

CHAPTER ONE: Writing as an emergent process of inquiry

Introduction

In the Introduction I described how in some ways I was new to writing. This chapter describes how I make sense of this ‘newness’ in terms of writing as method and deliberate process.

The chapter considers methodological issues for the thesis, concerning writing as a form of ongoing inquiry. I describe how I have developed an approach to writing as inquiry across the whole of the doctoral journey arriving at a set of approaches which I am applying as I write this thesis. I ask, how might writing be an emergent process of inquiry? This question correlates to another, which also appears in this chapter, can writing be used to capture in the moment experience? These questions have a slightly paradoxical or naive quality in the sense that they seem to fly in the face of common sense: how can a process so subject to crafting and amendment be associated with emergence, and the present moment? In responding to this question I bring forward insights culled from my engagement with phenomenology, which occurs from mid 2003 onwards in the doctoral journey.

The chapter is divided into five sections.

- *Some questions about emergence and writing.* In this section I use my own difficulty in beginning to write this thesis to explore aspects of emergence as they have related to my experience of writing. Also to illustrate writing emergently.
- *Writing where I am.* How can I convincingly write about my present moments? This echoes an injunction from process consulting to always be ready to express current thoughts and feelings in service of the client.
- *Supporting emergent form.* How do I provide practical processes for enabling my writing to constitute a process of ongoing inquiry? This includes a description of how I track questions and review my own writing for latent meaning. These two processes are taken up in the following two parts
- *On taking a distance from my own text: reading as well as writing.* Here I explore further how to read one’s own and others texts. I explore the process of stepping back, and opening a gap between myself, and my own writing.
- *Developing quality criteria for my writing at the EGOS conference.* I describe a research process I used for preparing a paper to an EGOS conference, designed to impute implicit action research criteria from five years of doctoral writing.

I aim to write this chapter in a way that includes a balance of *showing* and *telling* in respect of my efforts to write emergently, so as to illustrate, as well as describe, the themes under discussion.

1.1. Some questions about emergence and writing

In this section I introduce the idea and the practice of trying to describe present experience in the context of a crafted document. The section introduces important aspects of trying to work emergently, such as the risk of lack of purpose, and the possibility of creating a fruitful gap between my writing and my self. I seek to write the section in a way that is compatible with its subject matter, by paying attention to what emerges as I write.

I started to write this thesis at the end of the EGOS conference in Bergen, Norway (July 2006). However, I found beginning a frustrating process, and on the 3rd August 2006 I deliberately stood back from trying to write the thesis and created a new document. I focused directly on the problem at hand – my difficulty in beginning - and explored it by writing to myself. I experienced this as a calming process, which released me to eventually pick up the threads of this chapter again. In this new piece of writing I began by describing as directly as possible what was occurring as I wrote.

I begin to write, marking out with shapes that become words, and words that become sentences, a thought about a beginning, which hazily came to me as I crept from my bed, and attended to this familiar early morning vigil of scraping a pen across a page, or tap, tap, tapping at the keys of my laptop. What if I was to just start to write in the expectation that how I begin would reveal the direction I needed to take with the thesis? If I trusted what arose and worked with it, taking it seriously as a beginning?

As I write these first words I take possession of the thought which existed before now as a misty possibility, and it sharpens through expression here on the page. I also find that the articulation through this bodily process of writing-out a thought that arose from, or with, a feeling, works back to arouse my body with fresh feeling – a slight frustration melded with an anticipatory tingle in this case. Also that this awareness of my sensing body then arouses fresh thoughts such as the one I am having now as a question: how will my body's engagement here with this day, under this sky, effect what I will think and write? (Beginning Two, August 2006: 2)

Having begun in this way I then went on to explore the feeling I had of running out of momentum as I had made previous starts. It was not that I had not written a lot already, but that the writing seemed to lack sufficient direction for me to say what it was about and where it was going. This frustration echoed that from my previous attempts to start. This is how I described the problem as arising for me.

I have made several attempts to start writing this thesis. So far I have produced 34,000 words but no beginning! Each attempt at a beginning has led into a gush of writing that has gradually immersed itself deeper into one aspect of what I would like to say so that my attempts to introduce the whole in some way have slipped away from me. Direction seems to result from a series of consequential choices that carry me forward almost in spite of myself: almost as if the thesis is writing me rather than the other way around. Saying this produces a tingle of anxiety. After all as an action

researcher in the tradition in which I have been schooled I should be paying more attention to my choices and surely this should deliver me of more control should it not? Yet this “should” does not in the respect of this writing account for the whole of my experience – in fact, in relation to writing a beginning, it does not seem to account for very much of my experience at all. So let me return to that tingle: in what way is the thesis writing me? (Beginning Two, August, 2006: 3)

Following my inquiring nose in this way did lead me into interesting territory which I am confident will not be wasted, and in this way it is representative of other beginnings; however, in the end, it seemed to run out of steam and led me to feeling that I had explored, but that I still had not laid out the territory of the thesis in a substantial enough way. I had a feeling of treading water or running into sand – my energy was dissipating through the effort of keeping going, but without going any where in particular. On reflection both beginnings seemed to suffer from the same sense of insufficient direction: why should this be a persistent problem?

As I have thought about this I have come to realise my situation as being in part an ironic one. Both the beginnings illustrate my interest in how things emerge, and the relationship this has with inquiry: the first quoted extract does so directly by posing a question about emergence, and the other does so by demonstrating this interest through chasing after my “tingle” of feeling. Yet it is this interest that then sabotages my attempt to begin because each new moment offers yet another opportunity to start. To be continuously in the process of attending to the present moment means to be a constant beginner, for each moment offers a fresh opportunity; moreover a opportunity that is filled with the energy of being alive and present. My inclination to abandon one beginning in favour of a new one has emerged as a concern over writing this thesis (I might say that one of my quality criteria is to finish a piece of writing). It has also connected to other interests that brought me to the doctoral programme in the first place as we will see when we examine my first piece of doctoral writing (2001) in the next chapter when I asked myself, what do I stand for? Do I blow in the wind too much?

The suggestion I made as I wrote to inquire into my feelings of frustration over my beginning process was to try to start from where I was: to look back at what I had written and to accept what it is that I have already started to do. This is simple and, at one level, obvious. A simple re-frame is involved – I have started, so what is it that I have started to do? What is also involved is to treat my own work as not being completely apparent even to me. Taking this attitude involves taking some distance from my own writing in order to get closer. It involves a suspension of common sense: after all taking some distance from what I have spent so much time and effort producing myself may seem to be a rather odd thing to do. Yet it turns out that time and time again when I do this I discover aspects of my own work that were not apparent to me at the time I wrote the words. This experience of discovering or revealing things in my own writing corresponds to aspects of my life as a process consultant, where I have to

remain open to being surprised by what interests me or what I find myself doing when working with a client. Later in the thesis I describe situations where things like this occur. As far as writing as inquiry is concerned the question arises concerning what qualities are needed to write in an emergent way? I have already referred to aspects of patience and waiting as in the “early morning vigil” of my opening paragraph to this chapter. What other human capacities are related to writing emergently?

Having asked the question about “human capacities” I notice a slight reaction. On reflection I realise that this relates to a concern that “emergence” might be shorn of its rather mysterious quality. Might become simply a quality of myself that can be trained or developed. I can see that I might wish to explore the ways in which I have a kind of emergent process in my work or life; however, I also like the potential implications of “emergence” as being a quality of the world; not of my making at all. A social process, or as a process of nature for example – I don’t at this stage want a frame that would exclude these possibilities for inquiry. Marshall speaks about communion and agency as a “potentially complementary coping strategies for dealing with the uncertainties and anxieties of being alive.” (Marshall 2001: 434). If I introduce “emergence” within this conceptual frame then I might consider and inquire into the idea that *I have* an emergent approach towards my work (including my writing), which has arisen in response to the challenges I have faced in the work (particularly being a process consultant “lost” in large systems – see Chapter Two). Then I would be taking on emergence as an aspect of my agency, in the sense of being a part of my “independence, self protection, self assertion and control” (ibid: 435). However, in this thesis I also want to take the stance that “things” might *emerge to me*. From this perspective emergence carries for me “the sense of being ‘at one’ with other organisms or the context, its basis is integration, *interdependence, receptivity*.” (ibid. Emphasis added). In the context of writing emergently the concept of communion raises the prospect that my writing might be a way of “‘in-forming’ me, that is of giving shape to my way of seeing, not simply imparting information in frameworks already established.” (ibid)”. In this chapter I want to explore the possibilities for writing to be genuinely exploratory: to constitute a mode of research in its own right. Key to such a process is the attempt to write about my present, in the moment experience, as I did when I broke from writing the thesis to address directly the problem I faced with beginning. How else have I written about my in the moment experience? How does the attempt to do this reflect a style of living my life?

1.2 Writing where I am

In this section I expand upon the theme of writing emergently by considering the roots of my attempt to describe present experience; also considering the value of retaining in the text a trace of its origins, as part of realising writing as inquiry.

Exploring my response to being stuck in the section 1.1 above reminds me that I have taken in and made a part of my consulting style a particular way of responding to being stuck. This “way” or approach animates the questions raised in the extract I quoted at the beginning of the previous section: “What if I was to just start to write in the expectation that how I began would reveal the direction I needed to take with the thesis? If I trusted what arose and worked with it, taking it seriously as a beginning?” In one way my whole interest in emergence could be traced to a simple injunction taken in as part of my training as a process consultant: *If stuck just try to say where you are: in that way you need never be stuck*. This phrase is a kind of mantra that I carry to help me professionally, for, as an organisation consultant, I am often in strange places with unknown groups of people trying to sustain myself, and contribute to the understanding and resolution of problems I am struggling to grasp. I first learned the discipline – for that is what it has gradually become – from Sonia Nevis a Gestalt teacher who taught me much, mostly by example, but occasionally like this in the form of a simple injunction about using myself. In the immediacy of consulting it’s a hard thing to do, and often I miss the opportunity; I’m left feeling that achieving this state of presence is a little like trying to measure up to Noel Coward’s definition of wit: something you wish you had said ten minutes earlier. I mention this aspect of consulting here because it provides one reason why I should have continued to try to “say where I am” in my doctoral writing: it’s an example of my life leaking into my writing style. But that, on its own, would not be a good reason for introducing it here into my writing. What exactly does this practice add to the research process?

To respond to this question I would like to return to the way I began this chapter. I began to write this chapter with a complaint at how just starting to write failed to support me in defining an overall purpose for the thesis. I would like to return to that complaint over beginnings and take up that complaining spirit in order to make a slightly different explanation of my experience – one that looks more sympathetically on my repeated beginnings. It is true that on each of these Summer mornings, as I have come to my writing place, I have been moved differently from the day before, and that often I have been unable to pick up from the previous day’s writing. As a result I have launched off in a slightly different direction, animated by some oneiric inspiration, or by some emerging determination to get to the bottom of something that came sideways into my consciousness the day before, and lodged there, to grow overnight. The result is a succession of beginnings and a growing body of text, which needs ordering in some way. So why do I continue to write like this? What

would be lost if I was to stop trying to write emergently – to say where I am?

I notice that when I start to deliberately organise the text into a whole that two particular things occur. First I start to hide the origins of the text. Not deliberately or from bad intent. I aim at more coherence and continuity – to make sense of the whole in a clearer way. As I do I notice that I start to exorcise the “false” starts and the loose ends so the whole piece is crafted into a neater more logical sequence and order. Discontinuity is smoothed over; the present gobbles up the past. Secondly, as I do this I notice that my voice tends to change. I move away from a more tentative discursive style into a crisper more clipped advocacy. Sometime this progresses into a shift from a first person style to a third person as my confidence that I have answered the question or found my feet turns into a kind of expert posture. For short hand purposes I sometimes call this voice my consultant’s voice, for a kind of succinct, clipped expertness often informs my writing for corporate clients “Can you say this in a page of bullet points?” is an archetypical request that internally guides much of my consulting writing. What is lost is the fact that usually I can only achieve anything like this form because it rests upon much personal meandering and inquiring that has gone before. Not that my corporate clients are usually very interested in this – they want the action and in this way want the future. They are not much interested in the past: reasons perhaps, but origins no; clear causes yes, but ambiguities no. I’m not citing this in order to criticise my corporate clients, but rather to emphasis this neatening up as a feature of crafting my writing. This tendency is supported by the technology I use as I write this piece: the laptop computer with its word-processing software. With this I can exorcise the past in my writing at a stroke. My small black notebook operates as more of a natural palimpsest, but anything noted there has to be transformed by this tap, tap, tapping, into the computer from where, in a particular way, being present focused can be fully realised. Something of an irony, then, that I should start by valuing a statement of present existence, and end by lamenting the loss of the past. Why should I care? Why would I want to keep the, often messy, origins in sight?

Put at its simplest I fear for what might be lost. I suspect that in the messiness and the emergence of sense lies the capacity of writing to be inquiry. That if I want to explore writing as inquiry I cannot just show the end results, but must also engage myself with the process of achieving those results. That to be true to my inquiry I cannot just talk about this process, but must find ways of showing it here on the page. If I cannot do that then how can I authentically make my claim that writing may be a form of inquiry? (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005: 974; van Manen, 1990: 31-32.) It is in this spirit of showing myself that throughout the doctoral writing I lift my head look around and describe what I see. As I look back to find these moments in my six years of doctoral production, I notice that these descriptive moments often stand out from the writing within which they appear as a kind of interruption. They frequently have little or any framing, and often little attempt is made to incorporate them into the surrounding

text. In this sense these pieces have some of the character of exercises such as the finger exercises a pianist might perform, except in my case I'm not too sure, at the time, exactly what it is I'm exercising, or for what. An aspect of the doctoral journey is the gradual uncovering of what is involved in these practices. Why do I insert these descriptive pieces into my writing?

Let us look together at an example of what I mean.

It's 6.30am on the morning of Sunday 6th June [2004]. I woke up early and then couldn't get back to sleep for worrying about this piece of writing I'm working on for my PhD. I'm actually not sure how to go on with it – I'm feeling a bit stuck. As I sit here I sense a movement in the garden to which I respond by looking up from my desk. A rather battered looking fox is loping across the lawn, no doubt heading round the side of the house into the wooded area at the back. As he moves across the lawn he intersects a pool of early morning sunlight filtering through the trees. For a moment his down at heel, moth eaten looking appearance is transformed by the dappling sunlight. His skinny body ripples in the sunlight while the browns and blacks of his coat shine out in a multitude of different shades. I sigh at the easy grace of it all, wishing there was someone else with whom to share this moment. The fox disappears around the side of the house, but my attention stays with the dimpling sunlight. I notice a shift in my inner state; a movement in my confidence; a small surge of energy. I start to write this piece, happy to start by describing this experience. (Inquiring into my use of Gestalt in Organisation Consulting, June 2004: 1.)

Later the decision had to be made about whether or not to leave this paragraph in. It sat rather strangely at the beginning of the piece of writing, which was about my Gestalt therapy background. Should I have treated it like the canes that support the young plants in my garden - removed once they had the strength of self-support? Or should it have been left in as evidence of where I had come from, and as *potentially* significant in its own right? At the time I left it in, although I did not say much about the choice to do so. I felt it would turn out to be relevant without fully understanding why. As it turned out pieces like this, which appeared to be rather extraneous at the time of writing, gained in significance as the doctoral journey progressed. As I acquired an understanding of the term "life world" from my engagement with phenomenology, I began to understand this way of writing as a way of seeing myself in situation. I came to understand that allowing my self to respond to what arose in the moment was also a way of documenting and revealing my life world. The new word coincided with an incompletely understood practice, reinforcing my understanding of both word and practice¹. What had been left in took on more significance in the light of later developments in the research journey.

¹ The capacity of language to re-frame my perspective on aspects of my situation becomes a particular aspect of my inquiry in Chapter Four of the thesis.

Writing like this is also a form of practicing attentional discipline (Marshall, 2001: 433; Torbert, 2001: 251). In the course of the doctoral journey I come to understand that expression and experience are related. Writing is a way of illuminating and bringing to attention what is experienced. In this sense retaining pieces like this also shows method in practice – shows and records how I have sought to pay attention. How else have I come to support writing like this in the thesis? What practical supports have I developed?

1.3 Supporting emergent form

How have I supported writing emergently in the way I have sought to construct this thesis? It has been a new experience of the doctoral journey for me to write longer pieces in an inquiring way. It has been an especially challenging prospect to face writing this thesis. I have supported my writing by developing a structure of texts and also through practices of writing. The “structural” supports are not in themselves original, although their value has come to be appreciated as I have sought to manage the production of a longer piece of writing than I have ever written before. The main support is to simultaneously write five texts or bundles of texts:

- I have drafted an *Introduction*, which frames the purpose of the thesis, the area into which it seeks to contribute knowledge, my approach to action research and other important matters that are normally considered as important preparation for what follows. I see the Introduction as a text that develops in parallel with the other texts especially the one I describe next.
- I am producing text such as this, which I refer to as the *chapter text*. This will form the vast bulk of the thesis. As I write this is the main focus of attention in the writing effort and is likely to remain so for most of the period during which the thesis is being written.
- I am also writing *footnotes* as I go. I use footnotes for ongoing meta-commentary on the chapter text on points that are important, but which it doesn't make sense to include in the chapter text; this might be because to do so would disturb the flow or unbalance the attention being given to a particular point. For example I placed a comment about my relationship with my supervisor in a footnote, because it was important, but difficult to include directly into the Introduction I was writing at the time. Also I sometimes place additional reference material in a footnote, such as a quote that is interesting but only obliquely relevant to the point being considered at the time.
- I am preparing a *bibliography* as I write the thesis, and I sometimes prepare other documents to be included in the final thesis such as *Appendices* or *diagrams* and *charts* on separate sheets of paper for inclusion later. These are normally prepared in a rough draft form at the time when they occur to me, and they are perfected later. For example I have a rough draft of a personal bibliography of key material I have written during the doctoral journey; this will be tidied up into an Appendix to be attached to the main thesis.
- Finally I also have other documents that are less directly supporting the main writing effort. Included among these are copies of my original writings from my doctoral journey, and pages used to capture pieces of writing discarded from the *chapter text* (usually) as I go.

I move around between these texts as I write the thesis. For example I have experimented with taking this account of different texts out of this Chapter

and placing it in the *Introduction*, but I have returned it here because the Introduction was getting too large and cumbersome. I also return regularly to fine tune (and occasionally modify more dramatically) the part of the Introduction that states the purpose of the thesis; it has been re written several times as a result of insights that have arisen as I have written this *chapter text*. In this sense the thesis is a dynamic evolving process, the production of which involves ongoing inquiry, as I make decisions about where to locate material, and make connections between developments in one text and the other four. By working concurrently with these five categories of text I feel I am creating space in the chapter text within which to be more emergent, and do more 'showing'. This is because the other texts take some of the burden of tracking and providing continuity. Finally this structure of texts in relationship is a form of organisation that can be modified as I proceed. For example the idea of having a discard document for each chapter evolved out of a couple of frustrating moments when I discarded material only to regret the decision a week or so later. I support my ability to move from one category to the next with an extra screen plugged into my laptop, which is so co-ordinated with the laptop that I can easily move documents from one to the other.

These concurrently evolving texts provide a basic support for writing the thesis in a way that has structure but is still open to development as it is produced. I also support my writing in other ways. An important way is to keep the spirit of inquiry alive in my writing by keeping track of the *questions* that arise from the writing, and the *choices* that I make, usually in response to these questions. Most obviously this is a discipline of showing my thinking as I write; a way of leaving a trace of the development of my thought through the text. This makes the development open to the inquiry of others and also to myself at a later date. In this subsequent inquiry it is possible that other forms of question will be revealed - those that were not articulated fully or at all in the text when first written. Returning to articulate more fully the partly revealed or latent question is one of the ways in which the text may form the basis for a subsequent round of inquiry; "Why did I do that?" develops into "what was the question I was answering here?" The historian Collingwood advocated a particular way of looking at the past relevant to this point (Collingwood: 29). He spoke of history as leaving behind the visible responses to questions that have now been lost. They may have been 'lost' because they were never articulated in the first place, perhaps because at the time people did not have the sense of making a choice, because they were just doing what seemed obvious to them, or because the questions, once articulated, have been covered over by the subsequent answers. He advocated that to deepen understanding of the past it was necessary to search for the question to which the answer of historic practice was responding. Whilst I am not setting out to inquire into such distant times as Collingwood I am often looking back, seeking to make sense of something I wrote five or six years ago - or even last week. Inquiring by looking for the question unasked at the time, places more of requirement on me to position myself within *my situation at that time*. To do this respects the actuality of what was happening at that time, and also

reveals how the writing might be guided by unarticulated questions or intuitions that may be explored at a later time. How did my writing emerge *without* having a clearly articulated question *in mind*. How might writing *emerge* from a ground that is not consciously present? How may I bring what is inchoate or unconsciously steering me – what is latent or in the process of emerging – to light? Questions such as these arose early in the doctoral journey as I reflected back on my writing. Such an interest in the revelatory potential of my own past production gathered weight as the doctoral journey progressed until it coincided with a phenomenological approach that deepened my understanding of being unconsciously located in place (Chapter Four).

During the doctoral journey I have enabled myself in turning back to my own texts through a discipline of preserving the original text as it was when submitted to supervision. In this sense it becomes a document of record, as if it had been published in a journal. On some occasions I modify and re-submit my original text to the following supervision group, but in this case it is preserved as a separate document². This enables me in looking back to my past productions as source of material for how I was documenting aspects of my life world at that time (Richardson, 2005: 965). As I explain more fully in the next Chapter these texts have also been the subject of inquiry with my supervisor and fellow students.

I also apply the discipline about subsequent editing of texts I mentioned in the previous paragraph more tactically as I preserve aspects of a palimpsest (Richardson, 1997: 23) in my own writing by editing the pieces I write with discretion. I have already provided one example of this when I quoted the piece about looking up to describe something in my garden and then decided to retain it, and other examples will follow. These practices preserve some of the integrity of “then” and in so doing “narrativise” my own life (Richardson, 1997: 31). This practise provides an extended awareness of the past in the present; preserves the substantialness and dignity of the past, and also makes it available to help make sense of the present. As the doctoral journey brings me into contact with phenomenology I also make more effort to separate out my descriptive pieces from my explanations or theorising (van Manen, 1990: 54-55; Merleau-Ponty, 1962: vii). When I re visit my writing practices in 2006, I am struck by how they seem to foreshadow and prepare me for the turn, which my doctoral journey will later take. With hindsight I appear to quite quickly slip into a mode of documenting my life that then provides an essential ground for tracing how I belong in the world. It may also be that I knew in some way that this was the path my journey would take, even before I had consciously articulated it.

² This discipline is not invariably followed in the first year of the doctoral journey as I was not then fully aware of it as a deliberate practice. It emerged as a more disciplined practice over 2002.

Taken as a whole these practices amount to an attitude towards my own historic production. It is an attitude of taking a distance from it; standing back and holding it as if it were in some way not my own. What does it mean to distance myself from my own production like this? To assume that there is something there to be discovered, or revealed in what I wrote all those weeks, months, years ago?

1.4 On taking a distance from my own text: reading as well as writing.

Addressing the questions posed at end of Section 1.3 involves understanding myself as a reader as well as a writer. In this section I explore the correlation between reading and writing. In tracking my own questions and choices, as described in Section 1.3, I necessarily became a reader of my own production – to be a writer is to be a reader just as to ask questions is to invoke a response – to become a respondent. Movement between reading and writing may take place quickly, as when I re-read what I have just written as part of a process of staying in touch with the developing text. Other times the reading may take place a substantial time after the writing. I now have six year-old texts that were produced, and submitted to the CARPP supervisory process at the beginning of my doctoral journey in 2001. How do I now read them? My response to this question develops as the doctoral journey proceeds. It is particularly influenced by my engagement with phenomenology, which provides me with an approach, which, as I take it up, also feeds back to build my understanding of phenomenology as a practice; also to enrich my interest in the question of how I am situated in the world, and where I might find sources of energy and excitement. How do these reciprocal influences develop through the doctoral journey?

To understand how I came to answer these questions I first need to describe a problem that unfolded as a result of my decision to document my life world in ways that maintained the temporal integrity of the texts. The problem that my process of documenting my life world set up for me was one of interpretive method. On the one hand I felt under pressure to grasp what I meant when I originally wrote the piece in the situation in which it was written. This seemed to demand as *literal* a reading as possible, addressing the face value of the words as they were written then, and restricting the interpretive effort to trying to ascertain what I meant then. The same logic applied to reading any text – what did the author mean to say when she wrote those particular words? The attraction of this approach was that it accorded respect to what was written ‘then’ as in itself significant: the word acquired an importance that in some way transcended or framed current interpretation. This honoured the past as a moment in my existence. On the other hand, what was written then was being read now in this moment of my existence. From this perspective what was written then was open to my current re-constitution. Here the word from the past only had meaning in so far as it made sense to me now. I gobbled up the past and made it my present. What was attractive about this orientation was that it permitted me to invest my past production, and other people’s words, with fresh life: to make them relevant to me here and now. So how did I both respect the facticity of the written word, and bring it into my present? How did I have both respect for the original word, and bring it to life by taking it into my current existence?

I have spoken here as if reading my own past work and another’s were the same. I recognise there is a distinction between reading someone else’s

words, and reading my own. In regard to my own writing I will have access to more of the internal process that motivated the writing, because the words have merged originally from my own life world. But, as the doctoral journey unfolds through an engagement with phenomenology from July 2003 onwards, so I understand more fully how my life world is in a constant state of development, and is not, in any event, perfectly transparent to me. This creates a potential gap in my comprehension even in respect of my own work, and my own life. It is this gap that opens up an avenue into inquiry through my own past work. To exploit this gap requires *deliberately taking of a stance of curiosity or wonder towards my own work*. This is tantamount to holding back on my tendency to assume knowledge and to slow down my interpretive process. In phenomenological terms this would be a form of bracketing (Hammond, Howarth and Keat, 1991: 25-26; Sokolowski, 2000: 49-50; Ladkin, 2005: 119.). In 2003 I encountered a particular refinement of this principle, which caught my attention and shaped the development of my methodology.

The passage that caught my imagination was one in which Merleau-Ponty³ was describing an approach to take towards any phenomenon that appears to us; he was seeking to describe how to hold the ‘thing’ in our perception, whether it was a person, object, or concept.

Things [will] through their perspectives, offer themselves ... only to some one who wishes not to have them but to see them, not to hold them as with forceps, or to immobilize them as under the objective of a microscope, but to let them be and to witness their continued being - to someone who therefore limits himself to giving them the hollow, the free space they ask for in return, the resonance they require.” (VI 101)

I asked myself how could my own writing be this kind of “free space”? I imagined holding a thought or idea, or something I had said in the past lightly, as if it was a small animal with its own life. Would this be a way of refining the description of what I was doing, as I sought to read and write in a way that was open and encouraged emergence? I was struck by the idea of a “hollow” as a way of speaking about a writing space – how could I

³As I forewarned in the Introduction sustaining the metaphor of journey poses problems when it comes to the introduction of Merleau-Ponty. My encounter with him is a moment in the unfolding journey and I want to honour that by positioning his full introduction into the thesis properly. However I cannot write as if I was completely untouched by the journey I want to honour. In some sense there is no beginning or end; there is just the way the past and the future come into this present now. However to recognise and cope with the problems of my chosen form does not necessarily mean abandoning the choice – just finding a way to manage the dilemma. In this case I’m using one of my ‘textual structures’ – this footnote – to acknowledge the problem and to indicate that I shall strive to say enough to sustain understanding now whilst promising a fuller explication of how I come to be adopting these particular views of this particular thinker until later in the thesis. I will use footnotes as a tool for helping to sustain this balance between the needs of my chosen method and the necessity of present understanding.

create my text as such a space, so that what is in the text would reveal itself? Putting things in this way, suggested a de centring of myself, and, as a result, slightly shifting the basis of the choice that I was presenting to myself to either be as literal as possible, or accept the other's (including my own past self) production as an object for my own projection. The centrality of myself in choosing whether to hold myself back, or put myself in, that is suggested by the framing of that choice now started to look and feel different: now there was a third term in the form of the phenomenon itself with which I am in a potentially more subtle relationship. This way of thinking about how to read texts, and also how to conceive of the kind of writing space I was creating, particularly appealed to me, because of the turn that my doctoral journey was taking during 2003. As I describe in Chapter Three I was at this time particularly open to ideas that involved a change of attitude towards my own self, and enabled me to distance myself from my own self-absorption. In this way my own experience was shaping and also being shaped by the intellectual content of the journey as it related to reading and writing.

My process of writing as inquiry continued to feed back into my intellectual inquiries on the journey especially as they reflected on my thinking about myself and other people. As I continued to conceive of my writing as a hollow, or bowl, within which things might emerge, and show themselves I explored what it meant for ideas, concepts etc to have hidden or unexplored sides. This was another way in which the problems and issues produced by my writing choices reciprocated into my theoretical understandings, and helped to accelerate my energy for both writing and intellectual inquiry. I asked myself how my writing could be a "hollow" in which ideas or concepts might emerge? How could I conceptualise taking a distance from my own production as I re-read my own work? As I responded to questions such as these (from 2004 onwards) I discovered that, according to Merleau-Ponty, the visible thought was surrounded by a kind of penumbra of other "articulations" existing as "fields of possible variation" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 160). These "articulations" existed as "reflections, shadows, levels and horizons between things", and as such "do not exist as objects of thought" (ibid). What I took from this was that any text, *including a text from my own past*, had its own substantial presence, but was also only "half open before us" (ibid). It was simultaneously "unveiled and hidden" (ibid). In these circumstances the latent meaning – that inchoate sense of the otherness of the text - was to be preserved, and to invoke from us an inquiring style that would have qualities of "complying with" or "letting be" (ibid), provoking the question, what *emerges* for me as I read?

In this section I have reflected on how in the doctoral journey I sought to take a certain posture towards reading my own text. This posture towards reading correlated to a way of thinking about my writing as opening a certain kind of "hollow". The essential features of my approach towards reading and writing were a) to construe my own writing as 'other', and b) to treat what I (and others) had written as indeterminate – as possessing latent content. These methodological moves provide a counterpoint to the

development of substantive themes regarding my relationship to others, and to myself, which I develop in this thesis. In this way the methodological development of the research reciprocates with the development of the content of the research. I suggested in my opening paragraphs to this Chapter, that writing may be a “vigil”; a waiting for something to come, or a looking back to see what needs to be encouraged forth. I have gone on to suggest that I might write as if I was preparing a hollow in which things might emerge to show themselves. How in practice might I write to achieve this? What kind of process might I use to bring forth the hidden content in my own writing? In the next section I describe a way in which I used an examination of my own historic production to develop quality criteria from my own writing as I looked back on it from the first half of 2006.

1.5 Developing quality criteria for my writing at the EGOS conference.

Having introduced the connection between reading and writing in Section 1.4, in this section I illustrate this connection further with an example from my own inquiry practice: a paper presented to an international conference. In this paper I developed three provisional quality criteria that I claimed were implicit in my practice of doctoral writing. In this section I adopt these criteria for the thesis, although I do so with a reservation. My reservation concerns the necessarily provisional nature of these quality criteria in the face of the way that quality emerges as a feature of the evolving nature of the thesis. I discuss the evolving nature of quality in this section.

At the end of 2005 I was presented with an opportunity to explore questions such as these when I was invited to submit a paper to an international conference: the 22nd EGOS Colloquium (European Group for Organisational Studies.), which was due to meet in Bergen, Norway between the 6th and 8th July 2006. The invitation, which came through my association with CARPP, was to prepare a paper for the Standing Working Group on “Validity and Epistemology in Action Research”. As I reflected on how to approach my paper for this conference I conceived of a plan to develop a paper for the conference that would encourage me to continue my preparations for writing this thesis: I decided to read through all the papers that had been submitted to CARPP supervision to identify the emergent quality criteria. Here is how I described this in the paper I produced.

What quality criteria do I use and where do such criteria come from? At this stage in drawing my PhD work together I have been re-reading and cataloguing all the writing I have submitted to supervision. The supervision process is that these pieces are circulated for discussion in a meeting with my supervisor and a small number of fellow students. I record [on audio tape] the discussion that goes on about my piece, and my supervisor then returns the copy with hand written comments inscribed against the text. Often I will receive written comments from other students in the group as well. As I have read through my work and read/listened to the commentary I have aimed to notice how the work develops under the processes of dialogue and feedback. From this inquiry I have made notes about the quality principles that appear to me to be guiding this development: those which can be interpreted from the commentary and the way my writing and consulting responds. (EGOS Conference paper: 2)

This idea did not just pop into my head. I already had in mind that my research process consisted of recording, documenting my life world; also I had in mind that I would return to this documentation as a source of material for my thesis. This predisposition was then reinforced as I thought about what I would like to show the conference. At the time (early 2006) I was putting the finishing touches to a paper for a Gestalt Journal (Farrands, 2007). In this paper I had re-visited the fundamental idea of a gestalt as a figure appearing against a ground. As I reflected on my invitation to the EGOS conference, the coincidence between receiving the invitation, and

my double preoccupation with finishing the Gestalt paper, and starting to write the thesis seemed propitious. I decided that I would try to combine these preoccupations for the EGOS conference. I conceived of myself as revisiting *the ground of my doctoral life* by re-reading all my historic material. I thought that the figure was the double moment of the beginning of the thesis and the end of the Gestalt Review paper. I asked myself how do I re-visit the ground?

I decided that if I was to respect the work's status as background then I would have to eschew a frontal approach – that after all would make the material figural. How could I approach more obliquely? I decided to read the material in a particular way. To open myself to what came sideways as I read: to the intuitions and feelings that the reading gave rise to and to try and capture these. At the time I was also reading Donald Schon's book *The Reflective Practitioner* in preparation for some work I had been asked to do with an architecture practice in Philadelphia. I was intrigued by the way Schon wrote of "designing as a conversation with the materials of a situation" (Schon, 1978: 78). How could the materials of my situation speak back to me as in a conversation? This seemed like a proper respectful attitude with which to approach the mysterious presence of the ground. There was another, slightly embarrassing factor as well. Although I never met Donald Schon I imagined a gentle reflective man, and I felt drawn to his style: could I do this piece of work in a way that might honour him a little? Could I have a conversation with the materials of this situation? I picked up some of Schon's language again when I offered in the paper further explanation of my research process. I positioned my inquiry through reading my own work as being based on believing that I could, "draw provisional conclusions about [quality] principles as they are applied in practice, (rather than those that are espoused)", and I offered these comments on the process I had followed:

This retrospective gaze provided by my re-reading and re-listening reveals more than was apparent to me at the time [when I first wrote the papers]. I have not always *deliberately* sought to apply these principles, but I believe I can see in my PhD writing that implicitly, (and sometimes explicitly), this is what I am leaning into practicing. What I am aspiring towards. The practice is clumsily and incompletely practiced particularly, as the article will show, when I am acting and writing outside of the academy. How am I practicing what I profess to be aspiring towards? (EGOS paper: 5)

When my supervisor returned her copy of my EGOS paper she had underlined the phrases marked above which seemed to me to especially emphasise "leaning into" and "aspiring". The highlighting strengthened my interest in what is emergent, latent, in the act of becoming. This solidified my interest in the theme of emergence. I think it also set in train something else that crept along the bottom of my consciousness as a kind of background feeling to my time at the EGOS conference. I felt seen by my supervisor through the way she picked up these particular phrases. I fancied that if I had emphasised parts of this extract it would have been these parts. This encouraged me to think that I was indeed ready to start writing my

thesis; that in some way being at the conference as a representative of CARPP denoted that readiness.

The paper that I prepared and presented was based on this mix of reading my own work in the receptive way I have described above. I read and catalogued all my CARPP production (the catalogue is at Appendix A), writing in my notebook as I went, the evocations and feelings that were aroused. The paper I produced was in three parts. In the first part I hypothesised three provisional quality criteria for my work drawn from my reading and “conversing” with the material. In part two I applied these criteria to an extract from my most recent piece of writing (the piece for the Gestalt Journal which I have already mentioned) to gauge their usefulness and test their validity. In part three I drew some conclusions. I presented this paper to the sub group. I also gave a copy to my supervisor who was attending the same sub group meeting. She returned her copy to me annotated. As the paper captures important aspects of my thinking about quality in action research at just the moment when I am about to start writing the thesis I intend refer to them here, and to ask how are these quality criteria for this thesis?

The three provisional criteria that emerged from my reading were: 1) rich evocative describing, 2) openness to possibility, and 3) voicing and situating questions. This is what I offered to the EGOS conference about the first quality aspect.

Rich/evocative describing.

Where I speak from my heart with a story, metaphor, or choice of words that touches my reader then I receive positive affirmation [from my supervision group]. Where I rush along with careless choices of phrase, or lose myself in abstract language then I receive a corrective. It seems to me that my writing is being assessed in terms of its ability to be evocative, to connect through an alignment of internal will or feeling (Cunliffe: 2001). There is a patient tolerance even with my stumbling attempts at poetry. There is no rigid drawing of lines such as “this is not social science: it’s (attempted) literature”. All the time I am being encouraged to write fully about the situations in which I find myself, and to find good ways of using the language so as to connect with the reader internally through feeling and evocation, and not just externally through facts. Poetic as well as rational modes of communication are in play. Poetic evocation as well as crisp literalness (*Judi: so taking own choices in attending.*)⁴: both these modes are being encouraged but I notice myself honouring the former more as a line of development (*Judi: mmm?*).

⁴ I take these comments on my text by my supervisor and (in other extracts) by fellow students as being like conversational moments; they punctuate and emphasise aspects of my own text acting as a provocation to further reflection. In the quoted piece I refer to receiving a “corrective” through comments such as this, but on reflection I think that is too strong a way to word what is going on for me: I don’t feel corrected – more like provoked to think.

As a balance to this I notice that I am also criticised for showing self indulgence where I fixate on my own experience or seem to lose a sense of wider purpose: “what is this for?” This is often connected to comments about framing or sustaining the narrative flow: “not sure where you are taking me now, Rob” (EGOS paper: 3).

I take two aspects of this extract as being especially relevant to the writing of the thesis⁵. First I feel encouraged to take the telling seriously. To describe ‘where I am’ (ref my earlier sections of this Chapter), and to respect description as an important moment that is separate from analysis (van Manen, 1991: 31). As the writing of the thesis continues over the ten months following the EGOS conference I deepen my understanding of the significance placed by phenomenology on description, and so my attachment to this aspect of quality in my work is reinforced. Trying to describe where I am takes on even more significance as the thesis progresses, and I seek to open to more of my situation with others in the world. This focus on description is counter-pointed for me in this piece by the reference I make to “self-indulgence” and loss of purpose. These become fundamental themes explored as I write the thesis. I take them on as methodological questions about my purpose and self-centeredness; also they resonate into the substantial themes concerning energy and excitement, especially as I seek some kind of synthesis for the thesis in Chapter Five, and as, how do I block my energy?

The second quality criteria I identified from my reflection on my work concerned remaining *open to possibility*. Reading the piece again in April 2007 I think it could just as honestly have been headed “Openness to Other”. The question of bringing other voices sufficiently into play is arguably the main topic in the extract that follows. This is very relevant to this thesis. During my writing of the thesis I discover that the first person inquiry process does tend to circle me back towards myself in what can become a centripetal spin. Introspection becomes a focus of the thesis in Chapter Three as it picks up on events from 2002 and deepens my understanding of this time; also, in the Chapters that follow, I search for a more energetic and healthy way to bring my own subjectivity into play. Here is what I offered to the EGOS conference

Openness to Possibility.

A more or less constant refrain from the commentaries is a reminder that my voice or my perspective is not the only one available: “You are sounding too dogmatic here”; “This could be interpreted differently”. Comments such as these encourage me to think of alternate or missing voices or viewpoints, including for example those of other stakeholders;

⁵ I experience an incipient confusion over tense as I comment on these quality criteria. I first introduced them into the thesis in July 2006, but I am now revisiting this part of the first Chapter ten months later in April 2007. I find myself unsure about whether to write in the first person present or past tense. I think I will select first person past tense as it seems more honest recognising that I am now modifying this section with the benefit of hindsight, and acknowledging that I have chosen not to leave the original as it emerged.

also others whose voice is excluded or simply not thought about, such as the dead men and their families in the story I am going to relate. I develop an interest in what is not chosen, This returns me to the conversational present and with the in the moment decisions about paths not taken; in particular how habit and sedimented experience unknowingly (?) guide these processes of “choice” (*Supervisor: a journey of exploring*). This leads to an enjoyable engagement with Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the body and to a re-invigorated contact with my Gestalt inheritance. This then alerts me to trying to find a writing style that can craft a description of the multi-stranded nature of the unfolding situation. (*Supervisor: yoga is tacit but unspoken as another ground of your being/inquiring here.*)

The injunction to consider other voices also includes those of other authors, and theoreticians. Here the encouragement I take is to see theory as providing guidance in how to act: “Can we see you doing this?” “How was this useful?” Looking back I can see other authors tending to be assessed for their practical worth.... a little like elders providing direction (Shotter: 2005)(*Supervisor: oh, not only - but also?*)

When I inserted this extract in July 2006 I followed it with two other quotations, which I held throughout the thesis writing as kind of beacons or buoys in a channel. The first one from van Manen I took as like a warning of a wreck just beneath the surface. The second from Richardson I took to be more like the marker buoy denoting the entrance to the channel into harbour from the open sea. How might I avoid one and realise the other? From the perspective of April 2007 these authors seem to provide me with an example of what I meant when I wrote of authors as providing direction (I take my supervisor’s comments as meaning that this direction should be engaged with critically and not just blindly followed.) van Manen puts the wreck warning in a particularly direct and challenging way.

When scholars such as Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Levinas, or Derrida employ seemingly evasive or even poetic writing styles and ways of saying things that seem elusive, it may be that such styles and means of expression are the concomitants of a more richly embodied notion of human rationality. On the downside, however, there is a danger as well: the danger that an individual of insufficient talent and inadequate scholarly experience may try to hide his or her lack of insight behind an obfuscating, flowery, or self-indulgent discourse. (van Manen: 17)

I recognise this as a risk of my style. That by making the choice to write in an emergent and occasionally poetic way I run the risk of falling into obfuscation and flowery, and self-indulgent discourse. I think I do struggle with this risk. Where I do I try to address it directly seeking to explain what is happening and how it relates to the larger themes for the thesis. To balance the picture by adding aspiration to warning let me quote Laurel Richardson and then carry both her and Manen in my heart as I go on.

Experimenting with textual form I wrote sociology as drama, responsive readings, narrative poetry, pagan ritual, lyrical poetry, prose poems and autobiography. Experimenting with voice, I co-authored with a fiction

writer, played second theorist to a junior scholar, turned colleagues' words into dramas ...Troubled by doing research on other, I wrote about my own life. (Richardson: 3)

Over the course of the thesis my first person narrative breaks up into poetry on two occasions; unable to contain my feeling within the chosen form the prose breaks out into stuttering attempts at poetry. The first is when I am overwhelmed with loneliness and frustration at my own insularity; this occurs in 2002 and in Chapter Three of the thesis. The second occasion is at the end of Chapter Five when my prose voice seems too cautious and reserved to express the wisps of excitement that I feel. Of the two the first is the vaguer and less coherent because the disturbance that invokes the poem is too dark for me to grasp entirely. On the second occasion I leap at the arising feeling more energetically and hopefully and the result, I think, is a clearer 'account'.

The last quality theme to emerge from my reading concerns

Voicing and Situating Questions

This reveals itself in many comments, which seem designed to provoke my curiosity, and to the voicing of this curiosity: "In what way is this an inquiry?". Questions are to be crafted is the encouragement I take. In particular questions are to be crafted to the situation and to possible answers so think carefully about how to position the question in this situation.

Didactic statements or too much apparent certainty are carefully challenged as something to be inquired into and perhaps held a little more lightly. I am also encouraged to articulate the question; to see it on the page; to distinguish it from the answers. I begin to write about the answers "lying about" and start to wonder about the questions to which they are the answer (Collinwood: 1938).

The questions I am being asked to address are also about me. How am I seeing myself in this situation? There is a phenomenological flavour to the return to my experience and to the implications of this for my self-conception. I begin to think of questions as bi-directional: what do I see and how does that move (shift change re-create) me? (*Supervisor: & to your deepening multi stranded knowing*) Then to see the reciprocity in this: what do I see? How am I moved? What then do I see? This causes me to find a looser way of holding the notion of my self-identity: to see it more provisionally, in relationship to my situation. (*Supervisor: ah yes*)

Supervisor: My reading here of these peer/tutor comments is that they are a rounding out of what you are already doing too, not usually meant as 'corrective'...interesting to explore specifics e.g. "hold more lightly" may be generally a bit corrective too vs "how is this inquiry?" its [already inquiry] and wants you to articulate.

This statement summarises a number of quality aspects already alluded to in this Chapter, viz:

- That inquiry is a skill that has design aspects. What is the right weight and shape of question for this situation? What is the question to which what we see is an answer? This leads me to express my questions as part of my process of writing as inquiry;
- Answers are to be held lightly. I conceive of the idea of my writing as a hollow in which answers (among other things) might be held “lightly” rather than gripped tightly. This is part of my way of trying to think of taking a distance from things – including myself.
- Which resonates into the claim that over the course of the thesis I come to see myself more “provisionally, in relationship to my situation” - I will have to show the evidence for this in the rest of the thesis.

Judi refers here to my previous mention of “corrective”. With hindsight I agree with her comments, although I did not always see it exactly in these terms as will be revealed in Chapter Three. The fine-grained attitude towards the structure of the question, which she demonstrates in her comment, is an illustration of the application of the specific quality criteria referred to in the extract. A question for the thesis is how do I realise the specific, detailed attention to questions that my supervisor demonstrates here?

In part two of the EGOS paper I then turn these criteria onto my own work, try to apply them and notice what arises as I do. Generally speaking I find myself being confirmed in the criteria – sufficiently for me to want to introduce them as criteria for this thesis. As a summary I propose four generic quality questions.

- How have I described what I have found with richness and evocation?
- How have I opened to the possibility of the world?
- How have I voiced and situated questions?
- How have I folded these questions back into a fresh description?

You may remember that in the EGOS paper I added a qualitative feel to these questions by asking, “how am I leaning into practicing” these qualities, and, “how am I practicing and practising) what I profess to be aspiring towards?

Although I am proposing to adopt these quality criteria I have to report on something that happened in the second part of the paper that reinforces the tentative, or provisional character of the four criteria suggested by the questions I posed in the previous paragraph. In the detailed application to my piece of Gestalt Journal writing, something interesting occurs that sends me back to reflect on the figure/ground theme that guided my method for deriving the criteria in the first place. As I sought to apply the criteria to my piece of writing I noticed that all sorts of other criteria started to intrude. As I reflected on this I came to understand what was happening in terms of the original figure/ground metaphor. According to this way of seeing things the three criteria, which had been derived from an emergent process of

listening, and being receptive, to what emerged from the ground, had become figural as I grasped them more tightly through seeking to apply them. As, according to gestalt theory every figure appears against a ground⁶ this configuration had led to the formation of a fresh background, which was influencing the situation of deriving quality criteria. In the EGOS paper I described the process like this.

As I sought to comment on the writing on safety [in part two of the paper] I found that simply applying the criteria [developed in part one] would not do at all. Other parts of my life experience kept intruding to disturb the neatness of the process. I discover that for example I am carrying, unnoticed until I start to write, an untested belief that a Gestalt audience will not want too many questions in the writing, or I find that my writing starts to be unwittingly influenced by consideration of how my father might respond to the writing, or by the belief that richness in writing relates in particular to self disclosure. Self administered injunctions not to pose too many overt questions or to make the writing understandable for my father form quality criteria for the writing that emerge in the moment of writing, to possibly be uncovered later. They operate normatively appearing as inclinations, feelings or tendencies in the practice of writing (or of consulting for that matter). They are embodied arising from the rich sedimented ground of my life. These features can be brought to attention, or made figural, such as when I specifically notice my attitude towards a Gestalt audience: this figure is in turn accompanied by a rich ground that I could make some attempt to explore. By this process of regression I could implicate more and more of my life in this particular piece of research. What approach can we take towards a ground that is receding into indeterminacy? What can we do with an elusive reason? (EGOS paper: 14)

According to this then quality is a part of the inquiry process rather than a fixed set of criteria. Quality too partakes of emergent process. As Lather says “Validity is a ‘limit question’ of research, one that repeatedly resurfaces, one that can neither be avoided or resolved, a fertile obsession given its intractability” (Lather, 1993: 674). At the time of the conference my response is to assimilate quality into the general nature of an inquiry process: “Give voice to the deliberate, and, where possible, habitual choices, and ride on from there” (EGOS paper, 15). On this basis my quality criteria are also to be held lightly as guides or directions rather than as strict “criteria”. I imagine a sailor’s chart with a few shoals and an occasional piece of land portrayed on large acres of space that represent the sea. I imagine this rather than a map of distinct roads and pathways. This associates quality for me with direction and vigilance. How do I approach this? What should I be wary of? At the end of the thesis I take this double-edged aspect of direction and risk, and use it to think about my own relationship to my situation in the world. It is another example of how thoughts about method and process interleave with the substantive

⁶ I explain my understanding of Gestalt figure/ground later in the thesis. Here I just want to provide enough detail to make explicable the point about quality criteria I make in the next extract.

questions for the thesis. How do I keep quality alive as an always, already existing aspect of my inquiry? How do the substantive themes and the quality themes wrap themselves around each other?