Scales, Life Evaluation Questionnaire, Life-Meaning Survey, Life Questionnaire, The Chinese Hopelessness Scale, Psychometric

¹⁹⁵ J. B. Fabry, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, Abilene, Institute of Logotherapy Press, 1968, p. 31.

Analyses). The review suggests that there is strong empirical evidence for the theoretical assumptions of logotherapy and the effectiveness of its application. Furthermore the review implies that the body of assessment instruments described might further support the legitimizing of Frankl's theory for both clinical practice and empirical research.

Conclusion: Logotherapy as a source for conceptualising 'spiritual well-being in the creative arts?

In *Man's Search For Meaning* Frankl recounts how the arts played a part of surviving the spiritual poverty of concentration camp existence. He suggests that this contribution came in the form of the escapism provided by impromptu cabarets or the detailed and disciplined recollection of the beauty of a past artistic experience. He even describes as artistic the achievement of those who have succeeded in realizing attitudinal values in the face of suffering - those who are devoted to their spiritual development despite physical and psychic obstacles - in that their life has been given form by free will. However in many respects, Frankl's frame of reference for the arts is narrow, as it only really acknowledges the experience and impact of receiving an artistic product rather than participating in artistic processes.

Theoretically, logotherapy is rooted in forms of philosophy (specifically metaphysical forms of philosophy) and psychology (in particular, humanistic psychology) which have historic associations with the arts, in that they privilege meaning and human agency in meaning-making. Culturally Frankl was inspired by and cites several artists in his writings (Goethe, Kant, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Bruckner, and Thomas Mann) and shortly after the war he wrote poetry and a play. He often uses art or artistic processes as metaphors for his theoretical constructs. Furthermore the language employed by Frankl and others in writing about the practice of logotherapy borrows terminology from the arts, and theatre in particular (most notably 'improvisation' and 'unmasking'). As stated earlier Frankl was reluctant to have logotherapy viewed as a rigid system or dogma. Instead, he urged that psychotherapy should be practiced like an art form.¹⁹⁶ He rejects the concept of art as solely being a source of pleasure, claiming that a psychoanalytic reading of art renders it as nothing but flight from life or love, sees the basis for artistic creation being sexual repression, and reduces the great creators in the realm of the spirit to neurotics.¹⁹⁷ For Frankl, art, like logotherapy, accepts tensions and dichotomies as a reality of human experience and invites expressions of it. The dichotomy within an individual between what

¹⁹⁶ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p.11

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.36.

s/he is or s/he ought to be is crucial to Frankl's understanding of mental health. As opposed to homeostasis, this principle of dichotomy better lends itself to artistic activity even in an explicitly therapeutic context. Similarly, art is capable of heightening what Frankl describes as the necessary noological tension between a person and the world that s/he is in, by which he implies that through attending to this tension a person can develop their critical and reflective capacities and spiritual resilience. For Frankl, compelled by the notion of conscience, the arts recognise, explore, and reinforce his fundamental principles that we are taught by inner and personal experience. The arts are repeatedly referenced as a means of realizing experiential values in that those who experience or engage in the arts 'never doubt for a moment that life is meaningful'¹⁹⁸ and that an artistic experience for some might count as an ecstatic moment capable of 'retroactively flooding an entire life with meaning.'¹⁹⁹

Ultimately the term 'spiritual' conveys the sense of something beyond ourselves that is a provocative notion and a rich and resonant link for applied theatre practice and creative practice more broadly. Freud saw this 'something beyond' as an oceanic feeling²⁰⁰ which is a residue from the early formation of the ego. However what Frankl offers is the opportunity to investigate the positioning of research in the noetic dimension and what this then implies for artistic practice--specifically in this case creative practice with young people. What might an investigation of these potential connections between applied theatre and the noetic mean for creative practice with young people? What kind of language and articulations can be used comfortably to discuss the noetic realm in the contexts in which creative practice with young people takes place and with practitioners and young people themselves? These are the series of relationships to be investigated through the following research project.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 58.

²⁰⁰ See Sigmund Freud and James Strachey. *Civilisation and its Discontents*, New York, Norton, 1962.

Publishable Research Article

Untapped Meaning: Exploring the Relevance of a Logotherapeutic Approach in Dramatherapy and Applied Theatre Practice

Abstract

The starting point for the small-scale research project reported in this article was a question: why has logotherapy, a key component of the therapeutic traditions in the global North, been overlooked by dramatherapy and applied theatre? The article gives an account of a small-scale research project that offered an open-ended opportunity to explore the relationship between theatre and logotherapeutic ideas and practices. Logotherapy, initially proposed by Viktor Frankl in his book *Man's Search For Meaning*, provides a frame of reference for defining human meaning-making processes.

Here, logotherapy provides critical and practical framework to both shape a programme of reflective practice for a group of theatre actors, which aimed to encourage a discussion of theatre and processes of meaning-making, and to analyse the project findings. The research demonstrates that engagement in theatre-making processes can contribute to actors' ability to make meaning in their professional and personal lives and as such has relevance to the fields of dramatherapy and applied theatre. I argue that actors' meaning-making is most effectively enabled in rehearsal through processes which mirror logotherapeutic sequencing. Specifically, meaning-making is enabled for the actor by supporting the individual to manage the complexity of self through a range of theatre-making practices. The article identifies four examples of how this meaning-making process is enabled: self constructed meaning-making; meaning-making through physicalization; co-construction of meaning-making; and meaning-making through explicit reference to people as actors. I argue that, in exploring the development of a character-self, theatre-making goes beyond logotherapy in acknowledging both the therapeutic benefits of kinaesthetic, embodied, and collective forms of meaning-making and the meaning derived through experiencing transformation, empathy, and 'otherness'. I conclude that a logotherapeutic reading of actor experience helps us to articulate how involvement within theatre-making processes supports approaches to life practice. As such I suggest that further research is necessary to identify theatre-making practices and processes that can be better explored and exploited within the field of dramatherapy and applied theatre for their logotherapeutic potential.

Keywords: dramatherapy; applied theatre; meaning-making; logotherapy; rehearsal, wellbeing, actors; theatre-making

As an applied theatre practitioner and researcher interested in how engagement in theatre practice supports aims relating to wellbeing, I open this article by asking why Viktor Frankl, a key contributor to the therapeutic traditions commonly in practice in the global North, has been overlooked by the fields of dramatherapy and applied theatre? Specifically this article is concerned with practice within the United Kingdom (UK). Logotherapy is a form of psychotherapy defined by the twentieth-century neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl who claimed that finding meaning is the primary motivation for living and that our search for meaning is guided by values and conscience--an intuitive capacity to find out, to 'sniff out' the unique meaning inherent in a situation. Logotherapy was inspired by humanism and existentialism whereas dramatherapy practice in the UK has mainly taken root from the (more clinically acceptable) psychological forces of behaviourism and psychoanalysis.²⁰¹ However the contemporary concern with wellbeing reaches well beyond mainstream health provision and is especially emphasised within place making,²⁰² within education,²⁰³ and central government policy.²⁰⁴ As dramatherapists and applied theatre practitioners are engaging with these agendas and contexts I propose that logotherapy is useful because it opens up aspects of wellbeing such as meaning-making, self-transcendence, and spirituality for examination, and works towards a more developed, adequate, and comfortable language for accounting for these significant aspects of theatre and therapeutic practice. Within this article I focus specifically on what logotherapy offers as a critical framework through which we can analyse meaning-making. What can be learnt about the meaning-making processes engaged in by actors involved in a range of theatre-making practices that might be transferable to other contexts such as dramatherapy and applied theatre projects? Furthermore, can theatre-making offer logotherapy deeper insight into meaning-making and how it can be enabled?

The article documents a small-scale research project with six actors in which I openly explored the relationship between Frankl's ideas and a range of theatre practices (as represented by the actors involved in the research--see following section). In this project I focus on the actor, devising a methodology drawn from logotherapy that attempts to understand how the actor makes meaning professionally and personally. The actors engaged in semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and a group workshop at which they were introduced to different methods of exploring logotherapy from empirical tests to

²⁰¹ P. Jones, *Drama As Therapy, Theatre As Living*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 35-36

²⁰² www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk (Accessed on 21 October 2012).

²⁰³ R. McLellan et. al., *The Impact of Creative Initiatives on Wellbeing: A Literature Review*, Newcastle, UK, Creativity Culture and Education, 2012.

²⁰⁴ A., Stratton, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2010/nov/14/happiness-index-britain-national-mood> (Accessed 30 March 2011).

my own creative and participatory processes. The project demonstrates that actors can make meaning in their professional and personal lives via an engagement in theatre-making. I argue that aspects of theatre-making can not only be considered logotherapeutically beneficial but theatre may be able to extend the languages of logotherapy in its acknowledgement of the complexity of meaning-making. Theatre recognises the importance of meaning-related concepts not articulated in logotherapy such as transformation, empathy, and otherness. It also demonstrates that meaning-making, as defined by logotherapy, can be achieved through kinesthetic, embodied, co-constructed, reflective, and collective processes. The project findings are of significance to dramatherapists, applied theatre practitioners, and practicing logotherapists as they demonstrate how theatre-making processes might for some prove a more accessible means of exploring the logotherapeutic concept of meaning-making. My longer-term intention is to use insights from focused research projects such as the one discussed in this article to develop a working model that could inform areas of applied theatre practice.

Why Actors?

An actor arrives at a performance through a rehearsal process in which experiential, creative, and attitudinal values are discussed, explored, modelled, experienced, and rehearsed. If we understand rehearsal as a marking moment²⁰⁵ then perhaps this is most profound for the actor who out of this process must develop a performance which in turn creates meaning for an audience. The actors expressed their interest in being involved in my project by responding to a brief circulated amongst my own professional contacts and networks of theatre practitioners. I only approached practitioners and organisations that I considered to privilege use of relationship (over directorial control) as a mode of meaning-making in rehearsal. Within this specification though the group of six participants represented diverse theatre practices:

- Actor A: Active member of a number of amateur dramatic theatre companies.
- Actor B: Active involvement in (funded and un-funded) experimental theatre and happenings.
- Actor C: Full-time professional actor interested in political theatre and new writing (rehearsing for a mid-scale touring production of a new play telling the story of Jean McConville's murder by the IRA during the course of the research project).

²⁰⁵ J. Thompson, *Applied Theatre Bewilderment and Beyond*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2003, pp. 60-62

- Actor D: A drama studies undergraduate (rehearsing for an assessed university production of *We are Three Sisters* by Blake Morrison during the course of the research project).
- Actor E: Full-time professional actor interested in theatre education (rehearsing for a school's touring production with a regional theatre during the course of the research project).
- Actor F: A tutor and actor involved in an applied theatre project with long-term unemployed participants.

For the purposes of this article I have not explored or reported on these different practices in isolation because my methodology led to conclusions that worked across the diversity of practice represented here. This diversity of practice suggests that theatre is relevant to, and broadly applied in, everyday life in the UK. It includes and stretches beyond institutional theatre contexts while undoing binaries between the professional and amateur and the educational and non-educational theatre.

An overview of logotherapy

The article works from a definition of meaning-making taken from logotherapy, understood here, as well as within logotherapy, as an indicator of spiritual wellbeing. As opposed to his contemporaries Frankl urged that, rather than pleasure (Freud) or power (Adler), we should consider the will-to-meaning as the fundamental driver of human nature; “the innate desire to give as much meaning as possible to one’s life....that meaning must be specific and personal, a meaning which can be realized by that person alone.”²⁰⁶ Frankl believed that humans give meaning to their lives by realising value: creative values by achieving tasks; experiential values by experiencing the Good, the True and the Beautiful; and attitudinal values through the ways we face life and suffering. The motivation theory behind logotherapy is self-transcendence: the ability to overcome the limits of the individual self and its desires by finding a meaning to fulfil through serving a cause other than oneself. For Frankl spiritual wellbeing is born out of the ability to respond to the will to meaning and sees certain forms of neurosis and mental illness as a form of spiritual distress deriving from a frustrated will to meaning. Outside of his own personal faith and within logotherapy ‘spiritual’ does not have a religious connotation but refers to the specifically human dimension and here we see the influence of humanism on Frankl’s theories. In order to truly escape more traditional religious connotations Frankl borrows

²⁰⁶ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p. 10.

the Greek word *noos* (mind) using the term *noetic* in favour of spiritual. Frankl's conception of man sees him living in three dimensions: the somatic, the mental, and the noetic and it is the noetic dimension that makes us human.

A two-dimensional conceptualisation of a human, prioritising only the physical and the psychic (as employed by the other two schools of psychotherapy), would see the questioning of meaning in life as a disease or a pathological symptom whereas logotherapy sees it as a glimmer of humanity; the sign of a person ready to get to grips with the meaning potentials of their own life. In Franklian terms, self-transcendence is a power of the noetic realm and is realized through fulfilling creative, experiential, and attitudinal values--the three paths to meaning. Frankl projects a simple, non-religious, sense of self-transcendence being achieved through acting for someone or something else. In order for an individual to decide on which value to realise to enable the most meaningful possibility within the many offered by a particular situation Frankl offers the concept of universal meanings--values distilled from a vast history of millions of people finding meaningful responses to similar situations. Universal meanings can refer to the values rooted in a religion, a culture, or school of thought. Frankl recognized that contemporary life was leading to a greater transition in values with fewer people able to follow traditional values and accept universal meanings. Hence logotherapy's emphasis on the role of conscience in the search for meaning; conscience being the voice of the authentic self, the voice of transcendence. By being more alert to the voice of conscience, an individual can create a personal hierarchy of values, deciding moment by moment to what extent and under what circumstances to accept or reject universal meanings and traditional values. In using logotherapy as a critical framework through which to elicit and analyse project findings, I have found patterns and processes that I read as evidence of meaning-making. First it is useful to look at how logotherapy is practiced.

Logotherapy in practice

Despite the volume of writing by and about Frankl's logotherapy, only three specifically logotherapeutic techniques are documented in the extant body of work on his approach. Frankl does not provide these techniques as a 'miracle' method nor does he claim that they will bring about universal success. Indeed, whilst in many circumstances logotherapy is practiced in its pure form, Frankl advises that it is also necessary to use it as a supplement to other forms of psychiatry and medication.²⁰⁷ The three logotherapeutic techniques are paradoxical intention, dereflection and Socratic Dialogue:

²⁰⁷ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p.11

1. Paradoxical intention and Dereflexion are used for curing phobias or negative behaviour patterns. Paradoxical intention aims to overthrow the power of anticipatory anxiety to trigger exactly the thing about which we are anxious, 'taking the wind out of the sails of the phobia.'²⁰⁸ Frankl first tried the technique with obsessive-compulsive and phobic patients but it has also been used with to change behaviour patterns such as blushing, stuttering, and the forgetting of lines. In experiencing the first symptoms of anticipatory anxiety the patient is advised to intend precisely what he fears. In *Dr & The Soul* Frankl describes a case in which a patient was locked in an iterative cycle of being anxious about and subsequently demonstrating excessive sweating in public. The patient was advised to show those 'whom he was with at the time how much he could really sweat.' This paradoxical resolution helped the patient break a four-year phobic cycle in one week. In essence then paradoxical intention teaches patients to inhabit, release, or allow their symptoms.²⁰⁹
2. Dereflexion aims to help patients ignore symptoms associated with excessive attention to bodily function by thinking about something or someone else. Fundamentally the patient is re-orientated, through existential analysis, to focus on the unique meaning of his life. Frankl cites several examples of applying dereflexion to sleep disorders, sexual dysfunction, and eating disorders.²¹⁰
3. Socratic Dialogue is used to improve meaning orientation. Socratic Dialogue casts the therapist in a role similar to the Socratic notion of a teacher: a midwife enabling students to give birth to their unconscious knowledge. In a therapeutic context the logotherapist enables the patient to access their unconscious goals by connecting with their noetic unconscious. The dialogue explores experiences of the past and fantasises for the future, revives overlooked peak experiences, re-evaluates situations that appeared meaningless, and draws attention to disregarded achievements. The dialogue is a tool used to enable a search for meaning. In this journey the logotherapist is not accepting of expressions of hopelessness (no matter how extreme the patients circumstances), always insisting that choices are available and challenging the patient to take steps away from the problem.²¹¹

Frankl does not provide a systematised model for logotherapy's application within which these techniques sit but his follower Elisabeth Lukas has developed a four-step process which is commonly cited as an example of logotherapy in action. Lukas' four-steps are: distance from symptoms; modification of attitudes; reducing the symptoms; and orientation towards meaning. Lukas uses all three of Frankl's techniques within the first stage of the process to help patients to separate themselves from their symptoms. She suggests an additional technique of 'appealing' to use with those patients who are 'too primitive, too young, too old or too sick to achieve distance between himself and his symptoms by the Socratic Dialogue alone.'²¹² The appealing technique involves the

²⁰⁸ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p. 208.

²⁰⁹ A more detailed account of Paradoxical Intention can be found in V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, pp.205-232

²¹⁰ A more detailed account of Der-reflection can be found in V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, pp.232-237

²¹¹ A more detailed account of Socratic Dialogue can be found in J. Fabry, *Guideposts to Meaning*, Oakland, New Harbinger Publications, 1988

²¹² J. B. Fabry, *Finding Meaning in Life*, Lanham, Jason Aronson Inc., 1979, p. 103.

therapist in making a suggestion to the patient but a suggestion rooted in the patient's value system. Suggestions are recorded on audio tape, listened to in the presence of the therapist, and repeated over a period of time. The recordings use different voices for different characters. For the ego-centred and self-assured, suggestions are recorded in the I-form by a voice of the same sex, and are therefore more likely to be regarded as their own. For a more unsure or unstable patient seeking leadership from another, the recordings are made in the you-form and by a member of the opposite sex. In both cases the suggestions aim to enable the patient to identify him or herself with their own thoughts. A relaxing beginning and robust 'waking-up' ending feature are ritualistic elements of Lukas' practice. The third and fourth stages of Lukas' model are more vague, less practical and cite no specific techniques. The process of reducing symptoms usually 'takes care of itself' after attitude modification and new attitudes help even patients with an unalterable fate come to terms with, and make the most of, their life situation. The final stage, orientation toward meaning, is described as the preventative stage securing patient's mental health for the future. It at this stage the therapy focuses on the meaning potentials of a patient's life, clarifying creative, experiential, and attitudinal values and educating the patient in their responsibility for realizing these values. The patient who feels responsible for their life is deemed mentally healthy and capable of steering in their direction of choice. We can only assume that this takes the form of therapeutic dialogue.

Outside of the techniques detailed above, the application of logotherapy is not prescribed, leaving the philosophy open to practical interpretation. Influenced by Frankl, therapist Joseph Fabry sews the seed of potential for the arts as a vehicle for logotherapy, citing imprecision as an important factor and that any method compatible with the philosophy can be tried 'list making, painting, fantasizing, interpreting dreams ... logodramas giving participants a chance to act out parts of the self they still want to become.'²¹³ There are some interesting parallels in relation to how meaning is discussed and understood within logotherapy and theatre studies. Initial discussions of meaning in theatre theory stemmed from semiotics but have moved beyond this to encompass Erika Fisher-Lichte's notion of 'meaning' as emerging from the relational, dynamic, and inhabited/energetic processes implicit to a theatre event, specifically not reducible to signs and codes, and producing moments of 'reenchantment of the world.'²¹⁴ Helen Nicholson builds on the theories of US educator Elizabeth Ellsworth theories and anthropologists Gregory Bateson to suggest that the ephemeral and material qualities of theatre enables meaning to be made in both

²¹³ J. B. Fabry, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, Abilene, Institute of Logotherapy Press, 1968, p. 134.

²¹⁴ E. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 9.

the memory and the body.²¹⁵ This is reinforced by James Thompson's notion of mark-making.²¹⁶ Tony Jackson's work is useful too, in that it provides analysis of the means available and the aesthetic process involved in making theatre capable of generating educational and transformative processes in its audience and participants.²¹⁷ Jackson recognises the playful and the aesthetic as being important factors in the learning or developmental power of theatre education, taking it beyond an intention to inform.

The art of meaning-making: moving beyond logotherapy

Analysis of my project findings suggest that the construction of a character-self represents a human being's capability to transform, to better empathise, and to learn about otherness. According to theatre scholar Fischer-Lichte, the practice of developing a character-self allows us to go deep into another, to better empathise, and to vividly experience the "ever-evolving dynamic of being in the world".²¹⁸ The terminology does not feature in logotherapy discourse but it is possible to understand this as a significant expansion of Frankl's notion of self-transcendence. Frankl was determined that logotherapy should not be viewed as a rigid system and instead urged that psychotherapy should be practised like an art form.²¹⁹ Nevertheless he was operating in a field and a time that required empirical validation and as such did not develop modes of practice beyond talking-based therapy. From my analysis of this project's findings I would argue that theatre-making responds to the complexity of meaning-making processes in a way that logotherapy avoids. Within logotherapy the process of making meaning tends to be presented as exclusively one-to-one and dialogue based. In contrast and as evidenced in my analysis of examples from rehearsal processes, theatre-making moves beyond logotherapy in its understanding that meaning-making can be an embodied process, an externalised process, and a shared process. Theatre-making emphasises relationship as a mode of meaning-making and has ways of enabling co-construction of meaning within rehearsal. Even if it exposes some of its own shortcomings I propose that logotherapy is a useful critical framework for analysing the meaning-making potential of rehearsal processes. Ultimately such an analysis could help us demonstrate the relevance of theatre-making processes to those who are interested in supporting aspects of wellbeing such as meaning-making, self-transcendence, and responsibility in life practice. Actors, like any group of human beings within a collaborative process, come to rehearsals with

²¹⁵ H. Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

²¹⁶ J. Thompson, *Applied Theatre Bewilderment and Beyond*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2003

²¹⁷ A. Jackson, *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007

²¹⁸ E. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 9.

²¹⁹ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p.11

diverse needs and abilities in relation to their capacity to make meaning. Clearly some approaches to theatre-making implicitly and explicitly recognise and respond to this; specific meaning-making strategies are named in 1.1 to 1.4.

Devising a method to enable actors to reflect on the meaning-making

In this research project I used logotherapy theory and practical techniques to shape a programme of reflective practice for the participants, enabling them to discuss and analyse their experiences of rehearsal and to talk more broadly about their personal values. During spring 2012, six actors engaged in semi-structured interviews, completed reflective journals, and participated in a group workshop. At interview the actors were asked about their acting history from early years to present day. In addition, they were asked to describe a past rehearsal process in significant detail including moments identified as meaningful, sensory recollections, the director's approach, a sense of what they were left with after rehearsals, and how they might see themselves carrying any aspect of the character or the process into their 'off-stage' life. They were then asked about any attitudinal or behavioural changes that might have come about as a result of involvement in a theatre-making process and their thoughts on meaning-making in relation to spirituality or humans as spiritual beings. In discussing spirituality I briefly introduced logotherapy and how it offers a framework for exploring meaning-making and spiritual (noetic) wellbeing in both an anthropological or theological context. For those participants who did not practice a faith, spirituality was most comfortably understood and discussed as a sense of personal belief system or point of view on what it means to be human.

At the end of each interview we discussed the journal in which actors would document their thinking in the period between the interview and the workshops. Some of the actors were actively involved in rehearsals during this time frame and were asked to reflect specifically on that process. Through their journaling actors were required to reflect on observations about themselves under three headings of actor-self, personal-self, (mirroring logotherapy concepts of automatic and authentic self), and character-self. They were also asked to capture any techniques, processes, or events in rehearsals that really helped make a transformation to character-self, any observations about how the theatre-making process might be impacting on personal life, any meaningful moments and why they might be deemed meaningful. Finally the six actors came together for a three-hour workshop through which they were introduced in more detail to Frankl, logophilosophy, and my longer-term research focus. The group then individually sat tests²²⁰ designed to

²²⁰ Crumbaugh and Maholick's Purpose in Life (PIL) test, developed as part of Crumbaugh's work to objectify Frankl's philosophy, is an attitudinal scale measuring a person's will to meaning. The Seeking of Noetic Goals (SONG) test, also designed by Crumbaugh, is used to measure strength of motivation to find meaning. The SONG and PIL tests are copyrighted by Psychometric Associates and is available with manual from the Institute of Logotherapy, California.

scientifically prove logotherapy concepts. These were used in a reflective and qualitative manner, in order to explore how two empirical tests from the 1960's interact with 21st-century actors, rather than focusing on what the findings revealed about the participants. On completing the tests the actors discussed the experience and shared their responses to the logotherapy introduction. As a way into exploring Frankl's ideas about meaning-making in relation to theatre experience, I created a series of posters²²¹ citing quotes from professional actors about the interrelationship between their professional and personal lives.²²² The actors were then taken through two exercises, value mapping and the logochart, both of which are discussed in further detail later in the paper.

Logotherapy was used as a critical framework through which to analyse the research material and articulate learning about meaning-making identified within theatre practices. In analysis of interview transcripts, journal entries, and completed workshop exercises I was looking for evidence of meaning-making as defined by Frankl: identification and actualization of values; understanding of different modes of self and how to access or privilege these. Through employing this methodology I am also able to point to the limitations of logotherapy as a critical framework for defining meaning-making. Indeed, to reiterate an earlier proposition, theatre-making extends and challenges some logotherapy principles in its acceptance of concepts which go unmentioned within logotherapy discourse--concepts such as transition, embodiment, and the significance of collaboration and relationship with others in meaning-making.

In general the actors involved in the project found logophilosophy a useful and challenging framework through which to analyse their practice. Despite the fact they all *scored* highly in the empirical tests the actors did not find them useful, indeed they were labeled 'clumsy' and 'crude' instruments. My more creative, discursive and participatory application of logotherapy theory and techniques revealed interesting findings relating to where logotherapy overlaps with how actors understand the theatre-making process. I will now detail the main discovery about meaning-making and theatre-making practices made through examining actor perspectives. Namely that engagement in theatre-making can be said to support the process of meaning-making in two fundamental ways:

- 1. through modeling strategies for exploring, managing, and coping with the complexity of self

²²¹ As a group we moved around the posters placed on walls in the workshop room taking turns to read out the quotes, sharing our immediate responses and the extent to which they resonated with each of us.

²²² Taken from actor testimonies documented in M. Cox (ed.), *Shakespeare Comes to Broadmoor*, London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd, 1992.

- 2. through an actor's understanding of engagement in theatre being linked to a structure of meaning-making that makes sense in the broader context of their life.

Arguably then, theatre-making can then be seen as a process that supports the development of approaches to life practice.

1. Meaning-making in professional life

Practicing logotherapists employ techniques which help the client focus on analysing responses to a problem or situation in terms of automatic self (part of their biology and psyche) and their authentic self, which belongs to the noetic realm. In Frankl's terms, this is the realm through which we can relate to and love other human beings and through which we make tasks we will fulfil. Logotherapy illustrates how understanding of self is paramount to an individual's ability to make meaning. To explore this within a theatre-making context I introduced the notion of the actor-self equating to the psyche or the automatic self; the personal-self as authentic self; and the character-self being the portrayal of a role or performance state. I use the term character in its broadest sense applicable to all forms of theatre practice. I propose that the process of creating a character is one of embodiment--a position best articulated by performance scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte:

The character does not come into being as a replica of a pre-determined sphere but is instead generated through the very process of embodiment ... the actor's bodily-being in the world constitutes the existential ground for the coming into being of the character. It does not exist beyond the individual body.²²³

The interviews and journaling invited the actors to reflect upon which self they were drawing and developing through their engagement with theatre-making processes. This revealed two trends in terms of how meaning-making was constructed:

- A. The process of creating a meaning as a character necessitates processes for exploring and managing different aspects of self
- B. Within this there is a required chronology--strategies for minimising actor-self followed by processes for accessing authentic-self, followed by means of identifying departure points or connections with authentic-self in the development of character-self. This chronology mirrors the sequencing practiced in logotherapy to support clients to develop their ability to make meaning.

²²³ E. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 147.

Actors spoke about the 'curse of the actor-self' in the early stages of theatre-making processes. The actor-self can be thought of as akin to the automatic self – a person's automatic reaction to a situation, 'the result of physiology ... past environments and the gut feelings of emotional response.'²²⁴ In a theatre-making context this translates to the fear of other actors' perceptions, wanting to make a good impression on the director, a sense of one's skills being judged, the desire to 'gel' within the artistic team, and needing to prove talent to secure future work. In Franklian terms, the automatic self (and thus the actor-self) is not what I am, but what I have. When conditions are created by the director or individuals are equipped to employ their own personal strategies to reduce the actor-self, then actors have more capacity to draw upon their authentic self--their essence, uniqueness, and the source of their creativity and meaning orientation--as a springboard for developing a character-self. Actors pointed to a desire for rehearsal to be scaffolded chronologically around processes that (1) minimized or distracted from actor-self in order to (2) explore upon which aspects of their authentic self they might draw or reject to (3) construct a character. In logotherapy terms this represents a sequence through which greater meaning-making can be achieved in that it focuses on the ability to move beyond the automatic self and access the authentic self.

Theatre-making offers us the opportunity to explore another level of self--the character-self. In an attempt to understand how the formation of a character-self might add to the meaning-making process and its relationship to the authentic self I adapted a logotherapeutic technique for use in the workshop. In the eleventh edition of the *International Forum for Logotherapy Journal* Manoocher Khatami, professor of clinical psychiatry at the University of Texas, details his use of the logochart: a logotherapeutic technique to help patients find new responses to a certain problem situation and to formulate thinking about the situation so they can see meaning in it. As Khatami describes:

The chart lists three parameters: cognition, meaning, and response (response-ability). Cognition is the way we filter the incoming information, through our subjective value and belief systems. Meaning refers to our conscious and unconscious search, which differentiates the human from all other animals. And response refers to what we actually do in response to what we think and what meaning we see in a situation.²²⁵

At the top of each chart clients describe a specific situation or problem to examine. They are then asked to identify their automatic and authentic responses to this situation or

²²⁴ K. Manoochehr, 'Logochart', *The International Forum for Logotherapy Journal of Search for Meaning*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1988, p. 67.

²²⁵ Ibid.

problem under the three categories of cognition, meaning and response/behavior. At the bottom of the chart clients then assign percentages to their automatic and authentic reactions to the event evaluated in the chart. Through ongoing work with a logotherapist clients are supported to minimise automatic reactions in order to develop a greater percentage of reaction from the authentic self. For the purposes of my research and for use in the workshop I adapted the logochart to enable the actors to analyse a specific moment within a characterization process in relation to the percentage of material drawn from both their sense of character-self and their authentic self. We then used an instant theatre approach to recreate each actor's chosen moment with members of the group adopting physical and vocal motifs to portray the different aspects of self at play.

Character Played: Charlotte Brontë (all are three sisters.)
 Event / Situation: realisation of Branwell's illness, act 5 - final scene of the play.

	Drawn from Authentic Self	Developed as Character-self (not me)
Cognition: What do I think about the situation? How do I perceive it?	initial sadness, a family is losing a loved member before their eyes. Seeing my friend in that situation was emotional.	sadness turned more into disappointment, Branwell didn't help himself and Charlotte couldn't do anything but watch. hopelessness + disappointment.
Meaning: What are the values, purposes, goals or meaning possibilities in this situation?	family values, comforting the sisters, questioning loss.	searching / convincing herself of the meaning of their situation, turning her + Anne's thoughts with dreamst hopes of the future but bitter behind it all.
Response / Behaviour: What do I do in this situation? (actions, physical responses, or consequences).	want / need to help fear, emotional, want to be with the person in question in order to comfort them.	initially stand with Branwell but leave his side to comfort the innocent Anne. Bold + staunch in an attempt to keep order, physicality as normal other than a hand hold with the sisters.

Image 3: Completed logochart

Of the situations evaluated in their logocharts, all of the actors assigned at least 25% of their characterization process to the authentic self. One chose to focus on a moment in which 90% of the reaction was coming from her authentic self. The clinical nature of the logocharts enabled an examination of highly individual and internalized meaning-making process that would usually remain unanalyzed (and sometimes unarticulated) within a rehearsal. We could then use this as the basis for reflecting on the meaning-making inherent in aspects of theatre-making processes that enable the journey from actor self to authentic self into character self. My analysis of actor reflections identifies four specific strategies or approaches employed within rehearsal process that represent this meaning-making construct. The four strategies, explained in detail below are self-constructed meaning-making, meaning-making through physicalization, co-construction of meaning, and meaning-making through explicit reference to people as actors. The learning is transferable to applied and therapeutic contexts in that these strategies are fundamentally about managing the complexity of self.

1.1 Self- constructed meaning-making processes

At interview Actor B created a narrative of meaning based on a meaning-making process that is constructed, rehearsed, and performed in her personal rehearsal preparation process. Although Actor B had not previously come across logotherapy, the principles strongly resonated with her own life philosophy and she found it a useful framework through which to articulate how she experienced meaning-making within theatre-making processes. On leaving drama school Actor B decided not to pursue acting professionally but has subsequently engaged in funded and unfunded theatre projects on a voluntary basis. Nearly twenty years after graduating from drama school which left her feeling 'unraveled,' Actor B now feels she is able to be an intuitive actor. She describes her post drama school process as having to take 'ten steps backwards, throwing it all away and picking back up the bits that are useful – it takes a long time.' She feels that she can now work with a range of people with different styles and approaches because she has been able to cast aside the actor- (or automatic) self in order to tune into her authentic self. Regardless of with whom she is working artistically she knows that she has to build a character from a point of connection with her true self. 'I am intuitive but for me intuition has to have a logic, I have to start from something within me and then build outwards. From something of me I can then find out who the character is and feel how it is to be them--I can literally jump into their shoes.' This is quite a personal strategy for which Actor B takes full responsibility; it is not dependent on the director's support or style. Of particular significance to dramatherapy and applied theatre, analysis of Actor B's experiences demonstrates that over time engagement in theatre-making practice can

support the development of robust personal meaning-making and a capacity to adapt to very different professional circumstances.

1.2 Meaning-making through physicalization

At times actors described specific directorial techniques or exercises that supported meaning-making constructs in rehearsal. Actor C's accounts of physicalization processes used in early stages of rehearsal could be clearly analysed as contributing to meaning-making in that they provided a way into minimising actor-self and exploring points of connection with and departure from authentic self in the development of a character-self. During the course of the research project Actor C was rehearsing for a mid-scale touring production of a new play telling the story of Jean McConville's murder by the IRA. Actor C played Jean McConville and her journal entries during rehearsal describe the value of theatre concepts such as archetypal characters in providing a construct through which she could make meaning in relation to the portrayal of a real person. This concept enabled Actor C to move away from her actor and authentic self in order to develop a character-self. Significantly this was not achieved through dialogue or discussion but through physicalization of different energy states. In an early rehearsal Actor C's director suggested that she play her character between two archetypal characters of Mother and Child:

Both archetypes have very different energies--the mother's centre being in her pelvis and the child's energy centre living in the back of the head (to put it simply). So my task was to play between both of those places and explore the push and pull and tension that comes out of that. (Actor C, Journal extract, 12 April 2012).

Through a process of physicalisation Actor C arrived at an ability to make meaning about her character's reality and authentically portray her contrasting states. Analysis of Actor C's experience highlights that meaning-making can be supported through kinaesthetic processes and reminds us of the limitations of a purely verbal therapeutic approach. Physical processes and techniques such as the ones described by Actor C could be further mined for their meaning-making potential for use within dramatherapy and applied theatre practice.

1.3 Co-construction of meaning-making in rehearsal

Analysis of the research material evidenced co-construction as a third strategy for enabling meaning-making within rehearsal. Between the ages of nine and fifteen Actor E attended weekly community drama classes and from twelve to eighteen he was a member of a local amateur dramatics group. He did not formally study drama until age eighteen.

Actor E had recently graduated from drama school where he felt he had gradually lost both the enjoyment derived from involvement in amateur dramatics and the ability to work from instinct:

We dissected everything, we had to question a lot and stand back a lot which brought out our insecurities and made you compare yourself to others. Because I am quite timid, being around other people that weren't made me even more timid. I lost a bit of instinct, a bit of something--I don't know what it was. I really want to get back to working from my instinct and stop analysing my every choice. I would like to get to a point where I am back to the instinct and don't care about what other people think.

The sense of loss at realising this lack of connection with instinct was quite a recent acknowledgement for Actor E. He had not developed a personal meaning-making strategy to employ in each new rehearsal situation, instead stating his absolute dependence on the director and their approach.

Whilst theoretically logotherapy made sense to Actor E, he could not find the connection with his life practice and was unable to name any personal values during the workshop mapping. Actor E places great significance on living intuitively:

At the moment I am quite independent so any choices I make are driven from myself. I don't put a lid on anything; I do jobs because I want to do them. I know that it will get to a time when I can't spend as much time doing this because I have to think of others; because family is important to me.

Actor E described his post-drama-school self as someone grappling with tremendous shyness and struggling to overcome his actor - (automatic) self (or "actor thoughts"), worrying about making 'the right' choices and a positive impression on colleagues: 'it's a craft to know how to be in each moment, to put your ego in a box and just be a character.' In order to fulfill his goal of working more from his instinct Actor E requires a director who can quickly create conditions in which the actor-self would be diminished. Put logotherapeutically, the challenge to the director is amplified by the need to support someone who is in the early stages of acquaintance with his authentic self and as such has developed few personal meaning-making strategies.

Actor E was the only actor involved in the project who did not personally request to take part. My director colleague was interested in the research and added participation in the project to the contract for the actor she was about to cast in a touring education

production. I interviewed Actor E after his first day in rehearsals and he participated in the workshop the following day. As cited earlier in the article Actor E was often openly perplexed by the workshop material and the broader focus of my research. The play in which Actor E was involved was produced by the schools touring company of a regional theatre. The play tells the story of a young boy who is being bullied. He thinks he should fight his own battles and stand up for himself. He decides to protect himself with a knife. He has no intention of using it. The consequences are disastrous. This was a one-man production in which Actor E played two characters and responded to others portrayed through film. As a one-man performance all elements of the rehearsal process could be said to be feeding Actor E's development. Significantly, and fortunately for Actor E, the director with whom he was working promotes intuitive exploration as the foundation for developing a performance.

As the Associate Director at a regional theatre Actor E's director has been making theatre for over twenty-one years. Her understanding of the theatre-making process reflects her philosophy on life:

Theatre-making is a metaphor for life, you need to throw yourself in but you're not going to find *the* answer. It's useful to find ways of understanding and accepting the complexities of self.

In rehearsals this director creates an environment in which actors can experiment and play, stating that 'what we do in rehearsals is not what the actor then produces in performance but it is the process through which we must go to get to that.' In the director's view Actor E is an incredibly talented actor, raw and unaware of his bravery:

I have never come across another actor like him, he doesn't cover anything up ... He has no protective layer. He created a character that felt so exposed to the world--he made audiences squirm, cry and laugh. He took you through a range of emotions. Some actors don't like to make you feel like that even about a character--they somehow want to feel in control of it all the time. He's brave, he doesn't know it!

So from the director's point of view by the end of rehearsals Actor E had clearly overridden his actor-self, or his protective layer as she referred to it.

This directorial approach signifies recognition of the process of characterization as being one of embodiment. Early on the director recognized Actor E's perceived sense of dependence on her to make meaning for his character but opted instead for creating the conditions that would enable him to feel more relaxed and confident so he could work with her to co-construct the meaning. The process that supported Actor E to find his own way

through the play was rooted in analysing his instincts - knowing when to work from instinct and 'when his instinct was not responding to or hitting the moment because it needed something else.' Through acknowledging that Actor E needed support to fade-out his actor voice in order to tune into his authentic self, together the actor and director crafted a character-self using creative techniques when it was not appropriate or possible to feed from Actor E's inner life.

In his second interview Actor E concluded that theatre-making processes such as the one in which he had just been involved represent the most effective form of learning about his authentic self, thereby helping him to make meaning. This example demonstrates that collaborative approaches to meaning-making within a theatrical context can surpass the purpose of constructing a performance, having implications for broader personal development and wellbeing. Co-constructed approaches to meaning-making such as the one analysed above is of particular significance to dramatherapy and applied theatre practice in education contexts. Children, young people, and indeed emerging artists need experiences to be scaffolded and require strong relationships with adults (mentors) through which they can start to explore the concept of personal values and meaning. Actor E's experience demonstrates how theatre-making can offer a valuable context conducive to this personal learning and development.

1.4 Meaning-making through explicit reference to people as actors: an applied theatre example

This fourth example of a strategy that enables meaning-making in theatre-making comes from an account of an applied theatre project and clearly demonstrates how logotherapy can overlap with an actor's understanding of a theatre process. For Actor F the LAB project was 'one big rehearsal'--the process of rehearsal being significant in personal development terms because it encouraged a sense of detachment enabling Actor F to reflect on, experiment with, and refine the different components of self informing his work as both a tutor and a performer within an intense applied theatre project.

Two years ago Actor F was referred from a local drugs and alcohol recovery service to Proper Job Theatre's LAB project. The LAB project is aimed at participants who have been long-term unemployed. It runs intensively for two-weeks and uses drama to access creativity and improve self-esteem. At the end of the course participants then get the chance to put new skills into practice by running a drama workshop in a local primary school. Actor F's involvement in the LAB project made a significant contribution to his rehabilitation and he has recently started volunteering as tutor on LAB projects as well as regularly playing the part of a character in the dramatic presentation to the school group. Actor F was unable to participate in my workshop as he was engaged with a LAB project

at that time so after the initial interview I gave an overview of logotherapy which we discussed at great length. It seemed that my notion of using logotherapy to inspire a reflective framework would really support Actor F's desire to make meaning in relation to his role as a both a tutor and performer within the LAB. We adapted the questions on which he would reflect systematically at the end of each day of the LAB project to include observations about his tutor self as well as actor, authentic, and character- selves. In developing their methodology, Proper Job Theatre have strategically used meaning orientated rehearsal processes to further self-understanding and self-confidence in LAB participants. Analysed through the lens of logotherapy the LAB is successful because it enables participants to think about themselves as actors on and off stage. If, as positioned in this article, we see actors as meaning-makers, then Actor F's journaling offers insight into how meaning-making unfolds within this context. Actor F was able to identify that it was when having to present in a more formal or didactic sense that he lost connection with his authentic self as the automatic self took over:

I had this overwhelming "light bulb" moment today.....

Me as me (MAM)

Me as tutor (MAT)

Me as tutor presenting (MATP)

Me as actor (MAA)

I'm me in ALL areas other than MATP. I think as me, I act as me, I teach as me under all these circumstances, but when I have to MATP I become more rigid – Eureka! This doesn't sound a lot, but it is to me! This has highlighted a new area to work on and goals to be set. (Journal extract 2nd May 2012)

The LAB's use of theatre processes effectively facilitated a logotherapeutic experience for Actor F. His journal described how rehearsing, performing, and development of acting skills enabled him the space and means to find ways of behaving which were better governed by and reflective of his authentic self:

Rehearsing the workshop at the Lab day after day, I feel I am now taking the information on board and carrying it into my personal life. This includes everything to do with my body language, listening skills and general communication skills. Because of this increased awareness of reflection, I am better placed to view the validity and style in which certain exercises are presented. (Journal extract 1 May 2012)

The LAB's fundamental recognition of human beings as actors gives participants a framework and the permission to rehearse ways of portraying their authentic self. Analysis of Actor F's account of the LAB process points to this form of applied theatre's implicit appreciation of the very real challenge meaning-making presents to those who find themselves in situations which can result in extremely low levels of self-esteem. Meaning-

making in this context is often experienced or expressed as rehabilitation. Analysed through the lens of logotherapy the LAB is effective because it provides processes through which a greater sense of personal meaning comes from using theatre-making to rehearse the alignment of inner and outer self. The LAB project is rooted in a recognition that the actualisation of the will to meaning is an act which most of us need to embody, rehearse, refine, reflect upon, and keep performing within a safe theatre context or in our general life practice. Through this example we can see how logotherapy offers the field of dramatherapy and applied theatre one way into understanding and developing theatre practice as life practice.

2. Meaning-making in personal life

The actors involved in this project were particularly intrigued by the line of questioning relating to the interrelationship between their professional and personal lives. Specifically I was looking for evidence of how their involvement in theatre-making impacts their ability to make meaning on and off stage. All of the actors felt that they had been involved in processes of making theatre which had supported their personal ability to make meaning and as such, in logotherapy terms, their spiritual wellbeing. One of the actors had past experience of counselling and described the process of rehearsal as:

more spiritual than counselling ...It's too easy to only work within reference points for myself--counselling was cathartic but it was all about me. Theatre-making forces you into a different set of circumstances ... You need to be ruthlessly milking from and ignoring yourself.

Through ongoing engagement in theatre-making practices which involve or result in a re-visiting and a refinement of one's understanding of authentic self, it could be argued that actors have a more heightened sense of their personal values and (due to the nature of, and the skills associated with, their profession) a greater capacity to act in accordance with them thereby, in logotherapy terms, leading a more meaningful existence. Arguably, more could be done to exploit this quality within therapeutic and applied forms of theatre practice.

The actors made many direct references to what they saw as the causal relationship between the process of developing character and their capacity for empathy. One participant felt that her experience as an actor brought about a 'hyper-awareness of consequences, differences, and nuances of behaviour.' Another described how she felt involvement in theatre-making had simultaneously heightened both her sense of ego and insight and consequently sees the challenge of life practice as being to manage the ego: 'too much ego stops empathy and your values get skewed.' In theatrical terms if we read insight as character-self and ego as actor-self then, we can see that rehearsal processes

which incorporate ways of supporting actors to manage or relinquish actor-self are of significance to their off-stage lives.

The use of logotherapy as a critical framework enabled the actors to talk about their spirituality, a term several felt was linguistically uncomfortable because it is theologically loaded. Having used logotherapy to translate spirituality into an anthropological concept the actors were happier to discuss their personal belief systems and views on what it is to be human. Analysis of research material evidenced that engagement in theatre is linked, for some actors, to a structure of meaning that makes sense in broader context of their life. For example Actor A's decision to become involved in theatre was made by Jesus from whom her meaning-making is derived:

Jesus guides me, it's how I make meaning--he rules my life.....If Jesus wants me to get a part or direct a show he will open doors for me.

For others their current engagement with theatre reflected a belief in how life ought to be-- a very Franklian sentiment--or it had enabled different forms of meaning-making and spiritual acceptance. To explore this finding in more depth in the workshop I asked the actors to plot their significant theatre experiences against a map of how they perceived the evolution of their own values from birth to the present day. Actors were able to articulate the supportive function theatre experiences had served in shaping their ability to reject traditional values which obscured personal meaning. The project evidenced that, in the case of all six actors, their involvement in theatre-making could be directly linked to values ranging from equality to family legacy. A particularly interesting finding was the trend of actors choosing to sustain their commitment to theatre through engagement in amateur or community provision as opposed to formal education. Actors reported that they had not felt comfortable with actively presenting their passion for theatre as part of their secondary school identity but realised that their desire to maintain involvement came from a deeper sense of self and contributed greatly to their ability to make meaning.

The project also exposed some profound examples of how playing a specific part had directly impacted on actor's lives. This included both a realisation about personal sexuality after having played a gay woman, and the development of fine motor skills once considered inaccessible to a physically disabled actress who had to master the use of various items from a small handbag when buried up to her neck in sand to play Winnie in Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*. Of course these were not the objectives of the respective theatre-making exercises. Rather they were unexpected outcomes from which we can draw interesting parallels with those who set out to develop art practice as life practice. Indeed most of the actors at some point in the research project referred to the process of theatre-making paralleling life practice echoed in Actor C's belief that 'how you behave in the theatre space is how you have to behave in real life.' These claims are supported by

Erika Fisher-Lichte who suggests that performance can be thought of as 'both life itself and its model. It is life itself because it takes up the real time of the participants' lives and offers them the possibility to constantly bring themselves forth anew. It is life's model because these processes occur with a particular intensity and conspicuousness that focuses the participants' attention.'²²⁶ Extending this into the idea of theatre practice as life practice, are companies such as Song of the Goat Theatre, who attempt to create a 'performance practice that is actively integrated into the social world ... Song of the Goat trains young artists ... by encouraging the exploration of their own creativity, offering students an alternative understanding of performance, in which theatre is a compassionate practice to the self, to others, and the surrounding world.'²²⁷

Perhaps then we can envisage a form of theatre practice driven by logotherapeutic intent; a practice that seeks to support spiritual as well as artistic wellbeing. Such a practice might claim to support participants with developing the specific skills and capacities required to cope with life in the 21st century context. Meaning-making and subsequent self-transcendence is clearly more of a challenge during a period in which 'values are in transition.'²²⁸ In Frankl's terms, the material world presents multiple opportunities to succumb to the will to power or the will to pleasure. As such we need to find and promote practices that 'work towards an honest engagement in the world, focussing on the vital material that binds us to the world and gives our life meaning.'²²⁹ The research undertaken here highlights the possibility to draw on theatre to build practices that will support the development of resilience, of creativity, meaning-making, and spiritual (noetic) development. Theatre practitioners have historically enabled 'themselves and their spectators to experience and live through the very recognition of the mysterious elusiveness of the world.'²³⁰ Theatre's acceptance of and willingness to embrace this mysteriousness chimes with Frankl's philosophy that ultimate meaning, the meaning of life, is unattainable but you still have to strive toward it. For both the logotherapist and the theatre practitioner it is important for human beings to see themselves as 'creatures in transition, they could apprehend themselves in the process of transformation.'²³¹

²²⁶ E. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 205.

²²⁷ A. Porubcansky, 'Song of the Goat Theatre: Artistic Practice as Life Practice', *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2010, p. 262.

²²⁸ J. B. Fabry, *Guideposts To Meaning*, Oakland, New Harbinger Publications, 1988, p. 3.

²²⁹ A. Porubcansky, 'Song of the Goat Theatre: Artistic Practice as Life Practice', *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2010, p. 271.

²³⁰ E. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 207.

²³¹ Ibid.

Chapter 3. Methodology and the Search for Meaning: Letter Writing as Reflective Practice

In this chapter I present the choices I made in devising a methodology that enabled new meaning-making in relation to my own practice--a methodology that placed key people involved in that practice, and my relationship with them, at the core of the meaning-making process. Specifically, the first section of the chapter explores reflective practice, reflective writing and co-inquiry as meaning-making practices in relation to tacit and social knowledge. I then turn to letter writing as a reflective writing practice, charting the significance of letters in making meaning in human culture generally, and the use of letters in research. Studies from the fields of health and nursing are given particular attention because of the connections made between reflective writing, concepts of care, and creative competencies and more specifically because of their presentation of letter writing as a research tool for exploring emotional aspects of professional experience. In the final section of the chapter I tell the story of my research process, comprising personal reflective writing practice later extended to a co-inquiry through a letter writing project.

Epistemologically, the study is concerned with making both tacit and social knowledge visible. Tacit knowledge can refer to knowledge that can or cannot be articulated,²³² and it is often described as practical skills, intuition, knowhow, and implicit knowledge acquired through practice and experience rather than through language.²³³ Social knowledge advances beyond individualistic theories of knowledge, taking a relational approach to knowledge-making that is particularly appropriate to applied theatre research. As Steve Fuller argues 'social epistemology' takes seriously 'that knowledge is produced by agents who are not merely individually embodied but also collectively embedded in certain specifiable relationships that extend over large chunks of space and time.'²³⁴ In relation to learning theory, Jennifer A. Moon argues that we do not build meanings alone but in 'conjunction with the collected experiences of others who maybe teachers or scholars, or peers past or present.'²³⁵ My methodological decisions then were based on a privileging and making visible of tacit knowledge and knowledge made in relation, via social interaction. The kinds of meaning that were going to be most resonant for my enquiry were those that reflect the personal aspects of a professional relationship. Through reflection, tacit knowledge 'can become more visible and acknowledged as a source of

²³² S. Gourlay, 'Towards Conceptual Clarity for 'Tacit Knowledge': A Review of Empirical Studies', *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2006, pp. 60-69

²³³ A. Kothari, et al., 'The Use of Tacit and Explicit Knowledge in Public Health: a Qualitative Study', *Implementation Science*, vol. 7, no. 20, pp. 7-20.

²³⁴ S. Fuller, 'Social Epistemology' in G. Ritzer (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, p.1.

²³⁵ J. Moon, *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential learning*, Oxon, Routledge, 2004, p. 20.

explicit knowledge.²³⁶ Hence I turned to reflective practice, and reflective writing specifically, as a means to explore meaning-making through retrospective reflection on my own and with others.

The rationale for my focus on reflective practice aligns best with Gillie Bolton's understanding of reflection as being 'based on narratives of experience'.²³⁷ In her definition of reflective practice Bolton references Alan Bleakley's assertion that 'reflection and reflexivity are the essential elements of reflective practice'.²³⁸ She goes on to position reflection as the in-depth review of events²³⁹ and reflexivity as the identification of strategies to question our own attitudes, theories, values, assumptions prejudices and habitual actions.²⁴⁰ Bolton provides a useful extension to these set of terms through making the distinction between what she refers to as 'life as lived' and reflexivity:

In life as lived we are generally unaware of our daily theories-in-use, or the values-in-use which underpin them, we work on implicitly known, tacit knowledge. Our personal values and theories are always embedded in any story we narrate about any incident in our experience. Reflexivity is focusing a critical lens upon the story to discover our values and theories-in-use, what we want to do about them and what it feels possible to do about them.²⁴¹

She goes on to suggest that where enquiry into practice is undertaken 'alongside open discussion with peers on pertinent issues, an examination of texts from a larger field of work and politics ... reflective practice can be critical: a life changing enquiry into the assumptions that underpin our practice, rather than mere confession'.²⁴² In this spirit then, my study attempts to go beyond confession to present a critical examination of ten years of my own practice. It draws on early reflections on key events which took place in that timeframe from my own perspective and then attempts to further interrogate the findings by placing them alongside examination of relevant texts from the field of creative practice and applied theatre and through extending the initial enquiry into a co-inquiry.

Cooperative Inquiry (co-inquiry) is a term first introduced in 1996 by John Heron as an alternative to traditional science and social research paradigms. Co-inquiry research is an

²³⁶ L. Rykkje, 'The Tacit Care Knowledge in Reflective Writing – a Practical Wisdom', *International Practice Development Journal*, Centre for Nursing Innovation, vol. 7, 2017, p.3.

²³⁷ G. Bolton and R. Delderfield, *Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development*, 5th ed., London, SAGE, 2018, p.79.

²³⁸ A. Bleakley, 'From Reflective Practice to Holistic Reflexivity', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 3, p.317.

²³⁹ G. Bolton and R. Delderfield, *Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development*, 5th ed., London, SAGE, 2018, p.9

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.79-80.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p.16.

experiential and facilitative process, involving equal relationships where the researcher is both co-researcher and co-subject, and the research is 'with' and 'by' co-inquirers rather than 'on' participants.²⁴³ Epistemologically the decision to explore co-inquiry was appropriate as knowledge creation is understood here as a collective process evolving over time. Heron's notion of co-inquiry also sits comfortably alongside Bolton's conceptualisation of reflective practice which is rooted in the acceptance that the 'self,' experienced as a discrete unit, is not a coherent or reliable basis for pursuing knowledge. Bolton suggests that we attempt to make sense by constantly inventing ourselves anew, by telling and writing stories about ourselves and that we must 'locate and shift this growing self alongside others; through discussion and hearing their stories.'²⁴⁴ As such I developed a set of reflective writing methodologies to initially surface my own daily theories-in- use and values-in-use and then opened up these assumptions for others to explore through the co-inquiry process.

In order to begin to analyse a decade (2004-2014) of my career I initially engaged in a number of creative writing processes including journaling, sharing some generic insights through a blog and writing imaginary letters to and from Viktor Frankl.²⁴⁵ In order to develop my use of reflective writing, which I found productive during this early phase of research, I entered into a fictional letter exchange early in my Directorship of Orangebox, both to develop the research and to explore how I might practically embed my research practice in my day to day professional life. At this point it felt to me as if my research and professional life were happening separately. Bolton, Rowland, and Winter explore how fiction can transform professional understanding and inform professional practice.²⁴⁶ They suggest that fictional writing is a legitimate process for enquiry and professional development, arguing that it enables practitioners to 'achieve new insights without threatening their on-going professional work ... allow[ing] us to entertain new perspectives, tentatively at first, through the emerging writing and criticism.'²⁴⁷ The fictional

²⁴³ J. Heron, in C., Hopkinson, 'Using Poetry in a Critically Reflexive Action Research Co-inquiry with Nurses', *Action Research*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2015, p.32.

²⁴⁴ G. Bolton and R. Delderfield, *Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development*, 5th ed., London, SAGE, 2018, pp. 233-234.

²⁴⁵ For an example of reflective writing carried out early in the research process, see my research blog: <http://madeleineirwin.com> (Accessed: 16 August 2018).

²⁴⁶ G. Bolton, 'Stories at work: Fictional-critical writing as a means of professional development', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1994, pp. 55–68.
G. Bolton, *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*, 1st ed., London, SAGE, 2001.
S. Rowland, 'The power of silence: An enquiry through fictional writing', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1991, pp. 95–111.

R. Winter, 'Interviewers, interviewees and the exercise of power (fictional critical writing as a method for educational research)', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1991, pp. 251–62.

²⁴⁷ G. Rowland, S. Rowland, and R. Winter, 'Writing fiction as inquiry into professional practice', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1990, p. 292.

letter writing process enabled me to cut through some of the feelings of stress and pressure that inevitably came with the start-up of a new venture, and to be playful and interact with a key figure for my research, whom I could be confident would never come into contact with Orangebox and thereby represent a conflict of interest. However, fiction, as John Spindler suggests, enables discoveries of 'new ways of thinking and feeling about professional dilemmas that go beyond "mere truisms" to a deeper understanding of the significance of professional actions.'²⁴⁸ Instead of uniting my day to day practice with my deeper research interests, the letter writing process began to illuminate the growing gap between the two. Ultimately the politics of Orangebox's establishment created conditions un conducive to an open exploration of supporting young people's spiritual wellbeing (as explained in the introduction to the thesis and further detailed in Chapter 5)--a sentiment that, along with other contextual factors, contributed to my eventual resignation. At this point, without a setting on which to focus, I decided not to look for a new one and to instead adapt my methodologies to look retrospectively at the last 10 years of my practice--to really focus on my sense of this work having been about something unarticulated and to search for a language with which it could be adequately described.

The early reflective writing practice clarified a focus on 'applied theatre ethos' and 'spiritual wellbeing' as key concepts to explore within my research. But I soon discovered that both terms were under-explored and under-theorised within the field of applied theatre and, more broadly, within creative practice with young people. As a methodological solution I designed a process of defining these key concepts in 'negotiation' by analysing how they appear or are intimated in the relevant literature and across a collection of letters, extending the reflective writing practice to gather responses from staff, practitioners and young people with whom I worked closely between 2004 and 2014. I argue that this process of conceptual negotiation lends itself better to written rather than oral research disciplines as it allows participants to take as much reflection time as they need in order to construct a response. Because writing slows down the hand and brain, it could be said to promote more deliberative reflection.²⁴⁹ In a study of the connection between language and thought in writing processes, Mark Warford suggests that writing becomes a way to 'control and systematize concepts.'²⁵⁰ This suggestion corresponds with my aim to critically examine some difficult concepts which remain

²⁴⁸ J. Spindler, 'Fictional writing, educational research and professional learning', *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2008, p.21.

²⁴⁹ M.J. Ciriello, L. Valli and N. Taylor, 'Problem solving is not enough: Reflective teacher education at the Catholic University of America', in L. Valli (ed.), *Reflective teacher education: Case and critiques*, New York, University of New York Press, pp. 99-115.

²⁵⁰ A. Samaras and C. Sell, 'Please Write: Using Critical Friend Letter Writing in Teacher Research,' *Teacher Education Quarterly*, vol.40, no. 4, 2013, p. 95.

undefined and under-theorised within the field of applied theatre and creative practice more broadly.

Despite Roland Barthes statement that writing is the 'epistemological condition of research',²⁵¹ there is limited discussion of the role of writing in research within the qualitative and mixed methods research literature. Elizabeth Nelson suggests that this omission, along with the positioning of writing as a summative task rather than a dynamic process, reflects 'the lingering values of positivism, the objective, causal, and reductive paradigm in which writing enters the process at the end and writing is 'writing up' the results long after the research has been conducted.'²⁵² Nelson suggests that the use of writing as a summative task is a fundamentally different process to what she calls 'writing down':

writing down – a movement toward the depths of the ideas and images active in the work – in which writing, reading, and re-writing are valuable means by which researchers think through preliminary ideas, assumptions, and intuitions and dare to articulate their hopes, dreams, and fantasies of the research outcome and significance.²⁵³

My study roots itself in this understanding of writing as a practice of writing down. Furthermore it builds on Bolton's assertion that 'reflective writing *is* the reflective process'²⁵⁴ and that 'writing precedes thinking.'²⁵⁵ Interestingly, Bolton uses the concept of film-making analogously to justify her commitment to writing as the most appropriate form of reflection in that it enables a pausing of the film to reflect on one frame or a short series, then an opportunity to run the film backwards and review a previous scene in light of the reflection upon a later one. This, she suggests, would be nonsensical if attempted through talking and impossible to do in action.

Although Bolton in particular provides a useful way into thinking about and historicising reflective writing processes and setting them apart from other writing practices--reflective practitioners write for self-illumination and exploration, not to create a product--I have found the most valuable sources relating to reflective writing as research practice within the field of nursing studies. These sources have been particularly influential because they make a powerful case for connecting the use of reflective writing to the notion of care and the significance of creative competencies as essential components of caregiving--fitting given my later exploration of care as a key concept (see Chapter 4).

²⁵¹ R. Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. R. Howard, New York, Hill and Wang, 1986, p. 316.

²⁵² Ibid., p.330.

²⁵³ Ibid., pp. 330-331.

²⁵⁴ G. Bolton and R. Delderfield, *Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development*, 5th ed., London, SAGE, 2018, p.135.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 138.

This literature seems to reflect a broader recognition that an emphasis on evidence-based practice devalues other ways of knowing in relation to caring for others. Nursing scholarship often seeks to offset this by drawing attention to the other forms of knowledge, most often tacit, such as practical wisdom:

Such knowledge, unlike theoretical knowledge, does not pursue an intellectual conclusion but is seen in the actual performing of doing good for fellow humans. Such interactions come after the practically wise person decides, consciously or unconsciously, how to act in the most appropriate and moral way.²⁵⁶

The suggestion here being that what is needed is an approach that works alongside knowledge made in the process of doing.

Writing from the context of nursing scholarship, Melanie Jasper argues that although reflective writing is increasingly becoming visible within qualitative research reports, 'it needs to be further acknowledged as central to the methodological processes within research studies and recognised as an essential part of their methodology.'²⁵⁷ She charts the differences between audit trails informed by the nature of objective science which are 'stripped of any subjective musings of the researcher, and indeed are located within the realm of observable, justifiable, and measurable criteria' and those within qualitative work which tend to feature the 'subjective and personal contributions of the researcher, the capability of the researcher to put themselves into the research process and the explicit acknowledgement of themselves as an active part of the study.'²⁵⁸ She goes on to position the use of reflective writing within the qualitative research process as a method for 'not only contributing to the trustworthiness of a research study, but that in itself offers techniques to facilitate creativity, critical thinking and strategies for analysis and innovative discovery.'²⁵⁹ Although Jasper's arguments are rooted in the context of nursing practices they are arguably transferable to the cultural context and qualitative research more broadly where the pressure to report and evidence 'impact' more instrumentally is also experienced.

Similarly, Linda Rykkje problematises the permeation of positivist knowledge through healthcare services and makes a strong case for the use of reflective writing as key to expressing tacit knowledge and practical wisdom. Although Rykkje focuses primarily on

²⁵⁶ L. Rykkje, 'The tacit care knowledge in reflective writing – a practical wisdom', [*International Practice Development Journal*](#), Centre for Nursing Innovation, vol. 7, 2017, p. 3.

²⁵⁷ M. A. Jasper, 'Using Reflective Writing In Research', *Journal of Research in Nursing*, vol 10, no. 3, 2005, p. 247.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 248.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 248.

nursing services for older people, many of the arguments she goes on to make are again transferable to other practices, such as applied theatre and creative practice with young people, as I explore in Chapter 4. Fundamentally she suggests that it is troubling for a profession such as nursing, with caring often understood as being at its core, to emphasise visible tasks such as treatment and symptom management, while aspects related to expert caring skills are often invisible and therefore unrecognised. If this can happen in nursing then it is clear that a focus on care in other practices could very easily become invisible and devalued against an increasingly instrumental policy backdrop. It is useful then to look in more detail at how reflective writing is conceived in this literature as a strategy for re-establishing a focus on care as a primary research agenda in the health / social care context.

In a study of reflection notes written by students doing continuing education in advanced gerontology, Rykkje frames student stories as tacit care knowledge and practical wisdom. Rykke suggests that the reflective writing process strengthened students' ethical autonomy and imagination, which are cited as important in healthcare professionals' caregiving enabling them to act based on expertise and not formal rules.²⁶⁰ Rykkje argues that if practitioners can express tacit knowledge in written form then it may improve how they are able to apply theory in practice. For her, reflective writing translates tacit knowledge into words thereby making it recognisable. Practitioners can then use this new understanding in 'acts of caring.' Reflective writing is thus positioned as:

part of the educational pathway and contributes to the development of personal tacit knowledge and wisdom. The experiences put forward in the student's stories become part of their ability to act and care ... Fostering healthcare professionals' self-awareness through reflection can help them come to a realisation and understanding that opens up new possibilities for action.²⁶¹

Rykkje suggests that reflective writing is also able to foster more creative competencies such as open mindedness, imagination, and wonder through its emphasis on re-encountering situations in greater detail and the provision of a framework 'by which to understand new and unique perspectives.'²⁶² In this context these competencies are positioned as being part of developing a greater ability to act and care.

Following the Literature Review, I identified letter writing as a possible mode of reflective writing that would enable me to explore some of the key care-related concepts emerging

²⁶⁰ L. Rykkje, 'The tacit care knowledge in reflective writing – a practical wisdom', [*International Practice Development Journal*](#), Centre for Nursing Innovation, vol. 7, 2017, p. 7.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² L. Rykkje, 'The tacit care knowledge in reflective writing – a practical wisdom', *International Practice Development Journal*, Centre for Nursing Innovation, vol. 7, 2017, pp. 4-5.

from my early reflective writing practice, and as a basis for articulating a relationship between applied theatre and spiritual wellbeing. In the following section I look at the significance of letters in making meaning in culture generally, and the use of letters in research. Once again the most resonant accounts were found within health related literature, which, taken together, provide a very clear sense of why letters can be a robust research tool and how they might prove a suitable methodological approach for my own research specifically.

Letter writing

In their study of letter writing as a social practice David Barton and Nigel Hall suggest that:

Letter writing is one of the most pervasive literate activities in human societies, letter writing crosses informal and formal contexts. The history of letter writing reveals that it is anything but a static process and that from basic letter structures have emerged some of the powerful forms of text in contemporary society.²⁶³

Letter writing was one of the earliest forms of writing. John O'Connell charts a western-centric account of its history tracing the influence on current forms of written communication to the fourth century BC and Isocratean letters of patronage, letters supplying character references, letters asking favours and letters offering counsel.²⁶⁴ O'Connell progresses to detail the reflective subtlety and formal beauty of letters exchanged during the Renaissance as exemplified by Cicero and Erasmus' recommendations to students that the best letters should resemble 'not shouting in a theatre but whispering in a corner with a friend.'²⁶⁵ He reports that as more people started writing in English the classical models fell away and that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the publication of thousands of letter writing manuals including in 1868 *The Art of Letter Writing* which advises: 'Write as you speak, write just what you have to say, write exactly the things you feel ... in short write what comes uppermost.'²⁶⁶ O'Connell illustrates, with copious examples, how over time letters have broadly become more personal and more flexible in their uses – to convey duties, to express anxieties, to offer advice, as legacies from parent to child, as rebuke, to deliver news, to express love, to discuss death, and provide comfort through times of war and conflict.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ D. Barton and N. Hall (eds.), *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, Netherlands, John Benjamin Publishing Co, 1999.

²⁶⁴ J. O'Connell, *For the Love of Letters. The Joy of Slow Communication*, London, Short Books, 2012.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

²⁶⁶ Ibid

²⁶⁷ J. O'Connell, *For the Love of Letters. The Joy of Slow Communication*, London, Short Books, 2012, pp. 23-24.

There has been consideration of letter writing as research method in qualitative research and reflective practice. I have found examples from within life writing studies and social science, anthropological and historical practices especially useful in their focus on the socially-situated nature of letter writing.²⁶⁸ O'Connell argues that letters encapsulate lives more effectively than biographies because they show rather than tell you what a person was like.²⁶⁹ Arguably the strength of letter writing as a research method in the context of cultural research, and in particular in the context of my own research, is its ability to open up reflective practice to ensure that researchers openly explore and build robust ideas with those with whom we have experienced meaningful professional engagement. As a professional doctorate candidate critically examining my own practice this co-construction of knowledge enables those with whom I have collaborated to become active agents in defining my key terms and concepts. As such for me this method becomes both an apt reflection of and an ethical tribute to the way in which my professional knowledge has evolved over the decade of practice which my research details.

Letter writing as a research tool is given some attention in education literature, mainly in relation to teacher development. For example, letter exchanges between trainee teachers and students have been used in the context of exploring cyberbullying²⁷⁰ and to enable peer support with teacher research projects.²⁷¹ However, it is again the approaches detailed within health and social care disciplines that prove most significant in relation to my research in that they provide examples of letter writing as a research tool designed to enable researchers and co-researchers to access and portray emotional aspects of experience. Given the concepts I chose to address with my letter writers, and my focus on exploring modes of meaning that reflect personal aspects of a professional relationship, I anticipated that the data my methodologies produced would often be rooted in an emotional domain. Indeed the subsequent chapters in which the findings are presented deal with themes of pain, troubled emotions, and affects.

Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan, Mathabo Khau, Lungile Masinga, and Catherine Van de Ruit use reflective letter-writing as a method of generating data between a group of four

²⁶⁸ S. Smith and J. Watson, *Reading Autobiography. A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd edn., Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

R. Josselson and Amia Lieblich, *The Narrative Study of Lives*, London, SAGE, 1993.

D. Barton and N. Hall (eds.), *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, Netherlands, John Benjamin Publishing Co, 1999.

²⁶⁹ J. O'Connell, *For the Love of Letters. The Joy of Slow Communication*, London, Short Books, 2012, p. 61.

²⁷⁰ M. Connolly and V. Giouroukakis, 'Cyberbullying: Taking Control through Research-Based Letter Writing', *English Journal*, vol. 101, no. 6, pp. 70-74.

²⁷¹ A. Samaras and S. Corey, 'Please Write: Using Critical Friend Letter Writing in Teacher Research', *Teacher Education Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2013, pp. 93-109.

researchers who embarked on a collaborative autoethnographic inquiry into the emotional dimensions of researching social aspects of HIV & AIDS.²⁷² Their findings point to the value of a collaborative process of reflective letter-writing as a way for researchers to access and portray emotional aspects of their research experience, to deepen their engagement with these emotional dimensions, and to gain insight into their own and others' lived research experiences. Also noting the importance of letter writing for both collaborative and emotionally sensitive areas of research, Debbie Kralik, Tina Koch, and Beverley M. Brady discuss correspondence as data in relation to a research project that involved an exchange of letters over a 12-month period between a group of women from a wide geographical area who were all experiencing ongoing health challenges. The researchers were seeking insight into how the women all lived with ill health and to capture a sense of their day-to day experiences.²⁷³ They found that the letter writing process brought about a sense of equity in relationships between researchers and the researched, eradicating any sense of hierarchy. One of the women wrote to the researchers 'What I have found so nice about your study is that along the way you have revealed yourself, and that you are not just an academic asking questions.'²⁷⁴ The researchers make a strong case for the use of letter writing as the most effective research tool in this context by offering a comparison with other methods. Given the significance of this method for my research, it is worth including several instances of feedback on the approach here:

There was no pressure for the immediate response to questions, as is often the case in a face-to face interview. There were no uncomfortable moments of silence when they feel they have to say 'something'. There was not a researcher observing the way they sit the clothes they wear, or their facial expressions. They were not being 'examined'.²⁷⁵

There was never the perception that I had to respond in a certain way. This differs so much from a standard questionnaire where I would not be given this opportunity. There is no right or wrong answer to describe an individual's experience.²⁷⁶

The researcher found correspondence to be a different concept to a diary, because there was the expectation of a response, much the same as a verbal conversation, except writing a letter enabled time for reflective thought prior to putting pen to paper. There was the opportunity for the participant to shape and reshape her stories before they were told.²⁷⁷

²⁷² K. Pithouse-Morgan, et al., 'Letters to Those Who Dare Feel: Using Reflective Letter-Writing to Explore the Emotionality of Research', *The International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2012, pp. 40-56.

²⁷³ D. Kralik, T. Koch, and B. M. Brady, 'Penpals: correspondence as a method for data generation in qualitative research', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2000, pp. 909-917.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p.910.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 915.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 911.

In contrast to face-to-face interviews, this enabled the letters from the women to be focused on the issue at hand. The cost of postage must be considered as in this study the participants used a reply paid address; however, the costs associated with transcribing audio tapes following an interview are also great. In addition, the potential for transcription errors was reduced because the participants have recorded their own thoughts.²⁷⁸

The relationship that developed between the researchers and the participants is referred to as that of pen-pals, whilst the letter writing process is described as a narrative one which enabled a critical reflective conversation. The letter writing enabled the participants to become reflectively aware of their experiences, so as to capture and link elements of their past, present, and hopes for the future. The participants reported that the letter writing gave them time to really consider the researchers' questions and their reply and that while they wrote they took time to stop for reflection. There are a number of letter writing factors identified by the researchers as enabling the generation of rich data particularly that which provided insight on a personal and emotional dimension. The researchers argues that the dialogue exchange represented by the letters 'enhances the richness of the data generated,'²⁷⁹ the fact that the participants could write at their leisure meant they wrote at times when they had solitude and quietness enabling 'intense narratives at these times of deep reflection,'²⁸⁰ the lack of a physical presence (both researchers and participant) created an emotional safety zone that promoted disclosure of life stories. One of the participants suggests that the letter writing process was so effective because it made the project very personal:

the questions asked seemed personalized to my own very particular situation. I was aware that my responses would be compared to other women's and possibly shared. The use of the letter has enabled me to fully describe my situation and feelings related to having a chronic illness.²⁸¹

Whilst my research project does not focus on such obviously emotive contexts as the limited examples I offer here, letter writing studies from the field of health prove letter writing to be an appropriate strategy for responding to my research aims of collaboratively exploring concepts such as 'ethos' and 'spiritual wellbeing,' which traverse the personal and professional. Having discussed the methodological basis of the use of reflective writing, specifically letter writing, in my research, in the next section I give an account of how this worked in practice. I begin with a fictional letter written by myself, in the persona of Frankl.

²⁷⁸ D. Kralik, T. Koch, and B. M. Brady, 'Penpals: correspondence as a method for data generation in qualitative research', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2000, pp. 909-917, p. 916.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 914.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 915.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

The story of the research: Letter writing as a retrospective reflective practice

Dear Madeleine,

Thank you for your letter detailing the start-up of Orangebox, I now wish you much success in this your first full year of operation. I am writing with some thoughts and guidance (which you may of course take or leave to varying degrees) in order to help you stay focussed on your ultimate goal throughout this challenging year. Well, yes, let me start by acknowledging, rather than brushing over, the enormity of the task ahead just to make Orangebox financially viable, safe and managerially smooth; survival essentially. However it sounds like you now have some good support in place to ensure that this happens so my letter addresses the other aspects of your work better suited to my skills, experience, and knowledge. You talk about a fear of becoming hostage to the economic imperatives and the reductive forms of accounting prescribed by many funders and government policies at the expense of focussing on young people's spiritual well-being and your own reflective practice. Or, if I may be so bold, you are worried that this job will make a businesswoman out of you, taking you away from your desire to develop effective forms of practice for and with young people! Let me reassure you though that I really do understand your concerns and the stresses and strains of the neoliberal context. I would like to offer some quick Franklian tips on how to stay focussed on your ultimate goal despite the political and contextual complexity.

May I start by reminding you of my foreword to Finding Meaning In Life in which I provided a strong defence for the relevance of logotherapy: 'Let us be frank – the Western world has solved the problem of survival. The struggle for survival is over. But the question of "survival for what" is still open. That is exactly the question logotherapy has placed before us as the ultimate challenge.' I suspect that this challenge is extraordinarily palpable in post 09/11 Britain and young people especially will require ongoing support to find meaning and to develop their sense of self. Of course you must have known your letter would grab my attention given my late interests in work with young people and play writing. It really was frustrating not to have been able to explore that further before my death. Nevertheless, I think it is highly appropriate that forms of provision are created to support the development of young people's noetic resources. Furthermore I am deeply intrigued by your notion of applied theatre making knowledge and practice as an appropriate form of experience to inform leadership of such provision – perhaps you could make this the subject of a future letter detailing how you understand this and how you are attempting to articulate and evidence it? So to my tips then based on all that you have told me about the current climate:

Tip Number 1: do more to articulate how logotherapy offers a more neutral and socially embedded concept of spiritual wellbeing especially if, as you tell me, contemporary theologians are positioning certain faiths as a resource for counteracting postmodern alienation and oppression. You cannot assume that spiritual practices offer the counterweight to damaging neoliberalism. They might instead become part of the same historical impetus – don't new-age spirituality and fundamentalist religion go hand in hand with the neoliberal turn? I am not happy to hear that there is a growing use of spirituality as a 'brand label,' be wary of how the term can be used to serve capitalist structures! Spirituality's association with inner life can easily become understood as detached from a socially engaged perspective. In fact it is going to be most effective to stick to my term noetic

development rather than spiritual wellbeing, hence let's both use it in all future correspondence ...

(Excerpt from one of researcher's fictional letters to and from Viktor Frankl, December 2013)

My early research project (January 2012), described in the research article, demonstrated how theatre processes can enable meaning making--the main facet of spiritual wellbeing as it is understood within Viktor Frankl's logotherapy. Through the reflective writing projects I aimed to find ways of looking at the influence of arts practices on young people's personal development and quality of life outside of market influenced frameworks--going beyond the then-current youth provision and policy conceptions of practice to incorporate an emphasis on spiritual, as well as physical and mental, wellbeing. I wanted to find ways to articulate an applied theatre ethos and an effective leadership practice operating from this ethos that might be particularly conducive to the promotion of spiritual wellbeing. This articulation would come from the analysis of the perceptions of experienced staff / practitioners and young people as they expressed them in response to my letters and in negotiation with academic literature from the fields of applied theatre and creative practice with young people. I was aiming to generate new data through recall, reflection, and memories relating to the work in which we were engaged during the period 2004-2014. I chose letter writing as a central method for generating this data for the reasons outlined in the previous section and because, from a biographer's point of view, letters represent an indispensable form of literature. As Willis J. Westlake states in his 1876 book, *How To Write Letters*, it is 'in his letters we get nearer than anywhere else to a man's inner life--to his motives, principles, and intentions. Letters are written when the mind is as it were in dressing gown and slippers--free, natural, active, perfectly at home, and with all the foundations of fancy, wit, and sentiment in full play.'²⁸² A response in the form of a letter has depth; it is personal, crafted, and diligent.

In early 2015 I invited practitioners and young people with whom I had collaborated on Creative Partnerships and Orangebox to participate in a six-month letter writing exercise to examine my central hypothesis. Specifically in February 2015 I distributed twenty-four letters outlining my PhD enquiry and associated arguments to 16 adults and 8 young people. The young people were all aged 16+ so did not require parental or carer consent to participate and were those with whom I had worked most intensively in establishing Orangebox Young People's Centre. The adults were identified because they had a connection to applied theatre practice or were known to engage with themes that have resonance with the research territory. 7 adults and 5 young people responded to my initial letter and became the research cohort. In total the project generated 15 letters comprising

²⁸² J. W. Westlake, *How To Write Letters*, Philadelphia, Sower, Potts & Company, 1876.

approximately 33,000 words and 7 semi-structured interviews (average length of interview being 1.5 hours). Three of the letter writers used email and two sent their letters by post; all of the letters were typed. More detail on the biographical and professional context of each of the respondents is provided in the two chapters that follow.²⁸³

On average it took me four hours to write a letter and each letter comprised between 1600 to 2300 words. During the six month letter writing exercise I logged in a spreadsheet the date of each letter received and sent. Intriguingly even the emailed letters (emailed as attachments) observed date and address protocols and started with the salutation 'Dear Madeleine.' I deliberately did not respond immediately to any of my letters but I did read them as soon as they arrived. I found that a gestation period was useful to mull over the content of each letter and think through the potential connections and challenges to my research before constructing a response. Each letter lived with me for a number of days and I would then get to a point where I was simply desperate to respond and identified a space in my schedule to do so. I usually started by going over the letter once again, logging the areas to address, the relevant research connections I intended to unpack and mapping the general shape of the letter. As soon as I got to typing the words 'Dear so and so' there followed an intense, uninterrupted burst of writing. I then looked back at what I had written, refined it, and finally made sure that I had answered any questions and spoken to concerns raised by the recipient in the same chronological order as they were posed in their letter to me.

The style of writing evidenced in the letters was free flowing and characterised by generous, considered levels of reflection. For example J started his first letter with 'I have my slippers on and will endeavour to write this freehand, so to speak, so please accept that grammar and sentence construction may be a bit "stream of conscience" [sic] but I think that's what you intend.'²⁸⁴ The pace of letter exchange varied greatly. Two participants in particular were very quick to respond to my letters, often suggesting that their writing might be more 'rough around the edges' or 'stream of consciousness-like' as a result of their eagerness to respond:

I always tend to reply to letters quickly, for good or ill, because my first rush of thoughts is always a more honest response even if it is a bit rough at the edges and contains some ill-considered phrasing, so please forgive me if there is anything opaque here! I will be happy to clear up or extend any ideas you find interesting.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ The letter writers, also referred to as co-inquirers, respondents and participants throughout the thesis, have been coded using a combination of letters and numbers. To simplify the reading of the text their pseudonyms appear without inverted commas.

²⁸⁴ J, Letter 1, p.1.

²⁸⁵ D1, Letter 2, p. 4.

The other letter writers took a lot longer to respond, and one even sent holding postcards in between letters to say that she had not forgotten but was taking her time to craft a response. The letters regularly revealed the level of commitment and labour that went into their writing:

I will finish there because this has actually taken longer than I thought. (Three separate sittings – and not all of them done in my slippers).²⁸⁶

I had to read your letter 3 times, very slowly, to really get bits of it. Which was not a chore.²⁸⁷

I apologise for the delay in responding to your last letter. It has taken me a while to reflect on its contents.²⁸⁸

Oh my god, I've written 7 pages and I don't feel like I've begun to get to the meat and potatoes of your letter.²⁸⁹

Some of the early letters provide insight into the physical setting in which the letters have been written and the sense of a need to create or clear a space in which the letter writer could focus their attention on the task of crafting the letter:

The things is, what you should know is, I am for real sitting in my dressing gown and slippers as I sit down to write this. Which makes me smile. It's 5 to 10 in the morning and it looks like it's going to be one of those work mornings which consist of tea, slippers, mounds of scrabbling through work piles of paper on my desk and generally getting to grips with the physical place of home. I've been rushing around like crazy of late: lots of early mornings and dashes to London and places to be and deadlines to hit and meetings to make. This is the first morning in a while where I know I'll spend the day alone and will be able to think.²⁹⁰

The letters suggest a range of incentives for responding which can be grouped under three headings: discovering surprising resonances; intrigue at the thought processes the discipline of letter writing might bring about; an opportunity to think deeply or differently.

So for example, in line with 'discovering surprising resonances', D1 writes:

I have not read Frankl's book, but the general idea he espoused, that our resilience and sense of contentment as humans is in direct proportion to our capacity to find purpose, make meaning and to imagine possible futures (I hope I am not applying too loose a set of descriptions here!) certainly does resonate with me. I will read some of his work.²⁹¹

Building on this idea of surprise and novelty, E writes that:

It was also lovely to discover resonances that were a surprise. I think since my years at Creative Partnerships that we have generally kept in touch via social media or lovely moments when we bump into each other or the one or two times

²⁸⁶ J, Letter 1, p. 5.

²⁸⁷ E1, Letter 1, p. 1.

²⁸⁸ J, Letter 3, p. 1.

²⁸⁹ E, Letter 2, p. 8.

²⁹⁰ E, Letter 1, p. 1.

²⁹¹ D1, Letter 1, p. 1.

that we've actually got it together to meet – and under those circumstances it is easy to keep track of what one may be 'doing' but not so easy to really understand what one is 'thinking about the doing.' So I thought to myself, that's so interesting, because I think I see resonances in my thinking about my 'doing' and the thinking that you have been having while you've been on your journey of 'doing'. If that makes sense?²⁹²

Some of the letters portrayed 'a sense of the intrigue at the thought processes the discipline of letter writing might bring about'. This manifested itself in participants attempting to resist the temptation to subvert the written practice for a verbal one and is best exemplified by J's quote below:

My instant desire is to meet up and talk it all through long and hard but I am equally excited by the format of conversing via letter so let's give it a go! ²⁹³

Letter respondents also noted that the process of crafting letters represented 'an opportunity to think deeply or differently':

Now, I'm not going to set out any expectation that this letter will be satisfying to either of us, or indeed quite so lengthy as yours, but I accept with hope that I will exercise my grey matter.²⁹⁴

My immediate response was that it was all getting rather heavy and I wasn't sure I could relate to the way in which you were framing my situation--whether we were both trying to make it fit your thesis for the sake of convenience. On reading it again a few weeks later I think not; there is still mileage in this, though my response is inevitably not as critically or academically robust as yours. That, in itself, is interesting and pertinent I think--that sometimes another person can state things one can immediately relate and respond to and other times it takes a little longer, requiring time to reflect and re-visit. Again, as I have got older I like to think I have become less dismissive of things that aren't immediately apparent; accepting that whilst they might not appear immediately relevant that is not to say they are irrelevant. (I love the fact that one can re-visit a film or a book some time later and find it changed, because one's own thinking and experiences have changed).²⁹⁵

At some point in the process all but one of the letter writers expressed an anxiety that their writing might not be useful or 'on the right track'. They often felt the need to state that their ideas were based on hunches rather than actual sources exposing a sense of their vulnerability as letter writers:

I don't know if that makes sense. I don't have sources that I am founding this thinking upon. This is just me using / talking from my gut. Which may or may not be useful? ²⁹⁶

²⁹² E, Letter 1, p. 1.

²⁹³ J, Letter 1, p. 1.

²⁹⁴ T1, Letter 1, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ J, Letter 3, p. 1.

²⁹⁶ E, Letter 2, p. 6.

As with all these matters – since they are still evolving – there is a big element of guesswork and crystal ball gazing so some of this is just a great big hunch on my part.²⁹⁷

The wait between letters proved a very fruitful part of the discipline--living in the knowledge that you have an unanswered letter is not like having a report or unanswered emails to which you must attend. There was an implicit agreement between letter writers to be patient and allow the other space and time to construct their response. The need to move towards slower forms of research has been acknowledged within applied theatre and is well articulated by Paul Dwyer. Dwyer argues for a slower practice in order to deepen the dialogue between artists and project partners about both the creative process and the evaluation of outcomes.²⁹⁸ As a form of slow communication and a slow research practice the letter writing project provided a space outside the economisation of time that was an increasing feature of my working life at Orangebox and a prevalent characteristic of neoliberalism more broadly (as discussed in Chapter 1). However slow research is mentally taxing in nature. The demand for patience can be anxiety-provoking, especially when working on a time-bound project such as a PhD, and the growing complexity of the discursive terrain being co-constructed makes additional demands in terms of analysis. The intimate nature of what a letter writing process elicits brought additional ethical demands. In parts the letters contained a lot of emotion with participants moving in and out of the personal and the philosophical throughout their correspondence. A flavour of the personal nature of, and the sheer range of views expressed in the letters, is contained within the following excerpts from three early letters:

I have discovered my 85 year old Aunt has been hiding problems. Her kitchen has months' worth of washing up in it. Months and months' worth of rotten food and dirty pans piled high and on every surface and on the floor. The stink was incredible ... I sense that some of the creative negotiation skills I learnt during CP will come into play on this very personal front.²⁹⁹

You have provided me with an occasion and an excuse to reflect at large on some of the work I have been engaged in over my working life³⁰⁰

This letter writing process is certainly making me think - again, reflect, remember and learn. The artifice of the letter is somewhere between conversation and document. It is considered and self-censored, and yet I know I have given more of myself than I would have in interview or empirical questionnaire. I'm sure my contributions more than flirt with idiosyncrasy, but that's easier for you to identify and edit. This engagement is a good thing for me at this time, poignant even. I am

²⁹⁷ D1, Letter 5, p. 1.

²⁹⁸ P. Dwyer, in H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 147.

²⁹⁹ E1, Letter 1, p. 2.

³⁰⁰ T1, Letter 1, p. 1.

finding that I have to be disciplined in my responses to you. With this I started immediately upon receipt of your letter No. 2 as I did with letter No. 1. Then I became distracted and lost the thread and meaning/understanding. Subsequent attempts became more considered and less 'stream of consciousness' as I looked up various bits of terminology etc., but interrupted again by life. To eventually write this, and even then over a couple of sessions, is somewhat therapeutic. So forgive me if readability/fluency isn't great, or content drifts/becomes too personal. You will read that I am not confident in my understanding yet. Do guide me.³⁰¹

A return to the work of Gillie Bolton on reflective writing is useful here. For Bolton this intimate level of sharing is simply conducive to effective reflective practice, with its aims of practitioners bringing their 'whole selves to reflective practice and that whole person has vulnerabilities.'³⁰² Reflective writing, Bolton argues and as I have noted earlier in the chapter, creates closer contact with emotions, thoughts and experiences.³⁰³ As the excerpts show, my letter writers seem to engage with both the research process and their professional practice with their whole selves. In nursing this is understood to happen when practitioners integrate holistic caring into their practice through reflection, engaging 'herself or himself, together with thoughts, feelings and actions.'³⁰⁴ As such I would argue that in their incorporation of personal and emotional dimensions the letter writers demonstrate a commitment to reflection and, implicitly, to notions of care.

An additional challenge of letter exchanges as research relates to making a decision as to when the research process ends. The six-month period allocated to the letter writing process was decided in response to practicality relating to the time-bound nature of the PhD project. Notably by the end of that time period most of the exchanges were coming to a natural end:

This list could probably go on and on, but rather than wear you down I will draw a line under this and hope it captures some of the recurring 'what ifs' I sometimes turn over in my mind. It's been great to correspond with you. Good luck with the research and let me know how it all pans out!³⁰⁵

To bring a close to the project I sent each of the participants a thank you card and their own copy of Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search For Meaning*.³⁰⁶

As a specific response to the fact that the young people and youth workers involved in the research did not want to commit anything to paper in response to my letters, I developed a

³⁰¹ T1, Letter 2, p. 5.

³⁰² G. Bolton and R. Delderfield, *Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development*, 5th ed., London, SAGE, 2018, p. 34.

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 138.

³⁰⁴ C. Gustafsson and I. Fagerberg, 'Reflection, the way to professional development?' *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2014, pp. 271-280.

³⁰⁵ D1, Letter 5, p. 5.

³⁰⁶ V. E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, London, Rider, 2004.

form of interview which attempted to mirror the call-and-response nature of the letter writing process. Guidance on letter writing from a historical source (the 1868 manual *The Art of Good Letter Writing*) suggests that a good letter should mimic conversation: 'write as you speak, write just what you have to say, write exactly the things you feel, exactly the words you would say as if your correspondent were sitting by you.'³⁰⁷ I attempted to turn this advice on its head to ensure that the interviews mimicked a good letter. In order to achieve this I needed to commit to a conversational exchange that afforded enough time for a slow conversation and allowed digressions. The interviews were more of a dialogue than an interview covering exactly the same ground as the letters. They were semi-structured using a series of open questions, but allowing the discussion to roam freely in-between with some probing from me to guide deeper exploration of key topics. One to one dialogues on average lasted between 1.5 to 2.5 hours. As such throughout the study I make no distinction between the data emerging from the two methodologies in that those interviewed are also referred to throughout the thesis as letter writers, co-inquirers, or participants.

Analysis of the letters as research materials took place at least in part during the dialogic exchanges. This was followed up with an analytical approach influenced by new criticism. New criticism was dominant in American literary criticism in the mid- twentieth century with the movement adopting its name from John Crow Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*.³⁰⁸ As a formalist movement new criticism posits that literature is a unique form of human knowledge that needs to be examined on its own terms - as René Wellek and Austin Warren advocate 'the natural and sensible starting point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves.'³⁰⁹ Given the emphasis new criticism places on a work of literature as a self-contained object in its own right, the main characteristic of an analysis using this approach is close reading. As such my analysis of the letters necessitated a careful engagement with the text of each letter, paying attention to diction, imagery, tone, key themes, choice of language, terms and ideas, meanings, and particular complexities of meaning in order to understand how the various elements in each letter were working together to shape its effects on me as the reader. The interviews were transcribed in full and were then dealt with as pieces of writing and subjected to the same method of analysis as the letters.

³⁰⁷ From the 1868 manual *The Art of Good Letter Writing*, in J. O'Connell, *For the Love of Letters. The Joy of Slow Communication*, London, Short Books, 2012, p. 25.

³⁰⁸ J.C. Ransom, *The New Criticism*, New York. New Directions, 1941.

³⁰⁹ R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949, p.139.

Given the intimate and personal nature of the research, questions of research ethics were important. The process of research followed the norms of ethical research in UK higher education institutions, with additional adaptations in recognition of the fact that I would be involving young people with whom I had worked in the recent past. Two criteria were used as the basis for selecting the adults whom I invited to participate in the letter writing project: first, they had a connection to applied theatre practice or were known to engage with themes that have resonance with the research territory; second, they remained a live contact for me of importance to my professional practice. The participants initially received an email and Participant Information Sheet (PIS) inviting them to participate in the research. Using consent forms is not in the culture of the transaction between adults and young people or between staff in settings such as Orangebox and programmes such as Creative Partnerships; it was a voluntary relationship. I also felt that signing a consent form would undermine the informal feel of the method and that signing a letter in itself implies consent. Instead I asked all respondents to confirm that they had read and understood the PIS in their first response letter or at interview (verbal consent was recorded at the beginning of audio-recorded interviews). The information sheet detailed that any direct extracts from letters or interviews used in my thesis would be anonymised and participants would never be named. To participate young people and adults were asked to confirm their interest and consent by email and include a postal address to which letters could be sent. A deadline for responding in writing and for arranging an interview were detailed in the information sheet and in my initial letter. The participants who chose to respond to the letter via an unstructured interview did so on a one to one basis in a public location. The interview sought to support the participant to articulate an authentic response to my first letter.

One key ethical concern was identified in the ethics form submitted to the University of Manchester Committee on the Ethics of Research in 2015; it was that the young people approached to participate might feel coerced into doing so due to the my previous relationship with them. The steps taken to address this issue focused on participation being on a self-selection basis. Participants would opt in to the research based on the initial invitation (and participant information sheet) and emphasis was placed on it being a voluntary transaction--they were made fully aware of the opportunity to withdraw at any point. I identified young people with whom I had worked most closely and developed an honest and open working relationship. Some of these young people were more 'senior' to me in that they were on the youth board of Orangebox and connected to the project prior to my involvement and as such had no problem with being direct and honest with me. I stressed the voluntary nature of the research, encouraged them to be honest in their responses, and assured them that there were no negative associations with them choosing to opt out at any point. I deliberately avoided targeting those young people who

could be considered vulnerable or dependent as they would be unable to give truly informed consent and could be more likely to be coerced into participating due to my previous relationship with them.

Conclusion

Through my research I experienced the tensions associated with sustaining a commitment to developing as a reflective practitioner whilst working within increasingly neoliberal accounting frameworks. During the decade on which the research focuses, as explored earlier in the thesis, the dominance of neoliberal ideology was traceable within many of the funding and income streams available to the cultural sector by the growing emphasis on delivery of outputs, payment by result, and scoring systems weighted towards greatest benefit for least possible cost. It became increasingly difficult to deliver modes of cultural practice free from the characteristics of monetarism. I experienced this as a building frustration at the sense of too much energy being consumed by reductive forms of monitoring and reporting which seemed to distract from consideration of impacts relating to broader life practice, management of the self, and more complex aspects of inclusion, educational development, and wellbeing. I was concerned that this shift would limit my ability to develop innovative and participatory evaluative methodologies and could see that there was a risk that cultural practitioners might become increasingly less research-orientated. As a result I argue that the fundamental value of academic research in the cultural sector is to offset this phenomenon. To reverse the trend and, as a professional doctorate candidate, I have undertaken academic research to ensure that I develop as a reflective practitioner.

As the Director of Orangebox the Professional Doctorate provided a way of maintaining my focus on young people's wellbeing amidst the pressures of changing public-private policy, meeting the heavy income generation targets for the organisation, and other contradictions and tensions that were inherent in the economic and cultural climate locally (and that reflect global issues relating to neoliberal economic frameworks, public-private finance, and cultural regeneration initiatives detailed in Chapter 1). Given that there was no explicit strategic or professional imperative for me to capture progress against this goal the value of the professional doctorate became even more apparent in that it enabled me to create and commit to relevant forms of reflective practice so that I did not lose sight of this vision at the expense of economic imperatives. Furthermore at a time when little emphasis was being placed on professional and practitioner development in the cultural and youth work sectors, academic research emphasised the significance of reflective practice by promoting it as a professional characteristic as well as a process in the UK's

PhD researcher development framework.³¹⁰ Although I could not fully break free from market-influenced, neoliberal accounting frameworks, this chapter has given an account of how I sought to develop reflective writing practices as a 'slow' research method that created a time and place for co-produced meaning-making in a way that was practical, and directly relevant to safeguarding spiritual wellbeing of young people.

³¹⁰ <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework> (Accessed on 16 August 2018).

Chapter 4. Defining An Applied Theatre Ethos: The Troubled Affects and Pragmatics of Care

In this chapter I arrive at a negotiated, co-constructed articulation of applied theatre ethos as intimately related to a practice of care, and, in turn, spiritual wellbeing. I begin with a discussion of theories of ethics and of care at play within the applied theatre and related literature, and then extend this via a detailed reflection with and on the letters written by a small sample of practitioners. The chapter details the findings of an investigation into how applied theatre as a field may connect to the notion and a practice of 'spiritual wellbeing.' Drawing on a careful analysis of existing scholarship and letter writing exchanges with selected practitioners, I am conceptualising the relationship between applied theatre (and creative practice more broadly) as underpinned by an ethos of care carried out in 'negotiation.' The ways in which this is described in the scholarship and letters provides a number of points of connection between applied theatre practice and 'noetic' forms of spiritual wellbeing described by Frankl (and discussed in Chapter 5). My focus here is on analysing how the concept of care appears in applied theatre scholarship and across the collection of letters from four respondents in particular. The investigation has opened up possibilities to think more divergently about what constitutes applied theatre practice and the letter writing project has also highlighted the reciprocal benefits of seeking to capture and elucidate a more diverse range of language than that employed across academic literature. Practitioners reported that involvement in this process made tacit knowledge more conscious and sometimes provided terminology that has helped them make more productive sense of what they do on a micro and macro level. The academic benefit of this research lies in the opportunity to expand vocabulary in order to reflect the more emotional, as well as vernacular, dimension of the field, in a way that complements well-articulated philosophical and theoretical accounts that characterise existing scholarship.

In the applied theatre and theatre studies literature detailed later in the chapter, care is primarily written about in relation to ethics. To date nobody has looked at care in relation to ethos, that is, in relation to pragmatic, negotiated processes which span environment, practitioners and communities and that connect to notions of belonging. My concern here is that the notion of ethics is too abstract, distant from real world practice and therefore discussions of care stay detached from the messiness and complexity of practice. Whereas ethos is a more embedded and methods focused term. Attempts to discuss and negotiate applied theatre's ethos could help the applied theatre community to better articulate the fluidity and contingency of practice that is unique and changeable in context. Scholars and practitioners need to find ways of talking more explicitly about concepts such as ethos which direct attention to the transactions between environment, practitioners and communities in contexts of practice. Here I see an opening to the

possibility of a politics and practice of theatre as an act of care – and in turn, this opens up the potential to think about and develop a connection to theatre and spiritual wellbeing.

The chapter is structured under two key sections focusing on: firstly, a discussion of ethics and ethos in applied theatre which draws on applied theatre literature and practice and, secondly, a presentation of the three key attitudes and aspirations I argue are manifest within an ethos of care in applied theatre. I turn to the letter writing findings to capture a sense of what it means to actualise this ethos. From the literature alone I identified the three key attitudes relating to what I am calling an applied theatre ethos as ‘resistance to neoliberalism’, ‘commitment to the non-autonomous self’, and ‘theatre for healthy living’. In broad conceptual terms these headings were recognised by and resonated with the letter writers but they do not adequately reflect the emotional register or the practical vocabulary evident in the letter writers’ expression of the challenges associated with the real-life application of these attitudes. From the letter writers comes a more emotional and troubled dimension of how care is operating in theatre practice, indicated by the range of choices practitioners make about the forms of practice through which this ethos becomes manifest and the associated impact on their own lifestyles and livelihoods.

As described in Chapter 3, a new criticism approach to literary analysis was used to examine the letter writing data, focusing on tone, key themes, choice of language, terms and ideas and thus my notion of an applied theatre ethos has been stretched to accommodate the more, pragmatic and emotional dimensions of ethos articulated by the letter writers. As a result of the work in this chapter, the three key attitudes manifest within an ethos of care as described in the literature (detailed above) become both more differentiated and diverse, reflecting a spectrum of emotional, theoretical and practical positions within each attitude. Drawing on the discourse generated by my letter-writers, and in accordance with my methodology of co-production of knowledge, I am calling these: from ‘resistance to neoliberalism’ to ‘having one foot in multiple realities’; from ‘commitment to the non-autonomous self’ to ‘appreciation of selfhood as a social and relational process’ and from ‘theatre for healthy living’ to ‘authentic acts’. The chapter ends by exploring the broad implications of the investigation for understanding applied theatre and more specifically how the interchange of the two sets of languages might provide a basis for ethos as a useful opening for discussing applied theatre and spiritual wellbeing as it is defined by Viktor Frankl.

As discussed earlier in the thesis (Chapter 2) through his logotherapy philosophy and method, Dr Viktor Frankl offers a language and set of principles to help us explore the concept of spiritual wellbeing. Logotherapy is a form of psychotherapy devised by Frankl who “even in the degradation of Dachau Concentration camp retained the belief that the

most important freedom of all is the freedom to determine one's own spiritual well-being."³¹¹ In this chapter I explore some perhaps surprising resonances between Frankl's core notions of meaning making and the importance of creativity and applied theatre scholarship, in particular, via my identification of an 'ethos' of applied theatre thinking that is implicit in some published work in the applied theatre field.

The letter writers

In formulating the arguments detailed in this chapter I have drawn upon letters from four theatre practitioners with whom I worked closely on Creative Partnerships (CP) between 2004 and 2011. Three of the four practitioners with whom I am concerned in this chapter were engaged on freelance contracts as Creative Agents brokering relationships between schools and arts/cultural sector and supporting with the design and evaluation of subsequent programmes of work (for more detail on CP see Chapter 1). The other respondent, formerly a theatre practitioner, was a teacher and senior leader in a secondary school in Bradford, a school with whom we worked for six years under CP Bradford and subsequently CP West Yorkshire. This respondent was a CP Coordinator responsible for engaging with the wider local and national CP network and leading the development of the programme in his school. My first letter to these four practitioners provided an update on my professional situation and my research: setting the scene and detailing my choice of letter writing as a research method and a way of building and articulating shared or co-constructed knowledge through collaborative reflective practice. I went on to explain that my initial reflective practice methodologies were writing based and had helped unpack a sense of professional frustration through allowing me to re-write or re-frame my professional biography to be more explicit about the influence of applied theatre on my practice and the contribution it had made towards promoting and supporting young people's spiritual wellbeing. I described the gap I have identified in the literature and my sense that I needed to develop methodologies that were more collaborative and would lead to co-constructed arguments and conclusions (see Chapter 3 for more detailed account of methodologies) as an attempt to address this gap. I gave a quick overview of the ways in which applied theatre is understood and then introduced my sense of a particular ethos being at play, something I recognised as potentially in common with colleagues that came from what I would consider to be an applied theatre background. I posed several questions for participants to address in their responses:

For the purposes of our exchange I want to know what you think about this notion of an applied theatre ethos, does it mean anything to you? How do you feel about me viewing you as an applied theatre practitioner? What did your theatre training

³¹¹ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 1969, p. 1.

and experience engender? Has your applied theatre experience and knowledge remained with you, has it informed how you operate and if so would you go so far as to call this an ethos? Through Creative Partnerships were there things that you think you had in common with others who could be referred to as applied theatre practitioners? (Researcher's first letter to participants, 10 March 2015)

Between them these four respondents provided ten letters and approximately 25,000 words. In the first letters they each reflected on their current situation—sharing both personal and professional post-CP developments—to a certain extent mirroring the tone of my first letter to them. Given that the term applied theatre mostly operates within the higher education sector it is perhaps not surprising that the concept was new to all four respondents. Their initial letters contained spontaneous and *uncontaminated* thinking about both the term and the revelation that, within the context of my research, I considered each of them to be applied theatre practitioners. Indeed all four respondents evidenced that they found it a useful construct for reflecting on and looking back at how their theatre skills, experience and know-how had informed their CP and subsequent work.

You ask how I feel about you viewing me as an applied theatre practitioner. I feel fine about that. I think my theatre training gave me access to a range of techniques and skills that have provided me with a toolkit from which I can offer people the opportunity to engage with specific activities that fit a wide range of circumstances. These range from formal rehearsal and processes connected with 'putting on performances' to intimate personal and group activities that help people feel, understand and experience themselves and others in new and constructive ways.³¹²

Your thinking perhaps even potentially gives me some words and ideas to describe some of the thinking I have been doing (which I have lacked up to now) about how to make sense of what it is I do, what my values are and therefore who I might be. Because if you look at the snapshot of the last 3 weeks of my life, what on earth does it all amount to? It's a mess of family and stress and hopes and dreams and financial tightrope walking and being a storyteller in so many different contexts and so many different ways and for so many different reasons ... I think in particular that your idea that I might be an 'applied theatre practitioner' is intriguing because I have never thought about myself in that context and yet if there is a link between everything that I describe above, the idea that you have described about creating a process that uses skills learnt in a theatre context to develop / support one's self and others ... That feel present in all of that muddle of work and personal experience.³¹³

My training was as a researcher, designer, maker and technician in the theatre context. I learned to transpose an understanding of a text, contextualise it, apply clues/codes for meaning, imagine, create problems and then work out the solutions to a range of conventions and parameters. I still do all that in teaching, but in very different ratios, and until this moment, never considered what I do now

³¹² T2, Letter1, p. 3.

³¹³ E, Letter 1, p. 5.

in those terms. Is that an applied theatre ethos?³¹⁴

You talk about applied theatre and I would say absolutely. I had never intended running a shop and had always been rather dismissive of the retail sector thinking it was peopled by entrepreneurs solely intent on making money and fleecing the general public. My experience would suggest it is anything but, with a lot of people in the retail trade, especially food and drink, being passionate about their products and wanting to educate and change people's eating and shopping habits. And it was only when we opened the shop that I realised how well matched my theatre skills are to independent retail. The shop is essentially a site-specific installation. The bizarre appearance of a Dutch cheese shop in a small Highland street which, at the time, had no other shops on it was itself a piece of theatre. The ambience we have created inside is not unlike the multi-sensory theatre experience I was developing at XXXXX Theatre³¹⁵ – touch, taste, smell, visual. And the aural? Well, we tell stories and have wonderful interactions with our customers – discussions on current affairs with the locals and informative insights into local culture for the visitors. We have a costume (a Food Hygiene necessity) and we put on an act (which I hope has integrity). But there is another reason for the shop. It is a means to an end. By engaging in an honest financial transaction – I have something to sell, someone wants to buy it, money is exchanged – I have an income which allows me to pursue other creative projects without the need for external funding. And being based in the kind of community we are I am able to do this with others who are similarly self-supporting.³¹⁶

Respondents could also relate to a notion of an ethos driving their applied theatre practice:

So yes, perhaps the theatre ethos has stayed with me? I feel absolutely confident that although I might not have an immediate solution for a student, I can help them work one out, and I do still enjoy working in pressured situations and leaving one project behind and moving on to the next ... Theatre often brings to mind great collaboration and communal understanding, (as does Frankl by the sound of it?)³¹⁷

So you asked what do I think about the notion of an applied theatre ethos. Well I think that in all 'doing' there is inevitably an element of theatre. Even if it is only my reflection in the mirror as I mime to Tommy Steele, or the most private dramatic action in front of a teacher, classmate there is an element of 'showing' and if there is showing then there is an element of 'looking'. So I don't have a problem with the phrase.³¹⁸

Over the course of subsequent letters I drip-fed these respondents more details of the specific ethos of care I was attempting to negotiate and co-construct in reference to existing literature and through the letter writing process. This core idea excited and clearly resonated with respondents but—as previously mentioned--the expression of the three key attitudes of this ethos, arrived at through analysis of the literature, did not adequately

³¹⁴ T1, Letter 1, p. 2.

³¹⁵ Theatre company name removed to protect identity of respondent.

³¹⁶ J, Letter 1, p. 3.

³¹⁷ T1, Letter 1, p. 2.

³¹⁸ T2, Letter 1, p. 3.

capture respondents' rich depiction of what this meant in practical terms. The description of these attitudes (which features later in the chapter) now accommodates this shift and the ways in which respondents tested and stretched the original headings.

Reconfiguring applied theatre 'ethics' via a discourse of 'ethos' and care

This chapter builds on notions of care explored in the applied theatre literature which place emphasis on the relational value of applied theatre and creative practice with young people. However it also problematises discussions of care as they are currently presented in applied theatre scholarship and reframes these in relation to a concept of 'ethos'. Notably, key thinkers inside and related to the field of applied theatre – including James Thompson, Kathy Bishop and Helen Nicholson – although all concerned to some degree with care or care ethics - have not explored the notion of an 'ethos' of care. In reviewing the literature it becomes increasingly apparent that these scholars are far more comfortable writing about ethics in the abstract, even when what they are grappling with what could in fact be better described as the less tangible but more practically oriented concept of ethos. There follows a summary of this literature.

To date, Helen Nicholson, of the scholars referenced here, has devoted the most attention to exploring the notion of care ethics within applied theatre. In *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, after problematising the notion of theatre as gift, Nicholson draws on Annette Baier's interpretation of the gift to move away from definitions associated with cycles of debt and to highlight that 'emotional involvement with others is generative of a caring ethic which, in turn, has wider social implications.'³¹⁹ In her later publication, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, she privileges Kwame Anthony Appiah and Homi Bhabha's version of cosmopolitanism (and particularly Appiah's perception of it as ethical and emotional commitments to a world of strangers) as a prompt for the applied theatre community to think about an ethic of care. In *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Nicholson introduces the notion of a relational ontology of applied theatre in which care becomes about the relationships people have with each other as well as with other subjects and objects in the world. Here, there is a sense that life is 'defined by a network of relationalities with the human and non-human world.'³²⁰ This idea aligns with the attitude of commitment to the non-autonomous self, drawn from the work of Frankl, explored later in the chapter. More broadly Nicholson's relational ontology provides an opening to connect theatre and spiritual wellbeing in its resonance with Frankl's commitment to

³¹⁹ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.165.

³²⁰ H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 258.

achieving spiritual wellbeing through the emphasis on others, through self-transcendence and his acknowledgement of the social dimensions of spirituality (further explored in Chapter 5).

Kathy Bishop and Helen Iball explicitly connect notions of care with applied theatre ethics. Bishop puts forward a synergised moral imperative to help applied theatre practitioners to think about ethical issues in a comprehensive manner in which the idea and practice of care is privileged. She surveys six applied theatre practitioners deemed leaders in the field, linking the moral imperative that each practitioner names as driving their work to an ethical perspective identified in Sharpio and Gross' 2008 multiple ethics paradigm model.³²¹ The synergised moral imperative that Bishop arrives at is the responsibility of the applied theatre (and research-based theatre) practitioner to 'develop critical and emancipatory practice, being concerned and caring, and recognising the range of choices at any given time available to them.'³²² Writing from theatre studies (as opposed to applied theatre), Helen Iball usefully suggests that more ethical transactions may arise through working from notions of care related to virtue ethics "as distinct from the more familiar models of justice that we in theatre are maybe more readily inclined towards".³²³ As such, she positions ethics of care in opposition to justice ethics.

James Thompson, however, suggests that it is not helpful to view ethics of care and justice ethics as being dichotomously opposed and instead suggests that an ethics of care should be seen as 'a mode of enquiry that seeks to draw attention to interdependent human relations as a platform from which to enunciate broader concepts of justice.'³²⁴ From here Thompson moves on to explore an aesthetics of care underpinned by care ethics completely bypassing any mention of ethos. Arguably Thompson imposes limits upon his exploration of care in applied theatre by jumping from ethics to aesthetics, and thereby forcing an arguably narrow consideration of the practical application of an ethics of care (for Thompson this can be divided into preparation, execution and exhibition).³²⁵ A focus on ethos would enable a consideration of less tangible, less rigid, and less visible concepts – to go beyond a set of principles for guiding behaviour – to instead think in broader and fluid terms about the less conscious, more intuitive attitudes and aspirations

³²¹ Johnny Saldana, Jim Mienczakowski, Kathleen Gallagher, Tim Prentki, Anthony Jackson and James Thompson.

³²² K. Bishop, 'Six perspectives in search of an ethical solution: utilising a moral imperative with a multiple ethics paradigm to guide research-based theatre / applied theatre', *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2014, p. 73.

³²³ H. Iball, 'Towards an Ethics of Intimate Audience', *Performing Ethos: International Journal of Ethics in Theatre and Performance*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2012, pp. 41-57

³²⁴ J. Thompson, 'Towards an Aesthetics of Care', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2015, p. 436.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.441

driving the work and eventually look to how this might expand the field. Indeed in *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond* Thompson leaves the reader with the suggestion that applied theatre is neither a field nor a term but an attitude of making “engagement in theatre relevant and vital in the most unlikely of situations.”³²⁶ Sadly Thompson’s insight comes at the closing of his book with no more space given over to get underneath the skin of the concept and its resonances for practice. It does, however, provide a departure point and, its reference to the notion of applied theatre as an attitude, can be taken as a validation of the quest to name an applied theatre ethos even from Thompson - a scholarly way of synthesis and organising terms. Before attempting to define the concept of ethos on which the thesis builds, it is useful first to look in more detail at from where the notion of care in applied theatre might arise. Often, and as demonstrated in the above summary, the exploration of care comes as an extension of the emphasis on the significance of relationships associated with the importance of reflexivity in the field.

Reflexivity

Nicholson talks about reflexivity as ‘an on-going process—a continual journey’³²⁷ and James Thompson describes an inevitable sense of bewilderment associated with reflexivity as applied theatre practitioners engage with, acknowledge, and never seek escape from the complexity of human relationships, attempting to move beyond what they already know. Helen Nicholson positions reflexivity directly in relation to ethos and in so doing becomes the only applied theatre scholar to-date to refer to the notion of ethos, stating that ‘applied drama has a reflexive ethos.’³²⁸ By this she intimates that the field of applied theatre practice needs to be understood in the context in which it is generated ‘and needs to be constantly constructed interpreted, questioned and re-constructed.’³²⁹ Nicholson and Thompson establish reflexivity as a process of ongoing learning about both the practice of applied theatre but also about the self and other in social contexts. In the letters, respondents express a sense of commitment to and foregrounding of reflexivity that aligns with Nicholson and Thompson’s scholarly discussions but fail to name it as such. At this point in the letter writing exercise academic terminology provides a bridge between the practitioners and theory, helping to co-construct a positioning of reflexivity as a concern connected to care and specifically, I argue, to an ethos of care.

Although ethos is a term that I introduced to the letter writing project, the letters too suggest that reflexivity is integral to a way into exploring a potential ethos of care. The

³²⁶ J. Thompson, *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond*, Bern, Peter Lang AG, 2003, p. 205.

³²⁷ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 166.

³²⁸ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.155.

³²⁹ Ibid.

blending of both sets of languages co-produces a more detailed sense of Nicholson's notion that applied theatre has a reflexive ethos. The letter writers 'try out' a number of expressions in order to communicate the significance of having a sense of knowing oneself and an awareness of subjectivity as a way into working with others, otherness, and objectivity without ever using the term 'reflexivity'. Instead they use colloquial phrases such as 'getting on the same wavelength as others' and stress the need to be able to respond to different contexts, to be adaptable and to find different ways of relating:

Pure concepts are great for physics and maths but I've yet to find any in the social world! Human work, it seems to me is all about degrees of compromise and extents of understanding, not about absolutes.³³⁰

T2 talks in terms of a commitment to things being in a "RIGHT" relationship to each other as a factor to address at the outset of and throughout the course of any applied theatre endeavour:

We needed to have the social and political skills to enable the activity to flourish in the particular context in which it was set. We needed to get on the same wavelength as the people with whom we were working and 'draw out of them' their creativity into an expression or a set of activities ... What was for me at the heart of all the Creative Partnerships work was an understanding that through partnerships (i.e. the RIGHT relationship) the process of education for children, teachers and practitioners could be enhanced. It was the role of Creative Agent to help the partners discover how to do this and to draw out from the participants their knowledge, skills and understanding in a way that sustained and enhanced present and future practice.³³¹

The letter writers also provide a sense of the blurring of the professional and the personal as a significant connected concept and one which evokes Gillie Bolton's foundational definition of reflexivity as the finding of 'strategies to question our own attitudes, theories-in-use, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions.'³³² As such the letter writers suggest that in order to be reflexive they cannot think of personal and professional self in isolation but must instead focus on 'wholeness—our existence as artist/thinker/person/daughter etc.—all of it is who we are and my hunch is that until we find ways to express all of who we are in all our worlds of life, love, work etc., then the world will feel a topsy-turvy place to live.'³³³ It is possible to draw a direct connection here to James Thompson's claim that through challenging the categories of personal and professional--'where the intimate and interpersonal rather than being ignored are acknowledged'³³⁴--we can both expand the radical potential of the work and make a connection to an emerging theory of applied

³³⁰ D1, Letter1, p. 5.

³³¹ T2, letter 2, pp. 2-4.

³³² G. Bolton and R. Delderfield, *Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development*, 5th ed., London, SAGE, 2018, p. 10.

³³³ E1, Letter 1, p. 6.

³³⁴ J. Thompson, Towards an aesthetics of care, *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2015, pp. 430-441,

theatre as supporting spiritual wellbeing. My argument is that this emphasis on other and otherness associated with the importance of reflexivity in applied theatre suggests a correlation with a broader ethos of care which, in turn, opens up a terrain to discuss applied theatre's relationship to spiritual wellbeing.

The relationship between applied theatre ethics and ethos

Before proceeding to further define the conceptualisation of ethos from which the thesis operates, and given my intention to reconfigure discussions of applied theatre ethics in terms of a discourse of 'ethos', it is necessary to turn initially to discussions of applied theatre and its ethics. Applied theatre as a term emerged in the 1990s and has been aligned to a longer historical trajectory that links it with the alternative theatre movements of the twentieth Century beginning with the Worker's Theatre Movement of the 1920s and with progressive education.³³⁵ However, for the purposes of my research I am exploiting Nicola Shaughnessy's definition of applied theatre as 'a discrete area of enquiry only really starting in the early to mid-2000's with the publication of three key texts.'³³⁶ She goes on to name Philip Taylor's *Applied Theatre: Transformative Encounters in the Community* (2003), James Thompson's *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond* (2003), and Helen Nicholson's *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* (2005). Although I find Shaughnessy's crediting of the academy for inventing a field problematic because it lacks recognition of those operating outside of academia, her approach is theoretically useful for my exploration of the concept of a negotiated ethos. This is because Shaughnessy's history is congruent with the turn to discussions of ethics in applied theatre and it hones in on a time period (2004-2014) that aligns with the focus of my study. As such it is applied theatre and related contemporary arts literature from the mid-2000's onwards that I am privileging and drawing upon in this chapter. 'Applied theatre' is a term for a collection of practices--not any given or fixed *thing*--making use of theatre practice and processes for diverse aesthetic and social means beyond (but not excluding) staging a play or performance. Thompson and Nicholson especially have honed the present-day definition of applied theatre, tempering its tendency towards uncritical advocacy by acknowledging potential failings, dangers and limitations and bringing a greater emphasis on purpose and self-reflexivity. Ideologically speaking it could be said that applied theatre practitioners loosely subscribe to the claim that theatre processes have a value in non-theatre contexts and can support and facilitate learning, wellbeing, change, and development. Those practising applied theatre mine theatre processes for their intrinsic developmental

³³⁵ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.9.

³³⁶ N. Shaughnessy, *Applying Performance: Live Art, Socially Engaged Theatre and Affective Practice*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 8.

qualities. As such, the ethos present in a particular practice encompasses all the common things that the specific applied theatre practitioner knows about theatre as an art form and its potential application. It encompasses aspirations, personal and shared beliefs, and what they have been able to evidence about the collection of practices. Given that an ethos has to be built from activity and action--from practice as well as theory--in order to investigate an applied theatre ethos it is necessary to first to look at what might be classed as the customs and ideas specifically associated with the theatre practices that exist underneath and are related to applied theatre. In other words what are the exploitable qualities and characteristics that can then be applied in non-theatre contexts (usually formal and informal education, youth work, health and wellbeing, community [including international] development, activism, prisons, places of war, conflict or crisis)?

A turn to the work of Shannon Jackson is useful here. She suggests that we need to understand 'the fundamental elements and capacities of the medium ... To expand or re-distribute the effects of theatrical engagement.'³³⁷ Indeed, to think initially more broadly in terms of applied arts, scholars often usefully deconstruct art forms exposing their characteristics so we can see what makes them useful in, or transferable to, other contexts. Shannon Jackson's work is particularly helpful because she sees applied arts as 'social practices that provoke reflection on the supporting infrastructures of living beings.'³³⁸ Jackson describes theatre as 'a cross-disciplinary time-based, group art form'³³⁹ and the registers of theatre as 'duration, embodiment, spectacle, ensemble, text, sound, gesture, situated space, re-enactment of an elusive original.'³⁴⁰ Rehearsal, character development, conceptualisation, liveness, and practical techniques such as mask work and puppetry should also be named as capacities of the medium, as components of theatre's 'know how.' These registers of theatre are the specialist tools employed by practitioners to provoke reflection on the supporting infrastructures of human beings and help conceptualise applied theatre practice as an act of care.

Within the field of applied theatre there has certainly been more overt discussion of ethics than ethos. The word ethics does indeed come from the Greek ethos so we can see that the two terms are related but different. In a sense ethics is the more tangible or more operational concept – Richard Paul and Linda Elder define ethics as a 'set of concepts and principles that guide us in determining what behavior helps or harms sentient

³³⁷ S. Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2001, p. 144.

³³⁸ Ibid. p. 39.

³³⁹ Ibid. p. 14.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 19.

creatures.³⁴¹ Perhaps because they are nearer to the surface - more consciously and proactively operationalised - ethics are slightly easier to point to than ethos. Saying something about ethics may facilitate a way into the more difficult to grasp concept of ethos from which they are born. There are rich and diverse ways of writing about ethics in applied theatre: exploring drama as a form of moral education³⁴²; the application of performance techniques and methodologies such as presence, mimicry and artifice when we are working with real lives as subject matter;³⁴³ drama as practices of citizenship and the relationship of such practices to institutional practices³⁴⁴ and in relation to care (Nicholson, Iball, Bishop, and Thompson cited earlier in the chapter). The 2005 special edition of the *RIDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* examined ethics from a range of perspectives including the ethics of theatre making in international and development contexts, between university students in the UK and adults with learning disabilities, and within citizenship education in the United States. Across these practices common themes are identified as 'representation and authority, dialogue and critical reflexivity, the ethical responsibilities associated with history and contextuality and with the politics of place.'³⁴⁵ Nicholas Ridout also provides a useful way of thinking about the ethics that are embedded within the art form (despite the fact that its focus is firmly on the staging of theatrical work and how it is received by an audience and so there is no real reference to ethical considerations of 'applied' theatre practices). Ridout quickly moves from the rather limiting and simplistic definition of ethics as being about 'the kind of person you are and the things you do'³⁴⁶ to a consideration that ethics 'might in fact be all about everyone but yourself.'³⁴⁷ More usefully by the conclusion he has demonstrated how 'the tension between reason and emotion or between rational thought and the imagination has recurred in ethical thought about theatre and about life in general from Plato's day to our own.'³⁴⁸ He is able to point to logic shared by both Levinas and Plato in the identification 'that an ethical work or event of art would be one which demanded a labor of critical

³⁴¹ P. Richard and L. Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Understanding the Foundations of Ethical Reasoning*, Tomales, Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2006, p. 2.

³⁴² B., Edmiston, 'Drama as Ethical Education', *Research in Drama Education*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2000, pp. 63-84.

J. Winston, 'Theorising Drama as Moral Education', *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 28, no. 4, 1999, pp. 459-471.

J. Winston, *Drama, Narrative and Moral Education*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2005.

³⁴³ N. Shaugnessy, 'Truths and lies: exploring the ethics of performance applications,' *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2005, pp. 201-212.

³⁴⁴ S. Parry, 'Imagining Cosmopolitan Space: Spectacle, Rice and Global Citizenship,' *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 15, no. 3. 2010, pp. 317-337.

³⁴⁵ On ethics, *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2005, p.1.

³⁴⁶ N. Ridout, *Theatre & Ethics*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 10.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁴⁸ N. Ridout, *Theatre & Ethics*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 14.

thought for its ethical potential to be realised rather than offering within itself anything of the ethical'.³⁴⁹ The term 'a labour of critical thought' is particularly useful as it foregrounds reflexivity and resonates with the notion of reflexivity as hard work inherent in Helen Nicholson and James Thompson's writing. However, as explored earlier in the chapter, this thesis instead sees reflexivity as a core concept connected with applied theatre's understanding of care and hence is positioned in the reconfiguration of discussions of applied theatre ethics to a discourse of ethos.

Despite the ubiquity of discussions relating to ethics in applied theatre thinking and practice, there is very little in applied theatre literature that explores the notion of ethos explicitly. Helen Nicholson overtly refers to an applied drama ethos (explored earlier in the chapter) but even here, only as a brief and concluding remark with no subsequent focus on unpacking the concept. Given the difficulty other fields have experienced when defining and using the term, it is perhaps hardly surprising that 'ethos' is not a well-used concept in applied theatre research, despite its usefulness. The field of education, for example, in studies of school ethos, has struggled to quantify what researchers describe as an: 'unobservable force' (Prosser, 1999); an 'invisible essential' (Rooney, 2005); what is 'felt rather than thought' (McLaughlin, 2005; Jeffrey and Woods, 2003).³⁵⁰ This difficulty of definition has prompted researchers to ask 'at what point can expressions of the subjective be taken as describing ethos rather than idiosyncratic and individual ideas?'³⁵¹ In an attempt to avoid falling foul of mistaking an individual or idiosyncratic idea for an ethos I have scanned the applied theatre literature for evidence to support and extend my ideas and through the letter writing activity have ensured that practitioners with whom I have worked closely over the last ten years are active agents in defining and developing this notion of ethos. Furthermore I have turned to literature concerning theory and practice of theatre in recognition of the reciprocal relationship between the two. As Joseph A. Raelin says, this reflects an approach that accepts that 'theory makes sense only through practice, but practice makes sense only through reflection as enhanced by theory'.³⁵²

Ethos is a Greek word originally meaning "accustomed place" (*Iliad* 6.511) so at base it suggests a sense of place, dwelling or belonging. In this context then it becomes possible to develop an understanding of ethics, derived from ethos, as that which holds the

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

³⁵⁰ S. Bragg and H. Manchester, *Creativity School Ethos and the Creative Partnerships programme. Final Report of the project: Evaluation of the nature and impact of the Creative Partnerships programme on school ethos--2009-10*, The Open University, May 2011, p. 18.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² J.A. Raelin, 'A Model of Work Based Learning', *Organisation Science*, vol. 8, no. 6, 1997, p. 564.

environment together. Ethos however is not an adherence to a fixed set of principles; it is much more negotiated. My letter writers are stretched across such different practices but they are holding something and that is ethos. In the ancient Greek sense, it is belonging, it is an accustomed place. They are able to dwell with that whilst being stretched. In order to explore and understand the predominant themes in the letters I turned to the concept of ethos as one most accurately encompassing the sense of belonging through practice implied by the letter writers. I was also attracted to the idea of ethos in the early stages of my research when I started to think about how my own knowledge is generated, and here, the idea of ethos was more useful than ethics.

The word ethos has evolved to its current Oxford English dictionary definition as a term referring to 'the characteristic spirit of a culture, era or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations.'³⁵³ This modern interpretation is also useful in that it broadens the original notion of place or habitation to include concepts of community, spirit, and character that can be gauged by the expression of attitudes and aspirations. From here I am expanding my definition of ethos by drawing upon contemporary discussions of the term within education research. In an article exploring creativity, school ethos and Creative Partnerships, Sarah Bragg notes that school ethos and 'related terms such as culture or climate had little currency before the 1980s, but have since come to be very much in the vocabulary of educationalists.'³⁵⁴ Edwin Smith takes an ecological approach to ethos that also draws on Pierre Bourdieu to highlight the interplay between the 'habitus' of individuals and of social institutions.³⁵⁵ He provides the notion of 'negotiated ethos,' an idea which I am applying to applied theatre research. By negotiated ethos Smith refers to the need to accommodate the complex dynamic interaction of continuous construction and re-construction of individuals' and institutions' habituses. Smith's conceptualisation of ethos encompasses connotations of both the original Greek meaning in its attention to environment and the more modern usage in the suggestion that community members are active agents in defining and redefining ethos. Significantly it also adds an acknowledgement that ethos may change in response to new ideas or forces. As such I am working from a definition of ethos that encompasses all three of these perspectives—the original meaning which draws attention to the notion of belonging, its modern emphasis on attitudes and aspiration and Smith's notion of negotiation. This idea of ethos

³⁵³ A. Stevenson (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

³⁵⁴ S. Bragg and H. Manchester, *Creativity School Ethos and the Creative Partnerships programme. Final Report of the project: Evaluation of the nature and impact of the Creative Partnerships programme on school ethos--2009-10*, The Open University, May 2011, p. 9.

³⁵⁵ E. Smith, 'Ethos, Habitus and Situation for Learning: An Ecology', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 463-470.

allows for multiplicity, it opens up to plural negotiations of values in contingent contexts and consequently demands that we look contingently at practice in place and in process.

To think in terms of ethos rather than ethics necessitates a close look at the attitudes driving practice and may enable an expansion of the vocabulary used to describe and discuss it—determining how an ethos of care might unfold in practice, and the significance of this. In turn, better understanding and articulation of ethos could point to other frameworks, constructs and theories to develop new ways of actualising an ethos of care. For the purpose of exploring ethos as a construct I will be gently intimating a sense of an applied theatre community or movement. As part of this, I am interested in how far the notion of applied can be stretched. For example, does an applied theatre practice still have to reassemble theatre processes and activities of some description or can it also refer to an underlying theatre logic or know-how driving one's thinking and actions, whether or not a practitioner is working with theatre in a community setting? The letter writing research has demonstrated that the term applied theatre still feels relevant to a practitioner who is now running a Dutch cheese shop, after having left the field as a result of dissatisfaction with the broader economic policies determining practice.

It is important to investigate both terms rather than supplementing one with the other. Thinking about care in relation to ethos rather than ethics could open up new possibilities for expanding the range of wellbeing constructs informing our practice and for developing an associated vocabulary. I propose a reframing of care as a notion relating to ethos rather than ethics in order to look more deeply at some of the underlying attitudes and aspirations driving thinking and practice. As such I now explore the attitudes and aspirations that express the ethos of care I have identified as underpinning the collection of sources brought together here. If we take the popular psychological definition of attitudes as an expression of favor or disfavor³⁵⁶ then I suggest that it is possible to evidence, from the applied theatre and related literature and analysis of the letter exchanges, three key attitudes manifest within applied theatre's ethos of care. Each attitude encompasses the theoretical ideal (drawn from the literature) and a more practical expression and problematising of that ideal (drawn from the letters). They are: resistance to neoliberalism' to 'having one foot in multiple realities'; from 'commitment to the non-autonomous self' to 'appreciation of selfhood as a social and relational process' and from 'theatre for healthy living' to 'authentic acts'.

³⁵⁶ A. H. Eagly and S. Chaiken, *The Psychology of Attitudes*, Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1993, p. 1.

Attitude 1: From 'Applied theatre as resistance to neoliberalism' to 'having one foot in multiple realities'

This attitude arises out of what Jen Harvie describes as a 'concern with the way neoliberal capitalism infiltrates and reconfigures structures, practices, and subjectivities.'³⁵⁷ Jen Harvie, Shannon Jackson and Richard Sennett have investigated how contemporary art practice is managing to escape, repair, or offset the effects of neoliberal dominance. Practitioners need to be stealthy and resilient to keep these attitudes alive, sometimes within (but subtly subverting) the dominant neoliberal paradigm, using what Grayson Perry describes as 'stealth tactics to smuggle in what might be socially challenging ideas.'³⁵⁸ Theoretically, practice growing out of such an attitude provides the opportunity to avoid further championing of the neoliberal cause. It can protect art practice from being cast as 'economic practice and the artist as entrepreneur.'³⁵⁹ This attitude links to aspirations of enabling and empowering people to question and reject realities and social systems; creating new possibilities in place of domination and control, supporting people to deal with ambiguity and openness; and developing agency and reflexivity in relation to the politics of different contexts.

The letters however, tell a slightly different story about the strain of balancing an absolute philosophical allegiance to this attitude with the very real challenges of making a living. None of the letter writers refer to neoliberalism overtly but analysis reveals three ways in which neoliberalism is discussed within the collection of letters. First, as an ideology 'breeding cynicism of everything it has yet to co-opt and a kind of dull acceptance of everything it has consumed or appropriated'³⁶⁰--that is, as a dominant culture prioritising all things financial and subsequently limiting horizons and options. Second as a force constraining mainstream education practice and third as reducing understanding and communication of art to simply being a commodity to be consumed. The affects expressed by the letter writers in relation to this attitude are complex and the sense of troubled pragmatics is most apparent here. Rather than resistance, feelings of resignation, defeat, mourning and sorrowfulness are more apt in relation to their depictions of operating within the neoliberal context. At best the resistance to neoliberalism articulated is a more Foucauldian notion of resistance--working within as much as 'against.'³⁶¹ Many of the letters contain an air of sadness, desperation, and anger when the respondents

³⁵⁷ J. Harvie, *FAIRPLAY Art, Performance and Neoliberalism*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 65.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁶⁰ E, Letter 2, p. 3.

³⁶¹ Foucauldian resistance relies upon and grows out of the situation against which it struggles. For more on Foucault's politics of resistance see M. Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', *Critical Inquiry*, vo. 8, no. 4, 1982, pp. 777-795.

lament the ways in which they have sometimes have to adopt the tenets of neoliberalism or economic instrumentalism. This is most regularly exercised by the distinction respondents make between 'pure' and 'applied' theatre opportunities and the fact that to stay financially solvent they must engage in both. They articulate a concern that a lot of mainstream theatre remains conformist to and complicit with neoliberalism but it is more publicly valued and much better remunerated than its applied counterpart. E details a play she has written about living with / surviving self-harm which is about to be toured to schools across the city:

There are 38 high schools in Leeds with an average year size of 200 per school, this will mean that roughly (ball park finger in the wind ahoy) if this play ends up playing to half the Yr10 children in Leeds it will be seen by 4000 people, not including support staff, teachers and also the outside youth groups that have booked it previously and may book it again for new year 10 kids. Which adds up to the biggest gig of my life so far! Yet, in terms of interest or indeed acknowledging this piece of work happening however, in terms of 'industry' interest, it has zero significance. It's just a TIE show ...³⁶²

She also talks at length about another play she wrote which was created from intimate and long term relations with 20 older people across the UK for two years and in which male, female, white English, white Ukrainian, British South Asian, Caribbean and gay characters are depicted:

I think/ hope it achieved stuff in regard to representation and creating, including performing to new non-theatre audiences in non-theatre venues - a ton of stuff the theatre industry is paying lip service to at present. However no one from [the regional] theatre came. No one from any theatre space in the region attended.³⁶³

E very clearly here projects a jaded sense of the lack of appreciation of applied theatre within the more commercial theatre world, a conflict which is difficult for her to resolve personally as she relies on straddling both worlds to make a living. In her third letter E's weariness and anger is foregrounded as she starts to articulate these concerns as a 'triple-lock' issue. What is clearly communicated here is her linking of the need to resist neoliberalism to an overarching ethos of care in practice which is in turn linked to a commitment to reflexive modes of relational practice:

The problem with trying to enact a progressive arts practice of course, is that it demands a constant triple lock vigilance against getting tripped up by the bad practices that are: 1) generally out there in the world; 2) the pot holes that affect our particular artistic community; and 3) (if that were not all enough) our own subconscious/ego which often has different dreams for us than our conscious has ... Cameron Macintosh doesn't have all these exhausting triple lock issues and processes to think about does he! All we expect from Cameron is that he should make a ton of fucking money and who or what he fucks or breaks in the process is of very little interest to us. Meantime, we expect the very, very, very

³⁶² E, Letter 1, p. 2.

³⁶³ E, Letter 1, p. 2.

highest bars of best practice from tiny underfunded organisations and individuals who have dared to say 'we aim to try and not fuck up everything and break people when we make work.'³⁶⁴

Next E goes on to cite very tangible examples of how some arts organisations and venues are appropriating applied theatre to further their own aims. She provides an

example of a performance promoted and funded as a community show where in reality

the vast majority of community performers ran around in different costumes and were 'extras.' The focus of the story was elsewhere. The vast majority of those performers were not essential. This show did not project, illuminate or reflect on their lives, hopes or dreams. They were bystanders in a spectacle that has been created in their honour but which never stopped to engage with who they specifically are.³⁶⁵

E's frustrations point to a lack of language for describing the worth of performative experiences that pay attention to people's lives and for a broader need to distinguish at a really nuanced level the difference between theatre practice that is both ethically engaged and embedded in a reflexive and relational ethos, and more suspect approaches, including those that are predominantly commercially driven. J too expresses an uncomfortable relationship with what he describes as the 'mainstream theatre profession': 'My entire career seems to have been caught between the desire to create original work at the same time as wanting that work to be accepted by the mainstream. Maybe that gap between them is impossible to bridge because they are almost diametrically opposed?'³⁶⁶ In both cases these frustrations have led practitioners to consider the financial reality of their practice--'last year my earnings were below £9000. That can't go on. I think to myself I'm through with trying to separate the reality of my financial life and the desire to make meaningful art'³⁶⁷--and in the case of J, led to the application of his skills and values in a completely different sector.

The letter writers' translation of this attitude seems to manifest itself in two distinctly different forms of practice. The first, represented by J's decision to translate his applied theatre knowhow to an independent retail context, can be described as a radical expansion--a rethinking--of the practices through which creativity is expressed and applied theatre ethos is enacted. J certainly expresses a confidence in his honouring of the attitude but it is actualised and expressed in terms of breaking free and self-preservation whilst maintaining an emphasis on care for others. The second form of practice can be summarised as a commitment to protecting others or protecting contexts. This form of

³⁶⁴ E, Letter 2, p. 3.

³⁶⁵ E, Letter 2, p. 7.

³⁶⁶ J1, Letter 1, p. 1.

³⁶⁷ E, Letter 1, p. 1.

practice sheds a practical light on how Wendy Brown's theorising of the sense of sacrifice and despair propelled by neoliberalism--which comes about through the need to accept 'encomiums to spend, borrow or save according to the changing needs of the economy, rather than the needs of oneself, one's family, community, or planet'³⁶⁸--become manifest on an individual basis.

Reflecting Brown's position, letter writers adopt a tone of angst and self-sacrifice when discussing this practice. E and T1 communicate this as a response to the ever growing constraints of mainstream education. In this sense they talk about developing forms of protection for the people in the school (namely teachers and practitioners) driven by and capable of injecting an emphasis on enabling young people's creativity. These practices include pragmatic political manoeuvring within the school system such as keeping an unsympathetic head teacher 'in her office and out of the way because out in the school there was this thing happening which I knew she'd never understand and would stop if she knew it was happening.'³⁶⁹ In this case the protection led to a 'profound feeling that in those weeks building up to the summer break that education was happening not by rule but somehow by consent. It felt consensual and genuinely free flowing.'³⁷⁰ T1 expresses in more melancholic tones his commitment to bringing creative practitioners to his classroom to 'deliver the difference I no longer can because I am constrained by the job of teaching and managing.'³⁷¹ T2 discusses his decision to move into managerial work towards the end of his career as a way of using his experience and reputation to protect the good work that he knew was going on within the College and parts of the University at a time when there were enormous pressures to downgrade higher education teaching and learning. E also details another manifestation of this form of protection in the context of making a piece of theatre with non-professional actors. She usefully identifies a hidden tension in the experience of making work deliberately and primarily inspired by the people involved rather than the need for a high product outcome in that the 'power of being involved in something deemed to be 'good' is hugely important to the people involved.'³⁷² She describes part of her role as an applied theatre practitioner working in this context as being to hold the anxiety about the 'worth of the product for the non-professional (and sometimes even some of the professional) members of the team ... It's not something I particularly enjoy, but in a sense it's part of the role I've felt I had to play so that participants can relax and enjoy the process.'³⁷³ Here E is aiming to enable participants to

³⁶⁸ W. Brown, *Undoing the Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York, Zone Books, 2015, p. 212.

³⁶⁹ E, Letter 2, p. 9.

³⁷⁰ E, letter2, p. 10.

³⁷¹ T1, letter 1, p. 3.

³⁷² E, letter 2, p .4.

³⁷³ E, Letter 2, p .4.

experience for themselves that art is just as much about process as it is product. E's rationale for doing this connects to the attitude of neoliberal resistance in that her attempts to subvert the notion that excellence comes through a focus on product represent a challenge to the economisation of art and education.

The letter writing data then suggests that an understanding of this attitude needs to encompass a spectrum of positions from neoliberal resistance to the more ethically complex reality of having 'one foot in multiple realities'.³⁷⁴ There are implications for cultural leadership in terms of addressing exactly who is protecting the protectors and how can the self-preservers continue to feed their experiences and knowledge into the [applied theatre] community? However to my mind one of the most urgent underpinning themes in the sections of the letters articulating this attitude, which spans a range of positions from overt neoliberal resistance to the frustrating sensation of having to have a foot in both camps, is challenge to the neoliberal championing of the autonomous self. Each of the letter writers draws attention to the need to preserve what Jen Harvie describes as 'principles of sociality and equality'³⁷⁵ and to reinstate our interdependence as human beings.

Attitude 2: From 'commitment to the non-autonomous self' to 'appreciation of selfhood as a social and relational process'

As unpicked within Chapter 1, neoliberal doctrine champions the 'supreme worth of the individual above all else'³⁷⁶ but it relies on a very specific idea of selfhood in which the 'social forces of capitalism have become internalised and embodied as part of people's personal aspirations'.³⁷⁷ Jen Harvie draws on Sennett's exploration of the notion of craftsmanship as providing a counter to this celebration of the financial value of the arts and instead 'honouring our social interdependence'.³⁷⁸ Shannon Jackson expresses the same spirit from a position of championing and reinstating a positive perception of the term public and public agency, seeing performance as an 'art of interpublic coordination and as such a reminder that no one can ever fully go it alone'.³⁷⁹ Jackson sees that there is 'a working ethic that most of us take from theatre that, "main characters" are never autonomous but interdependently supported by others'.³⁸⁰ Later she goes on to say that this ethic 'both activates and depends upon a relational system, a contingency that makes

³⁷⁴ E, Letter 1, p. 4.

³⁷⁵ J. Harvie, *FAIRPLAY Art, Performance and Neoliberalism*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 77.

³⁷⁶ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 21.

³⁷⁷ H. Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 98.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

³⁷⁹ S. Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, Oxon, Routledge, 2001, p. 9.

³⁸⁰ S. Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, Oxon, Routledge, 2001, p. 37.

it a prime venue for reflecting on the social and for exposing the dependence of convivial and expressive spheres.³⁸¹ This is well reinforced by those writing from contemporary and experimental theatre practice, such as Anne Bogart, who states that: 'the theatre is the only art form whose subject matter, the content, is society itself ... the theatre has to do with the interconnectedness of people.'³⁸²

I find this repeated identification of a conceptual non-acceptance of the autonomous-self in theatre studies particularly powerful and one that resonates with applied theatre practices. As articulated by my letter writers and scholars such as Helen Nicholson applied theatre practice often demonstrates that the development of selfhood can be a social and co-constructed process. Indeed the attitude evidenced in more recent applied theatre literature expressly favours a definition of knowledge and knowing as a dynamic social practice and disfavours many forms of dualism: mind/brain; reason/emotion; aesthetics/ethics; aesthetic/non-aesthetic. In relation to applied theatre scholarship, this is most attributable to Helen Nicholson who champions the primacy of the body, of tacit knowledge and citizenship as an embodied practice³⁸³. This attitude feeds aspirations related to learning, growing, and development of people manifest within applied theatre's ethos of care. Nicholson's use of Schechner's notion of 'transportation'³⁸⁴ is useful here as it nods to an awareness of the uneasy politics associated with claims of the social transformation afforded by applied theatre practices. Instead, for Nicholson, transportation suggests 'greater scope for creativity and unpredictability ... Should transformation occur, it is a gradual, cumulative process, the result of learning and negotiation with others, a progressive act of self-creation.'³⁸⁵ Within this attitude there are echoes of the aspirations that often lie behind more general participatory learning cultures--the correlation between taking responsibility for learning and learners developing a sense of social efficacy and understanding their responsibilities of care to others in a wider context, both locally and globally.

Nicholson also introduces to the applied theatre context Homi Bhabha's notion of 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' which actively rejects sentiments of, and theories based on, common humanity or a pre-given universal empathetic self. Instead we are presented with

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² A. Bogart, *And Then, You Act: Making Art in an Unpredictable World*, New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 107.

³⁸³ H. Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 56-59.

A. Harpin and H. Nicholson (eds.), *Performance and Participation: Practices, Audiences, Politics*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, p. 3.

³⁸⁴ Nicholson Helen, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 12

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

a form of cosmopolitanism, influenced by Richard Sennett's perceptions of care in terms of it being rooted in an overt shift from notions of a 'dream of the world made whole to openness for others made possible by the acceptance of the insufficiencies of self.'³⁸⁶ This conceptualisation encourages notions of selfhood that encompass suffering and crisis and promote an openness to difference or otherness. Although Nicholson contextualises these ideas specifically within applied theatre practices that seek to facilitate intercultural exchange, I think they infiltrate practice more broadly. As such I have drawn upon them in naming 'commitment to the non-autonomous self' as the second attitude manifest within applied theatre's ethos of care.

This attitudinal category sat well with the letter writers who used a range of vocabulary and terms to explore, extend, and trouble constructs of self, selfhood, and interdependence. Within the letters self is constructed in a number of different ways that bring a personal and intimate dimension to the themes and threads articulated by scholars. T2 constructs his notion of self in relation to educational experiences and what he learnt from different key teachers initially and then later from the actors and directors with whom he collaborated. Selfhood is presented as a journey of discovery within which his own personal development is recounted through the discovery of different types of theatre and theatre ideas eventually enabling T2 to develop a set of skills which 'help people feel, understand and experience themselves and others in new and constructive ways.'³⁸⁷ In his second letter, despite being an atheist, T2 draws on Christian theology--the concept of righteousness specifically--to further articulate a sense of being in right relationship to self and others:

Theologically speaking righteousness is the perfect state to which believers aspire in order to enter heaven. Etymologically it has elements to do with justice and being justified, and also elements to do with conduct in relation to others. Self-righteousness is its complete antithesis. Self-righteousness is being involved only in oneself. Righteousness is at the root of spiritual wellbeing; righteousness, or a sense of it, is what gives people the confidence to act. Christians understand and know that people can only achieve and know righteousness through Grace. They do not believe humans are perfective through their own actions and in relation solely to consideration of the self ... Theatre teaches us to define our self in relation to others, righteousness gives us the confidence to act.³⁸⁸

Although D1 is introduced, and his letters are referenced in detail, in the following chapter, I draw on some of his writing here as it has relevance to the discussion of selfhood. As with T2, for D1 thinking and learning are inextricably linked to development of self and

³⁸⁶ R. Sennett, in H. Nicholson, *Theatre Education and Performance*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 158.

³⁸⁷ T2, Letter 1, p. 3.

³⁸⁸ T2, Letter 1, p. 3.

wellness with any loss of self being attributed to 'unthinking behaviour.' D1 places great emphasis on the significance of language in terms of understanding self and on the social dimension of art practice as a way of developing thinking vocabulary. He identifies that art plays a significant role in his own sense of self offering:

a process that unlocks very complex ideas and feelings. I find that when I am down I turn to art that is melancholic rather than seek to be cheered up. It is as if sadness provokes a need to remember that there are deeper sadness's than my own – and that I believe is what art is for and how it helps rebalance the psyche ... the arts have always been a means of amplifying and distilling my own frame of mind. They have never been distractions from my own thought, a way of forgetting or escaping.³⁸⁹

Despite acknowledging that experience does not have to draw on language at all, D1 continues to assert that it is through language that sense-making happens and through which he experiences a sense of personal development in relation to an artistic experience: 'the reflection I do afterwards, if it is to be something more than remembrance or nostalgia, if it is to be an analysis of why thing A or thing B mattered and made a difference, then it hitches itself to language's wagon every time.'³⁹⁰ D1 goes on to suggest that a richer understanding of self is driven by interactions with others which also 'combats the limits of a single's person's language as a boundary to understanding.'³⁹¹ In order to challenge the neoliberal notion of the autonomous self then for D1 language is key:

The challenge it seems to me is to begin to define a new way of thinking and a way of describing a person's existence and new core values that might give such existence fresh meaning and better terms of reference than, for example, monetary wealth, one that relates to personal fulfilment but fulfilment at any price ... We need to do more work to put systems thinking at the service of the person rather than it overlaying (or obliterating) the person.³⁹²

E's construct of self, as it is intimated in the letters, is very complex in that she suggests a tendency to deliberately work against her subconscious which in adulthood she recognises as having been conditioned negatively by her education and by experience in what she calls the 'pure' arts world: 'sometimes I wonder how much of my thinking is my own and how much of it has been created by the capitalist world I've evolved in.'³⁹³ For E the notion of 'applied arts practice' was a new and useful concept under which she could place more positive experiences of engagement with art and artistic processes. Her sense of those processes as central to her sense of authentic self and self-development through the space they offered for exploration of the subjective, for developing curiosities and for genuine reflection. She places particular stress on the importance of reflection in

³⁸⁹ D1, Letter 3, p. 4.

³⁹⁰ D1, Letter 4, p. 3.

³⁹¹ D1, Letter 2, p. 4.

³⁹² D1, Letter 4, pp. 3- 4.

³⁹³ E, Letter 2, p. 3.

developing non-autonomous constructs of self and as a means of mediating when to rely on self-knowledge and when to call on others:

I think the act of reflection is one of the most empowering tools anyone can be given ... if everyone had the skills to reflect then ultimate they'd be able to lead themselves in their own life's learning and research. They'd know when to go ask things from others. They'd know when to trust themselves. Reflection is king!³⁹⁴

T1 presents a very unsettled notion of self and subsequently alludes to the development of selfhood in terms of a struggle. He writes about feeling damaged and burnt out and about the emptiness he feels since leaving London which he attributes to the lack of 'sacred creative and cultural institutions.'³⁹⁵ He describes himself as carrying what 'some might consider as negative dispositions' and 'lacking in personal creative expression.'³⁹⁶ However his discussions of his rationale for becoming involved with CP reveal a firm commitment to bringing about systemic change within education in order to enable learning and development for students and teachers. Although T1 states the belief that all 'human relationships are built on collaborations / combinations of complementary sufficiencies,'³⁹⁷ he found it hard to spot in the day-to-day reality of a school. When he could point to this, it was couched in what he sees as mainstream education's dominant survivalist culture: 'groups unite against common adversity/ threat – perhaps this is still the ethos of care/importance of other?'³⁹⁸ In contrast J arrived at an understanding of how a connection to others was still vital despite an initial sense that he had been increasingly striving for self-gratification:

In many ways the whole Cheese House thing is quite a selfish act. But it is dependent on having customers and so in that respect of course we care—and not simply in a commercial sense. I care deeply about the local community and have got involved in all sorts of things to further that. Everything from bringing more cultural events to the town to pushing for a water taxi to serve the local communities (and be a rather fab tourist attraction in itself).³⁹⁹

Of all the letter writers J's construct of self is the most comfortably and explicitly artistic. J talks in terms of personal development as a journey towards finding one's passions and motivations. Paramount then is the ability to tune into instinct and having one's own authentic process of searching and questioning deeper motivations. For J personally

³⁹⁴ E, Letter2, p. 9.

³⁹⁵ T1, Letter 1, p. 2.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ T1, Letter 2, p. 3.

³⁹⁸ T1, Letter 2, p. 3.

³⁹⁹ J, Letter 2, p. 5.

selfhood is bound up in his attraction to theatre and his understanding of theatre as a very personal process of searching for and finding ways to act:

It is something one is drawn to, which fits ones temperament. It is indicative of a deeper driving need – to engage with audiences, to express ideas and emotions to reach a better understanding of the human condition ... theatre is in me and comes out in everything I do. The Cheese shop is an extension of the drive / that need ... Theatre as an art form is about creating something personal and original.
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J's letters suggest a construct of wellness associated with the ability to respond to creative endeavours with more instinct, by 'surprising and testing one's own sense of creativity and testing your own creative beliefs.'⁴⁰¹ In his own life this has led to the development of a philosophy on creative living, further explored under the forthcoming third attitude.

Analysis of the letters has led to an expansion of the definition of this attitudinal category to capture the deep appreciation of the development of selfhood as a social, relational, and lifelong process expressed by the letter writers in the rich variety of ways discussed above. Respondents have reinforced the significance of the commitment to the non-autonomous self and added useful vocabulary derived from reflection on their experience of translating it into practical actions, activities, and acts. In some cases they drew attention to the struggle that can be experienced at a very personal level when attempting to operate from constructs of self and selfhood that do not align with neoliberalism.

Attitude 3: From 'Theatre for Healthy Living' to 'Authentic Acts'

The use of an affective register was recognisable in many of the letters, reflecting Thompson's theories about pleasure and enjoyment as a starting point for practice, exploration of beauty as a motivation to learn, and a sense of belief in the universal right to dance, speak, play and narrate--all of which can be effectively grouped under Thompson's Ranciorean-influenced term 'the re-distribution of healthiness and wellbeing.' What is central here is, as Thompson puts it, 'working to keep people alive, to value their and others' lives and to announce proudly that they are worthy of living and being valued for being alive ... Happiness, joy and celebration are indispensable sensations in this act of redistribution.'⁴⁰² In turn, for Thompson, this impetus helps creative practitioners aspire to extend the range of our collaborations and the campaigns to which applied theatre can connect. It also makes us ask questions about the extent of this reach, how different the practice can look and indeed does it even need to look like a discrete practice--can it

⁴⁰⁰ J, Letter 3, p. 2.

⁴⁰¹ J, Letter 3, p. 6.

⁴⁰² J. Thompson, *Performance Affects: Applied Theatre and the End of Effect*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 179.

simply inform or underpin our way of life? The affective turn then helps inform and define the third attitude manifest within what I am calling applied theatre's ethos of care--'theatre for healthy living.' However I am aware that the term 'theatre for healthy living' could also sound very much like an instrumental government programme that seeks to use theatre to promote the consumption of more vitamins, for example. Fortunately the thinking and practice described by the letter writers quickly counters such an interpretation in favour of a more holistic reading of healthy living as a care intensive, care-full approach to life--'life and work are more interrelated'⁴⁰³ and 'work becomes purposeful beyond income generation'⁴⁰⁴ J refers to this attitude as the 'authentic act,'⁴⁰⁵ a phrase that has been incorporated within the definition of this category in order to give it sufficient depth and offset a more shallow reading of 'theatre for healthy living.' The letters describe the way in which practitioners are looking after their own and others' wellbeing through creative interventions in the world all informed by a certain ethos that they acknowledge comes from their experience of (what I describe as) applied theatre work. In his letters, T2's expression of the attitude of theatre for healthy living is found in the identification of his increasing awareness of the potential for applied theatre activity to:

move people towards what is known as deep learning. Deep learning occurs at a fundamental level where the knowledge, skills and understanding people acquire helps them make sense of what they do and relation to the world they inhabit. Furthermore it enables them to become comfortable with interpreting and re-interpreting the world, understanding reality in a new way. This seems to me to go straight to the heart of theatre practice. It is what we ask actors to be, fully alive in every performance; it is what we have to do every time we come to animate a play text.⁴⁰⁶

Finally and most poignant to the analysis of this attitude of theatre for healthy living is the insight provided in J's letters. I have already shared his reading of running a Dutch cheese shop as an applied theatre practice but he has also outlined his recent thinking in relation to writing a book about his experiences.

In essence it will describe my philosophy of Creative Living and as such is a serious book--but I don't want it to be 'dry' and I would like it to be widely accessible. So I am treading a fine line between anecdotal storytelling and a certain degree of analysis (why I ended up doing what I am doing, and, to use your framing, how independent retail is a form of applied theatre practice). The end result will not have the academic rigour to be considered a text book but I do hope

⁴⁰³ E, Letter 1, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁴ J, Letter 1, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁵ J, Letter 2, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁶ T2, Letter 1, p. 4.

that readers will be inspired by it and even supported in making their own life-choices.⁴⁰⁷

J's notion of Creative Living is synonymous with the notion of theatre for healthy living and he explicitly sees it as a continuation of his applied theatre practice. As such the insight he shares about developing an articulation of this philosophy is of relevance. He called his journey to a new life 'The Fifth Element', originally

because it referred to the all-important creative aspect – that a fulfilling life was about more than simply securing the primary elements of food, shelter, work etc. and that a fifth element (in my view both elusive and essential) was to be able to pursue artistic and creative activities. (This is, after all, what sets us apart from other beings). Last night I was re-framing this and came up with new definitions of what the five elements could be (in no particular order and all of them interconnected/interdependent):

1. Place – finding the right environment for you, where you feel part of a community, feel you can be yourself, accepted.
2. Person/People – being amongst others who support and accept you for who you are.
3. Passion – knowing what it is that motivates you and keeps you inspired, and doing it.
4. Means – having the means to support the lifestyle you wish to live. Most usually this is financial but it doesn't have to be. If one chooses to solely live off the land and be self-sustainable then great – but that probably still requires money to afford the land (and the sheep and the goats etc.) in the first place. And can anyone truly provide all their needs themselves? I mean, who grows enough grapes in Scotland to keep themselves in wine all year round?
5. Age/Experience – I realised it was important to have a 'time' dimension as one of the elements because the other four can change as you progress through life. My priorities are different now than they were 20 years ago. I also put this one last because it is significant in our discussion. Let's face it I am old enough to be your father and I am aware that your current 'search' will inevitably be different to mine, not just because we will have different (personal) responses to the other four elements but that our age and experience will have a bearing on their responses too.⁴⁰⁸

J's letters in particular signal significant implications for understanding and discussing applied theatre in broader terms and reveal a sense of scope for developing more explicitly varied forms of applied theatre. After all, the range of practice represented by the letter writing respondents informing this chapter (all of whom confirmed that the notion of being applied theatre practitioner still fits) spans writing, teaching, training, directing, facilitating, performing, animateuring, partnership brokerage, and selling cheese! J's

⁴⁰⁷ J, Letter 1, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁸ J, Letter 2, pp. 2-3.

reflections in particular suggest that a more overt discussion of the *ethos* of care could help us develop what we might consider as uncontrived, everyday forms of applied theatre as life practice that could eventually be embedded within education and care provision or simply exercised as private philosophies and practices. For my letter writers their theatre practice can be described as life practice because they care so much. It is a way of seeing and being in the world that reflects an ethos that spans all aspects of their existence and a type of thinking that is life orientated. The focus on wellbeing and authenticity here really opens up the possibility of a theory of applied theatre and spiritual wellbeing.

Conclusion

As previously outlined my definition of ethos takes into account the early Greek meaning alongside the more modern interpretation blended with the concept of negotiation borrowed from contemporary education research. Significantly, within education research, although it has been claimed that the concept of a school ethos could be used to support increased marketization, it is also acknowledged that the notion of ethos may help schools escape dominant performative and competitive cultures to focus instead on wellbeing--to prioritise student experience beyond attainment and to support the positive development of the emotional climate of a school (incidentally in its referencing of environment we see within a contemporary interpretation of ethos connotations of the original Greek meaning). Similarly, by reframing notions of care in relation to ethos (rather than ethics) I can see the potential to investigate the implications for wellbeing constructs that remain unexamined within the field of applied theatre and for which there is not yet adequate vocabulary. Specifically very little attention has been given to the concept of spiritual wellbeing. The turn to care, joy, beauty, healthy living and theatre as a life practice found in the applied theatre literature and the letters examined in this chapter signal an opening towards, and a searching for, an alternative realm of relationship and meaning making. As such the findings presented in this chapter provide grounds for making a connection between applied theatre and spiritual wellbeing. In hindsight much of my practice and that of others with whom I have worked has implicitly striven towards enabling spiritual, or more precisely, noetic wellbeing, as it is understood within Viktor Frankl's logotherapy (introduced in Chapter 2, and taken up in more detail in the following chapter).

In order to open a space for exploring the implications of the co-reflection presented in this chapter I propose the expanded term to describe the spiritual qualities or capacities of applied theatre--'Applied Theatre as Creative Noetic Practice'. Applied Theatre as Creative Noetic Practice could accommodate theories and practices concerned with the most extreme and literal application of theatre, 'theatre as a human impulse necessary to

healthy living'⁴⁰⁹ and the practices of those for whom some theatre even becomes a metaphor for life. However my research findings reported in this chapter also suggests that the term could be even further expanded to accommodate diverse ways of working and being as expressions of an ethos of care. The conceptualisation of ethos here is defined by an idea of belonging which emphasises shared attitudes and aspirations whilst allowing for multiplicity. The renaming of applied theatre as Applied Theatre as Creative Noetic Practice makes for a more suitable organising category for the practices on which my research focuses and better encompasses the range of attitudes and aspirations making up the ethos of care described in this chapter. More specifically the term brings together practices that implicitly or explicitly support and promote noetic wellbeing as it is presented by Viktor Frankl. This concept of noetic wellbeing was also examined with the letter writers, and my analysis of this co-reflection is detailed in the next chapter.

⁴⁰⁹ P. Jones, *Drama As Therapy, Theatre As Living*, London, Routledge, 1996, preface.

Chapter 5. Becoming Above The Radar: Applied Theatre as Creative Noetic Practice

We always attempted to nurture all aspects of the programme, above and below the radar so to speak, believing that creative work developed deeper and richer understanding than the crude memorization of facts ever could ⁴¹⁰

'Under the radar' is a term used by one of my letter writers to summarise a perception of the managerial approach taken by the Creative Partnerships National team but in this chapter it is presented as having broader resonance in relation to my research project. Although the reference comes from a letter writer discussing a programme taking place within mainstream education, youth work particularly lends itself to the notion of being 'under the radar.' For example, in its crossing of formal and informal contexts and the ways in which people often enter youth work--troubled lives turned volunteers turned professional workers and, in the case of Orangebox, turned precarious workers at the cusp of neoliberal times--youth work traverses formal, institutional definitions of its own value as well as more grassroots, diverse formulations. It is notable then that Orangebox colleagues and young people (introduced later in the chapter) chose to respond to my letters in a more 'under the radar' manner than the letter writers discussed in Chapter 4, (most of whom were involved in formal educational environments of CP) --opting for interviews rather than an exchange of letters perhaps out of fear of committing self to paper.

'Under the radar' is an expression that comes from the properties of the radar and is used to refer to anything that goes undetected. Through my initial reflective writing process I concluded that the fundamental drive behind my own practice was a desire to support noetic wellbeing--until then that drive had gone undetected, it was under my radar. This chapter attempts to dig deeper into this terrain. On the surface the practice in which I was involved between 2004 and 2014 would be recognised in the fields of youth work and education as creative youth practice, and it was often clear to me that the sector knows what this is but does not have a detailed language for it. I am presenting what might be understood as 'good' youth work, good youth arts practice, a good way of creating a culture in a new building but in this chapter I explore what is meant by good practice at a deeper level. My argument, based on analysis of letters exchanged with creative practitioners and interviews with young people and youth workers, is that an under-the-radar element of good creative practice with young people can be articulated as the promotion, support, and development of 'noetic' or 'spiritual' wellbeing. This practice could be named as Creative Noetic Practice. As explored earlier in the thesis (Chapter 2),

⁴¹⁰ D1, Letter 1, p. 4.

according to Frankl the term 'noetic' refers to the human spirit, the dimension that makes us human and able to get to grips with the meaning potentials of life.

As noted in Chapter 2, the work of Victor Frankl offers a framework and a language for discussing spiritual wellbeing in a non-religious, secular way, in a way which escapes neoliberal interpretations of spiritual wellbeing and resonates with applied theatre's ethos of care unpacked in Chapter 4. The investigation into an ethos of care brought about the introduction of 'Applied Theatre as Creative Noetic Practice' as a new organising category under which creative practices with young people rooted in and shaped by this ethos of care comfortably sit. The research material analysed in this chapter comes from an explicit introduction of Frankl's ideas to my cohort. I was curious to explore Frankl's notion of the noetic with those young people and practitioners with whom I had collaborated to investigate to what extent this resonated with them and how this might help develop the field's language. In emphasising spiritual wellbeing through self-transcendence and responsibility logotherapy acknowledges the social dimensions of spirituality and the self that Jeremy Carette argues have been 'neglected within mainstream psychological discourse.'⁴¹¹ Logotherapy--with its humanist origins and its affirmation of the importance of 'we' in the spiritual wellbeing of an individual--helps us build on an applied theatre ethos of care to better articulate how it might enable spiritual wellbeing in a socially engaged sense and thereby avoiding neoliberal hijack aimed at further promotion of autonomous individualism and the privatisation of the self. Theatre practitioners have historically enabled 'themselves and their spectators to experience and live through the very recognition of the mysterious elusiveness of the world.'⁴¹² Theatre's acceptance of and willingness to embrace this mysteriousness chimes with Frankl's philosophy in that ultimate meaning in life is unattainable but you still have to strive toward it. For the logotherapist, the theatre practitioner, the creative educationalist, and the youth worker, it is important for human beings to see themselves as 'creatures in transition, they could apprehend themselves in the process of transformation.'⁴¹³

In the previous chapter I opened up a space for considering applied theatre, as a body of scholarship, an ethos, and a set of practices, as concerned (albeit in disavowed ways) with noetic wellbeing, an acknowledgement that meant that respondents applied 'theatre' well beyond the remits of theatre and social theatre. Here, I take up that invitation by considering creative practices of a youth centre as noetic practice, and continuing to reflect on Creative Partnerships. In this chapter I look more closely at applied theatre as Creative Noetic Practice as one form of caring. I specifically explore what might constitute

⁴¹¹ J. B. Fabry, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, [City, TX], Institute of Logotherapy Press, 1968, p. 33.

⁴¹² E. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 207.

⁴¹³ Ibid, p. 207.

the motivations, ways of working, ideals, principles, and components of applied theatre as Creative Noetic Practice arrived at through a reflection on CP and Orangebox from the point of view of participants, leading to a co-constructed reframing of CP and Orangebox as Creative Noetic Practice. In this part of the thesis the critical foundations are provided by Frankl's work. The co-inquirers again bring a pragmatic and emotional dimension, particularly via their reflections on the challenges associated with the ways of working within the instrumental (third way) and economic (neoliberal) cultural policy continuum in which we were practicing during the time frame on which the research focuses (2004-2014). As in the previous chapter, my argument is that the concepts and language emerging from the co-inquiry might be usefully adopted and celebrated by the field of applied theatre in order to better describe on its own terms the breadth, depth, and scope of its approach to creative practice with young people and to further elucidate the ethos of care underpinning its practices. This chapter features some extraordinary people with difficult lives who are deeply resilient and recognise the importance of spiritual discourse-- a set of people and practices that suggest that the noetic is perhaps the last point of resistance and that (despite what Foucault might argue) it is possible to retain one's soul and imagination.

Introducing new Co-Inquirers

This chapter features reflections from eight new respondents as well as from those first introduced in Chapter 4. The young people and Orangebox staff all opted for an interview to air their responses to my first letter. These were lengthy un-structured interviews in which I attempted to mirror the chronology of my letters in terms of exploring and revealing my own thinking and initial theories. Once again in introducing these respondents I use some of their own words from the letters and interviews to provide a sense of how they view their practice and current situation:

D1 is a former member of the Creative Partnerships (CP) National Team throughout eight years of the programme. He spends little time in his letters describing himself but provides detailed insight into his take on managing CP nationally:

So I suppose I am acknowledging that those of us that worked on CP were inevitably locked in a shifting process of understanding the programme in our own terms, while also having to account to a set of stakeholders using discourses that perhaps did not always synchronise with our own viewpoints. It was ever thus, I fear! I think CP work was understood and made sense of in 3 broad phases (this is over-simplistic, but for the sake of argument):

2001-2004 – the early years; huge amounts of political goodwill and almost zero interest in monitoring or researching the programme. It didn't seem to matter when you had letters of support from Tony Blair himself (!).

2004-2009 – the middle years. The need to understand impact grew just as,

ironically, the politicians moved on to the next big idea and effectively lost interest in CP as a major force in education and cultural change. When they were reminded of it they still said all the right things, but their focus by now was elsewhere and the fight for survival had begun.

2009-2011 – the final years; by now we had better monitoring and research findings than ever, but we were also in the pre-/post-election moment and nobody was interested politically. Find Your Talent was an attempt to simplify some of the depth necessary within CP, a last gasp offering by Labour to show willing before the coalition took hold and by then CP's days were numbered. So much for the politics of it all!⁴¹⁴

SA1 is a youth worker employed by Youth Works, one of Orangebox's tenant organisations. Youth Works started in 2001 and is a specialist detached youth work project managed by the council's Young People's Service. Before re-locating to Orangebox, Youth Works had previously operated from another town centre space for eleven years. Youth Works offers a daily drop-in for young people aged 13-25 'to come along and chill-out, listen to music access the internet or have a brew.'⁴¹⁵ It is staffed by youth workers who can offer advice, information, support, or guidance on the whole range of issues that affect young people. One-to-one support is also available. SA1 has been a member of the team since 2005 and was particularly proactive in forging links with the Orangebox team and supporting the broader development of the organisation, advising on policies and best practice and encouraging young people accessing Youth Works to engage with volunteering, activities and events within the centre:

I am a youth worker, that's my job title. Some people would say we are detached youth workers but I think that limits the reality of what we do really. I started doing youth work when I was 16 in a youth centre, that's 19 years ago (laughs). So I was a young person that had many of the issues that young people now have—I was a self-harmer, I was in a violent relationship, I was taking drugs and drinking a lot and doing a lot of things I shouldn't have been and I was youth-worked out of that. My youth worker was very clever in what he did and I didn't even realise I was being youth-worked at the time, and that was through a drama based youth club, that's where I started. So I was a member of that youth centre. He then put me forward for volunteering which then gave me more responsibility which meant on those days I couldn't be stoned or I couldn't be whatever so it was actually his way of youth-working me without me realising I had been youth-worked. It was only a couple of years after that I thought oh year that was quite clever what you did back then. He was also one of the tutors at Bradford, he's lovely. So that was where it started so I started volunteering with the drama group one day a week. There was an opportunity to work within the youth club setting. It was called an activity assistant at that time. That was when I was 18 and through that I got put onto what was called the local qualification. It would be equivalent of an NVQ now but it was a route qualification. I was the youngest on that and went to uni when I was 21 to do my degree in youth and community studies. So I always knew it was youth work I wanted to do but I do think sometimes that trapped me a little because it was very

⁴¹⁴ D1, Letter 1, p. 4.

⁴¹⁵ <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/youngpeople/youth-works/index.html> (Accessed 10 September 2015).

vocational but it's not given me the broad scope that other degrees might give other people although there is a wide range of jobs you can do through it. It was really important to me to be trained, even through my degree I worked in youth centres and I had done for years. I worked my way up and by the end of my uni course I was running a youth club – that's unusual at 23. My dad is a residential social worker and my mum's done social work and youth work so I grew up around that caring environment. I had foster brothers when I was 5 who were kids that my mum met when she worked in children's homes and she used to bring them all home so we'd regularly get home from school and there would be groups of lads sat round the table and my mum would be feeding them all! That was quite normal. My sister probably found that slightly more difficult because when she was born my mum and dad worked in a children's home that was run by my grandparents so they lived there so my sister had to share not only a Mum and Dad with all these other kids but her grandparents and the house that they lived in. So things like when all the kids were lining up to get pocket money on a Saturday morning, even though she'd already had hers she'd sneak in the queue to try to get extra money out of my grandad! The home was in Alderley Edge in the 70's. When they took over that home it was one where mixed race kids were locked in the cellar, they were never seen in public, they didn't have toys they weren't clean – there was lots of that – when my grandparents took it over everything completely changed. It showed because at both their funerals there were over 250 adults that they had looked after. (SA1, interview)

Towards the end of the interview with SA1, JB1 joined us, having finished a detached youth work shift. SA1 was happy for him to join the interview formally. JB1 recently graduated with a First Class degree in Youth and Community Studies as a mature student. During his degree he undertook placements with Orangebox and Youth Works and on graduating was offered a job with the Youth Works team. He has a large family of his own (6 children) and has personal experience of both youth work as a young person and counselling in adult life.

SO1 is 25 years old and first came in to Orangebox to enquire about volunteering, but after a long conversation I instead encouraged her to apply for a team worker post to facilitate activities with young people. She was successfully appointed to the role of team worker and was very popular with a range of young people, offering hair, beauty, and fashion workshops in the atrium of the centre. She is creative and lively with a fantastic sense of humour and has undertaken lots of interesting and challenging voluntary work including a regular commitment to an orphanage in Romania. She was clearly growing in confidence when we met and had accessed support from Youth Works and a local Women's Centre for a number of years. She was in the midst of a very difficult legal case to win back custody of her two daughters. The interview took place on a day when she had her daughters, whom she set up on a separate table with paper and pens. They were incredibly well behaved throughout, occasionally interrupting to show us their art work. When I asked if she sees herself as a young person she replies succinctly: 'Honestly I'll

leave that in your hands to decide, Maddy. I'm 25, I'm a Mum. I'm trying to get more work as a youth worker' (SO1, 13/08/2015. Halifax).

KP was the first young person to be involved in the very early stages of Orangebox and a proactive member of the Youth Board until she left to study film at university in 2014. KP has an impressive archive of the project and even died her hair orange when the building opened. KP later followed up the interview with a letter explaining more about how she understood spiritual wellbeing:

I worked on Future Community Leaders scheme with Action Halifax and they asked if I wanted to help with the Myplace *application*. I attended a meeting and my job then became about getting young people involved, going to a lot of the groups I was involved in like Young Carers and Calderdale Youth Council. I didn't know how to speak until I was 7, I went to speech therapist from 9am – 5pm so I was socially outcast. I was quite large and I couldn't speak so there were lots of bullying points that you could use. The top floor of my primary schools was for disabilities—students that couldn't speak, high spectrum autism—there were single rooms and it was the young person and an adult 1 to 1, it was really intense all day every day—I was pulled out from normal lessons. At lunchtimes I went out and I met the other students but they didn't know who I was and I got completely bullied. It was so different to other people when they were growing up, I don't think other people could imagine what my childhood was like and I couldn't know what theirs was like. But from that, when I was nine, I got approached by Young Carers--it was 2002 when they were setting it up in Calderdale--and I was one of the first six Young Carers—they went through Calderdale Mental Health team and found out that my mother had lots of mental health issues. I wasn't a technical Young Carer because I don't look after my Mum in the sense that when people say young carers I think they think that you bathe them, you take them to the shops etc. but my Mum couldn't go out of the door, I wasn't allowed further than the length of this room outside my house. Young Carers used to take us to a group every Thursday. We had the same staff for seven years and the young people were pretty much the same people each week so you grew a family within the group and if you'd grown to a worker she would end up being the one that drove you to and from your house so you had someone to rely on and talk to and she was the one that pushed me towards Media when I got to High School. Bear in mind that I'd gone from complete no communication with anyone to going to High School. When I was six I could say 'my' and I could say some words and if you were a teacher and if you were patient you could kind of figure out what I was saying but kids understood me when I reached Year 5 so I wasn't understandable by my peers until Year 5. (KP. 13/08/15, Halifax)

CP was involved in the early stages of Orangebox as a young people's representative for the tenant organisation Youth Works. CP eventually became actively involved in the youth board regularly volunteering around her fulltime job at Costa Coffee. She played a major role in building the relationship and a sense of trust in Orangebox with the young people from Youth Works. CP is now planning to undertake an Open University degree in Youth and Community Studies.

I'm 21 and I work full time at Costa. I grew up in Halifax then Scotland then Halifax again. I do lots of voluntary work with church at Ebenezer, I help out on Friday with 11-18s and on a Sunday morning with younger children from like a couple of months to 13/14. We play with the younger group and with the older ones sit down with them, do different activities like cooking and pool competitions and we go camping. I got dragged to some Orangebox meetings, can't tell you when it was. I was working all the time but when I wasn't work I came to the meetings. I went to drop-in most days then, I was an angry girl! I have been involved with Youth Works for 9 years, from age 12. I just thought I was really weird and mental before. When I am with young people I can see potential in them but they don't see it themselves. I look back at what I was like and I wouldn't even have dreamed that I'd got this far, to be fair I really thought I would have been dead by now. Literally that's how bad it got, that's the truth. That's the reason I want to work with young people because a lot of young people when they are talking to people they think they are not properly listening because they haven't been through the same things but I want to show them that some of us have been in that situation and they might not know that they can get through it and I want them to know that it might be a fight to get through it but as long as they know they are not on their own, you can talk to them and they will get through it and it's a better life at the end of it. (CP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

ZJ is 22 and currently in the second year of an apprenticeship with Calderdale College. When I met ZJ he was unemployed and came to offer his time as a volunteer at the very early stages of the project. He was incredibly helpful and reliable. Eventually we were able to pay him for some graphic design work on funded projects and he got a freelance contract with The Cooking School to help market the café at Orangebox. He demonstrated a real range of skills from practical, building, and IT-related to customer service and creative competencies in graphic design and marketing. He got involved with a national music project we delivered and was recruited by a national youth organisation to represent Yorkshire and the Humber undertaking several visits and residential. In addition the Centre Manager and I always invited him to accompany us on visits to other *MyPlace* centres:

I went to the Ridings school.⁴¹⁶ It wasn't too good really as I didn't find out I was dyslexic until I went to college. I did badly in my exams and didn't get any help from school really. I used to get into bother at school mainly because I couldn't do the work so I'd have a tantrum, kick-off with the teachers and that. If I got frustrated I got angry and I couldn't control it but now I know how to deal with that. I got involved in Orangebox through the job centre, I was signing on at the time and they asked me what sort of work I wanted to do and I thought of youth work, work with young people and they told me about this Orangebox. I said, alright I'll have a look. I went down and had a look and it was still a building site so I looked on the internet and found the Centre Manager's email and arranged to come for a tour. I came down, met the Centre Manager and joined a tour [we were running hard hat tours of the building site at this time]. I stuck at the back which is where I

⁴¹⁶ Once labelled 'Britain's worst school' The Ridings was eventually closed down by the local authority in 2009. The label was used by the media when reporting on the 1996 emergency inspection report written by Mike Tomlinson, former chief schools inspector.

met you. I walked into town with you and told you I wanted to be involved. Then later on I was outside Greggs having a sausage roll and [Centre Manager] collared me on the way past and I said if you've got owt⁴¹⁷ coming up and you need help let me know and he told me about Routes Festival coming up so I turned up for that and helped and took it from there. I kept showing up to see what I could do to help. (ZJ, 13/08/15, Halifax)

JT, aged 23 years, grew up in Halifax and went to university locally. JT talks openly about having experienced a very troubled youth and how he got himself to a more positive state of mind with help from counselling, friends, and family. When JT first came to Orangebox he was still working through all of this. He went on to establish a Zumba class for young people at Orangebox in return for free room hire for his adult classes. Subsequently he got more involved in generic youth work and is now working as a team member at Orangebox where he was spotted by council colleagues who contracted him to run fitness sessions at a number of their facilities across the borough. JT is openly interested in spirituality, wellbeing, and creative writing:

I believe in doing what makes you happy. My modus operandi is to help so whichever medium I am able to help through I choose. I do that currently though fitness and youth work and I also try doing that through writing. I genuinely believe that if you don't have anything good to say then don't say it. I want to enhance the world through relationships, communication, open honest discussions about life. I'm a big believer in equality and the progression of humanity (starts laughing). (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

Viktor Frankl and Logotherapy: a departure point

Frankl was introduced in the conversations and letters as a stimulus for developing a co-produced language for spiritual wellbeing responsive to creative practices developed within mainstream education and to a youth work context devoted to flourishing of young people in a socioeconomic context adversely affected by post-industrial decline and uncritical embrace of neoliberal economic ideologies. Not one of my 11 respondents had previously come across Frankl or logotherapy but everyone expressed an interest and sense of connection with the concepts once I had unpacked them at interview or in writing. In every case the term spiritual wellbeing needed qualifying as respondents felt that by itself it was too loaded with religious or 'hippie' connotations. They welcomed a non-religious definition and a framework that acknowledges a human realm beyond the physical and mental. Logotherapy provides a useful framework for exploring spiritual wellbeing in relation to creative practice with young people—particularly creative practice that is orientated by applied theatre ways of knowing and doing--both because the noetic (spiritual) dimension is conceptualised as the repository for our creativity and because, in

⁴¹⁷ Yorkshire Dialect = Anything

its acknowledgement of the social dimensions of spirituality and the self, it connects with applied theatre's 'traditional commitment to social justice and equality.'⁴¹⁸ Frankl's theories help make the shift from perceiving pleasure as the ultimate achievement to an understanding of it as a by-product of successful engagement with the 'will to meaning.' Frankl's notion of self-transcendence is explicitly related to a concern with the social--acting for the sake of others beyond the self. A commitment to this concept is also reflected in my co-inquirers' interpretations of spiritual wellbeing:

There has been too much of a focus on individualism and not enough on the social dimensions of self-actualisation. I see the long march to total individualism as an exercise in building 'markets'--nothing more, nothing less. There is no moral dimension to it at all.⁴¹⁹

All of the co-inquirers express a sense of the significance of the social dimension as a context for personal development, from the statement above to the young people's expression of it as 'we all want to share in the same bubble.'⁴²⁰ This commitment to the social dimension reinforces the notion of applied theatre's ethos of care unpacked in the previous chapter and in favoring notions of interdependence over the autonomous self both Frankl and my co-inquirers disassociate with neoliberal definitions of spiritual wellbeing. In this reading of spiritual wellbeing the processes that best support and promote development are born out of group work or they are relational: teacher to young person; young person to young person; artist to young person; teacher to artist; young person to youth worker; youth worker to artist; logotherapist to client.

Despite the fact that logotherapy's principles and central tenets resonated on personal and professional levels, all but one of the respondents preferred to talk in terms that reflected an acceptance of Frankl's definition of spiritual wellbeing as a proxy for other terms, rather than explicitly referring to spiritual wellbeing or confidently adopting the term noetic for themselves. These other terms varied based on the type of work with which respondents were involved. For artists and creative practitioners connected with Creative Partnerships the resonance was in terms of how they thought about their own journeys and principles, frameworks for expressing creativity, and managing partnerships and relationships. For others involved in Creative Partnerships the resonance was with their ideals about schooling and education. The youth workers connected with Orangebox linked noetic wellbeing with their commitment to a people-centred approach. For young people it translated into ways of getting to know yourself and the essential nature of adult support required to help with that process. Through observing the resistances to using the

⁴¹⁸ H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 265.

⁴¹⁹ D1, Letter 2, p. 3.

⁴²⁰ JT interview, 24/08/15, Halifax.

term spiritual wellbeing when analysing the research findings, a new language for creative practice and spiritual wellbeing, inspired both by Frankl and my co-inquirers, has emerged. What now follows is an exploration and unpacking of this language. As outlined above the resonances translated differently for practitioners, youth workers, and young people. As such they are presented separately. The chronology of how they are presented is significant as each group builds on and expands the ideas of the former until eventually what could be seen as the practical components of effective Creative Noetic Practice are articulated by the young people.

Creative Partnerships (CP) Practitioners: Resonating with motivation to practice and education ideals

In their letters the CP practitioners express a resonance between Frankl's definition of noetic wellbeing and what lay behind their Creative Partnerships practice. These resonances can be grouped under three thematic categories. The first resonance is expressed in terms of a language for helping to make sense of the personal journeys and philosophies driving their practice. For E this is about 'acknowledging our wholeness—our existence as artist/ thinker/ person/ daughter etc.'⁴²¹ Similarly D1 saw Frankl's concept of noetic wellbeing as a proxy for his commitment to the process of 'reflecting on and thinking about your work and life as inter-related things, part of a single narrative.'⁴²² E goes on to acknowledge that my first letter introducing Franklian concepts gave her some missing vocabulary 'to make sense of what it is I do, what my values are and therefore who I might be.'⁴²³ 'When I read it I had an "I always felt like that but I didn't know how to say it, or even that it was say-able until I saw it written down" response.'⁴²⁴ Particularly resonant is the notion that life is about finding meaning and the process of making meaning derived from actualising (creative, experiential and attitudinal) values:

I am not a practicing religious person either but the search for an actualised meaning which is expressed in the way one meets the day and what one does within the day and what one dreams of doing tomorrow—that feels like the important thing now for me.⁴²⁵

Towards the end of her next letter E tries out some of Frankl's vocabulary whilst usefully emphasising that the process of self-transcendence might not always be a positive or easy one:

The journey to find self-transcendence and meaning does not appear to be a short fun bus ride. It's a lifetime affair and sometimes it's a slog on a crappy rainy shitty

⁴²¹ E, Letter 1, p .6.

⁴²² D1, Letter 1, p. 2.

⁴²³ E, Letter 1, p. 5.

⁴²⁴ E, Letter 2, p. 2.

⁴²⁵ E, Letter 1, p. 5.

day (while it's true, sometimes it can feel beautiful, like freewheeling down a long slope on a sunny day).⁴²⁶

Having adopted some of Frankl's terms E tempers the concepts with a sense of everydayness, how the processes of making meaning might feel day by day within a lifelong journey, evoking the sense of the troubled affects presented in the previous chapter.

The second resonance can be described as a commitment to broad frameworks for expressing creativity. For the letter writers this term encompasses a privileging of responsiveness (to time, place, and circumstance) rather than 'off-the-peg' solutions, that corresponds both with how Frankl saw logotherapy being flexibly interpreted and practiced and with his emphasis on the originality of each individual. Amongst the letter writers this is best articulated by J who sees his opening of a Dutch Cheese shop in Scotland as an extension of his theatre career (see previous chapter) but also as a way of 'surprising and testing my own sense of creativity.'⁴²⁷ J immediately connects with Frankl's notion of actualising meaning through realising creative values and suggests that there is a parallel with what he perceived as being at the heart of his CP practice—enabling people to express 'their creativity within broad frameworks and empowering people to see what is around them as potential source material.'⁴²⁸ The source material here could be read in logotherapeutic terms as a way into thinking about creative values and in CP terms as a stimulus for a bespoke curriculum. J carefully positions this understanding of creativity in opposition to those models of practice that present themselves as a 'solution ... where something that was initially produced out of a genuine response to a particular situation is then formalised into a 'method.'⁴²⁹ From his letters there is a sense of J finding Frankl's theory useful to bolster his dismissal of mass embracing of new models or packages to support the development of creativity instead suggesting that a more authentic and effective approach 'must be a response to time, place and circumstance.'⁴³⁰

The third resonance is reflected in practitioners' conceptualisations of their approach to managing partnerships and relationships. This was expressed by those letter writers who had worked in the role of Creative Agent—brokering relationships between schools and creative practitioners /organisations to develop programmes in individual schools or settings. In an early letter T1 describes the Agent role as being akin to that of 'animateur':

⁴²⁶ E, Letter 2, p. 4.

⁴²⁷ J, Letter 3, p. 6.

⁴²⁸ J, Letter 3, p. 5.

⁴²⁹ J, Letter 3, p. 2.

⁴³⁰ J, Letter 3, p. 3.

The role of the 'animateur' began to be recognised as a key role in helping communities develop their voice. The animateur may or may not possess specific skills as an actor, writer, photographer, muralist, sculptor etc. They must know of appropriate people who not only have those skills but who have the ability to deploy them and share them working alongside other people from the community.⁴³¹

In response to my outlining of Frankl's theories T1 made the connection between effective enabling of logotherapeutic processes and the need for Agents (or animateurs) to 'have the social and political skills to enable creative activity to flourish in the particular context in which it is set thereby promoting the sort of growth and development within individuals that could be defined in one set of terms as spiritual wellbeing.'⁴³² In this context T1 comfortably uses the notions of noetic and creative development interchangeably. In so doing, we can see parallels between the CP Agent and the logotherapist as mediators or enablers of personal development processes.

Other CP practitioners saw a resonance between Frankl's notion of noetic wellbeing and their CP practice in terms of how they worked in and thought about the school context—their education ideals. From the letters I have identified two approaches to working in schools that capture these ideals. The first approach can be described as a commitment to creating moments of 'liminality' in a school. Several Creative Partnerships programmes started with artists introducing experiments or happenings that interrupted the usual school routine: an empty classroom; a lost key; alien objects landing in the playground, the transformation of a classroom into a secret artist studio; a whole-school interactive game involving celebrities and geocaching. These activities prompted student reflection, enabling young people to analyse how they had responded as individuals and as a group. They brought what E describes as 'prolonged moments of liminality into a school setting which I have just never seen before at any time as a pupil or as a lecturer or as a creative practitioner in any other formal education setting.'⁴³³ In anthropological terms liminality has long been an important concept relating to creativity but it also connects with Frankl's notion of the need to learn about self as the route to noetic wellbeing. When practitioners open up liminal spaces young people get to think about, rehearse and explore ways of being. Over time this way of working could have a demonstrable impact on the school culture seeing children leading their own learning:

There was, to sum up, a profound feeling in those weeks building up to the summer break in the final stages of our work at [school name] that education was happening not 'by rule' but somehow by 'consent.' It felt consensual and genuinely free flowing i.e. that learning was happening between everyone involved. The artists, teachers and the children. That certain 'limits' were being breached. That

⁴³¹ T1, Letter 2, p. 3.

⁴³² T1, Letter 2, p. 3.

⁴³³ E, Letter 2, p. 9.

certain constraints were being allowed to lapse. That children were allowed to pick up highly expensive digital cameras and that the assumption would be that they would take good photos not that they would break the camera. Kids chose not to go to lesson and instead went to the library to be with [artist name] and [artist name] and in response their teachers went 'OK' and saw the benefit of it. Kids self-selected themselves and chose to work across age groups in their lunchtimes. The artists became truly part of the school. Something magical happened. Something absolutely unlike 'school' happened and it was brilliant.⁴³⁴

Here E is dealing with liminality in a way that corresponds with Turner's conceptualisation⁴³⁵—built on Van Gennep's definition—in which liminality is understood as being on a threshold, a state that is betwixt and between the normal day-to-day cultural and social states. In this case, the normal state equates to the traditional structuring and pattern of the school day within formal education in UK. As such education is re-cast as a rite of passage a concept which aligns with Franklian education ideals. For Frankl logotherapy is an education towards 'responsibility the patient must push forward independently towards the concrete meaning of his existence.'⁴³⁶ The task of education 'instead of being satisfied with transmitting traditions and knowledge is to refine our capacity which allows man to find unique meanings....Education cannot afford to proceed along the lines of tradition but must elicit the ability to make independent and authentic decisions.'⁴³⁷ Frankl positions values as central to this discussion of the task of education and stresses that values cannot be taught 'but need to be lived.'⁴³⁸ The description of the moments of liminality created in CP activities extend some of Frankl's education ideas by offering a tangible sense of how they can be translated into creative practice within mainstream settings.

The second category of CP practitioner education ideals resonating with Frankl's notion of noetic wellbeing can be summarised as humanising learning, a concept which unites a range of expressions used by the practitioners and connects with the influence of humanistic psychology on logotherapy. For E this means providing spaces and structuring activities so that children can 'live the fullest lives and be the best of themselves.'⁴³⁹ J's expression of this ideal comes in the form of 'education should be about finding your passion. Once you have identified what it is that motivates and excites you—and you have a goal—then learning has a context and it becomes a necessary pleasure.'⁴⁴⁰ The notion

⁴³⁴ E, Letter 2, p. 10.

⁴³⁵ V. Turner, 'Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1979, p. 465.

⁴³⁶ V. E. Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, London, Souvenir Press, 2004, p. 14.

⁴³⁷ J.B. Fabry, *Viktor Frankl, Logotherapy, and Life*, Texas, Institute of Logotherapy Press, 1994, p. 105.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ E, Letter 2, p. 11.

⁴⁴⁰ J, Letter 1, p. 4.

of context and relevance as a force for humanising learning is further reinforced by T2 in relation to deep learning and D1 in terms of personal responsibility:

Deep learning occurs at a fundamental level where the knowledge, skills and understanding people acquire helps them make sense of what they do and relation to the world they inhabit. Furthermore it enables them to become comfortable with interpreting and re-interpreting the world, understanding reality in a new way.⁴⁴¹

Children enjoy education and life in general when there is a real point to things, when they 'get something' on a personal level—in its simplest terms this might mean that learning is enjoyable, that learning is bound up with a personal responsibility and become the unique individual each of us is destined to be.⁴⁴²

This ideal also encompasses practitioners' emphases on the social dimension that the school context provides. In this instance the social dimension is discussed in relation to the idea that a richer understanding of self is driven by interactions with others. In D1's letters lies the suggestion that humanised learning might be that which 'opens one up' and that the value of the social dimension within that process is language related:

We are all limited by language and our own capacity to think with the vocabularies we have—some more limited, some more fulsome than others. Reflecting and working with others extends your canvass mentally. You don't stop your reflections of the self but the social dimension helps you see things from different vantage points, hear alternative perspectives and these are ways of working that tend to open you up to understanding rather than close thinking down in sets of ever decreasing circles.⁴⁴³

In broad terms then this ideal reflects the anthropocentric emphasis of secular humanism but of greater relevance to my research project is that through an exploration of Frankl's ideas the practitioners loop back to an expression of an ideal that connects with humanist psychology—one of the main influences on logotherapy (as detailed in the literature review). What the practitioners provide in their conceptualisations of humanising learning is a more pragmatic expression of approaches to education that support better understanding of the relational self which is central to humanist psychology. Later in the chapter the young people's contributions provide further rich and alternative vocabulary to extend the notion of understanding self.

Youth Workers: Redefining youth work—from person-centred to Creative Noetic Practice

When we were going through us end of the night sheet, the ticking the boxes and all the ECM⁴⁴⁴ stuff, spirituality is there but it feels religiously loaded. It's more useful to think of it in your Rogers' Person Centre approach innit?⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴¹ T2, Letter 1, p. 4.

⁴⁴² D1 Letter 1, p. 3.

⁴⁴³ D1, Letter 2, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁴ Referring to Every Child Matters framework – a new Labour policy introduced in 2003 applying to the wellbeing of children from birth to 19.

⁴⁴⁵ Short form of isn't it

For youth workers the notion of the noetic resonated with what they saw as effective youth work. Primarily this translated to being person centred. Initially they qualified this by referencing Carl Rogers' theories.⁴⁴⁶ Rogers' Person Centred approach to counselling was initially labelled as 'Non-Directive Counselling' in the 1940's and by the 1970's and 1980's was recognised and applied in many sectors including education, youth work and industry. Youth workers adopted this approach:

... because of its similar value base and commitment to creating helping relationships. The workers can identify with its core conditions of acceptance, empathy and genuineness identified by Carl Rogers and seek to bring these qualities into their relational work with young people.⁴⁴⁷

However the youth workers involved in this study proceeded to construct their own definitions of person centred which move the notion of person centred away from that of selfish individualism sometimes associated with Rogers' person-centeredness towards the relational and a mode of practice that might be better described as being rooted in the noetic. Their constructions capture a pragmatic and emotional dimension outlining a way of working that is completely obverse to neoliberal practices driven by managerialism. In these constructions there exists an implicit rejection of instrumentalism's advocacy of children existing to fuel economic growth. Instead they are seen to exist in their own right as individuals. As in Chapter 4, the pragmatic, emotional dimension that the co-inquirers bring is significant because it conveys both the strength of passion for sustaining the under-the-radar qualities of their work and the very real vulnerability and fear experienced by those delivering a practice that they sense is under threat:

We went to CP's graduation event at Project Challenge because no-one in her family bothered. That's where we first met Z and she told us to fuck off, then we'd see her at the bus station in town and she'd tell us to fuck off again. She told us to fuck off every week for a month and half and then eventually she said 'oh can you help me with this?' We did and so we build up trust but it was a really long drawn out process, it's not going to be quick. Years and years later we're still working with her but who else and what else has she got? This is what really scares me is that in Calderdale we are really lucky that we still have a statutory youth service. In other areas it's been cut—what happens to those young people? What happens to Z if that happens here? It really really concerns me because no one else would work with Z because she is a pain in the arse and on paper she's almost an adult. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

⁴⁴⁶ C.R. Rogers, *Client-Centered Counselling*, Boston, MA, Houghton-Mifflin, 1951.
C.R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*, London, Constable, 1967.

⁴⁴⁷ P. Pope, 'Time to listen: the youth worker's', *The Creative Researcher*. The 10th Anniversary Keele Counselling Qualitative Research Conference, Keele University, 2016, p.1.

In terms of fundamental enabling factors the youth workers constantly stressed and re-visited the importance of their work being 'generic' in nature, and 'without an agenda,' reflecting their unfaltering commitment to 'seeing the person and not the behaviour'.

It's dealing with the individual. They come to you with whatever needs they have so there is never an agenda (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

I'm clear with my young people. If they tell me to fuck off, I will. I'll go away but we'll try again next week. I'm not going to close the door; it's about recognising the young person and not the behaviour. That's what we do a lot. It's easier to shove a label on people. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

They often described this commitment in under-the-radar like terms in that it does not translate into the outcomes or outputs that policy makers demand as a means to justify or account for their practice:

I don't like doing those sheets because it's not a tick-box exercise because I'm like thinking, well we kind of talked about that so I can tick that but actually it's irrelevant to that individual. What that individual needs is for them to understand who they are and understand that they are unique and understand that everyone has different talents, different abilities, and just because they can't do something as well as everybody else at school that doesn't mean that they are failure in everything. That's just not their core strength, their core strength is summat⁴⁴⁸ else and it's helping them understand that, you know, you do what you want to. It's just understanding yourself and other people around you—you are all growing. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

I don't know if you've seen one of those strengths and difficulties questionnaires. The council keep saying that they need us to do them but the questions use very social services type language. What does that tell me that I can't get from a conversation with a young person? They are going to tell me what their own issues are, it's about giving them that room. It's an American survey and Calderdale have decided that it's brilliant and they will adopt it but it's awful! It's all about measures and outcomes which I get but those outcomes you get from a conversation are just as important for young people as anything else. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The youth workers also stressed the significance of being a generic service and of being very separate to school or CAMHS specifically.⁴⁴⁹ The school context is presented as being too connected with the family which might stand in the way of young person feeling able to open up to staff. CAMHS is problematised because it presents itself as being time efficient:

⁴⁴⁸ Yorkshire dialect = something

⁴⁴⁹ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is used as a term for all services that work with children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing. <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/mental-health-services-explained/Pages/about-childrens-mental-health-services.aspx> (Accessed on 17.01.18).

I was at a child protection hearing yesterday. I was there as an advocate not a youth worker, and they were making suggestions about where to get help but didn't mention Youth Works or the youth service. The important thing is that youth work is generic—there's a waiting list for CAMHS and if you do get in you only have 6 sessions and that's it and they have a really high threshold now for who they will help—there's no time to warm up. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed a sense of there being some key tenets of the youth work version of person-centred practice in relation to their explorations of the noetic--the first being time and space. Giving time and space to the development of a relationship between youth worker and young person or people was cited as being crucial in terms of effective person-centred practice. Although not articulated in such terms, there was a sense of the managerial emphases of targeting and outcomes increasingly presenting a threat to more relationship-centred ways of working. This played out in terms of one interviewee regularly re-emphasising this element of her work almost as if she were taking the opportunity to rehearse various means of justifying its value:

That's why I always said that I wouldn't be a social worker—our young people come to us because they choose to, they choose to engage with me. If they don't want to see me that's fine. If they've missed two appointments I don't send a letter saying that I will shut their case because that's not how young people work and also they need to be able to test you. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

So I'm working with the CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) Prevention group at the moment which is a group we have set-up with Safe House who are the CSE project for Calderdale. We took two young women gorge-walking⁴⁵⁰ this week but some people had questioned the value of that—you're taking 2 young people with 3 member of staff how cost effective is that blah blah blah? Actually for those young people it's really important because they got bonding time with us so that means they can trust us more. But they also got to experience something they would never get to experience in everyday life so actually that's invaluable to them but it's how you justify that. You have to get them to say it's changed their lives when really they have been gauge walking for 2 hours. The fact that they turned up at 8:00am in the morning, they got out of bed, is a big deal. It's about giving them that space. Like CAMHS for example, you get 6 sessions and then we'll have sorted you out and that's just not realistic. I wouldn't even expect to know one of my young people in 6 weeks. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

One woman I am working with, initially referred to us around issues around self-harming, it took her 3.5 years to disclose about some abuse and 4.5 years about more serious abuse and another 6 months to report to police. All that takes time and she said to me yesterday 'I needed to be able to test you and I needed to know that you would do what you said you were going to do and I needed to know that you believed in me.' But how can you do that in 6 weeks? It's just not realistic.

⁴⁵⁰ Gorge-walking is an outdoor activity which sees people following the course of a stream on foot.

Sometimes things don't come out ever. Sometimes families are your biggest barriers. So this young woman gets from her grandma 'well actually I was abused by my father and that's worse' and it's like, well no, it's not a competition. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Building on this notion of time and space, the youth workers went onto create a sense of deeply effective work happening in the places and moments between more formal interactions—during car journeys or pre- and post- counselling activities:

One young woman I was working with had had a ridiculously bad weekend and had completely blown her attempts to get on the straight and narrow. So the one hour session turned into a two hour session. Next day she came to see me again and we had an hour's session just after drop-in. Really I remembered thinking, well what are we doing here, we're just skirting around all sorts of issues. She just wanted to chat. Then I gave her a lift home because I was going to summat⁴⁵¹ else that way and it was in the car journey that it all came out, what she really needed to say but she just wasn't ready before that—when we were sat down for that hour or even in the drop-in where it was more relaxed—it wasn't until in the car she said, by the way this is what I wanted to tell you. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

(In response to the above comment): Yes, that young person, she has now been diagnosed with post-traumatic distress disorder so we have had 3 sessions with her counsellor who is actually really, really good. But we have an agreement that she only does it when I'm in and I will be there so that I can take her so we have got that car journey to go uhhr (makes offloading type noise) and the counsellor does recognise that this is throwing up so much stuff for her that we have to help manage her feelings afterwards and that's not always recognised. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Myself I went to counselling, the first 3 sessions we didn't get anywhere and you get into it and then it's not until the last 10 mins of your hour that it all starts coming up—you're left with it all buzzing around in your head and that's when you need a focussed conversation with someone. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The youth workers were keen to stress that a person-centred approach does not equate to a lack of boundaries. Rather a steadfast commitment and a consistent approach to setting boundaries is presented as another tenet of the practice. The following quotes illustrate how the youth workers contextualise boundary setting as a way of establishing equality between staff and young people in that young people are given the time and space they need to negotiate and accept the terms of engagement with a worker or a centre:

We've got a group at the moment and they are just stoned constantly so we kick them out but it's about getting the message through to them clearly. We worked with a group like that years ago elsewhere. They'd turn up at the centre stoned because that was their thing, we'd kick 'em out. We'd have nobody in the centre but that's fine we could deal with that. I think there's sometimes a fear that if we kick 'em out we're not going to have anyone in—tough, we need the consistent boundaries, that's what they need. It got to the point where we were kicking them

⁴⁵¹ Yorkshire dialect = something

out, kicking them out, and their spokesperson came to see us and said, right we've had a meeting. So these young people who had been labelled 'chavs'⁴⁵² who had criminal records as long as your arm and ASBOS⁴⁵³--they were all involved in youth offending somewhere along the line--say 'We've had a meeting and we've decided that we are not going to get stoned on a Monday and a Thursday so we can come in.' (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

You can't be the authority teacher because you are not. You can't treat them as a naughty child but as an equal with a clear sense of what the boundaries and expectations are. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The final tenet of this practice that relates to my Frankl-influenced notion of creative youth work and applied theatre as a Creative Noetic Practice is summarised as the commitment to valuing and drawing on personal experience as a means to supporting young people's wellbeing. Embedded in the youth workers' discourse are notions of youth work as a lifelong commitment and conceptualisations of their career choices as an extension of their own adolescent experiences. Whilst in my post at Orangebox it was notable to me that the local youth work community was very comfortable with and accepting of how those that they had initially worked with as young people could eventually become colleagues. Indeed the initial Chair of Orangebox, a retired youth worker, had once worked with several members of Youth Works staff as young people. In her introduction SA1 presents one coherent narrative from having being youth worked to youth working others. Value is placed on professionals having been 'youth-worked' themselves and being able to share those experiences with young people. However SA1 is also quick to stress the need to be honest about when you cannot personally relate to a young person's situation:

So I think, yeah, having personal experience helps--when a young person is talking to me about violent relationships and control and everything else, I understand because I've been there so it's not so scary for me. I think staff need training around areas that they are not comfortable with or they need to be able to say--I can't do that--and I think that's part of the problem that people think they have to have answers for everything. I do this regularly, so XX is a perfect example. He turned up at our office, he's transgender, so he turned up as a girl. There's was nobody else in, I was running around like a headless chicken, trying to answer phones. I said to her, just give me 5 mins and I will be with you. I go out introduce myself and ask what can I do: 'I think I'm transgender' she said. 'OK' I said and I'm thinking, I've got drop-in starting in 15 mins and I went 'right,' and I was really honest with him as he is now. I says 'I don't know anything about this but I will help you and we can find out about this together.' And that got a lot more respect from him than me trying to blag my way through a conversation because actually I had no idea what it felt like to be transgender but what I can do is help with the research and he's now at point where he is starting his gender clinic stuff and his

⁴⁵² The Oxford English Dictionary defines *chav* as an informal British derogatory, meaning "a young lower-class person who displays brash and loutish behaviour and wears real or imitation designer clothes"

⁴⁵³ A court order which can be obtained by local authorities in order to restrict the behaviour of a person likely to cause harm or distress to the public.

testosterone will hopefully start in the next couple of months. So it's a long process, and that's what's important to me about youth work—you've got to give young people time and find the right medium for them because not every young person does everything in the same way. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

In their overt rejection and problematising of some aspects of current practice, the youth workers create a clear sense of the antithesis of effective person-centred practice, providing a set of terms that can be read as being unsupportive of young people's noetic wellbeing. The vocabulary associated with the labelling of young people and notions of engagement and choices are cited as being the most problematic and at odds with noetically-oriented practice:

So it's looking at building up an individual person and it's interesting to see how young people out and about that I have worked with have become themselves but that has taken a lot of work. One young person who was labelled as angry and I worked with said, 'if you take all this anger away then what am I left with, who am I?' That's quite scary at 15 when you have been told you're angry kid all your life. I was working with an 11-year-old who was severely self-harming and her mum was saying repeatedly that she's always been anxious but I don't think that kid ever really knew what that meant or was she living up to what you say she is! Or another young person who says she has ADHD but she doesn't. What actually happened was that her mum used to feed her full of colourings take her to a CAMHS appointment, watch her bounce off the walls, and say 'right I need disability benefits now!' (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Professionals just accept that label but really you should be saying well actually there might be something else. (JB1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

We hear things like, well they are not engaging, but maybe they are not in a place where they are ready to engage with you. Or 'choices'—I hate the word 'choices'—so young people are choosing to go missing. Well, why is that young person choosing to go missing then? I had a young man who was being groomed online. He was sexually exploited and he was raped and the police said, well he chose to go to that house and I was like, well, yeah what's his home life like? This guy was offering him alcohol and weed and stuff like that—his intention wasn't to get raped, his intention was to get out of the family home. Things were so bad at a home that that was a better alternative so actually the choices that he has are one bad choice or another bad choice. It's not as simple as he's chosen to do something really negative rather than something positive. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The source of frustrations can be traced to these emphases being at odds with the youth workers' fundamental commitment to seeing the person and not the behaviour. In logotherapeutic terms the youth workers are committed to supporting young people to get to the essence of themselves, to explore and develop beyond psyche to connect with the noetic dimension. As such the youth workers constructions of person-centred might be better described as noetic practice. Frankl's ambition was for logotherapy to become an everyday sort of practice but he never found ways to articulate what this practice might look like. Youth work, as it has been deconstructed by the co-inquirers, provides an example of how the principles of logotherapy can be translated into a more everyday--

lifelong even–noetic practice. Furthermore it is possible to frame this work as Creative Noetic Practice through its points of connection with Shannon Jackson’s notion of art as social practice and Tim Edensor’s (et al.) notion of vernacular creativity.⁴⁵⁴ The youth workers’ expression of their work as noetic practice also chimes with Jackson’s notion of socially engaged art as being that which ‘provokes reflection on the contingent systems that support the management of life.’⁴⁵⁵ Parallels can be drawn between the way in which youth workers discuss the infrastructural operations of their practice and how Jackson describes those of performance highlighting a shared interest in ‘the confounding of insides and outsides, selves and structures.’⁴⁵⁶ The youth workers’ conceptualisation of their practice also aligns with notions of vernacular creativity presented by Tim Edensor et al. In these terms the youth worker’s practice can be described as creative because of its improvisational quality and its commitment to supporting people to adapt to particular circumstances.⁴⁵⁷ In comparison to conceptualisations of creativity that prioritise creative production of novelty and rapid change, vernacular creativity is ‘routinized and habitual everyday within mundane realms in which change occurs at a slower pace’ but ‘the forward movement of keeping life going, however, can involve a good measure of creative improvisation.’⁴⁵⁸ Edensor et al. draw on Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold’s understanding of creativity as being relational, involving:

... persons in those mutually constitutive relationships through which, as they grow older together, they continually participate in each other’s coming into-being. The idea that the uniquely creative person can somehow disentangle himself or herself from the social (including the non-human) world is dismissed since, as it mingles with the world, the (individual) mind’s creativity is inseparable from that of the total matrix of relations in which it is embedded and into which it extends. Implicitly then, creativity is social and sociable, culturally specific and communally produced, and is located in innumerable social contexts.⁴⁵⁹

Framing the youth work depicted in this chapter as Creative Noetic Practice by naming its points of connection to Jackson and Edensor’s work supports a compelling articulation of its value. In Jackson’s terms, this is because ‘to avow support is to expose the conditions of unconditional love. So too it remains key to sustaining our public life as, in fact, living.’⁴⁶⁰ A similar sentiment, articulated through the lens of vernacular creativity, is as follows:

⁴⁵⁴ T. Edensor, et al., (eds.), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity. Rethinking the Cultural Economy*, London, Routledge, 2010.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 9

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ S. Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, Oxon, Routledge, 2001,

... in the everyday enactment of the world there is always immanent potential for new possibilities of life. Quotidian practice is open-ended, fluid and generative, concerns becoming rather than being, is a sensual experiencing and understanding that is 'constantly attaching, weaving and disconnecting; constantly mutating and creating.'⁴⁶¹

As such the youth workers' accounts support the argument for a broader conceptualisation of creativity beyond economic values and practices. They provide a reminder of both the everyday spaces in which creative practice can take place and the potential for attention to noetic wellbeing to become embedded in everyday practices.

Young People's responses: the practical components of a Creative Noetic Practice

All of the young people interviewed had developed very involved relationships with Orangebox. Some were volunteering regularly and helping to shape the centre's initial processes and practices; some were founding members of the Youth Board and involved in the centre's governance; others were interested in offering activities to their peers or getting an insight into youth work with a view to taking up formal training longer-term. For these young people, noetic wellbeing best translated to getting to know yourself. CP concisely unpacks this notion of getting to know yourself:

Sometimes young people just don't know themselves. I never knew myself. I used to go down to Youth Works with cut knuckles and everything, I used to be so angry and didn't have a clue about who I was inside. I was just this angry girl. Pretty much that's what I was. I didn't speak to anybody at first. One of youth workers pulled me over to one side one week and said, 'I think we really need to talk, I'd really like to see you on your own.' I was like 'go away, I don't want to speak to you' but then I got to know them and then that's when we started talking and built this relationship up and we trusted each other. That's when you start to find out what's what, start to talk about your problems and you start to get to know yourself. It's like [youth worker] the other week was on about starting a group, bringing young people together who have self-harmed and she was like CP I really think you would be good as a mentor to a young person who is in the same situation as you was in with self-harming and can't see a better future for themselves. (CP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Of all the young people, JT was most comfortable with using the term spiritual wellbeing as it strongly resonates with his personal interests and beliefs. His beliefs are clearly born out of having developed his own strategies for overcoming difficult life events:

People say I'm so upbeat all the time, how do you do it? I tell them that I have lived and breathed the alternative and I don't want to go back. Why would I want to go back, when I've felt beyond dirt? The world is less than perfect and we need to embrace it, not accept it that's very different, but embrace it honestly—you know? (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

p. 247.
⁴⁶¹ T. Edensor, et al., (eds.), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity. Rethinking the Cultural Economy*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 9.

His expression of spiritual wellbeing as getting to know yourself is more abstract and playful than the others and it builds on his understanding of identity as a concept:

Spiritual is just a big ball of things ... It's ultimately that core feeling that comes out from the core—that place of self-esteem ... My identity is everything and it's the springboard to my life—it's me in this world just as it would be you in this world or that waitress over there. We're all coming from a place and we're all contributing something to the world so if I'm more like you what's the point? If it compromises who I am to the point where it's not me what was I born for? My contribution is tainted, it's not authentic. This conversation is enhancing both me and you, it's enhancing me because I am reflecting on things. I still have doubts, I'm not beyond doubts—that's not what I mean. I'm asking questions of myself. (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

He is quick to point out that he does not simply think spiritual wellbeing equates to being happy:

It's not just saying I feel really great today, all emotions are valid. One of the things that really irritates me is that we praise someone when they are happy and that's when we acknowledge them because they are of no strain or issue to us—do you know what I mean? Why does that affect you personally? Allow them to express that, you don't have to absorb it or take it on as your own. Just give them 5 minutes, it will be fine. How are you—the three most powerful words in the world. (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

In discussing his initiation of Zumba classes at Orangebox for his peers, JT described how a group of young people who regularly attended the drop-in decided to try his class. They arrived wearing their jeans and shoes, no semblance of conventional exercise clothing. JT conveys a sense of the reciprocal nature of personal development experienced:

So halfway through I thought, this is clearly not working. So I sat them down and I said 'I've been there you know. I've suffered, I've had pain, the things you are going through I've been through too so why don't we try and have a good time, why don't we share in something and be open to something?' The second half we smashed it. They were so good and it was because they are human beings and no one rarely sits them down and says 'are you alright?' It's creating that trust and those bonds. That was part of my personal journey too. It made me feel more whole and I was finding my sense of identity after I felt like it had been so crushed. (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

The young people were able to deconstruct what they saw as good practice in supporting this process of finding yourself to create a sense of its essential elements. These elements can be summarised as: trust between young people and youth workers; giving enough time to the process of 'sussing each other out'; continuity of staff and relationships; and the use of humour to diffuse difficult situations. More surprising to me was the young people's identification of the need for staff to model effective adult-to-adult relationships and the importance of authentic body language and facial expressions:

You've got to make sure that the team are getting on, it's the main priority as well as the young people ... if your team doesn't work then the young people are going to look and think, well, this is just a shambles, if they don't know what they are doing how are they supposed to help me, understand me? (CP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Some people do like a little eye roll or what do you call it? If you are sat down with someone and if you are like, you've got to be like, what's the word, be like literally like you are listening—eye contact is the main one, if you are not doing any eye contact at any point then it actually shows that you are not taking any notice of what they are saying. (KP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Young people and youth workers alike made attempts to sum up the nature of an effective youth worker to young person relationship but could not arrive at anything definitive.

Interestingly most people drew parallels with family roles: JT described youth work as 'professionally giving love.' SO1 captured its elusiveness and the sense of it lying at the crossroads between personal and professional domains in her statement 'it's like youth workers are your parent but not, your friend but not.' From an adult and professional perspective SA1 acknowledged this state of operating as almost (but not quite) a family member to young people:

It's like being a family, it is about having boundaries. At one point I got to the point where with someone like Z [regular attended of the drop-in and eventually an Orangebox volunteer, Z has severe autism often manifesting in violent and aggressive behaviour], it was a huge learning curve. I felt like I was a mum and was getting battered against constantly and I turned to J [line manager] and said I can't do this anymore and that's very hard to admit as a professional and I think a lot of professionals don't want to admit that. With someone like CP she did go through a stage where she was very clingy but we worked our way through it and that's worked positively I think. You understand where it came from because she didn't have anything. We went to a college interview where they thought I was CP's mum. I was really offended that they thought I was old enough to be her mum but she thought it was brilliant because it meant that somebody thought she had a family member who would care enough to go to the interview with her. (SA1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Most poignant to the focus of the research project is the fact that young people did not always see a correlation between the arts and effective processes to support the development of self or identity. Instead what was revealed was an extremely limited perception of what the arts comprise and fairly entrenched class associations as barriers to engagement. The young people ranged in their confidence with and experience of the arts but even those who regularly engaged in artistic and creative activities saw the management of Orangebox by the local arts centre as a major barrier to young people's engagement and ultimately to equality. Emerging across the interviews was a sense of the building being aimed at one set of people over another. This sense was mainly derived from the prioritising of artistic spaces and functions in the design of the building and the fact that one of the early partnership arrangements was made with Calderdale Theatre School (CTS) who moved from the arts centre to Orangebox when the building first

opened. All of the young people interviewed perceived themselves to be very different from CTS members:

Orangebox is aimed at one category. In my eyes it's better off being open to everyone as an open space, not one particular group. Put it this way, it's the only youth centre that seems to cover just one category. It's more arty art-based than all-based and that's closing it off to some people. Not everyone in Halifax is art-focussed. Sewing machines and knitting classes are not my cup of tea. I don't think a 13 year old chav like me would like to come and do a sewing class at Orangebox. It seems like sometimes it was aimed at higher class people than all class people. (*Researcher: Is that because you associate the arts with higher class?*) Yeah, because people like Calderdale Theatre School for example are more like 'let's have a cup of tea' than 'let's go to McDonalds for Cheeseburgers.' So it seems more like it was aimed and made for Calderdale Theatre School than Calderdale. (ZJ, 13/08/15, Halifax)

I consider myself an everyman. We have a class system but I'm open to everything and everyone. I just said to [CTS leader] G [puts on posh voice] 'Oh G your voice is absolutely fabulous darling.' I was joking and there was no malice but it does run deeper than that doesn't it? The socio-economic background of the drama students and theatre groups are in higher social standing. That's not going to reach Billie Bob with a drug problem who lives in Mixie.⁴⁶² Do you know what I mean? Choice is an interesting word because you can be given a limited mould but they chose that mould. But is that empowering or disempowering because culture made them choose that mould? (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

I think the arts focus is a bit silly really. You know it's a youth centre and a youth centre really to any kid is somewhere you go, you chill out, you have fun, you meet up with your mates. It's not somewhere where you go down and think right I've got to go and do an activity, I've got to paint or write a poem or I've got to sing. That's not attractive and I think it puts young people off. The kids love being able to hang out and sing on the karaoke. (SO1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Every child takes a different amount of time to find who they are and this is often affected by their background. Many higher class children will have already been exposed to their career route and what makes them happy whereas with many young people from low earning families are constricted on what events they can attend or after school activities so they haven't had a variety of creative outlets and so they haven't found a form of expressionism they enjoy. This can take many years for people to find but is an important part of the growing process as we are creative beings and to not be able to express feelings can cause them to stir and thus not reach our full spiritual well-being.⁴⁶³

These citations provide a clear sense of which activities young people deem to fall under the category of the arts--theatre, poetry and sewing: yes; karaoke, cinema, Zumba, hair and beauty: no--and the other cultural activities that they associate with the arts such as drinking tea rather than going to McDonalds. For some the perception of class implications was clearly derived from an assumption that all arts activities are fee-based.

⁴⁶² Referring to, Mixenden, one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Halifax

⁴⁶³ KP, Letter 1, p. 1

This was further compounded by, post my departure, the arts centre's programming chargeable arts-based activities for the summer holidays:

For the summer holidays it was open and offering activities and it was £10 in. Now which child in their right mind is going to pay £10 in? £10 is a LOT of money, to sit in a robot-making creative-flipping-workshop with one person in there. I'm sure they could just sit at home with their mates and make something or they could go to the cinema or bowling for that price. To me it felt like they were pushing out the vulnerable young people. If that was me I wouldn't have been able to access that and I couldn't pay £10 to come in then I would have been turned away because I didn't have that money. That's a massive chunk of our young people and they then think that we're not good enough for Orangebox--it's middle class. (SO1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The young people also problematised Orangebox's association with the arts in relation to the need for successful engagement to start from an unstructured approach. The young people perceived anything artistic coming in the form of structured activities and not in-keeping with the need to first give young people space and time to simply become familiar with the space and define their relationships with staff. At a personal level I experienced a profound clash in opinion with the arts centre's leadership about the need to resist imposing structured activities from the outset. I failed to convince them of the value of the playful and spontaneous activities the young people had generated in the early months of opening. Eventually the leadership insisted that we close for a period of time. The message to young people was that this was so that the finishing touches to the building work could be carried out but the direction to me was to devise a programme of activities to go live when the building re-opened. Young people's attendance dropped significantly once we re-opened and it was shortly after this that I handed in my notice. For me shutting down an environment in which rich play was starting to take place was counterproductive. My applied theatre knowledge and experience told me that play was evidence of community building taking place. From here we could eventually get to more structured activities if necessary. In neoliberal terms, play is seen as a lack of productivity with performance measures valued over working in exploratory ways with, and in response to, people. This reframing of play as unproductive can be read as a contributing factor to my own and the young people's sense of diminished space for supporting wellbeing. Theatre practitioner and scholar, Syed Jamil Ahmed, recognises that play (along with storytelling) is an essential element of an applied theatre practitioners' artistry and that in shaping and performing stories it can create a sense of community thereby helping to subvert the 'encoding of the social domain as a form of economic domain ... so that self-care can be revisioned as social care.'⁴⁶⁴ Furthermore J.K Gibson-Graham's analysis of a new post-capitalist political imaginary looks initially to the Zapatista uprising in Mexico citing their

⁴⁶⁴ H. Nicholson and J. Hughes (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, p. 168.

use of 'playfulness and humour to toss us onto the terrain of the possible.'⁴⁶⁵ By eliminating play from applied theatre practice, its artistry is diminished along with its potential to challenge the neoliberal project. The young people's contribution extends this argument and makes a connection between degrees of structure and the process of getting to know yourself:

I think the way we did it at first--we just opened the doors to see how it went--I don't think that was a silly move. I think that was a good idea, let young people explore, let them tell us what they want in here and see how they feel about the building and the staff and how they feel, do they feel welcome? Are these young people going to come back? Does it feel warm enough for them? It would have become more structured eventually but not in the way it is now, in a nicer way. A lot of the time kids might not come down to play table tennis or to do the karaoke. They might have come down to see us, to listen to my rubbish jokes. It was like an Oranegbox family and now it's just Orangebox--it's quite cold now. We had some really good times and the feel was better and as staff we wanted to do more--'come on, kids, let's do this, let's do that.' They just want to play games really, you don't need money or anything for it. I sometimes think to myself, I don't think I'm going to work here anymore because it disheartens me, I don't like what it has become but what holds me back are the memories of what it was and I think, oh it could get back to that. If I was a new person starting this job now I wouldn't have stuck at it but because I've been here from the start and I know what it could be. Yes that was so fun, and I remember everyone doing the Harlem Shake in the atrium. To this day these are the things that young people remember and it probably took their minds off all the crap that's going on in their lives. (SO1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Time and patience is important. Playing is important. Secretly I believe deep down, regardless of your age we want to just play with each other, to run and to be free. If that dies inside then you can see it, people that have gone beyond that point, how hard and cynical they become. Play is just a simple pleasure to indulge in with someone or just by yourself--the world doesn't always need a structure. Come in, be here in the atmosphere and then make an informed choice. [The local Arts Centre] were overreaching. They didn't come in enough to find out what young people might actually want to do. They want to come in, to relax and to have the freedom to do whatever. If we can provide the tools for them to come in, for them to just come in and have a good time, then that's brilliant. Once that good dynamic is established and you've build that little family so to speak they will fully participate in the building of that activity. (JT, 24/08/15, Halifax)

If you think that the young people that are coming have come from school or somewhere where they have had structure all day and they want to come to Orangebox to let their hair down and have a bit of a laugh and have fun with other people and get to know other people and they can't do that if it's all structured because it means they might have to join something they don't want to do or what they don't like and then they are like, 'stuff that, I'm not going there then.' (KP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

⁴⁶⁵ J.K. Gibson-Graham, *A Post capitalist Politics*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2006, p. xx.

It's all good fun, messing around, doing Macarena etc., it's what adults can do at a nightclub. You get to know the staff and other people doing stuff like that and then you might join in some activities next. (CP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

Between 11 and 18 you will have more deadlines and targets probably than your entire life with homework, mock exams, and expected grades. Orangebox provides an empty shell, a shell that can be moved and changed as the generations changed. That I think was the important part of the building that the building wasn't static the young people can once they trust it make it their own, a gift from generation to generation. (KP, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The young people's exploration and identification of what constitutes effective practice in supporting the process of getting to know yourself offers a sense of how the notion of applied theatre and creative youth work as Creative Noetic Practice should comfortably accommodate the activities that young people do not always see as being a good fit with the arts. Such activities as hanging out, being with friends, sussing out, pampering, karaoke, learning mass dance routines and sharing jokes are activities through which relationships are developed and from which more structured or specialist activities can potentially follow. The conceptualisation of creativity alluded to here is again vernacular which often embraces practices 'excluded from arts and culture-based regeneration ... Vernacular forms of creativity are neither extraordinary nor spectacular but are part of a range of mundane, intensely social practices grounded in a variety of everyday practices and places.'⁴⁶⁶ Tim Edensor et al. usefully disentangle this notion of creativity from economic instrumentality by arguing for non-productive creativity--'acts that may appear to the outsider to be nothing more than dilly-dallying, time wasting or procrastination'⁴⁶⁷--and suggest that because its practices and forms are non-commodifiable its value has been lost in that it does not connect with economic objectives.

In addition to this emphasis on vernacular creativity the young people's contributions suggest that Creative Noetic Practice can best flourish when it is routed in inclusive conceptualisations of participation. Class and economic justice--and inside this access to cultural life as well as certain constructions of cultural life--emerges strongly as a theme in this chapter as a result of the young people's deconstruction of effective and non-effective practice. Contemporary applied theatre scholarship provides a helpful rethinking of participation, raising questions about how participation is read or misread and whose judgements about understanding or misunderstanding are recognised. In the Orangebox context the locus of power should have been situated with young people, rather than adults, in defining what were recognised as acts of participation and why they mattered but as described above this was not always achievable. Helen Nicholson argues for

⁴⁶⁶ T. Edensor, et al., (eds.), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity. Rethinking the Cultural Economy*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 10.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

recognition of forms of participation that move 'beyond a transactional reading of bodies and behaviours and towards a messier ecology of senses and sensing.'⁴⁶⁸ Instead of identifying a set of pre-defined artistic activities in which participation is represented and recognised she suggests thinking about participation in terms of 'a constellation of practices that together comprise a political ecology of participation.'⁴⁶⁹ Nicholson's conceptualisation of participation resonates with and helps to define the notion of participation alluded to in the young people's accounts of practice—breaking down traditional divisions between amateur and professional arts practices and activities and the hierarchy between 'high' and 'low' cultures. Instead she places an emphasis on 'attending to the ordinary affects of life'⁴⁷⁰ and draws on Kathleen Stewart's definition of this 'ordinariness' as 'the kind of sensations, impulses and 'habits of relating' that are integral to everyday life. Ordinary affects are continually in motion and do not necessarily appear as coherent narratives, nor do they always have an obvious 'meaning.' Rather, she suggests, their 'significance lies in the intensities they build and what thoughts and feelings they make possible.'⁴⁷¹ This literature helps to illustrate how effective youth work as it is described by the young people—with their emphasis on the relational—is rooted in a scaffolding and enabling of this sort of participation. The mere interaction between young person and youth worker/artist/practitioner can be recognised as being participatory.

Similarly the young people's critique of the privileging of structured activities is much strengthened through a turn to both literature arguing for vernacular creativity and its validation of non-productive forms of creativity and applied theatre's appreciation of the value of play. In turn, framed by these theories, the young people's accounts become a qualification of what might constitute Creative Noetic Practice and how it might look. Furthermore this framing draws attention to a shared understanding of the significance of everydayness and ordinariness emerging from the logotherapy, vernacular creativity, and applied theatre literatures. Significant because becoming attuned to the everyday provides an 'an opportunity for stretching experience, for modifying senses and sensibilities. Such creative experiments might work against commodified consumer culture, generating affective encounters that affirm life's enchantment.'⁴⁷² This emphasis on the everyday and on ordinariness, as well as a broader conceptualisation of creativity, might also be conceived as a starting point for countering exclusionary cultural regeneration processes, as Chris Gibson and Natascha Klocker argue:

⁴⁶⁸ A. Harpin and H. Nicholson (eds.), *Performance and Participation: Practices, Audiences, Politics*. London, Palgrave, 2017, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 126.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

contemporary urban-social policy needs the kind of imagination that can understand something of the texture of poverty and working-class lives as ordinary and extraordinary ways of being. Without such thinking, working class people and places can only ever be 'less than' those in whose image they are reconstructed.⁴⁷³

As such, Creative Noetic Practice possesses power to create spaces and places which aim to promote and realise more inclusive approaches to participation, to creative education, and to cultural regeneration in ways that cannot be measured simply in economic terms.

Conclusion

There are a lot of vulnerable young people, and for me as well, me being quite vulnerable, it makes you realise that not everyone is so shitty. There are actually people that want to help and it makes you have more faith in mankind [laughs]. You think everyone is against you and you think, oh what's this person going to do, how are they going to help me? And then when you're in a place like that and you meet other people and you get talking and build relationships you feel like there are actually people that can help you and it got me out of bad situations in my life because I had someone that would tell me that things are wrong and that this is what life should be like and you start to expect more from life then. (SO1, 13/08/15, Halifax)

The findings presented in this chapter highlight the power and danger of the language used to describe creative practice with young people, the words 'arts' and 'spiritual' proving particularly difficult for adults and young people. As such, my research advocates for finding different ways of understanding and articulating this practice. The terms arrived at through the co-inquiry build on Frankl's ideas to provide new language and terminology to help the field talk about creative practice with young people and noetic wellbeing. The notion of spiritual wellbeing certainly resonated with the co-inquirers who were even more comfortable with the term noetic in its uncoupling of the concept of spiritual from neoliberal and religious connotations. On a fundamental level the theme unifying the co-inquirers and Frankl might be best expressed as faith—faith in the experiential impacts of an activity, faith in the creative self, and faith in the ability to find oneself. Because faith is such a personal and embedded experience it is easy for it to be practiced in an under the radar way, it can go undetected. As such this chapter has served to make visible examples of Creative Noetic Practice, translating it into expressions of ways of working, motivations, philosophies, and ideals. These expressions exist within education, youth work, and the arts but often operate under the radar of policy makers, local and national politicians, and the frameworks through which practitioners have to account for their work. Given that

⁴⁷³ T. Edensor, et al., (eds.), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity. Rethinking the Cultural Economy*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 7.

some significant and impactful programmes and ventures have not survived in the neoliberal context, then perhaps there is nothing to lose in calling for a bolder and sustained application of this language—in going above the radar.

Chapter 6. Conclusion: Translating an Invisible Language--a (Delayed) Invitation To Practice

So when you say you want to consider bigger questions related to well-being and quality of life I understand exactly what you mean. It's about busting through those artificial barriers and addressing the big, burning questions that really matter.⁴⁷⁴

At the outset of this research project I had envisaged working towards a practical outcome, perhaps some resultant training resources relating to what Frankl and logotherapy offers to applied theatre. Traces of this intention are most evident in the research article but from there the need to develop a language to articulate creative practice and its relationship to spiritual wellbeing took precedence and the research process evolved into one resembling translation. Translating between the different worlds of applied theatre, creative practice, formal education and youth work and the academy revealed a new language that existed but was unarticulated. It became clear that in order for me to progress professionally and academically a looking back was necessary; to dig deep into past terrain to understand and translate in new ways the impact of the work in which I have been involved over a ten-year period. Only now, in an attempt to conclude this thesis, can I look at what emerges from this process that may have implications beyond the PhD itself and start to consider what practical outcomes and practice might be possible as a result of the research.

The Medieval Latin term for translation, *translatio*, is derived from the Latin verb *transferre* (past participle *translatus*), meaning 'to carry across', 'to bring across'.⁴⁷⁵ In this respect my research process resembled an act of translation in its attempt to carry across Viktor Frankl's notion of the noetic to colleagues and young people with whom I had previously collaborated in order to identify the right linguistic terms of reference to enable a discussion of practice covertly concerned with spiritual wellbeing. The literature review revealed the absence of a language for discussing young people's spiritual wellbeing within creative practice and more specifically the need for a spiritual wellbeing framework that encapsulates creativity and how Viktor Frankl's logotherapy might fill this gap. In Chapter 1 I surfaced those voices from education and youth work that acknowledge the power of language and new articulations as a means to counter the neoliberal turn. I took great inspiration from these voices and their suggestion that bases for alternatives exist that have 'not yet found institutional articulation'.⁴⁷⁶ Within youth work, education and creative practice this seemed to translate into the positioning of the need to generate a

⁴⁷⁴ D1, Letter 4, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁵ S. Zrinka, 'An Epistemology of Tension', *The Translator*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2004, p. 33.

⁴⁷⁶ R. Connell, 'The Neoliberal Cascade and Education: An Essay on the Market Agenda and its Consequences', *Critical Studies in Education*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2013, p.105.

new language to describe deeply caring ways of working with young people as a crucial tool for mobilising ideological, system, cultural or institutional change. As such I set out to find ways of articulating applied theatre's commitment to care and caring as an ethos.

In Chapter 4 I explored how this ethos of care takes us beyond the limitations of the neoliberal construct of wellbeing; I argued that this opens up the possibility of acknowledging that our lives and relationships possess spiritual significance, and of articulating a relationship between applied theatre, creative practice and spiritual wellbeing. This investigation brought about the introduction of 'Applied Theatre as Creative Noetic Practice' as a new organising category under which creative practices with young people rooted in and shaped by this ethos of care comfortably sit and suggests that 'applied theatre' might be applied well beyond the remit and medium of theatre and social theatre.

In Chapter 5 I was able to look more closely at applied theatre as Creative Noetic Practice as one form of caring and specifically consider what might constitute the motivations, ways of working, ideals, principles, and components of applied theatre as Creative Noetic Practice arrived at through a reflection on CP and Orangebox from the point of view of participants. This led to a co-constructed reframing of CP and Orangebox as Creative Noetic Practice. The emergence of this co-constructed language is significant in that it offers practitioners and scholars a vocabulary to better understand and articulate the impact and application of practices in their own terms rather than seeking to align with, and prove value in relation to, the agendas of other sectors. Such a language might help to articulate the deeper resonances and meanings of what happens within forms of creative practice that are undervalued and misunderstood within the neoliberal context. As such the research opens up multiple opportunities and implications for further research and practice.

In relation to applied theatre research and practice, my study suggests that in broad terms the focus on developing practices committed to noetic wellbeing could contribute to the task of 'puncturing common neoliberal sense'⁴⁷⁷ in that they might be seen to challenge neoliberalism's proposition that 'human wellbeing can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms.'⁴⁷⁸ Concentrating on the development of practices driven by a commitment to noetic wellbeing might be seen as a route to inventing further humanising forms of practice as a counterbalance to the 'deep antihumanism' that comes

⁴⁷⁷ W. Brown, *Undoing The Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York, Zone Books, 2015, p. 222.

⁴⁷⁸ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 21.

with neoliberal rationality.⁴⁷⁹ More specifically the research points to an opportunity to explore the practical implications of further exploration of the connections between applied theatre and logotherapy practices. The findings presented in the research article relating to meaning-making through exploration of the complexities of authentic- and actor-self in rehearsal and theatre making processes particularly warrant further investigation. The research article concluded that theatre-making moves beyond logotherapy in its understanding that meaning-making can be an embodied process, an externalised process, and a shared process. It stresses that theatre-making emphasises relationship as a mode of meaning-making and has ways of enabling co-construction of meaning within rehearsal. Consequently there is scope to bring together logotherapists, young people, educators, youth workers, and applied theatre practitioners for a more in-depth practical investigation of what the connection between applied theatre and the noetic mean for creative practice with young people and what kinds of practices of story and social relationship might be suggested.

The academic implications of this research are both methodological and language related. Methodologically the research identifies the value of developing writing practices, specifically letter writing, as research practices. These practices are particularly championed in the thesis as a form of challenge to the permeation of positivist knowledge. The field of applied theatre and creative practice with young people more broadly could benefit from further use of reflective writing practices designed to express practitioner's tacit knowledge and practical wisdom. As suggested in Chapter 3, there is scope to look in more detail at the transferable learning in this area from the field of nursing.

As identified in Chapter 4, the linguistic implications of the research are represented by the recognition of a need to expand vocabulary in order to reflect the more emotional, as well as vernacular, dimension of the field, in a way that complements well-articulated philosophical and theoretical accounts that characterise existing scholarship. Here I see an under-realised potential to develop a broader applied theatre research community focused on better understanding of the impact and application of practices in order to simply get better at what it does. By being less effects-focused, the field can instead concentrate on the development of practices driven by applied theatre's ethos of care. Furthermore as the business world increasingly hijacks vocabulary and terminology from

⁴⁷⁹ W. Brown, *Undoing The Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York, Zone Books, 2015, p. 222.

spirituality⁴⁸⁰ and from theatre and performance⁴⁸¹ there is a need to reclaim language and definitions of terms from both fields in the name of socially engaged and participatory practice.

More broadly perhaps this expansion of vocabulary can be seen as an effort to better articulate applied theatre knowledge in order to contribute to the movements of building new systems through exposing the ethos and potentialities of the practice. In providing the term Creative Noetic Practice the research attempts to demonstrate how applied theatre practices might better articulate their potential contribution to the development of a 'viable and compelling alternative to capitalist globalisation.'⁴⁸² As presented in Chapter 5, the notion of Creative Noetic Practice with young people understands how ordinariness and aspects of the everyday coming into being of young people represent elements of creative and wellbeing practice. These elements would be deemed as unproductive in less broad conceptualisations of creativity. However, it is these elements, underpinned by key concepts discussed in applied theatre scholarship, that take us beyond the limitations of the neoliberal construct of wellbeing by acknowledging relationality, the unknown, intuitive levels of experiencing, and a sense of value for material and immaterial forms of life.

The contribution to building alternative futures might well be most effectively made through direct input to new social movements that seem likely to emerge as a form of countering the neoliberal restructuring of social policy. As explored in Chapter 1, one such movement might generate around the shared interests and values of critical academics, community and youth work practitioners, and young people themselves. It could 'provide fertile ground for generating a new language and new ways of thinking about how to measure the worth of community and youth work, and what it really means to 'care'.'⁴⁸³ This is the argument of Gill Hughes et al. but I suggest that we might broaden the

⁴⁸⁰ J. Neal and A. Harpham, *The virtues of spirituality and project management, in the spirit of project management*, London, Gower, 2012.

Q. Albertson, *The God's of Business: The Intersection of Faith and the Marketplace*, Santa Barbara, Civilian Media, 2010.

P. Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice and Beauty to the World*, New York, Penguin Books, 2007.

A. Lurie, *Five Minutes on Mondays: Finding Unexpected Purpose, Peace and Fulfilment at Work*, New Jersey, FT Press, 2009.

T.R. Malloch, *Spiritual Enterprise: Doing Virtuous Business*, Encounter Books, New York, 2008.

W. Miller, *How Do We Put Our Spiritual Values To Work? New Traditions in Business: Spirit and Leadership in the 21st Century*, New York. New Leaders Press, 1991.

⁴⁸¹ Notably J. Pine and J. H Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theater and Every Business a Stage*, Boston, Harvard Business Review Press, 1999

⁴⁸² W. Brown, *Undoing The Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York, Zone Books, 2015, p. 222.

⁴⁸³ G. Hughes, C. Cooper, S. Gormally, and Julie Rippingale, 'The state of youth work in austerity England – reclaiming the ability to 'care'', *Youth and Policy*, Issue 113, 2014, p. 11.

community to all those who are interested in and committed to what I have described in this study as Creative Noetic Practice with young people. In an attempt to adopt a shared language for aspects of common practice there is scope to incorporate all we know about care and caring from the fields of education, youth work, and applied theatre. As both Anni Raw⁴⁸⁴ and Kay Hepplewhite⁴⁸⁵ acknowledge, pursuing the development of a shared language for a commonly shared practice carries implications for training and professional development strategies within the sector. Perhaps new opportunities might come from sharing the findings of this study with cultural and civic commissioners and leaders for their consideration of the related discourses. This could enable the creation of cross-sector groups to come together for regular training, sharing, and development and in so doing form a community of practice along the lines of the new movement described above.

Finally, it is worth considering the potential for future studies of the concept of applied theatre ethos. Given that the study works from a dynamic definition of ethos as emerging from social processes, produced and reproduced over time, then it is also possible to point to its potential next evolution—to new attitudes and aspirations in the making. In his keynote lecture to the 2010 international Theatre Applications conference Rustom Bharucha urged applied theatre practitioners to stretch their existing methodologies beyond Euro-American traditions 'and the increasingly hegemonic use of English as a link-language to engage with other languages and world-views.'⁴⁸⁶ Ultimately Bharucha claims that models of applied theatre have, to date, relied too heavily on The Theatre of the Oppressed which operates from what he sees as overly urban, secular, and modernist notions of individuality and freedom. Instead Bharucha recommends models of practice against 'a spectrum of other modes of living and being in which gods continue to be embraced in the cultures of everyday life with mixed results.'⁴⁸⁷ He goes on to suggest that we need to reject 'normative constructions of beauty [which are] predominantly liberal and emphatically "white"'.⁴⁸⁸ In their place he asks us to imagine a 'perverse beauty' that might lead to a recognition of the pain of the Other, which could be the first step in the beginnings of a radical sociality. In terms of how applied theatre ethos might evolve we can point to potential continuity in this focus on care. Even Bharucha's demands for a focus on pain and a shift in the types of constructs we embrace comes from a

⁴⁸⁴ A. E. Raw, A model and theory of community-based arts and health practice, PhD Thesis, University of Durham, 2013.

⁴⁸⁵ K. Hepplewhite, 'Here's One I Made Earlier: Dialogues on the Construction of an Applied Theatre Practitioner', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2013, pp. 52-72.

⁴⁸⁶ R. Bharucha, 'Problematising Applied Theatre: A search for alternative Paradigms', *Research In Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2011, p. 378.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 379.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 379.

commitment to a form of caring: 'I would argue that we may have no other option but to be as vigilant and caring in our exploration of the pain of others, opening ourselves to our own pain in the process.'⁴⁸⁹ This prompts me to acknowledge that the notion of the applied theatre ethos I have been building in the thesis may well be one that is skewed towards what we have, to date, known as typically white liberal values (it would not after all be inaccurate or unfair to describe me as a white liberal) and does not yet reflect Bharucha's vision. However there are echoes of the theories and modes of practice for which Bharucha advocates in the ideas of both Nicholson and Thompson and in those presented by the letter writers featured in this study. As such the thesis perhaps signals a turn towards different constructs of individuality and freedom, non-liberal notions of beauty and the pain of the other, as the dominant attitudes in a not-too-distant future applied theatre ethos.

This research grew out of my hunch that there exists a disparate community of people that actually share a 'structure of feeling'⁴⁹⁰--a sense that something may be at stake that is yet to be fully articulated--and a commitment to dealing with the fallout associated with attempts to preserve and sustain certain forms of practice. It seemed to me that this structure of feeling potentially resided and expressed itself in a wide range of practices and people. It could be found in something like the Occupy movement but also in the individual teacher in a classroom. The study enabled me to scaffold a way of exploring this structure of feeling in relation to my own practice within the field of creative practice with young people. I have arrived at some key terms, philosophies, and principles which I hope will inspire readers to further explore the relationship between applied theatre as a creative practice and young people's spiritual wellbeing. I hope too that it will encourage practitioners and scholars operating in this field to continue to learn, prioritise, advocate for and develop our own language.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 381.

⁴⁹⁰ R. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1961.

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