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An exploration of the relationship between personal
and career identity in the stories of three women:
a counter narrative for career development

by

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**Thesis submitted
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to two important people in the careers world and in my own career. Dr Bill Law who died just before this work was completed encouraged me to begin and to complete this doctorate. His seminal work in understanding career and how to help people to navigate the lives through the world of work included Community Interaction Theory (Law, 1981), putting who they are at the heart of a person’s story. Elizabeth Whicheloe, a friend for over 20 years, was a dedicated careers educationalist who knew how to make complex ideas accessible to young people whatever their background or ability. Her dedication to young people was an inspiration. She died too soon, also just before the completion of this thesis and I will miss her very much. I hope they would both be pleased with what I have done in this work.

Abstract

This thesis explores the stories of three women. They are different stories connected by experiences of first or second generation migration, ambiguous identities, belonging and otherness. I also connect the stories as I am one of the women, my cousin is another and the third is my friend. My interest is both personal and professional as this research serves both my personal interest in our lives and careers, and my professional concern as a practitioner about the development of career counselling practice to meet the needs of clients.

The search for and interpretation of meaning (Bruner,1990) informed the methodology and analysis of this work. I do not seek a 'truthful account' of our stories, accurate in their telling, but a 'truth seeking' narrative, what memories and stories mean to the teller.

The methodology is auto/biographical. I began the research where my thoughts and questions began, with my own story. This is neither autobiographical nor biographical research, it is an interplay between the two. The '/' both connects and divides my story and those of my participants (Merrill and West, 2009). I reflected upon images, memories, collage and discussion about my own life and career. The stories of my co-participants, gathered through loosely structured interview and using artefacts, poems and family histories, are rich in themselves but their intersection with my own story is also part of the heuristic nature of the methodology. The interviews, lasting one to two hours, were recorded and fully transcribed, and those transcripts shared with my co-participants for accuracy. A second interview, after a period of reflection on the transcription was conducted with one participant. In this follow-up interview, questions were shaped by events and elements in the story that were of particular interest and were then able to be explored further. With the other participant a full weekend of discussion followed the interview, which brought in other family members, reflections and stories.

The analysis of the material is holistic and considers the ethnography, process and Gestalt of our interactions (Merrill and West, 2009). The meaning in these lives and careers is a co-construction from themes within each story and also the shared meaning between them. The three stories present windows into very different lives and careers, but also into recognisable and shared struggles and resolutions. Although personal agency is at the heart of each story, this is set within and shaped by the family, history and communities in which each of us grew.

The work of Jung (1938), Adler (1923), Frosh (1991) and later of Savickas (2011) provided some theoretical 'heavy lifting' in understanding the relationship between personal identities and career. Each is invited into the thesis to comment upon and to illuminate the processes at work in

this shared space. They help to understand the relationship between the threads and themes in these stories and how they create a tapestry of meaning for the teller.

Insights into the three stories offer a critique of the dominant models of professional practice in career counselling. Such critique follows a now well established paradigm shift in career theory in response to the changing nature of work and of social structures (Bauman, 2000; 2005; Frosh, 1991) and an increased interest in contextualism in career counselling (Richardson, 2002). Social constructionist theories and models include Savickas' (2011) Career Construction Theory in which he identified the significance of pre-occupations as threads that accompany us through career and life, connecting the plots, characters and scripts into a story that in the telling has meaning and purpose. Pre-occupations in our three stories were identified from themes in the interviews and in other material and the pre-occupation that united us was the clarification and construction of our identities. Sometimes it was a clear and painful roar and sometimes a quiet question hidden within micronarratives that were re-remembered in our conversations. Career provided us with a stage whereon identity was more or less resolved and reconstructed.

The significance of the relationship between personal and career identity emerges as the key argument of this thesis and a counter narrative for career counselling. It provides an alternative to neoliberal, individualistic, outcome driven practice (Irving, 2013), and has at its heart an acknowledgement of the relationship between who we believe ourselves to be and what we do in our lives. I conclude that such a counter narrative must be illustrated first within the development of the curriculum for the training and education of careers practitioners. It must also be reflected in the development of models of career theory and counselling. In this way it will be secured within the practice of careers professionals for future generations.

On a broader level there is much that the exploration into the relationship between personal and career identity can illuminate outside the specific context of career counselling. Social and political concerns about radicalisation and the construction of identity in migrant communities may be illuminated by the insights offered by this thesis. Moreover as identities become more mixed and complex in 'liquid modern' worlds (Bauman, 2000) this thesis offers a further understanding of the scaffolding that is needed for identity construction and life planning, when traditional structures are hard to find.

Chapter One

Introduction

“Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,

The proper study of mankind is Man”

(Alexander Pope, 1711)

Notwithstanding the androcentric nature of Pope’s words, the sentiments echo in the heart of this thesis. The driving need to know myself and through that to understand my relationship with others in society, has I now see, been a thread throughout my life. As I discussed this with others I realised that they too had stories to tell and a need to understand them. The need to make meaning of our stories and lives is profound and in understanding them can, I will argue, help us to place our future lives and careers in a wider personal, historical, cultural and social perspective.

In this thesis I explore lives with multiple and sometimes contested identities and selves, and in particular seek insight into the meaning made by the participants of their own stories.

My research explores questions of how this understanding contributes to:

- the expression of influences of multiple heritages in relation to my participants’ career pathways.

And;

- how pre-occupations and lived lives might inform the development of career counselling in a society and labour market no longer defined by bounded people or careers.

In this introductory chapter I will present a rationale for this research and thesis, the background to that rationale and the place of the questions posed in the research within theory and literature. I will set the research into the context of the lives of three women and within the practice of career counselling, so that this research might offer new ideas and perspective on the relationship between what we do with our lives and the ‘pre-occupations’ that have shaped them; who we are and the bearing of such interrelationships on what we do. The research offers a critique of the neoliberal dogma and obsession with individualism, and of career theory and practice as processes that serve economies, labour markets and systems rather than lives, communities and sustainable futures.

Scene Setting

I am a career counsellor and University lecturer; I have a career. The professional knowledge and interest in career that I have causes me in my practice and in my teaching to reflect upon the relevance and usefulness of what I do and teach, in the context of my own experience of career. It has been a natural response to critique what I hear, read and teach about the nature of career and the practice of career guidance and counselling from the perspective of my own, varied and non-traditional career. Although associated with career guidance and counselling for longer than any other sector, I remain ambiguous in my career identity and retain the right, and some curiosity, to try something completely different should I choose or need to. Traditional career theory and practice does not seem to reflect, illuminate or offer a great deal for the shape of my career apart from some support for individual transitions and processes. Like many people I have taken up or passed over opportunities as they have come along, with little notion of what I was looking for or trying to achieve. My curiosity about what has guided my life and career direction, if not framed by rational and objective decisions, has been a motivation for this research.

As well as a less than standard career my life, background and family has been and is full of variety, complication and sometimes conflict. A mixed race woman, I moved geographically and socially many times as a child and young person, and am familiar with the experience of belonging at the same time to a number of communities and to none. My initial focus for research was to explore whether there was a connection between an ambiguous identity and the shape and nature of a career. Perhaps a varied life and family encourages curiosity and resilience, and enabled me to cope well with, and even embrace change. Perhaps these are part of the same spectrum of influences, learning and development that mould and shape us all. In accordance with my early understanding of what research is, I sought to find an answer to the relationship between what I saw as these two distinct variables. Furthermore it seemed clear that in increasingly complex times such diversity in family life and identity may be becoming more common. There seems to be more untidiness in people's lives as well as in their careers so that even those with a more consistent life than mine will meet, as they enter their adult lives, a world less predictable than they may have been led to expect. Writers such as Bauman (2000,2005) and Frosh (1991) have explored the reality of living in and navigating a path through such a complex and ever shifting landscape. They suggest that as well as imposing day to day difficulties and demands on people, it also has psychological and personal impacts as insecure futures and relationships take their toll. Moreover I have pondered for some time the relevance of the neoliberal obsession with the individual and a reluctance to acknowledge the fundamental connectivity between us and our backgrounds, stories and identities. Burkitt (1998) argues that

the existence of the 'monad', the self-contained, separate, solitary individual is a myth. It seems that a counter narrative is required that, without returning to the fatalistic, pre-ordained approach to career as destiny, we acknowledge and even celebrate who we are as a contribution to what we do. I began to consider whether the notion of 'pre-occupation' (Savickas, 2011), an early and persistent and identifiable thread through life, may help to understand the meaning we make of our lives and careers. Perhaps the understanding of such a thread might provide a longitudinal stability. Moreover a return to processes of linking with those around us rather than ranking against them, may be something that an exploration into a relationship between life and identity, and career and purpose, could illuminate.

Who we think we are, what we do in our lives and where and who we come from are perhaps ubiquitous questions in the human experience; such is the innate need to understand ourselves and our life stories. The meaning we make of our lives draws much on the questions which are predominant in everyday social intercourse including how we introduce ourselves to others, how we position ourselves in relation to others and what we feel to be true or troubling in our communities. The following vignette illustrates this connectivity that 'belonging' and identity in a particular setting is built upon.

Jane has been invited to dinner by the parent of a child that her child has become friends with at her new school. Brief chats at the school gate indicated that they had something in common; holidays in France and interest in classical music. On arrival she is introduced to other guests...

Hi, I'm Jane – nice to meet you. How do you know Patrick, I don't think I've met you at school?'

'No mine go to St Andrew's. When did you move to the area?'

Oh about 6 months ago – we came from Salisbury. How about you – lived here long?'

Oh about 4 years – we moved because of my wife's work and I can work anywhere so we moved.

And actually I lived not far away as a child so it was nice to get back.

Oh that's interesting – so do you work from home – your own business?'

Yes – web design

Ah – well I may be coming to you for some help then. I'm an Architect and since moving from Salisbury I decided to set up on my own. What does your wife do?'

Ah well – she's a surveyor for the local authority – so you've got a lot in common – I must introduce you.....Helen!

In this vignette the two actors are searching for something in common; location, family and occupation. When they find a connection the relationship can grow. The connection provides shared points of reference and world view. We are comforted by this connectivity. As Savickas (2011:452) asserts 'identity crystallizes when individuals join a social group that provides a recognizable social niche'. Such a social group or niche could of course be a profession or career path. We feel a belonging to this group and our identity is confirmed. Frosh (1991) points out that each of us has a sense of some fragmentation in the self and 'seek[s] refuge from this awareness in the illusion of wholeness' (p.13). It may be that all our career and life paths are part of this search for albeit illusory wholeness and belonging. But feelings of wholeness and belonging may be more intangible and reliant on masks for those, like me, with ambiguous and complex backgrounds. As a Jungian persona might offer (1938), such masks provide protection with a 'ready to wear' identity.

Each of us has an identity or identities derived from our experience of place within and interaction with the world. Terms such as identity and self, as well as concepts of career identity, narrative and narrative identity will feature in this thesis and will be explored in detail in the review of literature. However it may be helpful to consider briefly some of these terms at this early stage so that their contribution to later discussions, their shared space and their complexities can be introduced.

Identity might be described as that which characterises the person in relation to the world around them. In a contemporary world therefore it may draw upon culture, gender, community, geography and the individual's relationship with these constructs. Identities therefore change according to the social context and role we are playing. We rely on the interaction with others to construct identities and to understand our place or places in the world. The 'essential person', or selfhood, if it exists at all, could be construed as existentially different and constant in relation to identity; the emerging consistent personhood which transcends individual contexts and roles. Ricoeur (1994) explored the essence of the self which he called 'personal identity' (I) as the answer to the question 'who?'. 'I' can only exist as an individual identity if another refers to me. He concludes the essence of 'I' is 'me'. We might recognise echoes here in the philosophical musings of Buber (2010) who distinguished relationships as being 'I, Thou' or 'I, it'. Whether relating to another person or an object, in any context, the notion of the self is still 'I'.

Writing about the construction of the self, as distinct from Identity, Frosh (1991) relates this process as the construction or creation of a work of Art. He poses that the nourishing of the self creates an 'inner identity' (p.183) which in a time of social fluctuation can offer some stability in a

world of fractured or fluid boundaries, which Bauman described as liquid modernity (2000). Biesta (2006) proposes furthermore that what defines the self is the very notion of agency and that 'I am responsible and cannot slip away from this assignation' (p.54) rather than identity which he asserts is really just a particular set of attributes ascribed by a particular setting.

Narrative is also a term that will be explored in this thesis as it is used to explore both identity and selfhood as well as the meaning we make of stories. It too is a contested term. Rimmon-Kenan (2006) explains that whereas the word was once clearly defined, its use is now broader. He refers to his early definition of 'the narration of a succession of fictional events' (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:2) and to what he proposes were once the two key features of narratives; 'events, governed by temporality, and [the] telling or narration, as an act of mediation or transmission which, in literature, is verbal.' (1983:2). However the term is now used differently and includes non-verbal narrative and contesting narratives that disagree with each other while seeking to present objective 'truths'. Barthes (1977) explained his perspective on the analysis and nature of narratives;

Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed among different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting [...] stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation (1977:79).

This will be illustrated later in the thesis when the use of collage is introduced as a non-verbal expression of a personal narrative or life story, this being the type of narrative that much of the thesis seeks to explore. Concurring with Barthes' explanation, Atkinson (1998) asserts that life stories are 'a clear and ordered record of personal truth that of necessity consists of both fact and fiction. This is the most we can ask of a life story.' (1998:20). That narratives can, and for some writers should, be fictional is of interest as later in this work I will examine the arguments for and against the use of narrative approaches in research, some of which are based on concerns of validity and authenticity.

The backdrop to this work is the career counselling and guidance profession. Its aims are broadly to enable individuals to manage transitions successfully in education and employment and to sustain a rewarding career and life path. Relatively objective measures such as exam results,

salaries, labour markets and personal skills and attributes are commonly considered. Identity and heritage may be of interest in theory but less so in practice. Yet Biesta (2006) would argue it is precisely subjectivity and autonomous thought (which develops identity and career identity) that is the purpose of education (including careers education) in a democratic society. If young people are to be nourished in their autonomy then they need to understand how that sense of self is constructed. Perhaps identity is too elusive a notion, shaped as it is by so many variables. It is hard to measure or even describe, and in an increasingly target and outcome driven context for practice it may not be welcomed. We recognise anecdotally that some backgrounds may be associated with particular careers and lifestyles and much of the work of careers practitioners is to broaden the access to opportunities for individuals beyond such possible restrictions of access and understanding. Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passerson, 2000) illuminated one of the possible processes by which such patterns in families and traditions are perpetuated when he described the notion of cultural capital. The parties in the vignette at the beginning of this introduction required such capital to enable them to interact in a way that was familiar and acceptable in what Bourdieu describes as a habitus. A different habitus could be described in another social setting. A different set of behaviours and expectations may be found there, also learned through observation, expectation and familiarity. Such capital can be taught to some extent in order to ameliorate restrictions on those without the necessary cultural or social capital to participate in such a habitus, through inclusive education and the broadening of horizons. However Roberts (2005) argues that an individual will still remain subject to restrictive structures and practices in society that also limit their opportunities. These may be recognised and accepted or recognised and resented and resisted. Nonetheless such structures limiting opportunity by, for example, gender, class or ethnicity will also have an impact on the experience or capacity to choose by the individual.

In this thesis I explore what may be a layer of influence beneath and beyond cultural capital and the social structures of opportunities; the early experiences, relationships and prequels to stories not yet expressed that unconsciously guide the author or teller and create chambers of preference in life's path, constructing personal and career identity as they author their story. Old stories shape our understanding of the world and ourselves in it, and help us to make some meaning of our own stories through these shared narratives. These factors may be illuminated through narratives, spoken and otherwise.

The specific focus of this thesis is that of the impact of early experience of ambiguous identities such as my own. It considers the possible significance of conflicting, mixed or multiple heritage and influence on the participants' career and life trajectories. Identity requires some congruence

between old and new stories; those heard in childhood and those constructed by and enacted by the self. Moreover in a late-modern context where identities may struggle for clarification, and in societies where contexts and structures are so rapidly changing (Frosh,1991; Bauman,2000;2005), the experiences of those of mixed heritage and early experience may provide some insight into the complexities of the development of today's career identity and the services and activities that may be helpful to understand and support those individuals struggling to do so.

As already noted, individuals are shaped by their environments and in turn shape the communities and society in which they live. As Wright-Mills (1959) argued, the use of separate disciplines to explore social phenomena or to understand lived lives, may not capture the complexities and nuances of individuals' experiences within the broader social context and within a historical setting. But paradigms of thinking and writing also have historical contexts. Wright-Mills wrote after the Second World War and at the cusp of a sociological revolution and expressed the increasing complexities of the times. The micro, meso and macro levels of lives are interrelated and interdependent and if we are to understand individual lives and the influences upon them, the context must also be considered; the psychological, cultural, sociological, and the historical.

Beginning with the macro level of lives, we might consider the place in history in which the story resides. Setting the scene for the stories explored in this research, there are two key historical elements that form the context for the individual narratives. The first is the issue of nationhood. In the decades preceding all three of the stories of the participants in this work there were significant world events and shifting of political tectonic plates. The first, particularly relevant to the stories of two participants, was the gradual dismantling of the British Empire in the Indian sub-continent. The importance of national identities in newly independent states such as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was not only illustrated by the establishment of administrative systems built upon the foundations of British structures of government, but was also echoed in the shifting identities of individual citizens. In this thesis I will draw upon the work of Homi Bhaba (1994) and Edward Said (1999) who write about their own perspectives on post-colonialism and its impact upon identity. The unspoken assumptions and hierarchies that prevail in previously colonised peoples and their continuing impact on personal identity and status, are helpful in the exploration of my participants' stories and those of their families.

The other element of nationhood will refer to the creation of the State of Israel, carved as it was out of the trauma of the Holocaust and Second World War. What was for one side a returning to a homeland, was for those living there a removal from land that they had lived upon for many

generations. The ongoing conflict of Israel-Palestine is something that we are painfully aware of as one side violates the other in defence of their perspective of nationhood. The notion of belonging to a nation and nationality is something I will return to many times in this thesis.

The other world event was of course the Second World War itself. The effect of this across the world and in the years after was profound and it is hard to imagine any community that was not changed through it. But in terms of the specific impact on the participants, this research recognises that they were subjects of two diasporas. One was the involvement of the previous colonies in fighting for Great Britain and the allies, and the expectation that after the hostilities had ended the 'motherland' would welcome ex-servicemen and their families to these shores. The second was the consolidation of the Balfour declaration of 1917 which established what was then Palestine as a Jewish homeland and to which many Jewish people fled following the Holocaust. This has a particular significance to the story and background of one of the participants in this research. Furthermore, elements of the other two stories included experiences of the war and its aftermath. This movement of peoples was mirrored in the West Indies too. The UK, having been relatively monocultural in the past (although not without diversity) struggled to come to terms with and accept the influx of those of different race and significantly colour. Conversely after the war, Jewish people from all corners of the world and especially from Europe moved to what they considered to be their re-established homeland, Israel.

Both the movement of peoples away from their countries of birth, whether to a new land where they would be minorities, or to a country ostensibly 'home' but still unfamiliar, brought with it eddies of movement in identity, both personal and national. In this work I explore the possible ripples of such movements for the generation that followed in personal, national and cultural identity and consider the extent to which such tides of change had an impact on the lives lived.

The meso level of individuals' stories is that of their interactions with the communities in which those stories are lived. Wright-Mills' work (1959) explored the relationship between the private troubles and public issues and helped to position this research in the space between two spheres; the meso or shared psychosocial worlds wherein I will propose identity and career are shaped. The work of Goffman (1959) also contributed to my thoughts about the way in which people behave in response to societal expectations, as does the concept of Bourdieuan 'habitus' (Bourdieu and Passerson, 2000) already mentioned.

The micro level of the biographies explored in this work, is the intimate and psychological; the internal world of the individual. In this thesis I will draw upon the writing and ideas of a range of writers and thinkers in this regard. However it may be useful at this introductory stage to briefly

introduce some of the key ideas that three writers have contributed and which shape this thesis: Alfred Adler, Stephen Frosh and Axel Honneth.

Alfred Adler, developed his notion of 'Individual Psychology' in the early part of the 20th century (1923). Again historical context is important because this was a time of modernity and an embracing of structure, predictability and classification. However the period between the World Wars was one of chance and uncertainty. He was interested in the individual and their path through life and, as I do, wondered about their influences, their identities and their ambitions. Where Sigmund Freud looked into the history of an individual and at their unconscious drives, Adler looked forward towards an individual's goal and the achievement of the 'self-ideal'. This he claimed was laid down very early in the life of an individual in the form of a 'prototype' that forms the shape and purpose of the future goal. However rather than this being about determinism, he claimed that it is not the early experiences in life that affect later direction, but rather it is the meaning given to those experiences by the individual that shapes the future person (Adler, 1931). In this thesis I explore the meaning made by my participants of their stories. Similarly it will not be deterministic events or experiences that I look for in the stories of the early lives of my participants, but the sense that they make of them. However Adler's writing does offer some enticing thoughts about possible internal drivers of life's direction and I will return to such notions throughout the work. Writing about his ideas of inferiority complexes (1927), Adler introduced the concept of the 'felt minus' driving the individual towards a 'desired plus' of personal development and, he argued to some extent, superiority. It may be that the notion of stigma (Goffman,1963) and the experience of physical inadequacy described by Said (1999) have some resonance here. Said (1999) writes about his feelings about himself as a child, countered somewhat later in life by his writing and challenge of the post-colonial values that earlier had so pained him.

A forward looking, planning and goal driven model such as Adler's, has much to offer the careers professional. Adler's work underpins much of the work of Mark Savickas (2009) who developed the notion of a narrative approach to career counselling, specifically Career Construction Theory (2011) and drew together other constructionist approaches in the Life Design group (Nota and Rossier,2015). Career Construction Theory draws upon the individual and their experience, and on how the themes in a life are shaped, and thread together a series of episodes and decisions towards the self-ideal goal. The pre-occupations cast in early life Savickas suggests, shape such themes and threads. Echoing Adler's earlier work he claims that 'in career we actively master what we have passively suffered'(1997b:11). This will be a concept of career construction that I will return to and refer to throughout this thesis as I consider how the relationship between the

stories of my participants, and the pre-occupations derived from ambiguous identities, were expressed and relate to what was actively mastered in their lives.

The work of Stephen Frosh (1991) also informs this thesis. His thoughts as those of Bauman (2000;2005), on the development of self and identity in a late modern society provide a useful compass for the contexts of the stories of the participants in this research. Frosh points out that many of the social and cultural structures within which identities could in the past be securely constructed, have become less robust, more fractured and in places porous. He notes that it is the excitement and the possibilities that what he calls 'the modern world' offers that can be both the motivator and the downfall of the individual. Moreover he asserts that personal integrity (and therefore perhaps identity) can only survive 'the monstrous aggression of the world' by 'keep[ing] on keeping on' (p.21). In such a world, where previously unchallenged structures and establishments are dismantled and explored to see what they have been hiding, can at the same time be either liberating or entombing. Critical theory, feminist and secular discourses for example provide individuals with alternative narratives, possibilities and identities but also shake the foundations of the selfhood that brought that individual to the point of questioning. Frosh questions how identities are to be established, re-established, constructed and reconstructed in such an unstable world.

The last theorist I would like to introduce briefly who also, like Adler, considers the micro or inner world is Axel Honneth. He considers the place of biography in the attainment of freedom and autonomy and in the need for recognition of the self by the self, and by others. Honneth encourages the notion of individuals as writers of their own destiny and liberation (2009). However he suggests that there are three key requirements for the individual to master such agency and to gain the recognition of society (1995a). He asserts that the key dynamic in the formation of the identity of the individual is that of recognition. The first level of recognition he suggests is the love and support of family which allows for the establishment of self-confidence. The second is that of self-respect, and the third is that of self-esteem which Honneth says requires the recognition of the individual by others around them, and the celebration of the contribution that the individual brings to society. Honneth's three layers of recognition provide a psychosocial understanding of the relationship between this inner world of the individual (micro) and its interdependence with the meso and macro experiences of lives lived. This, I will propose in this thesis, resonates with the early infant relationships described by Bowlby (1997) and Winnicott (1971), in the ways in which early dependencies, and what Adler would call inferiorities, echo later in life. There will be aspects of the stories of the participants in this

research that will be illuminated by Honneth's thoughts on recognition and the formation of selfhood and its part in who we are and what we do.

The research

My first naïve steps into this research, although acknowledging ostensibly that it sat firmly within a subjective, qualitative paradigm, were uncomfortable and accompanied by a looking over my shoulder to earlier days in a very scientific, and objective research field. These early experiences in research shaped what I understood as research and confirmed a preoccupation with order and clarity. I searched the literature including those introduced above for a theoretical friend who would tell me how I might prove some clear and generalizable relationship between complex backgrounds and identities and fractured or similarly in-distinct careers. I wondered whether these stories would reveal an ongoing search for identity in career that would ameliorate the ambiguity in the person. There may still be something in that.

With this perhaps unconscious goal of tidying up untidy lives, and using an auto/biographical methodology, this research set out to explore the stories of the participants. Although the methodology was occasionally an uncomfortable one, it enabled me to recognise that careers are messy, unpredictable emotional journeys into the centre of lives and that they lie at the heart of who we believe ourselves to be. In many ways these are late or post-modern stories. As indicated earlier with reference to the work of Frosh (1991), the early years of these stories was an era in which the clear structures of state, religion, class, gender and family were changing and rather than being replaced by new structures were superseded by a 'liquid modernity' (Bauman,2000), in which change became the new norm and people and their lives experienced a new freedom which challenged the old order.

Having reflected upon my own life I looked for some other examples of people who identified with being hard to define, difficult to categorise and who may consider themselves to be on the margins of a number of communities and groups. I wondered whether I would find in their stories and their careers anything akin to my own wanderings. At this point I will introduce the three participants; what follows are their brief pen portraits.

The first is myself. Born at the end of the 1950s to a white mother and Sri Lankan father, I lived in three countries before my fourth birthday and added two others before my twentieth.

Furthermore my parents were from different religious traditions and both had families who had working class as well as privileged roots. One of my earliest recollections is that of being aware of

my colour in contrast to that of a Sudanese person while living in that country. Other memories follow this theme of otherness including many first days in a new school, in a new part of the world or in a different area of work. Change and subsequent feelings of being marginalised or not belonging have been familiar features; so much so that continuity can seem uncomfortable and alien. This has been echoed in my career. I began my working life in medical research, moved from there to the pharmaceutical industry, thence into sales and marketing, recruitment, career guidance and counselling, and now academia.

The second participant in this research is a friend of mine, G. She is a Jewish woman whose mother was part of the Kindertransport in 1938 and whose father was one of the first Israeli diplomats after the Second World War, following a strong Zionist tradition in the family. Although born in England through her parents' choice so that her nationality would not be German, G and her family lived in many countries during her childhood. However despite strong cultural and political identification with Israel she did not speak Hebrew or live in Israel until her late teens. She mirrored my experiences of feeling the constant outsider, belonging only in transit and taking her identity from what she was told rather than what was experienced. In her career she wavered between interests in education and Law, working in Israel or in England and finally settled as a quality officer in a Jewish College in the UK. Having been single all her life she married an Anglican priest at the age of 50.

The third participant in this research is my half cousin S. We share a Sri Lankan paternal grandfather but different paternal grandmothers; mine being English and hers Sri Lankan. Her mother was English and from a strong traditional working class family in Leeds where S was born and grew up as the third child of four and the middle one of three girls. In the 1950s immigrant families were uncommon in Leeds and mixed race families even more of a rarity. Her father who had fought for the British in North Africa and who was a committed member of the Roman Catholic Church, was respected but also somewhat of an oddity. Only after his death did she discover that he had been the recipient of racial abuse and discrimination. He never spoke of it and urged his family to ignore unkind words and to 'turn the other cheek'. As a student in the 1960s S was at the heart of the Women's liberation movement, War on Want, Nuclear disarmament and social reform. Her activism in many causes continued after university and continues today. This caused tensions with her conservative and religious parents as she rejected marriage, opportunities they considered for a professional career, the Church and its teaching on family life and announced in her middle years that she was gay. Although in her early childhood she speaks of a difficult relationship with her mother, her childhood was mostly a happy one and the family had a strong bond. As she got older feelings of otherness began to dominate and she

began to be more interested in her Sri Lankan heritage; embracing it ultimately as she describes herself as a 'black woman'. However it is in South Africa that she states she is most at home; the rainbow nation offering her the opportunity to establish her own identity, unhindered by racial expectations. In her career she has devoted much of her time to supporting marginalised groups in society, especially women who are victims of domestic violence and those individuals who do not fit in or who fall through gaps in social support networks. She is an accomplished poet, psychotherapist and writer.

I began this research with writing my own reflections on my life and career. Then I turned to G's story. Following an initial interview which was transcribed and shared with her, a second interview was conducted. The first interview was loosely structured and the second semi-structured on themes and topics from the first. Next I spent a weekend with my cousin S, recording loosely structured conversations and also writing a short account of the weekend. I then returned to my own story and, feeling that my earlier reflections were inadequate, I turned to collage to explore my thoughts and story further. A conversation with a colleague about this collage was then transcribed and analysed.

Having recorded and explored the stories of the three participants I wrestled with the question of how to approach the analytical interpretation of their meaning in pursuit of the research questions. In doing so I established a confluence in this research between its focus and its methodology. The foci are the stories told and the meanings made by the tellers of their lives and careers. The methodology uses the telling of the stories to explore the inter-relationship between the tellers and the told and how they may in turn flavour the meanings made. This auto/biographical work therefore explores in particular the connections between my story and those of the other participants, as well as an awareness of the separateness of the stories. The '/' therefore both divides and connects the three stories (Merrill and West, 2009). Although there is much I know of all of the participants outside the confines of the interviews for this research, it is the transcripts of these interviews that are analysed and interpreted. Furthermore the stories told to me are what they wanted to say to me at the time, with motives as subjective as the relationships they are shaped by. The story I tell of myself is a product of what I want to say of myself and may of course be very different to that which others might tell of me. There is therefore an interplay and conversation between the here and now and the there and then. But these complexities I believe serve the research well and do not reduce or negate its validity or meaningfulness. Rather they illustrate the rich tapestries that are human relationships and experiences and warn against the simplistic generalisations that a different approach may present. Moreover this research recognises that there are reasons that people say what they do

about themselves; whether accurate or not. It is these reasons and the meaning behind them that is of interest.

Contrary to my earliest ambitions and anticipations of order there are no generalities revealed in this research, but what it does contribute is an illumination of three stories that demonstrates the central role of the search for meaning and selfhood and the importance of that meaning to the individuals as they work out who they are, and how that might relate to what they have done, what they are doing and what they may yet do. The plot of such biographies is not that of a teacher, social worker, administrator, researcher, scientist or marketer. The script of their lives is not a generic one for anyone to read. The beginning, course and ending of such life stories is embedded in the stories of others who came before and who will live after and whose own stories share a chapter or two and move on. Career, as a thread that links chapters of the story as well as dividing them into sub-plots, themes and possibilities, sits uncomfortably with an individualistic, standardised world, and mirrors my own discomfort with current practice in my profession. The changing landscape for career has been explored and alternative perspectives offered (Amundson et al, 2014). The paradigm shift required has been written about by Savickas, (2011) Reid and West (2011a, 2011b, 2016) and others from the narrative and Life Design group (Nota and Rossier, 2015). Furthermore Richardson (2002) recognises the place of contextualism in contemporary counselling practice and the increased importance of relationships and broader life experiences in understanding and constructing lives. However what I propose is more than the consideration of context, it is the meaning of the story that contexts shape. Perhaps fundamental change in careers guidance and counselling is on its way, but it is only partially and somewhat reluctantly being embraced by the profession and its paymasters. This research supports Richardson's (2002) argument for the understanding of context, of the self in family, history and community, in career counselling but relates this more firmly in the understanding of resulting identity; an increased acknowledgement of the relationship between who we believe ourselves to be and what we do. This thesis is set within the setting of established, contemporary and emerging theories that inform our understanding of the liminal space between the individual and society; the 'psychosocial' space within which such influences have their impact. Better understanding of the meaning of people's lives and the identities they construct, may become even more pertinent in years to come following current and future movements of peoples, alongside less predictability in peoples' lives and careers. It will enable career counsellors to support individuals better and with a more personalised understanding of the challenges that such experience and world events can bring.

The chapters in the thesis

Following this introductory chapter where the scene and context for the research is set, chapters follow that take the reader through the story of the research and how and what it has led me to conclude.

Chapter two is the review of the literature that has helped me to conduct and inform the research. I have shaped this chapter to illustrate the development of ideas and concepts, the questions and issues that arose and how they were addressed. Furthermore as I have frequently found, this research sitting as it does in the shared space of a range of disciplines does not segment easily into topics as each informs and is reliant on the other. I further develop the terms macro, meso and micro as a device to structure the chapter. The starting point of my research journey is the macro picture, the literature found useful to inform my understanding of wider society and historical context. The meso world is where I have placed the literature about career and narratives; sociological in part but also historical. Finally the micro world is explored through literature which seeks to understand the inner world of the individual, the psychological aspects of a person's experience of the world. However all of such terms are contentious as career in its different definitions and contexts straddles them all. At the end of this chapter I turn to the methodology of the work; this being further developed in chapter three. As indicated earlier the topic and the methodology in this thesis are closely related. The auto/biographical approach taken reflects the way in which selfhood, identity and career identity are understood and interpreted by the participants and by the researcher and so there is a dynamic between the material, the methodology and the findings of the research that is kaleidoscopic; the same pieces shifting respective places and producing different patterns as they do so.

Chapter three is the methodology chapter and considers the possible approaches I might have taken to illuminate my research questions. Beginning with the ontological basis for the research it looks at epistemological alternatives that were considered and why some were rejected. It seeks to explain the decisions made about methods and tools used and my understanding of the limitations of the work and how it might have been extended. In this chapter I will refer to the reflexive process that accompanied the research; the reflective research diary I maintained and how that informed my decisions and questioned my unconscious doubts and predilections about what was valid, useful and genuine. In chapter three I also concern myself with the ethical questions that arose in this research. My participants were not children or vulnerable adults but the telling of personal histories can and did evoke strong emotions and memories at times. Although they both consented for the transcripts (which they had read and approved) to be used in the research, I was at times troubled by the analysis and interpretation that the material underwent and what the

reactions of my participants might be to that. Furthermore I was concerned about the impact of this on my relationships with them both and also how other members of the family mentioned in their stories might feel. A careful anonymization of the material ameliorated some of my concerns but some still remain.

Chapter four is a prequel to the stories of the three participants. It presents some of the background of the family and cultural setting which is so much a part of the stories told and provides further insight into the multi-layered inheritance of each. It is not part of the research material but is included to provide context for the reader.

Chapters five, six and seven present the participants, their stories and my interpretation of them. Chapter five draws upon reflections of my childhood and family story, and I use collage to interrogate my interpretation of the possible relationship between my mixed heritage and the subsequent shape of my career. In chapter six I present the story told by G and in chapter seven that of S. In each of these chapters I use the proforma introduced in Merrill and West (2009) to present a pen portrait of the participant, the process of the interview/s and other material, the themes that I identified in the transcripts of the stories told, and the ethnographic issues and the Gestalt of each. I draw no overall conclusions in these chapters but begin to consider what these themes might offer to the research. I explore the very rich material for the meaning made by the story teller and also my interpretation of that meaning in relation to the research questions. I am careful also not to make comparisons or generalisations. However insight is gained into three experiences of mixed and conflicting heritage and of the individuals' thoughts about that impact on their lives.

In chapter eight I return to the research questions and present a synthesis of the findings of the analyses of the three participants' stories in relation to them. I consider how theoretical concepts of a possible preoccupation with identity and selfhood might illuminate these themes in order to understand the meaning made by the participants of their stories and their telling of them to me. Furthermore the stories of living in-between communities and sometimes on the margins of society are examined in order that greater understanding of the experience of complex or ambiguous identities can be achieved. Specifically in this chapter I consider what mixed heritage and early experience can tell us about the construction of individual identities and subsequent career identities when different, and at times contradictory, world views have been experienced. Some links are made in this chapter and in chapter nine between such experiences and the increasingly prevalent experiences of many today whose lives appear more complex, experiencing fewer structures and certainties than generations who have gone before.

In chapter nine I reflect upon the contribution of this research to practice. By looking at the very personal, specific and particular experiences and stories of my participants, current practices and theory in careers work are critiqued in the context of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000) and a counter narrative for career counselling and practice proposed. Social and political events such as the migrant crisis from the Middle East and further afield, multiculturalism and struggles with identity among second generation migrants and others, are also considered in the light of this research. Acknowledgement is made of the contribution of many new and developing social constructionist approaches to careers work but in particular Career Construction Theory and Counselling (Savickas, 2011) and the work of the Life Design group (Nota and Rossier, 2015) is explored. Moreover the need for a re-visioning of career learning and development and the training and education for career professionals is highlighted in the light of the insights from this research.

The final chapter of this thesis is **chapter ten**. Here I reflect upon early wonderings that inspired the research and its process and scope, and with hindsight reflect upon what I might have done differently. I consider what further research may add to our understanding of ambiguous and complex identities in this late modern society and what it may offer for understanding the development of career identities. Finally the future nature and role of careers work and the changes in policy direction needed is considered and proposed.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In planning the review of literature that has informed this thesis, I considered how it might be structured. The focus of the thesis is an examination of the participants' lives and careers, and how personal identity is expressed in those lives and careers. A seemingly endless source of literature could contribute from disciplines including sociology, psychology, philosophy and history. Furthermore this research is essentially interdisciplinary; in exploring the meanings made of life stories I needed an understanding of literature from a wide range of genres and the connections between them. Therefore rather than attempting to categorise literature this chapter mirrors the reading journey that accompanied the research. It is a journey back and forth between the macro, meso and micro worlds of societies, communities, cultures, families and individuals.

Beginning with literature that helps to understand the location of an individual within society and the interplay between the two, the chapter moves on to explore how such dynamics shape the meso space of identity or identities. Such interplay and interdependencies may be expressed and illustrated in the stories people tell and so the nature of narrative is included in this part of the chapter, to be further examined in the next chapter on methodology. Focus then moves to one particular area of identity, that of career. The nature of career in the lives of people and its construct as the interphase of private lives and public engagement is explored, and a range of theoretical approaches for defining and understanding career are considered in terms of their usefulness in this work. Finally I turn to the personal; the micro world of the individual. I examine some of the ways in which this most elusive of worlds has been explored and understood and how some of these ideas illuminate this thesis.

The individual in society; the macro world

This research is about individuals' lives and their particularities that are lived in a geographical, historical, social and cultural context. In this first section I begin with the writings of Simone Weil whose life and work spoke to this research at the macro, meso and micro levels. Weil was also something of a paradox. The ambiguity of her identity and her response to the world around her provided a starting place for my reading for this thesis. In the preface by T.S Eliot of 'The Need for Roots' he explains that she was 'three things to the highest degree: French, Jewish and Christian' (1952:vii). She had, like the participants in my research, a mixed and complex identity. Her loyalty to and association with one of these identities in particular led to her death from malnutrition

and tuberculosis while refusing to eat more than French peasants were allowed during rationing in the Second World War. In her writing (Weil,1978;2002), she offers some particularly pertinent ideas for the understanding of the stories of the participants in this research. A classical scholar, Weil knew the writings of Plato well. She studied Descartes who had parodied Plato's 'knowledge of knowledge' into that most famous of declarations 'I think and therefore I am...' Weil, whose life was dedicated to action as much as thought, built upon this by posing that 'I *act* and therefore I am'. The *acting* I propose in this thesis is synonymous with the shared space between private and public spheres and within which career is found. It is action that Weil claims is the responsibility of all in society; a visceral engagement with no rights, only responsibilities. Helen Arendt (1958), whose work explored much of what we might call public and private spaces revisited the ancient Greek term '*Vita Activa*' which described three human activities of, labour (the process of staying alive), work (those activities that are 'unnatural' in their essence and separate us from the natural world) and action (activities and interactions between people). So Weil's focus on action also has some resonance with *Vita Activa* and helps to illustrate different spheres of a person's interaction with the world. Arendt (1958) also considers the notion of the private world. She points out that it was in the decline of the public spaces that the rise of the more private and intimate Arts have been seen, such as poetry, music and in the emergence of the novel.

It may also be that within the writing of Weil a bridge is presented between the public and private aspects of her life; her awareness of the self as an individual is clear as is the obligation of that self to others. Weil, in considering the notion of obligations to our fellow human beings wrote:

On this point the human conscience has never varied. Thousands of years ago, the Egyptians believed that no soul could justify itself after death unless it could say 'I have never let anyone suffer from hunger'. All Christians know they will hear Christ himself say to them one day 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat'. (2001:6)

This exemplifies her belief that the individual and their actions are inextricably linked to the lives and needs of others. For Weil and the participants in this research, such beliefs and obligations were underpinned by religious beliefs and influences. Weil (1947) addresses this directly when she writes about what she perceived as the mystical nature of work. She claims that there can be no equilibrium between the individual and the world around them other than through work;

Man's greatness is always to recreate his life, to recreate what is given to him, to fashion that very thing which he undergoes. Through work he produces his own natural existence. (1947:178)

Clearly work to Weil was more than a means to earn a living or even to engage with society. On the contrary she categorised work as slavery if it were merely engaged with in order to exist. The meaning of her life and work, her reason for being and in particular for *doing* was a spiritual one.

Of her own life and its purposefulness she wrote;

You may not realize what it is to conceive your whole life in front of you and to take the firm and constant resolve to make something of it, to orient it from one end to the other with will power and work in a chosen direction. When one is like that - I am like that, so I know what it's like..(1998:233)

The notion of 'uprootedness' is also a strong theme in her work (Weil, 1952). As someone who had experience of being uprooted due to the Second World War, she was writing about this concept within the realms of major social upheaval. It is the impact upon the personal 'needs of the soul' that is of particular interest here and offers some insight into the focus of this thesis; that of the lives of those with mixed or complex identities, lives lived on the periphery of communities and with indiscernible or ambiguous roots.

What such values and beliefs tell little of however is Weil's notions of identity having been formed or shaped by her earlier experience of French society and culture. Weil had a complex and at times an ambiguous identity (Christian, Jewish, French etc.), but it appears that the complexity was something she chose rather than something imposed upon her. So rather than making choices to clarify or favour an identity she seems to have done the opposite. Perhaps she responded personally to the unstable world around her. This may also have resonance with the stories of the research participants.

Moving on from Weil's engagement with society, the broader relationship between an individual and the world around them is something explored in depth in Wright-Mills' well-known work 'The Sociological Imagination';

When a society is industrialised, a peasant becomes a worker, a feudal lord becomes liquidated or becomes a business man.....When wars happen an insurance salesman becomes a rocket launcher; a store clerk a radar man; a wife lives alone; a child grows up without a father. Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. (1959:3)

It may be no surprise that in this book, published in 1959, Wright-Mills presented a picture of the individual trapped in a life they cannot control. Writing not long after World War two and in the shadow of the cold war and the possible slide towards World War three, the individual's freedom

to do with their life what they chose was certainly restricted. In addition this was a time of cultural change when the old pillars of morality, law, patriotism, religion and family life seemed under threat and it was not clear what would replace them. It is within this time and context also that the stories of the three participants in this research begin; I was born the year that Wright-Mills published this work. How such periods of time are defined is an issue I referred to briefly in my introduction to this thesis. Terms such as modern, post-modern or late modern can be confusing and problematic. Frosh (1991) refers to 'modernity' where others may have referred to post-modernity; the period after the era of new science, classification and order. However Bauman (2005) offers some clarity of such terms through a series of metaphors. His assertion that society is losing its solidity, and being replaced by 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000) is further developed; he proposes that changes are not able to solidify before they change again. Moreover he asserts that social structures;

cannot serve as the frame of reference for human actions and long-term life-strategies because their allegedly short life-expectation undermines efforts to develop a strategy that would require the consistent fulfilment of a 'life-project.' (Bauman, 2005:303)

He compares the pre-modern era to the world of the gamekeeper, protecting his/her world from interference and not challenging the social or 'natural' order of things. In the modern era he says that society was more like the world of a gardener. In this world the gardener nurtures and cares for his/her land, working hard to transform it into the vision s/he has for it. The natural order for the gardener offers chaos and must be tamed and controlled. Bauman (2005) proposes that liquid modernity, or late modernity is becoming increasingly the world of the hunter. He does not eliminate the gamekeeper or gardener from this world although he claims that they are under threat, so this is not quite yet 'post-modern'. The hunter cares little for either the natural order of things or is engaged with the long term nurturing of the land; what matters is competing for the next 'kill'. This, Bauman states, is what individualisation looks like.

Wright-Mills (1959) distinguishes between personal and the societal perspectives by considering the 'troubles' of the individual in the context of the 'issues' of society at large. The connection, he proposes, is that of scale. Overwhelmingly he asserts, the direction of impact and power is one way; society onto the individual, such that the individual feels trapped and impotent. However Giddens (1991a) claims that a person's ontological security, 'basic trust in stable circumstances of self-identity and the surrounding environment' (p.114) relies more upon personal trust in others than on the structures of society. Personal life he concludes has become 'deinstitutionalised' in modern (late modern) society, while the public sphere has increased in its bureaucracy, creating a

lack of reference points save for those of others and the subjective stability of the private or micro world. Wright-Mills (1959) concluded that rather 'men act with and against one another' (p.29), in a complex tapestry of interdependent disciplines. Writing in the same year, there are echoes here of Goffman's dramaturgical description of the way in which people 'act' in response to what is socially accepted and expected, or not (Goffman, 1959). Society as described by Wright-Mills (1959) is a series of institutions shaped by a balance of sanctions and standards, and he contrasts this stable state with when men and women are no longer constrained by such structures and so experience anomie or instability. Such an approach might conclude that the stability of societies is put at risk by those who deem to open up such constructs, such as those who feel constrained by them or those with less definable heritage and identities. This may be what Wright-Mills is alluding to when he writes about the trapped individual; trapped because liberty could threaten the very institutions that they hold dear.

In terms of individuals he emphasises the importance of 'human variety' and yet his description of that variety is in terms of members of clear social, cultural or ethnic groupings,

'Indian Brahmin,pioneer farmer of Illinois, and English gentleman..' (p.133).

As mixture and diversity in western society (and illustrated by the participants' lives in this thesis) has increased since this was written and social structures are more porous, such clear-cut caricatures may be less predominant. Variety, as in much of popular discourse, can be considered to be that of a variety of clearly identifiable groups, not the less tidy variety that is mixture.

Each grouping has its own exclusions and internal conflicts. A discussion in Merrill and West (2009) illustrates this well when it is pointed out that:

White feminists, as black feminists have stated, often neglect racism and can be oppressive in their ignorance (p.74).

Critique of such groupings and categorisation is found in the work of Lorde (2004), and hooks (1981;1984). Heschel (1983) and Plaskow (1991) comment particularly on issues faced by women in Judaism where, they argue, discrimination against Jewish women of all ethnic backgrounds and economic circumstances lies within the conservative interpretation of holy scriptures and is prevalent in prayers and Jewish daily life. Nonetheless it is notable that categories are often based on geography, race, religion or occupation and social status, or a combination of these. The group term Feminist has more of a political than cultural dimension but Lorde (2004) and Heschel (1983) and hooks (1981;1984) point out that other descriptors are also assumed by the term (e.g white, middle class), or equally excluded (Black and Gay). Wright-Mills' (1959) argument for an

interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of social structures and a loosening of the boundaries between traditional doctrines such as psychology and anthropology, was indicative of his recognition of the need to respond to a mixed, changing and more diverse world. It will be a significant feature in this thesis that categorisation can leave the mixed, hybrid or those with ambiguous or less clear identities without a voice or with a diluted one.

Such groupings, loyalties and characterisations may have their uses in binding people together but also in creating barriers between them. Fenton (2003) comments upon such complications and three significant contradictions evident within capitalist societies, which help to understand the context of the stories in this thesis. The first is the widely-held acknowledgement of equality but the persistence of inequalities which would concur with the comments above. The second is the notion of the individual and individuality within a society that relies upon community. This will also be a recurring theme in this thesis as I offer a critique and counter-narrative to career counselling that fails to take account of the cultural context and history of the client. This argument is further supported by Biesta (2006) who notes that individualism in society risks undermining the basis of education in a democratic society in which the notion of civic space is diminishing (West, 2016). The third contradiction is the tension between individual values of freedom and that of tradition. Again this has resonances throughout this thesis as the cultural and historical background to the participants' stories is explored alongside the individuals' choices in their careers. These will be explored in more detail later in this chapter. But it will suffice to say at this point that, notwithstanding the commentary of Roberts below (1977; 2005) on the social structures of opportunities, a review and critique of the long-held precept that individuals should be empowered to act and to make choices with little or no reference to family, culture or identity, is long overdue.

Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passerson, 2000) explored the behaviour of individuals within a cultural context and explained the notion of 'habitus'; groupings of behaviours or dispositions that are learnt by members of a society and confer a degree (or not) of cultural capital. Such learnt cultural capital enables an individual to be successfully accepted by a group and to have access to the social structures and opportunities therein. It might be simplified by suggesting that 'people like us do this or behave like that in certain circumstances'. An example was given in the vignette described in the introduction. If such cultural capital has not been learnt or inherited then the behaviour of an individual could be considered as rude, odd or unacceptable. This is what Goffman (1963) referred to as *stigma*, ranging from a disfigurement or disability to a less visible but still noteworthy difference that identifies the 'other'. And thus the behaviour of an individual tells those around them who they are, whether they are 'one of us' and therefore the

nature and potential of the relationship with them. Absence of such cultural capital can similarly limit or remove access to those relationships and all they can offer. Moreover such cultural capital is engrained into the young by observation, correction and mimicry. Although it is possible to learn later in life and develop such cultural capital through similar processes there may always be the danger (Goffman,1963) of being caught out and the 'true' nature and identity of the individual to be revealed as 'not one of us after all'. This is important and relevant when exploring the stories of the participants, all of whom acknowledge their otherness along with efforts to 'fit in'.

Much cultural capital can, particularly in the UK, be associated with class. Roberts (2005) extended this argument with his description of the impact of the structures of opportunity in the UK on individuals' careers and futures. He argued that opportunities in the world of work are largely structured around class rather than innate abilities or acquired interests. He concluded that young people from a working class background could be excluded from some opportunities because of the culturally controlled access to professions, and also perhaps because of the expectations they had of themselves and that others had of them. In Bourdieu's terms 'people like us don't become lawyers'. This raises a fundamental question in this research. I am interested in the shape of lives and careers and in the choices they have made. But the notion of free choices being made must be contested. Individuals can only choose between options they are aware of or have access to. This may be the case, to a greater or lesser extent for everyone. In addition any choices are not made within a vacuum but are constrained and contorted by our experiences, expectations of others and any number of other conscious and unconscious forces. It is the search for the nature of such forces; the cambers in the paths of my participants' lives that this research seeks to illuminate.

In Ian Burkitt's work 'Social Selves' (2008) he offers a critique of what he describes as a post-modern obsession with the individual and the notion of the agentic person; autonomous, separate, self-contained, or what he calls a 'monad'. At odds with the stabilising effect of communities and society, he considers how the notion of the division of labour and the salaried job has isolated individuals from public life and given them 'the illusion of the totally self-sufficient individual' (2008:10). There is some congruence here with Bauman's *hunter* (2005). Furthermore Burkitt (2008) argues that what one of the 'fathers' of sociology, Durkheim (1984), called the collective consciousness of a society breaks down as the division of labour (and perhaps also individualisation) becomes the norm;

...each mind finds itself directed towards a different point on the horizon, reflects a different aspect of the world and, as a result, the content of men's minds differ from one subject to another. (Durkheim, 1969:26).

Burkitt (2008) explains further that within a capitalist society which relies upon such a division of labour, an individual must look outside their private world to find a role, work, as a source of personal development and identity. Exploring some of the factors that shape personality, from the genetics that shape specific traits to the socially constructed inner self, Burkitt, echoing Vygotsky's assertion that 'there is nothing in mind that is not first of all in society' (1978:142), argues that in each personality there is a tension between the inner and the outer. The balancing of such tensions will be returned to in relation to career later in this chapter. Indeed there is much overlap here with the spectrum of career theories; the simple trait/factor matching at one end of the scale, and the social constructivist approaches at the other. Referring to the work of George Kelly (1955), Burkitt also explains that personalities are not fixed, but are constantly reshaped by their interaction with the world around them and their view of their place within it. Such reshaping could be described as a process of learning. The social learning theories of Bandura (1986) assert that a person is thereby constructed by the self within their social context and networks. Again this echoes theories in career choice that acknowledge the construction of a person's view of career, which will be introduced later in this chapter.

The idea then that an individual makes a free autonomous choice of the role they will play in life, including that of career, is therefore difficult to defend. An analogy may be of a child in a sweet shop with 25p and another with £5. The opportunities are there for both but one has more access and opportunity to choose than the other. The work of Gergen (1999) also challenges the notion of the monad. He proposes that the 'autonomous individual' is a fallacy, even though the discourse in the late modern world is all about individual choice and self-direction. He argues that unlike collectivist cultures, the western world focusses on individual agency. However paradoxically such individuals are inseparable from their context, culture and perspective. Nonetheless, in the West the rights and responsibilities of the individual are highlighted, whereas in more collectivist cultures it is in families or communities that responsibilities lie. He refers to the work done by Geertz (1973) about Balinese society in which he describes the almost absence of acknowledgment of the individual. In contrast Gergen (1999) identifies the super-complexity of the relational world many in the West now inhabit. There is also a notable absence of previously held 'truths' about the self or society in the West which might have helped to provide some certainty or at least reference points. What Gergen describes as the 'loss of the identifiable' (2000:112) he uses to offer an alternative ontology, that of the social construction of reality. It is

such a construction, or co-construction, that is observed within the stories of the participants in this research.

The geographical classification of peoples in the past may have provided some identifiable structures in society. However when there are movements of peoples such classifications may be referred to ethnically, racially or in terms of their countries of origin, or that of their parents or grandparents. This is simplistic of course. Such inheritance of classification or identity must be experienced and re-defined by individuals. Moreover, movements of peoples have led in the West to more culturally complex and diverse communities, following in particular post-colonial migrations of peoples from previous colonies to the 'motherland'.

The notion of multicultural society has been contested and continues to be so. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), assert that although the definition of multiculturalism may be debated, the reality is that societies in the West are multicultural. However, how that reality is discussed and debated is driven by world views and the beliefs of the protagonists. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) describe a range of approaches to multiculturalism. The monocultural assertion is that things were better when white, Western, male and heterosexual 'norms' dominated, and that tensions in society have been created by movements away from this premise. Critical multiculturalism however argues that liberal approaches have failed because they do not recognise the ongoing discrimination in society and the approach contends that without a more honest and realistic recognition of the lives of ethnic minorities, women and LGBT people, such differences in lives will not change. Moreover, the cultural narratives of minority groups, argues Horsdal (2012), can be dominated by those of the majority; leaving a 'nostalgic ethnic identity' (2012:113). Rattansi (2011) also questions the apparent goal of multiculturalism, the production of a 'salad-bowl' society with 'separate intact ethnic cultures' (2011:1). He challenges the assumption that racism can be averted merely through education about other cultures based on superficial elements such as cuisine, rituals and dress. This simplistic approach to 'otherness' he suggests, ignores the complexities and diversities within cultures as well as between them. Charles Taylor has been the exponent of the term 'interculturalism' (1994) within which the needs and concerns of both ethnic minorities and majorities are considered. In his critique of Western attempts at intercultural (or more accurately in reality multicultural) solutions, he asserts that the pedantry of secularism does little to ameliorate tensions.

The awkwardness arises from the fact that there are substantial numbers of people who are citizens and also belong to the culture that calls into question our philosophical

boundaries. The challenge is to deal with their sense of marginalization without compromising our basic political principle. (Taylor, 1994:63)

Terms such as tolerance and integration are also problematic. Tolerance suggests that 'others' are to be tolerated, not necessarily welcomed and accepted as they are. Assimilation as a goal is uncomfortable as it suggests a melting away of differences or the acquisition of the preferred and dominant culture. Integration is similarly contested as it is not clear about what it is that peoples are to be integrated into. What is still to be clarified is the accepted essence of what it is to be British or Western. Rattansi (2011) also points out some of what he considers to be flaws in the arguments of monoculturalists and that multiculturalism has been responsible in part for the rise in racism, far right political resurgence and extremism. What is now widely recognised as multiculturalism (largely relating to race rather than gender or sexuality), he points out, came about in the UK and in other Western nations at the same time that other changes were happening. He poses that the post-industrial labour market saw the demise of many of the low skilled and manual jobs that the indigenous working classes had relied upon as had the migrant populations. However although many migrants had been encouraged to come to the UK to fill some of these jobs, perceived competition for them caused tensions. Moreover Rattansi argues that it has been the migrant populations who have borne the brunt of the unemployment in these areas of work. He, like Taylor supports the case for a different model, that of interculturalism. This concept is more about the interrelation and interconnectedness between cultures and ongoing dialogues within and between communities. Such interethnic dialogues and mixing may of course spark tensions before understanding and acceptances are reached, but it may be that it is within such dialogues that commonalities and shared values can be found. Moreover the participants in this research, each having a complex tapestry of connections and loyalties within and between communities, offer a conduit to such dialogues and shared understanding, and a lens with which to understand them. However that experience of having a foot in more than one camp, I will show, can come at a price, that of the ambiguity and complexity of their own identities.

The notion of multiculturalism specifically within a counselling context has been explored by a number of writers. Arthur (2001) noted the cultural shock experienced by some students during cross- cultural transitions. She concluded that experiences of acculturation did little to help; rather it was those with secure self awareness that were most successful in their transition. Arulmani (2012) also comments upon the tendency toward acculturation or culturally neutral approaches and that the cultural preparedness enables the client and their particular cultural context to remain central to the counselling conversation. Bimrose (1996) acknowledged the

importance of the development of a range of approaches depending on the context and circumstances. If, as Gergen (1999) posed, cultures build their own realities and truths through accepted discourse, then the practitioner must be aware of these and meet the client where s/he is. Bimrose referred to an earlier three-fold framework (Bimrose, 1993) which described 'individualistic' approaches; where the individual is free to act outside the context of his/her cultural context, 'integrationist' approaches; where the counselling takes account of the social context, and the 'structuralist' approaches which emphasise the political and economic factors. In this chapter and throughout this work I suggest that the individualistic approach is one that has traditionally been taken in careers work; the notion that everyone is able to and wishes to make their choices outside cultural confines. The person-centredness (Egan, 2010) embraced by the careers profession, could be said to illustrate an individualistic approach, but I concur with Arulmani (2012), that notwithstanding human rights of self-determination and equality, not only the individual but their culture, background and context must be acknowledged and celebrated as part of who they are. Whether, for those from immigrant families such as my participants, this includes some form of cultural fusion (as discussed in the work of Nesbitt (1998) later in this chapter) is interesting to consider. I propose that the Egan model reflects what Bimrose (1993) described as an individualistic approach and is neither really possible nor helpful, and that an integrationist approach is more congruent with the life lived by an individual. In many public services however it could be argued that it is the structuralist approach that is dominant in an increasingly outcome driven model, particularly in the public sector. All clients and service users are products of their understanding of who they are in relation to the communities around them. At the same time communities and society are themselves changed by the individual. Add to this the experience and perspective of the practitioner or researcher, and what emerges is a dynamic mosaic of relational factors and interdependencies. The relationship of the individual with the society in which they live is not simple or one-directional. Cultures within cultures, and individuals within them have far from a neatly defined relationship, and cause and effect overlap and change their direction. Within this setting of unpredictable influences and complex interdependencies the helping professions must find an approach that is equally flexible and appropriate without losing core values or theoretical rigour.

This section has explored the concepts and literature relating to the macro world or public space within which an individual *acts* and with which s/he *interacts*. In the next section I will focus on the shared space between this public arena and the private or personal. It is the space within which I propose identity is constructed and career is lived.

Construction of identity in the meso world

The meso level of experience is that in which the private and the public meet. It is that space in which our relationship with and place in the world is understood. In this section I will discuss the literature that illuminates this space and informs this thesis in terms of what happens within it; namely the construction of identity/ies, the formation of narratives which help to understand our lives, and the development and shaping of career in its widest sense. It is therefore in this space that I will be exploring the focus of this thesis, the relationship between who we believe ourselves to be and what we do.

Identity

What is meant by the word 'identity', and the way in which this may be constructed is central to this thesis. My research explores the relationship between 'career identity' and 'personal identity' and these, and other terms therefore must be examined. This is not just semantics, it is an important exploration into the complex notion of who we believe ourselves to be, in different contexts, in relation to others in our families, communities and society, and at its most essential level, selfhood itself.

Frosh (1991), as the title of his book 'Identity Crisis' suggests, exploring the impact of changes of social structures in late modernity on identity, and the consequences on the development of the 'self', concludes that the fractured structure of society has a profound and potentially destructive impact on lives and on the construction of identity. Gergen (1991; 1999) proposes that in such challenging contexts narrative supports both the development and understanding of identity and that the development of identity and the self are separate but interdependent, constructed through interaction with the society in which they exist. In this way narrative can be understood as the mechanism by which meaning is made of an otherwise disconnected series of events and experiences. This process is what is illustrated in the storytelling of the participants in this research. Within late modernity Frosh argues (1991) that society loses many of the structures that once framed it, and so the individual may be left to establish identity themselves with little scaffolding within which to do so. However lives have not lost all structure and the once predicted complete loss of the 'master narrative' does not appear to have come to fruition (Lyotard, 1979, cited in Horsdal, 2012:101). As this thesis will make clear, individuals' narratives and identities remain closely embedded within those of others, and of the society or societies we live in.

Drawing upon the work of the political philosopher and thinker Charles Taylor, Horsdal (2012) asserts that personal stories and therefore identities are closely related to cultural narratives, and therefore cultural identities. Whether this ever enables individuals or researchers to identify or

clarify a 'nuclear self', an essential me, remains unclear. However, the desire for such certainty, particularly in two of the participants' stories seems to be strong.

Giddens (1991b) distinguishes between the term 'self-identity' and the term 'individual'. The ontological awareness of 'being an individual' is not, he suggests the same as having self-identity. This he asserts is founded in the development of what Winnicott (1971) termed 'basic trust' whereupon the 'emotive-cognitive orientations towards others' (1991b:38) allows self-identity to emerge because it creates the early understanding of separateness and the importance of 'the appraisal of others' (1991b). Savickas (2011) reminds us that terms such as 'identity' have many meanings but asserts that 'self' and 'identity' are not the same; 'self' being larger than 'identity' as the self may have a range of identities in different circumstances. He proposes that;

Identity forming [might be considered] as an individual's thesis (self) encountering the world's antithesis (role) and crafting a synthesis (identity)...(2011:447)

Both Goffman (1959) and Kearney (2003) point out that the roles played and the masks worn by individuals shape the way in which they relate to the rest of society, find their place within it and conform to an appropriate and congruent script. Such masks also shape how others relate to them, and therefore shape the personal narrative. Goffman, an ethnomethodologist, was a contributor of what might be termed the 'ethogenic' social sciences, which are those attempts to understand how people make meaning from their actions and interactions. This is illustrative of what Charles Taylor described as 'self-interpreting animals' 'condemned to meaning' (1992). Goffman's (1959) approach is to emphasise the metaphor of a stage and the roles people play on it. He explains that these roles can be engaged with consciously and sometimes cynically; the individual understanding their importance and using them to navigate their way in the society in which they operate. The tacit agreement of members of a society is to take on roles, maintain structure and order even though this may be superficial and used to hide their true feelings or beliefs. Any deviation in behaviour in a recognised position or role may be considered as odd and worthy of comment and interest. An example could be a very wealthy person who has a small house or old car, or a head teacher who has piercings and tattoos. These illustrate the misfit or oddity that he also refers to in terms of stigma in Goffman's later writing (1963). Perhaps such concepts of roles and expectations from them offer some insight into the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes in all parts of society. What Goffman describes as 'performances' come with an expectation of who is doing the performing. The role of Engineer is played by a male and that of Nurse by a female. Any deviation becomes noteworthy. Terms such as 'male' nurse, 'lady' doctor are an illustration of the need to emphasise exemptions to stereotypes. As discussed earlier in

this chapter such expectations are constructs of society, but as this section explores the meso level of experience it is also pertinent to recognise the impact of such norms on the construction of identity. In this research I will examine the stories of those who have not always conformed to social or cultural norms and I will propose that it is in such particularities that the meaning of their stories lie. Moreover Savickas (2011) and Horsdal (2012) emphasise that stories are only stories worth sharing if they narrate that which was not planned or expected; what is particular or other. As Savickas (2011) notes, a shopping trip where everything goes to plan is not noteworthy. A story is only told when something unexpected happens such as a flat tyre on the way or meeting someone not seen for a long time. So, it is an unconventional 'performance' that is both noteworthy and possibly unsettling; a male midwife or a female motor mechanic. In this research such noteworthiness or unconventional performance may be the person of colour in a white community, a non Hebrew-speaker in a Jewish school in Israel, or just the new girl.

The metaphors of masks (Kearney, 2003), and roles and performances (Goffman, 1959) offer an explanation of the nature of identity, its meaning and its construction as an outward facing conduit between the personal and public worlds, synonymous with Jungian persona (1938). Career can be an example of such a mask worn or a role or performance. When a career becomes so much a part of the identity of a person it can be difficult to let it go. It may be that this is why we often refer to people who are retired as 'retired doctor' or 'ex-police officer'. In such situations personal identity is fused with career identity; the micro and meso worlds overlap. Career identity (Meijers and Lengelle, 2012) is established through engagement in the world of work. Later in this chapter I will also relate this concept to that of narrative identity. However identity before the time of career in a person's life must be drawn from something much earlier in terms of influence. Sarbin (1986) uses the term 'storied lives' and asserts that the identity of the individual cannot be separated from the society in which they live and the stories that are told about that ongoing interrelationship. An individual is a product of and grows into an identity shaped by that society, their position within it, and the structures that shape it.

In this thesis I explore the stories of three women with complex and conflicting identities. These stories offer some insight into the ways in which these individuals established their personal identity and career identity. Although I make no generalisable claims, the importance of establishing our identities for ourselves is resonant in each of the stories. Each one is, perhaps as a consequence of conflicting or ambiguous identities, drawn to explore potential or possible selves. Three writers in particular have illustrated the experience of such conflict and complexity in cultural or ethnic identity. Each has written widely about such conflicts in their own identity and about the emergence of a clearer sense of self.

The first of the authors that I draw on is Edward Said. In his autobiographical work 'Out of Place' (1999) he documents the experience of growing up in Egypt as a Christian Arab from a Palestinian family with a US passport. He comments on the echoes of British colonialism in Cairo which led his parents to give him the name of an English king 'yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arab name' (p.3). His experience of such contrasting identities was not a positive one; throughout the work he expresses his envy of others' names and the inherent clarity of their identities. He recounts how he yearned to be unified and recognisable as one or other of the groups around him at school and in Cairo society in the post war years. Neither did he reflect his father's expectations of any of society's norms. As expressed by Goffman (1963) and mentioned previously, such stigmas are socially constructed and illustrate a notion of 'otherness' and a lack of fit with what is expected or accepted. The individual is expected to fit into a category described by society and that those who do not fit comfortably into such categories are notable in their miss-fit:

This is exactly the position of the adolescent, the light-skinned negro, the second generation immigrant, the socially mobile person, and the woman who has entered a predominantly masculine occupation. (1963:25)

Arguably Said also felt stigmatised by this Arab name and heritage in an otherwise Western context. I am reminded by these examples of the challenge presented to those who, like Edward Said and my research participants, do not fit into the usual categories and whose ill-fitting is felt like a poorly made garment to be discarded and replaced with one of their own construction.

Homi Bhabha (2004) is the second of the three writers who considers the place of cultural and ethnic identities in a post-colonial setting and also writes about conflict in identity for previously colonised peoples and cultures. The connections with the stories in this research are significant and will be referred to throughout this thesis. His work has much resonance with current concerns about the rise of fundamentalism and the feelings of exclusion and otherness reported by some young British Muslims. Bhabha uses the metaphor of a building to explore the experience of multiple and conflicting identities. Rather than considering such identities as rooms in a building into which the individual can choose to enter or leave, he refers to the stairwell between rooms and floors of a building as a place of liminality.

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white...the temporal movement and passage that it

allows, prevents identities at either end of it from setting into primordial polarities.(2004:5)

Bhabha, writing about the post-colonial experience, illustrates what it may feel like to be 'other', the person whose story remains untold;

No name is yours until you speak it; somebody returns your call and suddenly...you enter the territory of the right to narrate...In another's country that is also your own, your person divides, and in following the forked path you encounter yourself in a double movement...once as stranger, and then as friend. (2004:358)

So a person may by either choice or circumstance become 'other'. It is here perhaps that there is an illustration of the liberation that may be that of being the mongrel. Difference imposed by circumstances of birth or early childhood may be 'the one less travelled' but not 'taken' by the individual themselves. Rather such pathways have been subject to the decisions of others or of the status quo. The liberation of difference in these examples may be experienced as permission to create, or the necessity of creating their own identity.

Referring to the work of Salman Rushdie, Bhabha comments on the experience of the migrant and of the disenfranchised minorities. He comments that 'the truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision' (2004:7). So as well as the 'other' having opportunities to explore and perhaps reshape their own identity, they are also in a unique position to observe that of the indigenous population.

The third writer I include here as a commentator on the experience of otherness, referred to earlier in this chapter is Audre Lorde. As in the work of bell hooks (1981;1884), Lorde (2007) examines the experience of Black Feminism as, like Bhabha's idea of liminality, the non-polarised position and experience of those with mixed identity, or those who are a minority within a marginalised group. Exploring mixedness, Lorde asserts that selfhood may be different again and self-determination more complex when there is a choice of at least two identities. For Lorde it is the black woman, gay black man, Asian lesbian and disabled feminist whose challenges and battles are divided and compete for attention. She also acknowledges the struggles of those of mixed race to identify with one or other, or none of the narratives in their complex heritages. Liberation is not the experience recounted by writers about mixed heritage (Massey, 2014; Walker, 2001), but rather a painful process of choosing; to rank one part of one's identity over another can be damaging. However Honneth (2009) asserts that the activity of autobiography can

be liberating as it provides the individual with an opportunity to claim agency over their story and renegotiate the meaning that they make of it. It is a keystone in the methodology for this thesis.

This thesis looks in particular at mixture, of heritage, experience and background. The needs of mixed heritage clients are an area in careers work that is little explored but I suggest is increasingly relevant. Research conducted by Eleanor Nesbitt (1998) explored the experience of children of Hindu families growing up in Britain and contests the assumption that there is necessarily conflict in their identity, but that there is cultural fusion and a navigation of cultures rather than integration or assimilation. Later in this chapter I will return to the question of whether cultural fusion is a feature of acculturation, of agentic construction of identity or another form of otherness. However I believe it is also important to acknowledge that if such cultural fusion occurs, it does so within a largely secular discourse rather than in one of opposing faiths. Fenton (2003) states that migrant individuals and communities 'have inherited a legacy of cultural difference' (2003:119), suggesting that cultural differences persist long after what may appear as integration has occurred. Whether this results in cultural fusion or not, the stories of the participants in this research relate such persistence. Horsdal (2012) also explores the changing identity of individuals as society changes. As accepted 'truths' are challenged, she argues, this provides 'new possibilities for negotiations and co-existent interpretations' (2012:112). This is something that can happen between one generation and the next, but may be especially felt by the children of immigrant families as cultural and religious structures are tested. This is illustrated in one of my participant's stories but noticeably not in the others. The old and new truths coexist as aspects of given identities are accepted, challenged and rejected in waves of reconstruction and agency.

The place of gender in identity and also in career has already been referred to. Despite many years of effort to reduce gender stereotypes in the world of work, they are still prevalent in many areas of work. Some changes are evident in professions such as medicine. Khan (2012) writes about the feminisation of the medical profession and how fears amongst the profession are growing about the consequent weakening of its status and worth (BBC, 2004). It is interesting that feminisation could be considered synonymous with weakening or devaluing. Nonetheless it may be that in work further down the pay and qualifications scale there are still significant barriers and gender biases. In a similar way in which Roberts argues that opportunities are structured around class (2005), they are also structured around gender. It is not only that work remains gendered, but 'women's jobs' still appear to be poorer paid (Guardian, 2013). As well as relating to the methodology chosen in this work that will be explored in the next chapter, feminism and feminist literature have much to offer this research. The default position of women

as 'other' (De Beauvoir, 1949) and male as the norm has an impact on all women whether they are aware of it or not. It is important to consider how such a subconscious thread of power and relative importance might have an impact on the self-concept and construct of a young person and in particular what impact it had on the three participants in this research. It is hard to imagine that the directions taken by each of us were made without such powerful currents influencing and even driving them. Clearly gender is only one of these possible currents of influence but a powerful one nonetheless.

I acknowledge here my own initial scepticism on such influences on my own decision-making. The nature of a Feminist for me was not a positive one and not one to which I was drawn. I did not recognise the impact of gender in my own life and career. But perhaps such drivers were more subliminal than conscious and what I became aware of through this research was a realisation of the forces that may well have been at work in my own story. My concerns were that I did not want to be 'against men'. Beasley (1999) concurs that there is a danger of an overriding negative connotation that Feminism is generally 'against' male, men and the status quo which was indeed my own early perception. The work of Judith Butler (2010) takes such concerns about male dominance further to the assumption of heterosexuality, and explores the resultant diminution of an individual's identity by the societal default setting of male, white, able-bodied and heterosexual. All those outside these categories she argues are indeed 'other' and characterised as such; their difference to this 'normality' being the dominant descriptor such as female, disabled, gay or lesbian or any ethnicity that is not white. Bel hooks (1981;1984) has also contributed considerably to these arguments in her paradigmatic work which, drawing on her own experiences points out what is described as the 'wicked triangle of race, class and gender' (Grunell and Saharso, 1999:203). Like Butler (2010) and Lorde (2007), she notes the white dominance of feminism, but also the male dominance of the black movement and what she suggests is the low level of importance given to such concerns by the academic community.

Returning briefly to the work of Bhabha (2004), the norm of Western can be added to those of gender, sexuality and class. He describes how emerging cultural communities exhibit a 'disturbing practice of survival and supplementarity' (p.251), and draws parallels between these communities and the feminists of the 1970s and the gay community of the 1980s as having crossed 'boundaries between nations and peoples' (p.251), challenging identities and normalities. As the stories of the participants in this research are explored, considerations about what is *normal* will be revisited alongside the notion of emerging, renegotiated and reconstructed identities. Furthermore congruence with Bhabha's (2004) arguments are found in the work of hooks (1984). She refers to the notion of the colonisation of the minds of marginalised peoples; the tacit acceptance of

otherness which serves to propagate intrinsic inequalities in society. Such acceptances and adherences to accepted truths about what is 'best' is illustrated further in the work of Fanon (1986) in which he comments on the construction of identity in some colonised black communities, and the persistence and some acceptance of stereotypes. The acceptance of jokes by my father from his cricket playing friends, and the 'turning the other cheek' of my uncle will be discussed later in this work and are I believe examples of the tacit approval of inequalities that Fanon describes.

Narratives

In this thesis narratives will be engaged with as material to be explored, as a research methodology, and as an approach to career counselling. Narrative methodology and its place in this research will be examined in chapter three. Narrative approaches to counselling will feature later in this chapter in relation to emerging approaches to career counselling. But now I will consider the literature on the nature of narratives and their telling.

Throughout human history people have told stories. They are 'the most ubiquitous and powerful discourse forms in human communications' (Bruner,1990:77). Story telling is part of what it is to be human. Stories help us to understand the world around us, rehearse possibilities and consequences, and when we tell our own story we not only narrate what happened and when, but also why and what that means to us and about us today. The literary critic Barbara Hardy comments that:

We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative. (Hardy 1968:1)

As Sarbin (1986) asserts, stories create the links between the macro, meso and micro parts of our world. Moreover when we tell a story we tell it *to* someone. A person may, as in this research, have been invited to tell their story or, in other contexts, others have been asked to listen. The context and the participants in this process also matter. The way that I tell the story of my day to a friend will differ to that told to a colleague although both may be 'true'. The person to whom we tell our life story, and the reason behind that telling will also have an impact on the content of the story and the way in which it is told.

Bruner (1989) explains that narratives require agency on the part of the teller to tell, some level of sequence and timeline, an understanding of cultural norms in the interaction, and also the

acknowledgment of the perspective of the teller. This explains the importance of narratives in the construction of identity as the question of 'who narrates?' (Arendt, 1958) is bound within the gap between private and public life. Ricoeur (1985) argues that the understanding of the self happens within the context of history and historical narratives and so constructs a community's and an individual's narrative identity, as he termed it. So stories told by others help to construct our narrative identity and help us to understand such fundamental questions as who we are. Ricoeur posed that understanding one's narrative identity is essential in order for autobiography to be possible (1985). Nonetheless the term 'narrative identity' has been used widely within a range of genres, not least of all career reflected in the notion of 'career identity' (Meijers and Lengelle, 2012), which describes that particular narrative in a life story. The historical contexts of the stories of my participants is crucial, as will be discussed in each of the chapters that explore each of them. The communities from which such narratives emerged were to some extent distanced from ours but nonetheless our narrative identities drew strongly from them. The complexities of the construction of autobiography referred to above are also important to reflect upon. Ricoeur (1985) offered some helpful thoughts:

In first-person narrative fiction, the narrator and the main character are one and the same; but only in autobiography are the author, the narrator, and the main character the same...(1985, vol 2:183)

This will be important later in this thesis when I discuss the validity of the methodology used and the importance of the subjective nature of the stories in the process of meaning making.

Furthermore Ricoeur notes that in autobiography there is a;

confirmation [of how] the story of a life continues to be refigured by all the truthful or fictive stories a subject tells about himself or herself (1985, vol 3:246)

The word 'narrative' suggests a verbal account of a story. However stories are told in many ways; through music, art, photographs, drama, poetry, novels, history and dance. The stained glass windows in ancient churches depict Biblical stories because many at the time could not read. In communities without written texts stories are told and handed down from generation to generation, factual or mythical they give meaning to the community, their heritage and their place in the world. Written or not, such stories are told at the behest of the teller and may change in the telling. The notion that history is written by the victors is an important lesson. Stories that form the narrative truth of a family or nation may trigger wars or allow feuds to persist because a family or nation has that narrative truth embedded into their cultural reference points. Religious beliefs may be part of these histories, conferring spiritual as well as narrative truths upon them.

So far from being perceived as part of the soothing comfort of the nursery, stories are powerful and sometimes dangerous things. The power comes not from the content but from the meaning that is made of the story. Nursery rhymes and stories are often moral tales or cautionary tales. The abandonment of two children in a wood because their father could not afford to feed them is a sad story. But the meaning behind the story is powerful, that is that you cannot even rely on your father if he has a new wife who competes for his love. The meaning conferred is that you have to rely on your own abilities to protect yourself and those you care for. Things may not always be what they appear to be. The Gingerbread house, far from being full of joy and loveliness was in fact full of danger, horror and deception. The meaning is, trust no one, suspect all and rely only on yourself.

In the telling of our biographies it is perhaps inevitable that we will present a self that we wish to be heard and accepted. However the telling of our stories to ourselves in reflections, reiterated in dialogues with others is essentially a re-construction and a re-remembering, and accesses our auto-noetic consciousness. To be affirmed in who we believe ourselves to be and to be able to defend our position in relation to society, our stories must harmonise with those narratives around us that we rehearse every day. Who we believe ourselves to be, our narrative truths, substantiated by the stories we tell, must be congruent with what we say and do today if we are to avoid psychological stress. This may result in or require some re-forming of our stories. As we tell stories of our own lives or those of our families it is the meaning rather than the facts that are central to the plot. We draw upon our memories and those of others who have recounted their own stories, second or third hand or from so far in the past that they are almost legends. The 'facts' may have changed but the meaning to the family, or community persists. The opposite may also be the case; the same series of events may be recalled by different members of a family but have a very different meaning.

Memories are therefore not like video clips, able to be played and replayed identically each time. We re-member according to the context of the telling, the message we want to convey and the meaning it has for us today. Langer (1991) explored the nature of memory in depth with the stories of Holocaust survivors. Memory and memories, he concluded are not simple things to be verified or challenged for their truth. He points out that common memory 'offers detached portraits, from the vantage point of today' (1991:6). Memories set the present in the context of the past, help to make sense of the present and look to the future. They are often not of our own making but co-constructed from fragments of other stories, photographs and the meaning ascribed to them. A photograph of ourselves as a small baby will be unlikely to stir memories of what that moment was like but the stories heard about our birth, how much we cried, who was

there and what our arrival in the world meant to those around us will be part of a collective memory that we will share (Formenti, 2011). These stories, as Winslade and Monk (2000) explore in terms of narrative approaches to therapeutic conversations, can be self-affirming or troubling and can persist in the narrative truths of families.

The notion that stories are not always narrated but can be told through other media such as music, art, poetry and so on, will become more significant in chapter three when I examine the use of both written stories, the use of collage and narration in the telling of my own story. This approach in the telling of my own story was in part in response to my concerns about the danger of privileging the written text. The work of Barthes (1977) highlights the ambiguity of the written word and the impact on a story of being turned into text, the teller transformed into an author, and the listener into the destination. He concludes that the reader ultimately has the power, like the listener. So as explored further in chapter three, the receiver of the written or narrated story adds a layer of interpretation and meaning, not least of all because of their presence. Any concern that alternative forms of narrative such as the creative arts, photographs, collage, poetry or music might introduce a level of interpretation that takes stories to an unacceptably subjective and invalid place must be challenged or at least put on a comparable level of subjectivity as written stories.

Career theory and counselling

Reference is made to career throughout this chapter and thesis. Indeed it is the further development of career counselling that is at the heart of this thesis. The notion of career identity has been referred to earlier as a key element of how we define ourselves in our social and cultural context. This section of the literature review will bring together aspects of the preceding sections as I propose that career occupies that shared space between private and public life and which showcases who we believe ourselves to be. As Savickas suggests, 'declaring an occupational choice states what an individual wants to mean to other people' (2011:470)

The meaning of the word Career is somewhat contested. It is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a person's 'course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life)'. Although the traditional meaning of career is closely related to succession in paid employment, a contemporary view is that a person's career or life work includes unpaid work, voluntary work and domestic life, in fact all aspects of what an individual does throughout their lives. The word 'career' implies choice, progression and individual fulfilment. This may be more true to the origins of the word which comes from the French word 'carriere' and Latin 'carrus' which means a cart for a road or course. So career can be synonymous with what takes us through life's road, or

journey and is a broader and more complex aspect of life than solely that of paid employment; it is the life lived. Useful metaphors for career were outlined by Inkson (2004) which included career as inheritance, construction, matching, seasons and cycles, journey, networks of relationships, role, resource and finally as story. These metaphors and use of language help to understand the different meanings career can have and the ways in which people approach it as a concept and as an element in their lives. In the stories of the participants in this research there are examples of many of these as will be explored in each of the chapters that focus on each of us.

The notion of a journey through life and career is a familiar metaphor and includes movement linearly as 'race' or vertically as a 'career ladder', and may best describe the competitive, individualistic notions prevalent in the western neoliberal thinking. It concurs with the metaphor of the hunter in Bauman's liquid modernity (2005) where achieving the 'kill' needed to win is central to success. A journey however can also follow the smaller slower routes that allow the traveller to 'stop and stare', and to nurture in the role reminiscent of the gardener (2005). The approaches to career explored in the stories in this research do not conform to the competitive individualism of the hunter prevalent today but appear, as will be explored later in this thesis, to have other goals.

Theories and literature about career can be broadly broken down into two types; attempts to understand the nature of career, processes of career decision making and how it is managed by an individual, and also those that structure the ways in which career professionals can support such processes. There is much overlap and connection between the two; the notion of matching a person's skills and traits with the requirements of a particular job both offers a view of what career and career progression might be about and gives a career counsellor a basis for their intervention. The idea of a career being a broader concept of a pathway through a life lived, suggests a more storied approach both to its navigation and its understanding.

Career theory, provides tools with which to examine and improve practice. Without it we fail to understand the *why* and the *how* and are left only with the *what*. Theory builds upon theory, not necessarily replacing it but further examining it, perhaps in different contexts and to meet different needs. In 'scientific' disciplines research classically seeks to disprove a hypothesis or theory (Popper, 2002), and by failing to do so claims some, albeit temporary acceptance and perceived validity of the proposed theory or hypothesis. Popper's assertion that 'science may be described as the art of systematic over-simplification — the art of discerning what we may with advantage omit' (1988:44), provides a useful contrast to the epistemological approach of this

thesis and to career theory more widely. In this thesis I will acknowledge and explore complications and complexities. Much of career theory also recognises that no one theory is correct to the exclusion of others.

Career theory however is not (often) in the 'prove or disprove' camp but different theories, models and approaches are developed to provide an evolving range of tools for practice and with which to understand clients' needs in the increasingly complex world in which they operate.

In the earliest days of career or vocational guidance the world of work to which it responded was relatively stable even if the world itself was not. In the early part of the 20th Century, during an industrialised era, the division of labour based on the scientific workforce management principles of Taylorism (Aitken, 1985) had become commonplace. Marx and Durkheim's predictions (Durkheim, 1984) of its impact on people would have been clearly seen. What mattered for capitalism to work was the fit between what a person could do and what was needed in a particular part of a process. Chaplin's depiction of the industrialisation of people into 'cogs in a wheel' in his 1936 film 'Modern Times' is perhaps only a little exaggerated. The earliest theory proposed by Frank Parsons (1909) was summarised with the notion that everyone is different and each job requires a particular set of traits. By measuring the skills and abilities of an individual the expert careers professional can predict and propose the best fitting work for that person. This is the foundation upon which the questionnaires and tests given to young people and adults, in schools, in magazines and in psychometric tests are based. The objectivity offered by a test which produces a resulting classification was, and is still today, tantalising in its simplicity, predictability and prescription. In its infancy it served an important purpose that included the welfare and prosperity of workers. Perhaps today however, this approach is illustrative of a desire for simple answers to difficult questions and there are few more complex than how to spend one's life.

The first paradigm shift in career theory came after the Second World War when the focus moved from the trait/factor best fit approach, to the person and the development of their career. But the times during which such theorising was set is important to our understanding. The post Second World War era in the US was characterised by a relatively stable labour market when, unlike the pre-war times, there were choices to be made. The developmental phases described by Donald Super (1951;1957) reflected a largely middle class, male, Western and stable labour market. The fit explored by Holland (1973) focused more on that between the person and the working environment than with the skills needed in the job itself. Initially such fit and congruence with environment was considered in terms of heredity; an assumption that an essential self existed and could be fitted more or less well into different environments. However later revisions

of Holland's work included an acknowledgement that such a fit has a development over time and life stages and so also included the concept of life as a narrative (1996).

The driving issue in careers work had changed from the functional needs of an industrialised society and workforce, to the needs of the individual to find fulfilment in their working lives. Importantly however one did not, and does not replace or negate the other. Rather, the developmental approaches considered a wider context for the skills and talents of the individual, including their development and their testing out and establishing in the working world. Today the question of what to measure in people, in order to fit them into a role with a particular set of requirements has become more complex, nuanced and difficult to answer. A host of psychometric tests have been developed and welcomed by those persevering in their quest to measure, including tests of values, resilience, personality, relationship and leadership styles. This of course also necessitates the equally detailed measurement of the possible roles and tasks to be performed, which are changing all the time. Proponents of such testing regimes assure their clients that the outcomes are largely for the purposes of self-knowledge and reflection and I do not dispute that this is their intention.

The usefulness of these theories is not confined to the past; aspects are helpful today in understanding the contribution of skills and personality, of stages of career development and the different roles that are played and overlap in a person's life and career. Scientific approaches such as trait and factor matching were developed into models that could not only inform career guidance practice but also provide a learning and developmental framework. In 1977 perhaps the most well-known of models was presented by Law and Watts; the DOTS model. Its continued popularity, like many ground breaking ideas, is possibly because of its inherent simplicity. It suggests that in order to make a decision an individual needs to understand their skills and qualities (S) and also the range of options available (O). Having made a decision (D), with help to do so, they need the transitions skills (T) to take forward that choice or decision into actuality. This has an irresistible rationality and offers clients and practitioners alike a clear format for a career conversation and also for a career learning programme. It fits well into the popular three stage model of guidance proposed by Egan (2010), and is more holistic than the instrumental model of guidance proposed in Alec Rodgers' Seven Point plan (NIIP and Rodger, 1952).

However, anecdotally we are all aware that this is not how many career choices are made or can be made. If we reflect upon our own choices, including those that have been successful and fulfilling, they have not necessarily been based on such careful, considered steps. Quite simply we often stumble upon opportunities and if they suit our circumstances and needs, we take them.

The notion that the social and life structures were changing and that career theory may need to reflect this began to take hold in the latter parts of the 20th Century. The process of placing the individual at the centre of career theory, as opposed to a job, working environment or role, followed on from the shifting of the broader academic gaze toward the individual and their personal context and identity (Bourdieu and Passerson, 2000; Ricoeur, 1994) and to their stories and adaptability (Savickas, 1997).

The notion of happenstance in career was introduced by Krumboltz (2009), and reflected the experience of the unplanned and haphazard arrival of opportunities experienced by many. He claimed that far from being a process of luck or fate (although of course both of these are possible), the individual can learn to first recognise and then make the most of such serendipity. Planned Happenstance gave permission to not plan but, taking into account attitude of mind, curiosity, optimism and resilience, to manage opportunities as they present themselves. He asserted that the role of the career counsellor was therefore not just to facilitate a single decision, but to enable the individual to successfully manage their ongoing career, including the consideration of unplanned or foreseen events. Along with Chaos Theory of Career (Bright and Pryor, 2008) these perhaps more pragmatic approaches to career are helpful as they present career as it is experienced by many and also recognise that a career locus of control (Rotter, 1966) can be brought in from the cold of fatalism. Furthermore Bright and Pryor, (2008) assert that in the Chaos Theory of Careers there is an acknowledgement of patterns in behaviours in career that are non-linear, changeable and unpredictable and that they therefore relate to narratives as much as they do to the labour market.

Such concerns about subjectivity and a growing social constructionist premise to vocational psychology and to career signalled what has been described as the second paradigm shift in career theory (Reid, 2016). It followed the realisation that the more complex, unstable, unpredictable and changeable the world of work becomes, the less adequate that some established career theories seem to be in response to clients' needs. Moreover it is supported by the rise in contextualism in counselling and psychotherapy that recognises the inadequacy of the notion of choice without consideration of agency (Richardson, 2002). As Reid and West (2014) explain, particularly within western cultures, individuals are assumed to be both responsible for and able to make decisions about their career. Such assumptions are misplaced when career services strive to be inclusive in a multicultural setting without conscious consideration of cultural differences and approaches to decision making in collectivist communities. As well as such social complexities, the rise in the temporary contract, portfolio career and the fluidity of working hours made possible by the increased use of technology and digital communications, makes the place or

work and career less distinct in lives and the boundaries between the different aspects of our lives more porous. Within such 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000) individuals trying to navigate such a working world, and career professionals are met with a considerable challenge. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) concurred when they wrote:

Trying to place an evolving person into the changing work environment is like trying to hit a butterfly with a boomerang. (1996:263)

Savickas (1989;2001;2006) far from dismissing earlier theories and ideas, considered them with a new lens developed from Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology (Adler,1923), where the 'self-ideal' and prototype adult is proposed to be set in the psyche of a young child and shaped by early experiences. This new lens built upon Savickas' earlier work with Donald Super (Super et al, 1996) and notions of stages in career, explored the mechanisms of the construction of careers based on a narrative approach. The increased need for 'career adaptability' (Del Corso et al, 2011; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012) in a modern labour market was addressed by developing techniques of questioning and reflecting back so that the client could learn how to be proactive in their responses to career decisions. Such ideas and techniques which place clients' narratives at the centre of the work were developed by Savickas, McMahon and Watson and others (Nota and Rossier, 2015) and responded to an assertion (Kidd, 2006) that a range of approaches are needed to support more complex careers with transitions throughout a lifetime. The Adlerian notion of understanding the overall goal or destiny (1923) is useful to enable individuals to navigate complexities more securely, understanding the plot and overall theme (Savickas, 2011) of the story rather than one particular and possibly challenging part of it. This management of challenges, disappointments and interruptions in the plot of a person's career, termed *Biographicity* (Alheit, 1995) came from the study of adult learning and is part of and possibly even the aim of Savickas' Career Construction Theory (2011). The original context for biographicity in adult learning is a reminder that careers work is not confined to young people or schools. Moreover all three of the participants in this research have worked with or continue to work with adults and so adult learning is both a context for the stories and a setting for the counter narrative offered by this thesis. In particular the stories of S and G illustrate a passion and preference for teaching adults; providing them with opportunities for transformation through learning and a voice for disadvantaged groups (Angus et al, 2013). Both the importance of biographicity and the identification of plots, themes and *pre-occupations* used in the practice of Career Construction, will be central in this research and in the understanding of the meaning made by the adult participants in this research of their own stories. The identification of themes in the stories is part of my approach to their analysis. The concept of pre-occupations is key to

this thesis and will help to understand both the threads that link the chapters of stories, and to understand the ways in which those threads guide each of us toward the resolutions of felt minuses experienced in early life. The importance of the inclusion of narrative counselling and the identification of threads of meaning in lives and careers, will offer an argument for a counter narrative for careers work that supports the development of the skills of biographicity.

Overwhelmingly emerging approaches including 'Life Design' (Nota and Rossier, 2015) are, as asserted earlier, based epistemologically upon social constructionism and on career as a narrative. The terms constructionism, and social constructionism, as Young and Collin pointed out (2004), have been used erratically and interchangeably in careers literature. Referring to Savickas (1993;2000) they reflect upon the importance of including subjective as well as the traditional objective approaches in career and vocational counselling. Concurring with Richardson (2002) they note the move towards a subjective and relational perspective in career and vocational psychology. Moreover Young and Collin (2004) point out that the embracing of late modern thinking and cognitivism in the fields of counselling and psychotherapy preceded such moves toward constructionism in career theory. Put simply this is the process of meaning making within the psychology of an individual whereas social constructionism explores ways in which such constructions occur through social and cultural interaction. This places Life Design and narrative counselling firmly in the social constructionist camp and also frames the research in this thesis in the same epistemological space. This social constructionist position contradicts earlier notions of an essential, pre-ordained self with traits and qualities, but rather a selfhood that is constructed throughout a life narrative. However it also has its critics. Dumora et al (2011) express concern that what they see as an individualistic approach to career both fails to take account of objective aspects such as labour markets, and place agency at the centre of career management; thereby not addressing the needs of those from collectivist cultures where decisions are often made by families rather than by the individual. Such an approach of course is not the only service available to clients; information and advice must still be available. Furthermore the construction of a narrative should embrace the client's cultural context and their understanding of the opportunities available to them.

As discussed in the section of this chapter that considered the nature of the narrative, stories we tell about ourselves, whether in narrative form or elicited by a test, are done so at the behest of another. Their content and meaning reflects who we are telling the story to and why. We tell our story as our interpretation of what has gone before and what it meant or means to us. Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2011) seeks to make career and life narratives meaningful by enabling a client to construct their story, and then to de-construct it to establish the nature of the

micronarratives within; the vignettes that provide the scaffolding for any story. Then with the support of the counsellor they re-construct the narrative while identifying and taking into account what has gone before and what the connecting thread or threads might be.

Before finishing this section on career theory and practice and the literature that has informed it, I would like to pause for a moment to consider the purpose of this area of work: career counselling. Like the tensions between the economic and personal aspects of career (Barnes et al, 2011) the purpose of careers work also has a tension to be resolved. The economic arguments presented for careers work by government and policy makers must be balanced by the fulfilment and career happiness of the individual, or else we serve only the state. However without any economic benefits to state and individual, no service will exist. Furthermore there must be, it is argued (Watts and Herr, 1976; Hooley and Sultana, 2016) an overall social good at the heart of the work; a striving for social justice and equality of opportunity. As Dumora et al (2011) state, all clients may not have the agency needed for such an approach to be helpful. A tension then exists, which must be balanced and resolved between the individual and the common good. In a neoliberal, individualistic society that balance for some has been or is being lost (Irving, 2013; West, 2016) and one of the functions of careers work, that of the promotion of social justice, is undermined.

Earlier in this chapter there was consideration about the notion of free and autonomous choice about identity and a person's place in society. So with career choice it must be argued that choices are also made within a socially constructed framework. Soresi et al (2014), Savolainen (2001) and Archer et al (2013) emphasise the strength of influence of parents and family. Indeed whether a parent is engaged with directly or not, their influence is significant (Chant, 2011). The sociological critique of career theory that treats people as though they existed outside any cultural, economic or social context, was, as mentioned earlier, championed by Roberts (2005) in his description of the social and class structuring of career opportunities. Arulmani (2006) took these situational and contextual challenges further when he explored the contribution of ethno-cultural influences and expectations, particularly pertinent in this research. He emphasised the importance of the cultural preparedness of both client and counsellor (2012). The notion of career as inheritance may be familiar and offer stability in one context, and be limiting or constraining of individual freedoms in another. The threads of career run alongside those of lives lived, often entangled and shaping and reshaping each other. I argue in this thesis that far from being autonomous in career, individuals are subject to many external factors such as which opportunities are available to them, and how they perceive themselves in relation to those opportunities. Their responses, choices, preferences and goals are shaped by such external

factors and also internal, personal ones. It is this personal and private world of the individual that I will now turn.

The Private and Inner self; the micro world

In this chapter I have explored the impact of the historic and macro societal issues on an individual such as world events, class or multiculturalism. I have discussed the meso spheres of influence such as family, gender, class and ethnicity which connect the individual to the public world and which impact upon the development of identity, selfhood and personality. The place of career and work has been acknowledged as part of that meso shared space; a key aspect of and reflection of identity and how a person interacts with society, community and cultures.

In the final section of this chapter I explore the micro world; that private and personal world behind, but also reflected in masks and roles. I am minded not to adopt the metaphor of layers which must be peeled away to reveal the inner world, which being the deepest and contains the 'true' or 'essential' self that suggests some unchanging core of selfhood. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter the relationship between the private, the shared and the public spaces is a dynamic one and is not one directional and so any 'essential self' that remains constant is unlikely to exist. Wright-Mills (1959) describes how society has an impact on an individual, as public issues result in private troubles. However the shared space within which identity is shaped by both private troubles and public issues. It is also clear from history and the stories in this thesis, that private troubles can and do shape actions, ideas and beliefs, which in turn can result in the changing of the public sphere and either ameliorate public issues or result in new ones. There is a dynamic interdependency between all of these spheres, and selfhood inhabits not one but all. Moreover I propose that rather than being isolated from the context of a person, their connections, relationships and place in the world, the private world is created *through and because* of such dynamics and not isolated from them. Further, it may be that behaviours in those contexts and the details of lives lived, rather than being caused by the self within, are small windows through which the private world is understood. The behaviours, roles played and masks worn, like different coloured glass in a window will colour what is understood of the private and micro world of the individual. In the context of this thesis the understanding of the micro world illuminates the psychological drivers of the shape of the stories of the participants. In relation to the development of career counselling the understanding of this space ensures that due consideration is given to such psychological factors in the choices people make and the lives that they live.

The inner world described by Freud (1961) focussed on the role of drives (sexual/ pleasure) in a person and the impact of the suppression of such drives. He refers to the micro world as the 'id' (drives and instincts) the 'ego, or I' (the reality of the person's behaviour and personality) and 'super ego' (the person's moral framework). He argues that the personality and behaviour of individuals is largely a product of the tensions between these aspects of the person. He describes a process where pressure builds within the ego when drives (the id) are suppressed, perhaps because of a need to remain safe, and that such suppression is at the root of psychological distress (1961). Freud's work offers some insights into the relationships of the participants in this research with their parents and siblings, particularly for S, and about the suppression of feelings and frustrations indicated in all three of the stories. However it is not Freud's work that I draw upon to any great extent in this thesis, it is his contemporary and critic Alfred Adler.

Adler, referred to earlier in this chapter, developed the ideas of 'Individual Psychology' in the early part of the 20th century (1923). He was interested in the individual and their path through life and, as I do, wondered about their identities and their ambitions. His work and ideas provide a useful insight into the development of an individual's pathway and goal and even their quest (Taylor, 1992 cited in Savickas, 2011) and have thereby proved helpful in the understanding of the development of career. A key idea of his was that individuals are drawn towards power and powerfulness and that this quest shapes an individual's goal and the achievement of the 'self-ideal'. Adlerian thinking proposes that this goal of the self-ideal is laid down very early in the life of an individual. During the early years of childhood it is suggested that a 'prototype' is created in the mind of the child that forms the basis of the future goal. However in his 1931 work he explains that rather than this being about determinism, it is not the early experiences themselves but rather it is the meaning given to those experiences by the individual that shape their goals. So he asserts that two people could have similar early experiences that would pre-empt very different lives. With regard to my research this balances some concerns about accuracy of recall or 'truth' because it is the meaning that the teller derives from the memory that is of interest rather than the memory itself. It is a form of auto-noetic consciousness (Horsdal, 2012) that enables the teller to reconnect with feelings and experiences and to place these in a continuum with the present and with a possible future. This will be important later in this thesis when I present my analysis of this research.

Adler (1927) wrote much about the effect of physical disability, neglect and the 'pampered' child and the impact these early experiences have on the development of a prototype self-ideal and subsequent goal. He asserts that the individual needs to overcome feelings of inadequacy by achieving powerfulness. He introduced the concept of the 'felt minus' and of inferiority that drive

the individual towards a 'desired plus' of personal development and, to some extent, superiority. The 'self-ideal' or 'ideal self' is a private and intimate goal but Individual Psychology does not ignore the bigger picture. The individual is considered always in the context of their relationship with others. In his 'Three Tasks for Life' Adler (1927) proposed that every individual has three main problems to solve in their relation to the world around them: the task of building successful relationships (social interaction), the pursuit of a socially useful occupation (career/job), and the establishment of an intimate relationship (reproduction).

These tasks are reminiscent of the *Vita Activa* referred to earlier (Arendt, 1958). In the first two, the structure and functioning of society has an impact upon the solution for the individual. The individual is not considered as separate from society, rather as an essential part of it whose purpose is to be 'useful'. In Adlerian approaches social conscience and actions relating to it remains an integral part of the journey towards the fulfilment of 'self-ideal' and the healing of the 'felt minus'.

This forward looking, goal driven model has much to offer careers guidance and counselling and Adler's work has been at the heart of the work of Mark Savickas (2009) who developed a narrative approach based upon it: Career Construction Theory (2011). The practice of this approach has at its core the role of the practitioner as enabling a client to construct their story, re-construct its meaning and co-construct ways forward that are congruent with the clarification of their life theme (Savickas, 2001). The Adlerian notion of felt minus moving to a desired plus is fundamental to a career context in which a person is 'actively mastering what has been passively suffered' because by 'moving from victim to victor the individual turns tensions into intension, pre-occupation into occupation' (Savickas, 2011:33). Both the original Adlerian concept and Savickas's work draws upon specific experiences and memories, and on how the meaning made by early experiences (rather than the experiences themselves) may shape the self-ideal goal which in turn may drive the choices made or directions taken. It may be however that in today's context the notion of a self-ideal (thread, goal, or pre-occupation) has a greater complexity. As referred to earlier, Frosh (1991) charts the impact of modern life on notions of identity and the development of self. He poses that humans are inherently social and interdependent creatures and that modern life has imposed an unnatural isolation, responsibility and expectation upon the individual. In such times the complexities of an individual's story and their struggles to understand it may be challenging and the need to recognise the threads that link the micronarratives into a longer term micronarrative, ever more important. Savickas (2011) suggests that the construction of the self 'is a life project' (loc.361). When understood as chapters in a story rather than the story itself, these episodes, fluctuations from the plan or challenges no

longer dominate or define the outcome but contribute to it. Such a social constructionist approach to career work was discussed earlier in this chapter. Enabling biographicity, (Alheit, 1995; Savickas, 2011), the ability to navigate and re-author one's own story, takes the long view and responds to the world around the individual, enabling them to maintain continuity in that micro space while the outside world twists and turns around them. Pre-occupation, according to Savickas (2011) is both the underlying thread that enables such biographicity to guide the path of the individual, and the Adlerian goal that they are trying to achieve.

Jung was also a critique and contemporary of Freud. Where Adlerian Individual Psychology is teleological ie goal oriented, Jung's approach to the understanding of the micro world was entitled 'individuation'; the forging of links between the conscious and unconscious such that a wholeness is achieved that reconciles different aspects of a personality (Fordham, 1991). Unlike the Adlerian prototype this is not conceived early in life but during the maturation of an individual and has some congruence with Super's life stages (1951;1957). It may be that this describes the process that is experienced by the participants in this research in the telling of their stories. I propose that Jungian ideas offer this thesis a threefold insight. First is this notion of individuation; the relationship between and process of connecting the conscious and unconscious. Secondly there is the Jungian concept of the *persona*; that mask that he suggests is attributed to the role played in society and through which a relationship with the world is established. This, he asserts is part of the conscious psyche and has much in common with what Goffman (1959) later described as role playing and performance in social interactions. Finally there are the now familiar terms of extrovert and introvert psychological types. The extrovert type, possibly favoured in western culture, is outward facing and individualistic. The introvert type could be considered more spiritual (Eastern?) and inward facing. Fordham (1991) in her reflections on these three key thinkers proposes that the ideas of Freud relate closely to the extrovert type as it examines behaviours and events. She proposes that both Jung and Adler adhere more closely to the introvert as they focus on inner attitudes. Although only one of the participants in this research claims to be introvert, these concepts will be helpful in the understanding of the inner thoughts and meanings of the participants' stories and their career paths. Moreover, in particular Jung's thoughts on the place of faith and religious observance contributes to the understanding of the place that plays in each of the stories. He posited that religious belief and observances provide a dynamic expression of the unconscious in the public space (Struck, 1956). Emanating from the micro, subjective and intimate world, it connects the meso and macro worlds. It is no surprise therefore that in the stories of the participants in this research, faith and religious conviction and

identities play a strong part in the shaping of each of their identities and their career too, as for all of them religious faith touched their micro, meso and macro worlds.

In examining the micro world of the individual the work of two further key writers and thinkers are helpful. The first is Donald Winnicott whose work explores the early interactions between infant and primary carer and the processes of developing independence through transitional spaces such as playfulness, and notions of self and other in the young child (Winnicott, 1971). His interest is on the private subjective world but also on how it is objectively shaped and also revealed by interactions around that world. His work is a commentary on the premature birth of the infant human and its consequential exaggerated dependence on its mother as compared with other animals. The resulting need for highly developed social interactions and relationships led to the introduction of his term 'good enough' to explain the qualities needed in the relationship between the child and primary care giver, so that the child feels confident enough to explore increasing independence without fear of rejection. This term also refers to the importance of the balance needed in the assessment of risk so that a child has the freedom and confidence to take appropriate risks and the ability to do so. Winnicott thereby comments on the dangers of overprotection which can cause anxiety and a lack of curiosity in the young child. Adler writes about the 'pampered child' but is perhaps more concerned with the outcomes of such early imbalance and the impact on their feelings of inferiority (Adler, 1923). In this thesis there is an example of how it felt to be kept 'too safe' and the reactions to that experience from one of my participants. There are insights into the consequences of separation between mother and child, of damaged relationships and of preoccupations in life initiated by such early experiences.

The final theorist I include in this review of literature is Axel Honneth. His ideas concur with the methodology of this research; he recognised the importance of biography in the attainment of freedom and autonomy and in the need for recognition of the self by the self, and by others. Honneth also encourages the notion of individuals as writers of their own destiny and liberation (Honneth, 2009) and suggests that there are three key requirements for the individual to master such agency and to gain recognition in society (1995a). I will show in this thesis that recognition is an important element in the stories of all three of the participants in this research. Honneth asserts that the identity of the individual is dependent upon such recognition. The first requirement for recognition he asserts is the love and support of family; if a child is loved s/he can love themselves and others. This allows for the first of the three essential attributes, self-confidence. The second requirement is that of self-respect which is supported by the legal and moral rights of the individual so that they are sure of their dignity and equality within a society and their ability to participate in public life alongside others. The third is that of self-esteem which

Honneth says requires the recognition of the individual by others around them, and the celebration of the contribution that individual brings to society. This could perhaps be equated to job satisfaction and career happiness. These three self-relations Honneth argues are essential for the individual to gain self as well as public recognition and freedom to realise their personal and social potentials. Love of self and of others, dignity and recognition in law, and the approval and acceptance of others in society sit comfortably along with Adler's 'three tasks of life' referred to earlier. These three requirements for recognition may then provide a useful link between the relationship between the inner world of the individual and its interdependence with the meso and macro experiences of lives lived.

In this section I have discussed the ideas of key writers on the psychology of the micro world. The earlier writing and theories of Adler and Jung, and to a lesser extent Freud, provide some possible insights into the drives, goals and search for wholeness of my participants. Winnicott illuminates the very earliest experiences of helplessness and dependency and the building of the first relationships. Finally I considered Honneth's ideas about the need for recognition and the development of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. None of these ideas or theories will be embraced universally at the exclusion of others, and all are reflections of the times in which they were written. However together they will help me to gain an understanding of the stories told by the participants in this research; to interpret the meaning made of them and what they offer the development of career counselling practice in terms of consideration of the micro as well as the meso and macro worlds of a client.

Summary

In this chapter I have explored a range of literature that offers insight into the relationship between the individual and the world around them. The concepts of the individual and their micro, meso and macro worlds has structured the chapter and presented a summary of the literature providing a context for this research as well as providing many voices of commentary, opinion and critique.

In this thesis I draw upon this literature to understand the meaning made of the stories by my participants as expressed in the material gathered in this research. The literature suggests that an outward expression of identity or identities is a transient thing, constructed, reconstructed and co-constructed in different ways, in different contexts and with different people. It is sculpted by cultural, sociological and historical events and meaning and cannot be understood without such factors. One of the ways it is expressed is through career, perhaps one of the most visible and tangible expressions of identity, but also subject to interpretation, expectation, and nuance.

Literature about career has been examined for its meaning, socially and personally. Theories and approaches to careers practice have been examined with reference to the relative autonomy of the individual and their cultural heritage, and to the changing nature of the world of work in which it operates. The intimate or micro world of the individual has been considered and key theories explored in order to acknowledge the part played by this most subjective of spaces in a world, labour market, career and life that is evermore complex, rationalised and impersonal.

Literature relating to narratives has been included in this chapter with respect to both the nature of the material gathered in this research and to the epistemology and methodological approach taken. This will be examined further in the following chapter on the methodology of the research and which tells the story of the research, the choices made and their justification.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter outlines the story of the research and the methodological approach taken in this thesis. Drawing upon relevant literature I will present my argument for the way in which this research was conducted and explore the choices made.

Throughout the research and experiences accompanying it, I have kept a reflective journal (see App F) which documents my feelings, concerns, and personal journey of learning. Although not included in the material of this thesis it has informed my ideas and inner dialogue throughout this extraordinary chapter of my life.

My choice of methodology was not an easy one. Originally schooled in a positivist, objective, rational Popper-like (Thornton, 2015) scientific approach to research; the concept that an individual's narrative could tell us anything useful was initially an uncomfortable one (See extracts from my research journal App F extract 1). Popper was well known for his distrust of qualitative disciplines and felt that such interpretative 'sciences' were highly suspect as they were not possible to disprove (or prove). I had similar concerns. Furthermore, that reflections on my own biography could contribute to research felt indulgent and narcissistic. Reflexivity was not something that I had more than a nodding acquaintance with and even then more concerned with reflective practice than an examination of the place of internal conversations of a researcher in their research. However the reading for this work and the research itself have enabled me to challenge my concerns and I have come to consider research as an activity that extends our understanding of the world around us, and within us. Both Etherington (2004) and Gilgun (2010) encourage qualitative researchers to adopt a reflexive approach; an awareness of their place in their work. They assert that reflexivity supports research by helping researchers to understand the rationale for the topics explored, the perspectives of the participants and other stakeholders, and also that of the readers or audience of the research. Any rigorous approach to the deepening of understanding, I now argue is research. More of this a little later, but earlier concerns about the nature of truth have subsided (but perhaps not always disappeared) as I acknowledge that fiction has been one of the most important ways in which I have learnt about what it is to be human in all its complexities. I believe that this thesis responds to Gilgun's (2010) three areas of reflexivity; my place in the research and the rationale for the topic, the perspectives of the participants, and in addition, the subjectivity of the reader.

A methodology provides the most appropriate way in which to address the research questions posed, and so first I needed to establish the nature of the knowledge this research sought to

illuminate. That knowledge is in this case an understanding of the meaning made by the participants of their stories as they were told. As each participant had multiple, sometimes contested and ambiguous identities, I aimed in particular to understand how such meaning might contribute to;

- the expression of influences of multiple heritages in relation to their career pathways.

And;

- how pre-occupations and lived lives might inform the development of career counselling in a society and labour market no longer defined by bounded people or careers.

It was clear that ontologically this work would be qualitative, seeking to understand the meaning behind the stories of the participants rather than seeking out generalizable facts or features that could be applied elsewhere (Bell,1993; Hollway and Jefferson,2000). Interest in people's lives requires their telling and so at the centre of the epistemology is the use of, and exploration of, narrative. The aim is not about establishing cause and effect but about the subjective understanding of the meaning that the participants make from the process of telling their stories, as well as the stories themselves. Moreover it is about the subjective meaning that the researcher makes from hearing them from the perspective in this case of a friend, the cousin of the teller, and the teller themselves. This involves a deeply reflexive process of exploration of relationships, identities and meaning making in the study of biographical and autobiographical materials. As Bruner (1990) points out, in autobiography the narrator and the subject are the same but separated by time. As the story progresses the separation of time becomes smaller until the two merge. The relationships to be considered therefore also include that of the narrator to their earlier self. Schafer (1981) posed that stories about ourselves told to another are in effect 'double narratives' because we are telling the other as well as telling ourselves the story. Savickas (2011) later described this process as, 'we tell stories as the stories tell us'. It is an iterative co-construction between teller, told and the tale itself.

The research demands an epistemological approach that recognises the relationship between the researcher and the individual telling their story. When I had decided to include my own story which has instigated the research questions, the complexities increased. I needed to explore the impact on my interpretation of the stories of my relationships with the participants, but also that of my own story and my interpretation of it. The auto/biographical (Merrill and West, 2009) approach offered the most congruence with these dynamics; recognising the co-construction of

the interpretation and meaning making processes by me as researcher and interviewer, and those telling me their story.

An alternative approach might have been that of case study research (Yin, 2003), laying out each case and exploring them in turn. Case study research explores individual features of a case or cases in order to consider how they may have an impact on processes and so may be useful to illustrate a larger scale survey or study to inform future policy and practice in, for example, career services. Like auto/biographical research case studies are not intended to offer firm generalisations, although what Bassey (1999) refers to as 'fuzzy generalisations' may be common to both. However a case study approach would not give space for the interrelationships that this work contained. Moreover it can seek a level of objectivity that is not possible or desirable in this work.

An alternative narrative approach may have been the Objective Hermeneutics proposed by Oevermann and his colleagues (Oevermann et al, cited in Denzin, 1989). However as pointed out by critics, this attempt to tie down facts and truths rather than interpretation and meaning would not have illuminated stories such as these with such complex dynamics between researcher and participants. Schutze (1983) combined Objective Hermeneutics in a biography with the subjective meaning given to it by the teller. He also incorporated the theory building processes of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992) to address the ongoing debate about validity, reliability and generalization. These are concerns dealt with differently in this work and explored a little later in this chapter but it is useful to point out here that the hermeneutic thesis in this work was never intended to be objective or to offer comparisons through the use of coding as Grounded Theory does. That said the notion of the iterative processes required in Grounded Theory in the establishment of theory from data, does have some resonance with this work. During the analysis of each of the participants' stories there was indeed an iterative cycle of listening to the recordings, reading and re-reading transcripts and immersing myself in all the material collected in whatever way. Any thoughts of themes or meaning from the materials were considered reflexively with regard to the research questions. However in this case it was not in a process of theory building that the iterative process was found, but in the gradual insight into meaning.

So after consideration of some of the alternative methodologies, that of auto/biography was embraced. Auto/biographical work is not a combination of autobiography and biography. The '/' in the term 'auto/biographical' is not so much a form of punctuation as it is an illustration of the interplay and relationship between my story and theirs (Merrill and West, 2009). It does not have

to contain autobiography as part of the material to be explored, although in this case it does. My story influences theirs and the telling of their stories influences mine.

As the focus of the work is the early experience of individuals of mixed heritage and experience, I identified three people, all of whom have experienced mixed cultural influence in their early years. The choice of participants was largely opportunistic; women whom I knew, whom I could access and who were interested in this work. As well as my initial discomfort with the methodology I was also unsure about such a subjective sampling (See App F extract no 2). Once it was clear that I would tell my own story I was initially concerned about who else and how many other participants I should include. I had identified five or six possible participants just through conversations with friends and family. Discussions with my supervisors (See App F extract 3) challenged my thinly veiled discomfort with small numbers of participants and literature including that on single case research enabled me to understand the contribution that 'thick and rich' (Geertz, 1973) detail can contribute to understanding in qualitative research.

I began by reflecting upon what had brought me to this area of research. I came to understand that my own experience of growing up as a mixed race child was pivotal to my interest, as was my fascination with the different trajectories of my cousins and sibling. And so the three people's stories I explore in my research are that of my cousin, that of a friend and also of me. The decision only to explore the lives of women was not because of any particular desire to have a feminist or female-centric flavour to the work, but because the inclusion of a man or men as participant/s would have added an additional layer of complexity to both the stories and importantly to my interpretation and relationship with them. The aim is not to compare or contrast the stories but nonetheless this seemed to be one layer of nuance that would not improve or add to the research. That said the absence of gender difference in my participants does not remove the gendered nature and indeed the class-based nature of the stories (Denzin,1989).

Before exploring the details of the research methods used, it may be useful first to look at two issues that emerge from this methodological approach. The first is to explore my early concerns of validity and usefulness and that of its critics. The second is related to the first; whose meaning does this work explore: that of the participant, that of the researcher, or that of the reader of the thesis?

Validity; that something has value and a contribution to offer is I believe largely established in the rigour of the approach to the collection of the material. As far as possible I have recognised the methodological assumptions made or potentially made (Hollway and Jefferson,2000). There is, for example the possible assumption that each of the participants had the same understanding about

the focus of the work and their place in it. The focus of the research evolved during the process of the research and the understanding of it is interrogated in the analysis of the material. Another assumption may be that the dialogue in the interviews, particularly my contributions, could shape the responses of the participants. Such subjectivity is both acknowledged and embraced within the auto/biographical approach and is extended to the analysis. Validity is also claimed by the way in which the work considers the relationship 'between past and present and the researcher and the researched' (Merrill and West, 2009:163) and in the acknowledgement of the fragility of memories and their construction from the present. Later I will explain the standardised approach to analysis using a proforma from Merrill and West (2009) which explores such processes and contributes to the work's validity.

Reliability is a term associated with the repeatability that is so crucial in positivist research. In such approaches the same experiment must be able to reliably produce the same results by the same or by other researchers. However reliability in this work and using this methodology is embedded into the rigour in which the research has been conducted; the respect paid to the participants and to their stories. The term 'trustworthiness' is therefore more appropriate in this thesis than reliability. This, according to Merrill and West (2009) includes consideration of and responses to the ethical issues associated with the work. They include procedural matters such as gaining consent, maintaining confidentiality and I would add, the transparency of the process of recording and transcribing the interview/s. They also raise issues about boundaries between research and therapy, and awareness of the value basis of the research conducted such as respect, being non-judgemental and maintaining a safe space in which the participant is not exploited or harmed. I had to be mindful that this was not a career counselling session or therapy. It may be that some therapeutic effects are a possible outcome and that some clarity about career may also be achieved, but it had to be clear in my own mind and in my preamble with the participants that these conversations were about research. There are also concerns about the relationships between researcher and participant before, during and after the research which is particularly pertinent in this work. Ellis (2004) reflected on the ethical challenges of using ourselves in our own research, such as the extent of acceptable self-disclosure, boundaries and their impact on the reader, an issue also addressed in Liz Stanley's paper (1993) in which she reflects upon her experience of her mother's stroke. The level to which it is useful and relevant to divulge personal or intimate stories is of course an individual one for the researcher to decide, but for me the issue is whether the turning of the private into the public serves to address the research question/s posed and that was the line I drew. Josselson (2011) put the responsibility of the researcher most eloquently;

But as narrative researchers, we retain a responsibility to protect those who inform us, even as we return to our colleagues to relate our own narrative of what we believe we have learned. The limits that we must impose on ourselves here reflect the fact that the data that we are dealing with is core, central, important. These are not aggregated peripheral variables we are studying, but the axis on which people's lives turn. (2011:34)

Generalisation is, as already pointed out, not the aim of this work as the interest is in the particularities of each story rather than in any generalizable truths uncovered. But, like the notion of not being able to step twice into the same stream because the water has moved on, the same interview cannot be conducted again. It is a moment in time between two people and is unique. That said such particularities can provide insight into commonalities between stories and experiences and it is from these that we can gain deeper understanding.

My enthusiasm and excitement in the early stages of this work was real, but as I have indicated was tempered by a voice of commentary and criticism from my past experience of research (See App F extracts 2 and 11). My first career was in Stem Cell growth factor research and my first exploration into doctoral research was in this field. It was an exciting time for this work, in the 1980s this was ground breaking and offered (as it does today) much potential for advancement in medicine and our understanding of how cells behave and sometimes mis-behave. We were searching for answers, for truths that lay hidden in the complexity of communication between cells and chemicals and the signals they gave. Somewhere in all that complexity lay an answer to how we could understand such communication and thereby control it or at least interfere with it. So what was the truth, the answer that my current research was seeking 30 years later? I found myself stumbling for words of explanation and justification when friends and family asked about this. I suspect I was stumbling because I was not sure of the answers to these questions when I asked myself. Finding out how cells communicate and behave has clear benefits for humanity. Diseases can be cured or treated, and lives improved. How could my current research come close to these goals? How could an exploration of three women's stories, one being my own, match such clear claims of advancement?

In order to explore this personal dilemma I considered a parallel battle of validity; that of classical versus contemporary Art (See App F extract 11). Although interested in Art I do not suggest any particular knowledge about it. However I, like many others have struggled to understand and appreciate some artistic genres. We can all appreciate when a piece of Art is so skilfully executed that it 'looks real'. But its function is more than to copy reality. Even a photograph does not simply copy reality; why then would we pose, choose an expression or compose the shot (Barthes,1993)? Classical Art, it could be argued no more represents reality than does contemporary work. It presents the human form, pictures of social contexts and preferred norms and makes political and often religious comments to communicate messages of power and status.



Figure 1. Arnolfini and his wife. By Jan van Eyck

An example of this could be the Flemish artists including Jan van Eyck. Two of his most celebrated works, 'Arnolfini and his wife' and 'Madonna with Canon van der Paele' illustrate this well. In the first the wealthy merchant is pictured with his pregnant wife. He is dressed richly in furs and gestures as though to bless her and she looks demurely down. What is less clear is the meaning behind the shoes on the floor, the small dog at her feet and the mirror showing their backs on the wall.

The meaning in the 'Madonna' on first looking is also clear.

The work was commissioned by the wealthy Canon and portrays him in close proximity to and in adoration of the mother of Christ who sits in her lap. Behind him is a Crusader and to the other side of the Madonna is the Bishop. But what of the glasses in his hands, the gesture of the soldier and of



Figure 2 Madonna with Canon van der Paele. By Jan van Eyck

course the green parrot clutched by the Madonna and the Christ child?

Moreover to our modern eye the Child appears old, not young and beautiful. He looks troubled by the Canon at whom He and His mother look directly although he in turn averts their gaze.

While making no claims of being an Art expert or interpreter it is the story and meaning that the artist appears to be trying to communicate that is of most

interest to me, not so much the exquisite skill and genius exhibited by the art. In Jan van Eyck's portrait of Jean Arnolfini and Jeanne de Chenamy his wife, much of what is in the painting has meaning beyond the reality of what would have naturally been in the room. Oranges indicated wealth and health. His wife is portrayed as heavily pregnant but there was no record of them ever having children and she died a year after the painting was completed. The custom at the time was to paint women as pregnant because fertility was of course their main function. In the mirror two other people can be seen entering the room. One may have been the painter himself as the inscription above the mirror reads "Jan van Eyck was here, 1434".

In his painting of the Madonna with Canon van der Paele, there is also an abundance of symbolism, much of which would have been understood by viewers at the time. Had Barthes (1993) examined the composition of this painting in the same way he explored that of photographs, we may conclude that the meaning within this painting goes beyond the obvious staging of the commissioner alongside the Madonna and the Christ child, the parrot and the soldier.



Figure 3. *Mother and Child divided*. By Damien Hirst

Much of contemporary or 'modern art' attracts criticisms of sensationalism, shock tactics and challenges what Art is and is not. My purpose here is not to engage in that debate. However if we consider perhaps one of today's most famous proponents of such work, Damien Hirst, it may be that there are more similarities with van Eyck than there are differences. How does the 'Mother and Child divided' make us feel? What is the story and the meaning of

the 'Two parrots and the grotesque baby'?

I admit to not enjoying the experience of looking at these but they intrigue me. What made him create such pieces? Or, cynically, was he just playing with us, fooling the buying public into believing there is meaning and gravitas where there is none? Was van Eyck doing the same when he took money from Canon van der Paele, only to put him under the accusing gaze of the Madonna and Christ



Figure 4. *Two parrots and the grotesque baby*. By Damien Hirst

child, his own looking away perhaps in shame? The meaning then is perhaps often not in what we see, or hear or read, but in the meaning behind a work's creation. Moreover the meaning for the artist may not be the same as that of the subjects or the observer.

So returning from this sojourn to the auto/biographic methodology; like an artist the researcher is not only acknowledged but is in the work itself. It is an interpretation, a meaning that is different to any other interpretation. This brings me to my second question, that of authorship. The word suggests 'authority' and many writers have offered thoughts on the complex dance between the writer and the written about. Foucault (2004) had a particular concern with authority and the power it yielded, in particular within language. The author of a narrative has the power and control to include or to exclude. In terms of my work the original author is of course the participant whose story is transcribed. However as the researcher and analyst I take over the authorship and authority and power both within the conversation and throughout the analysis of those conversations. In Philip Barker's (1998) commentary about Foucault's work he points out a further contribution to this issue of authorship. He explains Foucault's commentary on the relationship between the author and the subject, about which they write as posing that the two 'fold into each other' (1998:7) as a result of the favoured discourses of the time. Furthermore 'favoured discourses' may include those about methodologies that are more or less accepted by the academy and so it may be that as interpretative methodologies gain in acceptance, so will the validity of the subjective interpretation of the stories in this thesis. Much as the symbolism and conceptual nature of some Art has gained in understanding and acceptability so gradually is interpretative research.

Barthes (1977) poses that the very act of writing reduces the subject, the author, to 'lose its origin' (p.142) and that therefore writing or narrating eliminates the author and hands over the meaning of what is written to the reader. He also warns against analysis of text that is too reductive. He describes isolated sentences as a single flower in a bouquet. We are reminded by Barthes therefore not to assume ownership or authority either by the writer or the reader. Meaning is co-constructed by the subject of the writing, the author and the reader. In the context of my work the meaning I may extract from the analysis of transcripts is a unique co-construction by my participant (my cousin or my friend), our relationship, my analysis of those conversations and the experience of the reader. The boundaries between the contributions in construction of writer, written about and reader are blurred. The transcribed interviews are a conversation between me and the participant. I am transcribing my own words as well as theirs. What I say has an impact on what they say and what they say influences my response. What we both say is influenced by our shared histories, our relationship and the place and context we are in at the

time. The interpretation of those transcripts by me is an interpretation not only based on the words heard and typed but on my memories and thoughts at the time and of the time. When this thesis is read there is a further interpretation. One early reader asked about the Feminist meanings within the transcript, another commented on echoes of Jewish history. Each has his or her interpretation, expectation and response to the meaning I make of these stories.

In my earlier encounters with research I was exploring communication and behaviour between cells and trying to understand it. In my current research I am I believe doing much the same albeit on a larger scale. Perhaps the usefulness is of a different nature, and its transferability less clear. Clearly the exploration of the meaning within a Shakespearean play provides insight into the experience of being human, even if it transpires that Shakespeare did not write it himself. The meaning of each play and sonnet will be nuanced for each reader or actor but such stories, like those of my participants I believe will add to the understanding we have of lived lives.

Story telling and the use of narrative to understand the meaning that is made of them by tellers and hearers, particularly in research, has its origins in feminist research. Richardson (2012) relates the social constructionist approach taken in this thesis both to feminist and social equity values. The relationship between Feminism and Feminist literature and the methodology for this work was emphasised by Neilson (1990), referring to the paradigm changing work of Oakley (1981). As Josselson also describes (2009), Oakley found the expected sterile and impersonal approach of the researcher problematic and moved away from attempting the scientific style; rather she engaged in a two-way dialogue. This move to the Hermeneutic Tradition embraced the interpretation not only of text, but also of social interaction. Neilson (1990) points out that the feminist challenge to previous androgenic, objective methodologies resulted in the growth of the feminist methodologies that embraced different ways of knowing and understanding experiences; particularly those of women. Such approaches require a reflexivity previously not felt necessary and an acknowledgement of previous 'gender asymmetry' (1990:72). The move towards the use of oral history is central to feminist inquiry because it is 'a basic tool in our efforts to incorporate the previously overlooked lives, activities and feelings of women' (p.95).

As explored by Josselson (2011), different researchers can find different material and come to different interpretations of the same story. She explains that this is in part because of the behaviour of the researcher and their relationship with the participant, but also because of different levels of importance given by different researchers to themes or issues in the story. My earlier minimal engagement with the feminist themes in one transcript, on reflection may have illustrated my own perceived neutrality on the subject. However as well as the subjectivity of the

research we must also acknowledge that of the reader of the research. In some of her earlier work Josselson (2009) illustrated the complexity that is memory, on which narratives are drawn. She explains that in a longitudinal study layers of memory were elicited such that as the years progressed the meaning of memories appeared to change to preserve the favoured self and to diminish those identities that were less favourable. In this study (2009) it is also notable that the relationship between researcher and participant becomes important in the interpretation. Josselson acknowledges her admiration for the participant and there is an intimacy in the analysis of later scripts that is less evident in earlier ones.

Moreover in this thesis I also draw upon insights from post-colonial writers such as Bhabha (2004) and Said (1999). These as well as writers about multiculturalism (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997) not only inform the context of the stories told in this research, but also acknowledge the place of my own story in its methodology.

As referred to earlier, Etherington (2004) emphasised the importance of acknowledging the place of the researcher in research. Even the most 'scientific', objective and positivist research could bear the questioning of the researcher about the source of their interest and their question. Why might a scholar of English literature choose to research into the work of one particular author if the work of that author has not touched them in some way? Why might a medical researcher devote their life to the finding of a cure to a particular condition over another if they have never known someone or themselves experienced that condition? Or were they serendipitously presented with the opportunity? In either scenario why choose it? Without including the life or thoughts of the researcher we cannot be sure of the motives behind the work or the perspective taken. This is even more pertinent when the subject of the research is a person's story told to the researcher, and in which the researcher plays a part.

As my research topic and questions developed, I recognised that an exploration of 'rich and thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) within my own story and those of others, has the capacity to help to understand the meaning made of them by their tellers and thereby to move toward a better understanding of the complex issues behind the shaping of lives. A clearer understanding of the need to include an exploration of my own story in this research caused me to reflect on the reasons behind my interest in the study of lives and the shapes they have taken. My reflections centred around my awareness that I have been shaped by my own past, in particular by the competing forces or compromises that come from mixed heritage. In my own case this was an experience of mixed ethnicity, mixed faith, mixed social background, place and politics. For my participants it may be any or all of these as described by them in their stories.

This epistemological approach therefore cannot be accused of attempting to uncover facts or truths about a person's life in terms of an accurate account of events. Moreover it does not aim to identify patterns of behaviour or cause and effect that could be used to predict what others might do. Rather it allows the researcher to explore the richness of the stories. In so doing it is my interpretation of the meaning of those stories to the tellers that is of interest. It is the meaning that we make of our own stories that helps us to navigate life's richness and possibilities rather than adherence to any career model of matching and conformity.

The work of Merrill and West (2009) and Atkinson (1998) enabled me to understand the potential of auto/biographic approaches and life story to research, and that auto/biography is not simply the use of the researcher's story and those of participants, but the interaction of one with the other. This work has required the telling of my own story and an understanding of the relationship of that story with those of the others. The work of Jerome Bruner (1990) explores the intentions, conscious or subconscious, of the story teller, reflecting the observations cited earlier by Josselson (2009). Bruner proposed that the teller may want themselves and their story to be received in a favourable light, particularly if the power balance in the relationship is not even. Within my conversations with the participants there are elements of them wanting to be helpful and being keen for their story to meet my needs and be useful and acceptable. These nuances and dynamics in the processes of telling stories and interpreting them are important, not so that they can be eliminated but so that they can be acknowledged as part of the process of the research itself.

Methods

Before data, or material can be explored or analysed it must be produced or gathered, therefore the quality and validity of any analysis relies heavily upon that of the material itself (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). As discussed above, in order to explore the subjective nature of my interest in this research topic I needed to tell my own story. This was done by reflecting upon a series of images that, for reasons unclear to me, sit somewhere quite prominent in my mind. As Bruner (1990) has pointed out, memories are not buried treasures that we dig up, unchanged from the day they were formed, but are constructed by the present self, trying to make sense of the past. Thus I am not clear how accurate were these images or the feelings they were associated with. Donald Spence refers to this as 'narrative truth' (1982); the historical accuracy being less important than what it may mean about the author's thoughts and interpretations. Consciously or unconsciously what these reflections highlighted was a story of otherness, of search for identity and of a creation and re-creation of self-concept. Horsdal (2012) comments that in

particular autobiographical memory requires the ability to remember the selves of today in the past, what she describes as 'mental time travel' (2012:49). It is a process in which we understand the past from the context of the present and indeed in order to make some sense of the present. This is what emerged; it seemed to me that struggles for clarity of identity and belonging had also resonated in the career choices and changes that I had made. This was then the germination of my interest and led to the development of the research question/s. I wondered whether there was any relationship between my struggle with identity and my career choices. I could of course have confined my research to that one story but two other people (G and S) had expressed an interest in my research. Furthermore at this stage the notion of only exploring my own life story was ontologically still too uncomfortable. So I then moved on to explore the stories of my 'other' participants. Both women had expressed an interest in my research and had offered to take part. Although initially concerned about the partiality of my relationship with each of them, I soon recognised that this was an additional dimension that was better to embrace and explore rather than to try to exclude. Even if I were to work with someone with whom I had no previous relationship, there would be a relationship of researcher and participant, and that may be more difficult to understand and explore.

I explained the initial focus of my interest to both G and S and asked them to read a briefing sheet which outlined their role in the work if they chose to be involved, including practicalities about recording and storing the interview/s. When they agreed I asked them to sign a consent form. (See Appendix A). The idea of such informed consent is also a contested one because however rigorous the briefing and consent neither the researcher nor participant are clear where the research may take them, and so there are real gaps in the informed nature of any consent given. Although the analysis would be of the transcripts of their stories, I still wonder whether they were aware of the intimate and potentially intrusive nature of that analysis. I continue to feel uneasy about this because although it is the transcripts that are analysed it is hard to establish a clear space between the transcript and the person. Analysis of the transcripts makes me very conscious of the privileged position I have as a researcher and therefore the responsibility to treat their stories with great respect.

Whilst maintaining my own reflective writing, I began the research by interviewing G, using a loosely structured approach so that although the key area of interest was clear, she had the opportunity to take the story to wherever she felt appropriate. Care had to be taken not to ask leading questions, or to try to impose meaning on what was being said during the interview. As a career counsellor I found it difficult not to review, summarise and lead the conversation to some useful conclusion which would be my natural tendency. A more structured interview would run

the risk of leading the conversation into too narrow a gully created by my own thoughts rather than those of the participant. An unstructured interview in which the narration is uninterrupted (Horsdal, 2012) may have been interesting and helpful to the participant, but may not have illuminated my research questions at all. The interviews were conducted after having first explained that I was interested in their stories, life and career, and their early experiences of mixed or conflicting identities. During each interview I made every effort not to lead the conversation but if something of particular interest was said I would say, 'that's interesting can you tell me a little more about....', or 'can you remember how that felt?'. In a follow up or second interview I had more specific questions about a topic that had emerged in the first one and about which I wanted to know more. All the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. The transcripts were given to the participants to check for accuracy. In G's case after a period of time for reflection I interviewed her again, asking her about her experience and thoughts of the first interview and her comments on the transcript. (See Appendix B for examples of worked transcripts).

The context for my interviews with G reflected upon and was significant in terms of my relationship with her and with her husband who had at the time also been my parish priest. However the complexities of relationships and the ensuing story was particularly pertinent with my second participant, my cousin S.

I wrote about and have included in chapter seven an account of the time spent with her during a weekend when two interviews were recorded. Although this writing was initially part of my reflective research journal, as it developed I became aware that the experiences that weekend were too rich to leave out of the work. As Richardson (2017) proposed, the writing became a method of inquiry itself and as well as developing the reflexivity needed in this research. Its usefulness in reflecting upon both professional and personal experience was argued by Bolton (2006) who set such processes in the natural arena of storytelling and its place in understanding and remembering. Whilst taking care to preserve the anonymity of all concerned as far as possible, I used this writing to reflect upon the weekend I spent with S and on what I had heard, seen, said and felt during that time and what it might offer in terms of my understanding of, and place in, the stories we explored. In addition, as a poet and family archivist there are other sources of material included in my analysis. S's poems tell about aspects of her (and my) story in a poignant way. Her collection of family photographs and artefacts are also full of significance for her and for me. Furthermore our shared family stories were embodied within that weekend; the photographs, singing and embraces found their place in our stories and in my writing (Meekums, 2008). In addition I also conducted a lengthy and again loosely structured interview with S. This

was also transcribed and shared with her. There were no changes that she asked me to undertake on this transcript. (See Appendix B.ii for a section of worked transcript).

Returning to my own reflective writing, thoughts about which had prompted the initial interest in this research, I recognised that my story required a fuller exploration. My reflections were interesting, even revealing but gave little insight into how my adult life had unfolded. My options were broad (See App F extract 13). I could have written a more comprehensive autobiographical account of my life and thoughts. I could have recorded an interview with a third party about my life. Or I could recognise, as for S's story, that a creative route may be illuminating and helpful. An experience of the use of collage introduced me to a new way to explore thoughts and meaning and encouraged me to consider this approach. The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods (Given, 2008) describes this approach as;

an arts-based research approach to meaning-making through the juxtaposition of a variety of pictures, artifacts, natural objects, words, phrases, textiles, sounds, and stories. It is not meant to provide one-to-one transfer of information; rather, it strives to create metaphoric evocative texts through which readers, audiences, and patrons create their own meanings on a given research topic.

Within this research I have explored in some depth the importance of language, words and the meaning we make from them. I have acknowledged that the stories we tell are a product of that language and of the discourse around their development within families, communities and cultures. However as well as being illuminating in itself and its use, language can also restrict meaning making, particularly as we self-edit in response to the listener or reader;

knowledge or understanding is not always reducible to language.....Thus not only does knowledge come in different forms, the forms of its creation differ. (Eisner, 2008:5).

McNiff (1998, 2011) introduced me to the idea that a researcher's creativity could be used as a 'way of knowing' (2011;387) particularly in the field of counselling. As I expressed earlier in this chapter and also espoused by McNiff (2011), art and creative arts such as fiction can provide windows into understanding where more established methods do not. I would include in this epistemology the writing I engaged with following the weekend with my cousin. Along with other creative methods, collage making is a constructionist approach, linking experiential knowing and understanding with the action of choosing and placing of pictures, images or other artefacts. As Butler-Kisber and Poldma explain, collage and other forms of arts-inquiry 'are a means of making

tacit ideas explicit and makes new insights possible for both the researcher and the research audience' (2010:2)

In my research of S's story I had already encountered rich non-language based materials such as photographs and family artefacts as well as creative expressions such as poetry. I had a strong sense that a creative, non-language based method may introduce meaning hitherto unexpressed and I wondered whether collage may be that method.

The choice of methodology is of course driven by the research question it seeks to illuminate. As explained by Moore and Murdock (2012) when such questions are about individuals, and in particular when the research space is shared by the researcher, as in this case, then the methodology is likely to be qualitative. In qualitative methodologies we are interested in socially positioned relationships, as well as the relationship between the researcher and the research and the researched. My research questions explore sociocultural contexts and meaning for my participants and for my own reflections, but choosing a creative process introduces further issues to consider. In the use of collage I am not only using a creative methodology, but also exploring the meaning of a creative process. Creative research and research into creativity or creative outputs are not the same thing but are of course related (Runco,2012).

One of the strengths of collage for me was that there was no technical skill required other than cutting and sticking. This frees the individual and in this case the researcher to be creative and expressive where a more skills-based approach (such as dance) may not, because of the physical and practical restrictions it presents. It is however tactile and embodied; giving physical form to abstract and in this case unconscious concepts. The sources and choice of fragments and the juxtaposition of those fragments on the paper, all provide opportunity for a variety of interpretations and points of enquiry.

Furthermore, for my own story the use of collage had an additional appeal. What seemed to emerge from my initial reflections was a recurring story of mixture, of difference and of marginalisation. Collage offered me a medium and research method that embodied much of these elements to my story; different fragments from different sources placed together to construct an image that bears no particular allegiance to one source. Both the process and the product seem to provide an opportunity for the embodiment of my story and my interpretation of that story in relation to the research question.

During the collage workshop I had attended in 2014 the participants were required to consider the notion of 'research' and to choose images from a range of magazines to cut out and place on

a blank page. The meaning making for me occurred on three levels: first the thinking about images in the resources and their choosing and cutting out, secondly in their juxtaposition and the conscious or unconscious consideration of their relative and collective meaning, and finally in my explanation of the process to colleagues at the end of the workshop.

However before favouring and including this approach it was important that I was aware of and considered other creative alternatives to that of collage that may also provide some illumination into my reflections on the research questions. Dance, I have said was not either practically possible or possible in terms of my own skills. Concept Mapping may have been both possible and useful. It does not require a high level of skill and, as explained by Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) are, like collage, a visual form of inquiry, and a non-linear way of revealing unconscious meaning. However the way that concept mapping helps to make meaning is different to that of collage; it puts analytical ideas into a visual form, but unlike collage does not represent or explore feelings. Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) make the important contrast between these approaches that where concept mapping seeks to reduce ambiguity, collage can, and may need to create and underline ambiguity. I chose collage.

I chose collage to explore my thoughts about my research question; the possible influence of mixed heritage and identity on my life story. In preparation for the collage I thought carefully about the three levels of meaning making referred to earlier. Such meaning made will be explored in more depth in chapter five which presents my story. But it began with the sources of images and what they may mean in terms of the impact on the process. It is not possible to be able to gather a truly random selection of materials with no biases or links to the chooser and so it is more congruent to acknowledge that the materials were not random. I gathered materials around me, from colleagues, from my home and family and from what appeared unsolicited through the front door. I also looked through some old photographs of my family and photocopied some of them so that they could also be used. The sources were from and of my life and lifestyle. They were part of the story.

When the collage was complete I presented it and discussed both the result and the process with a third party and recorded and transcribed that conversation. (See appendix C for the collage itself and B.i for part of the transcript of the subsequent conversation).

Approach to Analysis

The material from each of the three participants is different in content, quantity and nature. The stories are different and my aim is not to compare or contrast them but to explore the rich and thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) found within them for the meaning made of them by their tellers, including my own. The hermeneutical process of analysing and interpreting all the materials from the three participants reflects the aim of meaning making rather than identifying specific patterns or frequencies of words or phrases as indicative of any particular theory or hypothesis. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) warn against the fragmenting of 'data' by breaking it down using some system which also risks fracturing or changing the meaning. It was tempting and appealing to me initially to consider some kind of coding or counting approach to analysis, perhaps because of the lingering concerns about subjectivity (See App F extracts 8 and 9). The objective approach (Denzin, 1989) 'seeks to find reason and order in lives' (1989:52) whereas I am looking for meaning. I am aware too that we hear selectively and subjectively, depending on what we want to hear and what we are listening for (Andrews, 2007) and similarly those telling their stories remember selectively too (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). Moreover the power balances in such research settings must be recognised. Being a participant in research, someone expressing an interest in our story, will have an impact upon the story. The participant, as in this work, does not wish to disappoint. Stories therefore may be more interesting, significant, emotive and meaningful than perhaps they actually were. Denzin (1989) concurs that the need to perform, to re-construct in order to deliver a useful and interesting story can be compelling. But, as Holloway and Jefferson (2000) point out it is the wholeness, the Gestalt or form of the material wherein lies the meaning, to the teller and to the told. It is in this effort not to lose the complexities of the meaning or the *thick and rich* detail (Geertz, 1973) in the analysis of material, and to acknowledge the complex ethnographical and process related eddies, that the proforma of Merrill and West (2009) was developed. This proforma provides a standardised approach to the analysis of transcripts which leaves space and flexibility for the particularities of stories and the circumstance of their telling. Moreover this encourages an immersion in the detail of the conversation and in the transcript to allow themes to be identified and a reflexive engagement by the researcher in the material. There is a number of useful headings around which to gather the details of the encounter and the story told (See appendix D for a blank proforma and example of an early worked proforma).

The first part of the proforma is the recognition of the themes in the transcript. My approach was to listen to the recording/s a number of times and after transcribing to read the transcript/s two or three times; immersing myself in the words, the stories and the engagement between us.

Gradually themes became clear to me as they held meaning for me within the context of my relationship with the participants (Josselson, 2011).

The second part of the proforma is concerned with the process of the encounter itself; its nature, power imbalances and unspoken intentions or reticence. In the third part this is explored more in terms of the ethnography of the interview such as the place in which it was held, what happened before, during and after the interview and so the context of conversation. The final part was initially the one which I found difficult. It is the emerging Gestalt of the interview and along with the themes felt the most subjective and contestable. I resolved this by thinking of it as the overriding experience and meaning of the encounter when all themes, processes and ethnographic details were taken into consideration. The Gestalt of each of the analyses is therefore subjectively shaped and coloured by me and the research aims and questions defined by me, but also indicates some unconscious meaning in the material not anticipated by me.

Summary

In this chapter I have told the story of the research, moving through the methodology, methods and tools used and their justification. Importantly in that process I have encountered and explored important ontological issues such as subjective and narrative truth and interpretation, epistemological questions of validity and reliability and the methods available to best illuminate the research questions. My own struggles have been reflected in excerpts of my research journal (See App F). The backdrop to this process is my own experience of doing this research, my perspective, history and consequent concerns and discomforts. I have taken the reader through both the clear and the opaque experiences of doing this research and my conviction that ultimately it has provided insight into not only these three lives, but also into the relationship between personal and career identity. Thoughts about the ongoing development of the practices of career guidance and counselling will be discussed in chapter nine.

The limitations of this research are two-fold. It focuses on the particularities of three life stories. In chapters five, six and seven, via the stories of the three respective participants, I will present an argument that although precise generalities cannot be justified, the exploration into the meaning made of the participants' stories offers insight into the relationship and dynamics between personal and career identities. This psycho-social space is of course subjective, but then so are the decisions made in lives and our judgment of them later on.

Secondly, the methods and tools applied in the research had some variations for each participant. The research developed organically with an iterative subjectivity which resulted in poetry and

writing for enquiry as well as interviews being used with S, collage and reflective writing being used by me and a more traditional approach to loosely structured interviews taken with the story told by G. This was largely in response to the participants themselves. S had a lot she wanted to talk about, to tell me and to show me. This was in part due to our shared history, but also because of the time in her life when the research was conducted. G was more measured in her involvement and was clear that this was an opportunity to help me to answer my research questions and, for her, not very much more. This approach mirrored what she said in terms of her interaction with people and communities i.e. cautious. I also had a story to tell, to myself in order to make meaning of it, to others to clarify it and to the academy for recognition that it/I has/have something to offer.

What follows this chapter is a prequel to the stories and backgrounds of the participants which are then presented in chapters five, six and seven. In these later chapters, the three stories of the participants are analysed and their meaning explored alongside my interpretations. In chapter eight I will bring together the meaning made in each of the stories into a synthesis, illuminated by reference to literature and theory. It is here that I will argue my case about what insight this research offers into the relationship between who we understand ourselves to be and what we do in our lives and careers.

Chapter Four

A Prequel

The historical context for the stories of all of the participants in this work is that of second generation migrants to the UK. All three are the children of those whose own stories transcend two diaspora of the mid 20th century; the Jewish peoples' movement in response to the Holocaust and those from Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) following engagement with WW2 and the establishment of independence from Britain. In the wake of such movements of people, ambiguities of identities and loyalties are found along with a search for a better and safer life.

In this prequel I shall indicate what I know of the background stories of the parents of the participants, as it is against this background that our stories were written and within these stories that some of the struggles of the participants find their roots.

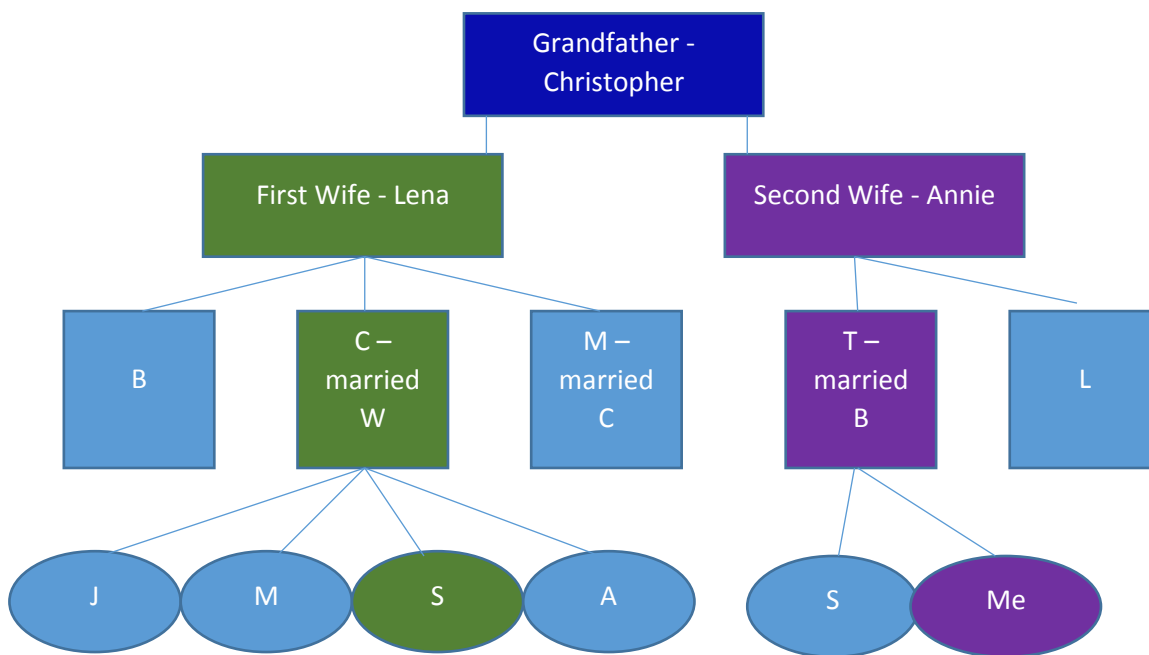


Figure 5. Our family tree

The first is of the parents of my cousin S; my Uncle and Aunt. My Uncle C was the oldest son of my grandfather's three children with his first wife. He was known by his siblings as a saint because of his profound faith and because he was a good boy. He was taken before the war to visit my grandmother's parents in Leeds, his step grandparents, along with his younger brothers and sister including my father. It is not clear why only he was left behind when the rest of the family returned to Sri Lanka, other than my father's explanation that his brother (M) was naughty and my father (T) was too young. So C was left in Leeds as a young man and when the war began he joined up and fought in North Africa in the 'desert rats'. He did visit Sri Lanka at one point

during the war where he was welcomed with open and proud arms. He was a hero to his family both in Leeds and in Sri Lanka and after the war he married W, settled down in Leeds working as an engineer for the Post Office, and began his family. C and W had met through their Church and went dancing together.

The story I was told was that he was meant to return to Sri Lanka and marry a young woman identified for him by his father, but refused because he had met the love of his life, W, a white working class woman from the same community of the step grandparents that he had lived with. The family they subsequently had, consisted of J, who was described as a good and mild mannered cheerful child, M, a very bright girl, S, the participant in this work and the youngest A who came along some years later.

C and W lived out their lives in Leeds, never visiting Sri Lanka, but sending magazines and letters regularly and having my grandparents and other members of the family to stay when they visited the UK. Their community and day to day life was the local RC church and W's family, as well as my grandmother's parents and extended family until they died. There was little talk or reference to his ethnic origins, to his or his children's racial difference to those around them or to the challenges that brought. He was determined to raise his family in a loving, safe, secure and religious household. It was only after his death that it became clear that he had indeed suffered racial abuse and discrimination, but had not acknowledged it or discussed it with his children at the time.

His funeral was a large, elaborate affair conducted by the Bishop because he was very highly thought of in the Church and had risen to the highest ranks of laity.

What Did You Do in the War Dad? – By S.

I fought in the desert, one of Monty's boys,

Green khaki camouflaging the

Dusty brown of my skin/

They called me the Chocolate Soldier,

I laughed. They didn't see me

Up on the ridge, waiting for the dawn

*To melt my skin, blend me in
 With stone and sand.
 And when their boots marched over me,
 They didn't hear the joke in the
 Crunching underfoot,
 They didn't see me clinging to their laces
 Longing to be one of the lads.*

The second narrative is my father and mother. He was the youngest son, one of two children my grandfather had with his second wife who was the daughter of the couple who took in my uncle



Figure 6 My Grandparents' Wedding as reported in the Yorkshire Post. 1927

C. They were a working class couple from Leeds and had, somewhat amazingly, agreed to the marriage when my grandmother was only 18 years old. She married my grandfather who was by then a widower with three children, a barrister and from Ceylon, a small island in the Empire that she is unlikely to have known much about at the time.

The wedding was so unusual that local children got the day off school to see the spectacle of a coloured man marrying a local girl. Even more

surprising was that in order to marry my grandfather both she and her parents became Roman Catholics; extraordinary as my great grandmother came from an Orange order family in Belfast.

After the wedding my Grandmother eventually travelled to Sri Lanka with her husband where she met her new family for the first time including three step-children not much younger than her.

She had to run a house with servants in a strange land; different in every way imaginable. My father was born the following year and then a daughter two years later. As indicated above, my father had visited his grandparents in Leeds before the war but then returned for his schooling in Ceylon. He tells of a happy childhood. His father was apparently quite the disciplinarian and a distant and rather aloof character but charming when he needed to be and a Poker player in many senses of the word. My father left Ceylon (NB: Ceylon became independent in 1948 and was renamed Sri Lanka when it became a republic in 1972) on the first ship to depart its shores at the end of the war and sailed the long way around Africa to dock in Southampton on a cold damp morning.

He was enrolled at Leeds University to read Law and lived with his grandparents. His older brother gave him a small 2/6 allowance each week and although times were not easy there was apparently plenty of love to go around. To earn some cash he took a job in an iron foundry in the university holidays where one day he suffered a life changing accident when he slipped, pouring molten metal into his boot instead of the mould. His foot was severely burnt and he was told he should expect to never walk normally again and that in fact he might lose his foot completely. As he recovered in St. James' hospital however he met my mother who was a nurse on the ward. A romance developed and they married on 25th March 1950. However the match was not celebrated by everyone, or indeed many. The woman in Sri Lanka who had been lined up for his older brother was now in waiting for my father and so this was not good news to his parents. This woman, having been turned down by two of the brothers eventually married the middle brother M and became my aunty C. Furthermore my mother was not a Catholic which added to the consternation. So the wedding although a happy event for the couple was attended by only a few friends and no family. My mother's family disowned her almost immediately because she was marrying a coloured man. They had lived and worked in West Africa and to them 'natives' were not for mixing with and their disparaging remarks about him 'living in a tree' caused a rift that was never truly breached.

Uncle C, S's father did little to maintain his Sri Lankan identity. Unlike his brother my father remained proud of his roots and identity and as both his parents were alive had a close relationship with them. They visited the UK in 1953. In 1955 my grandfather died. He had been at a horse race watching one of his horses 'Half Blue' who won. He had a heart attack while driving home on a mountain road, plummeting off the hill side. He was buried in the village rather than being returned to the family site in Colombo.

My mother's family was equally complex. The parents mentioned earlier had adopted my mother in Jersey, Channel Islands in 1926. They were the neighbours of her birth parents and adopted her when my mother's mother died giving birth to her. Her heartbroken father could not cope and so had agreed to the adoption. The 1930s economic crash later rendered her adopted parents bankrupt. She still recalls being told by her adoptive mother to hide precious jewellery in her underwear when the bailiffs came. They had no option other than to return to the UK to her grandparents in Yorkshire. My mother tells of the hardship they endured and how her mother struggled with mental health difficulties as their situation deteriorated. One Christmas her father got temporary work as a post man and was given a box of chocolates by a householder and gave them to his wife; the only gift given that Christmas. My mother's childhood was not a happy one; as her mother's health deteriorated she was cruel and reminded her often that she had not been wanted by her own family and was lucky to have been taken in by them. A watch given to her by her adopted grandmother was taken away from her by her mother and given to her cousin because she was not 'real family'.

At the age of 14 she 'escaped' by going to train as a nurse in the early days of the war. At 16 she was working in Beverley Cottage Hospital near Hull when bombs were dropped on the hospital and she pushed many patients in their beds out of the wreckage to safety. She was awarded the Defence medal at the end of the war but only collected it when I badgered her into doing so in 2015, almost 70 years later.

Throughout my life I recall my mother telling of her anger at being given away by her father and she was adamant that she would not try to find out about him or her siblings. However in 2013 my father, after considerable research and with the help of the archivists in Jersey, found her last living sibling, Patricia. She was 89 at the time and after some persuasion my mother agreed to travel to Jersey to meet her. Her first response was to apologise for 'killing your mother' but Patricia explained that all her and her older siblings' lives they had wondered where their 'baby sister' had been. She gave my mother some of their mother's jewellery. Only after her sister's death in 2014 did my mother admit to the joy and relief of meeting her and the comfort it brought.

In 1958 my brother was born, and I arrived in 1959. In 1961 my father took a job at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. It made visiting Sri Lanka and his mother and siblings and extended family easier and throughout the following years we travelled widely in the Indian sub-continent and in Africa. We returned to England permanently in the late 60's and moved into a small village near Salisbury, Wiltshire. There were no Asian, black or mixed race people that I was aware of in that

community. We were many miles from the rest of the family in Leeds. I wasn't sure at the time whether I was 'odd' because I'd come back from living overseas or because of my Sri Lankan name or that my father was brown. No one really talked about it. My father who was a great cricketer played for the village where we lived and seem to be accepted. I do recall him saying with some amusement that when light was failing on the pitch they would ask him to smile so that they could see where he was. That hurt; not because I thought they meant to hurt him, but that it was his smile that betrayed his difference and otherness.

The other family story is that of G. In her interviews she tells of some of the history of her parents. She also refers to her grandfather. More detail risked the anonymity of G and her family but what follows is a broad account of her family story.

G comes from a family who was deeply involved in the Zionist movement for some generations. Her great uncle was a well-known and celebrated economist, early sociologist and member of the Zionist Organisation. He was also one of the founders of the city of Tel Aviv. He supported a shared state solution, a binational state, until after the massacre at Hebron when he concluded that only an independent Jewish state would be a solution. He facilitated the movement of many Jews to Israel before the second world war. Many cities in Israel have streets named after him as does the German city of Magdeburg where he spent much of his youth. He died in 1945. G's father followed in his embracing of the responsibility to support the creation of and defence of the Israeli state when he joined the diplomatic arm of the new government of Israel after the war. His great friend and Rabbi performed G's wedding ceremony. A former parliamentary correspondent for several UK national newspapers he was a refugee after the war and had been a close friend and colleague of her father. After the war G's father worked in Germany on reparations following



Figure 7. G's Rabbi and friend of her father

the holocaust and it was there that G's parents met. Her mother had grown up in England having escaped from Germany in the kindertransport. As will be explained in chapter six, G's mother travelled back to England to give birth to her so that she would not be born German.

Chapter Five

Introducing the 'Offcomedon'

The word used for the title of this chapter will be unfamiliar to many. It is a Yorkshire word that means 'the outsider' or someone who has joined the community from elsewhere. This chapter is about my story and as I read my reflections and think about my story, this is the word that seemed to capture what it was like being me as I grew up. As Horsdal (2012) points out, part of the human experience is to be able to experience time and space as a continuum; to relive and re-experience the past in the present and project through fantasy and daydream into the future. She uses the term 'auto-noesis' to refer to this level of consciousness which is more than memory, and this I propose is the process that I engaged with in the telling of my story.

As a participant in this research, and also the researcher, I was aware that the nature of the material exploring my own life would be ontologically different to that collected through interviews with the other participants. I had a range of options of how to approach this and these, as well as the rationale for the approach taken, are explored in chapter three. Ultimately I explored my story in two ways. The first was written reflections and the second was the process of collage making.

The first approach undertaken at the beginning of this doctoral research journey, was that I reflected upon my own life and memories. When I thought about my early life in particular my memories were illustrated by images. These non-verbal cues were powerful. I decided to use them to frame my reflections.

The reflections were my material and these were explored holistically as with the other participants, using the Merrill and West (2009) proforma. This of course differs from the material that this proforma was designed to analyse and the rationale for its use was discussed in chapter three. It was formed as an approach to the analysis of transcripts of interviews and this initial material was not sourced from interviews but from written reflections. Later in this chapter I will explore material from an interview that was based on a conversation about my collage, and the proforma was again used. Nonetheless, for the analysis of my reflections I felt that a holistic approach was needed, congruent with the material from the other participants. Themes were identified heuristically and the process and ethnography as well as the Gestalt of the exercise were explored.

What follows are my initial reflections on the images in my mind; memories that took little effort to recall. A pen portrait and a story lies within them.

Small pale hand

The first image I recall is that of my small pale hand in the very large, very black hand of a man called Ali. When I was very young my family and I lived in a small Sudanese town called Shambhat, near Omdurman. My father who had an English mother and Sri Lankan father, was working in the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Khartoum. Like all other ex-pats we lived in neat bungalows in one area of the town and were taken good care of by Sudanese domestic workers including a cook, gardener and a 'boy'. There was also Ali. I do not remember what role he had officially, but he took care of my brother and I if my parents were away and was a constant presence in the house. Ali was I believe originally from the Dinka tribe in southern Sudan and, as such, possibly as much a foreigner in this northern Arab town as we were. He was very tall and very black. His teeth were so white in comparison to his face that they looked almost luminous. And he showed them often because he was always smiling. I do not actually remember him saying anything, although I imagine he must have at least to my parents and the other servants, but he always smiled. I do not remember where we were or what we were doing but I remember looking at our hands that day. I remember thinking that this hand was me, and that hand was him. We were different. Although I am sure I was too young to put the thoughts and feelings into words, the feeling was that this hand, mine, would always be with me. It was small but would not always be so. The other hand would not always be with me. Perhaps this was the beginnings of my awareness of me as an individual, of identity or aloneness. It was certainly my first awareness of the difference between me and others.

The Curtsey

The second image is that of a department store in Salisbury, Wiltshire. I was about 12 and was facing four girls from school. They were bowing and curtseying (we had learnt how to do this at school the previous week) and chanting, 'Princess Anne, Princess Anne...!' I was horrified and turned and ran. I do not remember if I was on my own but I think so. I do not remember what happened next. I think the incident stemmed from a discussion in the classroom about my name and background. My family name was long and hard to pronounce. My father had told me with pride that when people call you names such as 'pakki' or 'nigger' it showed only ignorance. Our family, he told me, were in fact one of the ruling elite in Sri Lanka and my grandfather had been one of the key figures in the process of winning independence for the country from the British. When taunted I was not to react angrily but to calmly explain the facts about Sri Lanka and about

our name and family. I had done this in the class room and the teacher had been impressed. The girls however were not.

Meeting on the Lawn

The third image is of the head of house at my next school walking across the lawn towards me as I swung on my tree swing with my brother. My mother introduced him as Mr Hunter, Head of House at the enormous new comprehensive school that we were about to join.

My parents had bought a very large house in West Cumberland. It was an 'Old People's Home' and my mother had moved us all north to run this business. Initially it had been quite an adventure. It was a Georgian mansion house built on the top of a hill with wonderful views of the western Lake District. It had six Doric pillars at the front, 20 rooms in the cellar (two of which my brother and I discovered ourselves and had all kinds of loot in them) and five acres of gardens and woodland. It was wonderful, fun, exciting and the old ladies were kind, interesting and interested in us. The home's staff were also kind and welcoming. Best of all was Mrs Dunbobbin the cook. She had blue hair, kind eyes and made the best food I'd ever tasted. Unfortunately most of the staff also had children at the school we were about to join. This didn't go quite so well. My brother managed fine. He quickly acquired a west Cumbrian accent, skipped lessons, got into fights and disappeared out of my life. I hid in the cloakroom at break times (with Andrew, who was gay but I think did not know it – others did), was beaten up in the changing room for PE (suspended from a clothes hook, I remember) and every day ran the gauntlet of the bus journey home. My brother was nowhere to be seen. When my mother challenged him he said he could not stick up for me or else he'd get it too. After half a term I joined the school orchestra and fell for the '2nd trombone'. My father did not approve when he asked me out so that was that. I left the school and went to board at a school in Keswick.

The wash room

Anyone who has been to a boarding school will be able to recount experiences and adventures; good and bad. My fourth image is one that makes me smile now and did at the time. My first dormitory had 13 beds. We woke to the first bell, got out of bed to the second and raced to the wash room. On my first morning I was a bit slow. When I got to the washroom I was faced with eight white bottoms. I quickly understood why on the uniform and equipment list had been '4 face flannels'. One was for the face and underarms (done first) and the other for below the waist. The other two were for when the first two were in the laundry. The system was: fill basin with warm water, take soap from plastic pot, wet flannel #1 and rub on soap, wash face and armpits,

rinse, knickers to the floor (apart from Amanda who daringly didn't wear any at night), flannel #2 into sink, add soap and scrub, and scrub and scrub..., quick rinse and dry. If you were in the second cohort to the sinks they were coated with soap scum and curly hairs and I decided there and then that I would be UP at bell one and would never again have to rinse off someone else's scum. It was a realisation that I would have to understand how things worked quickly, and I did.

The introduction

The final image from my initial reflections was that of my new classroom in a convent school in Dumfries Scotland. Standing at the front of a small room I was greeted (well looked at anyway) by 20 girls sitting behind individual wooden desks. I looked back. The teacher (Mother Mary Joseph), introduced me (paused for the giggles that followed my name) and announced that I was one of the winning team on the Young Scientist of the Year TV competition. Silence. Not only was I a challenge to the hugely popular, top of the class Bridget, I was English and coloured.

After a term all was well. I was still the 'new girl' and when in trouble the 'English girl' but when I passed my driving test cheers went up as I drove into the 'staff car park'. I became one of the group, went to parties and discos with everyone else and cried along with everyone else when one of the boys from the linked boys' school died in a rugby accident.

These images are the most readily recalled but there are many more. Not all are sad, damaging or profound. Some are in fact wonderful. Travelling to London with the other members of the 'Young Scientist of the Year' team is a wonderful memory. We were all odd-bods. Geaky boys and unfashionable girls were on a holiday from it all and free to be ourselves. Many years later I was studying for a PhD at University College London. The team was engaged in the exploration of stem cells and I was invited to present some of my work at a conference. I remember looking out at the sea of faces; all listening to me.

As the research and my exploration of the literature for this thesis progressed I reflected further on the relationships in my life and family, and their importance on my identity and life. Some additional memories were stirred along with images, still and moving.

My baby's face

Most of the initial recollections and images came from childhood and early adulthood. However one of the most profound was that of becoming a mother for the first time. My daughter had been born by caesarean section after a long labour. I had had a general anaesthetic and so was groggy for a large part of the first day of her life. Only in the evening when everyone had gone

and the other women in the ward had gone to sleep did I reach into the cot and lift her out, draw the curtains and look at her. She was the most wonderful, beautiful, amazing sight I had ever seen; and I knew her. I knew her smell, her eyes, each digit and each sound she made. I could have picked her out of millions. We had a brief conversation, a little one-sided, and I thanked God for choosing me to be her mother and we both went to sleep.

Pat and the midwife

Some of my recollections and pictures shared here relate to the mixed ethnicity of my family, centred on that of my father. However the untold other half of my identity was beginning to emerge at the time of writing. I have in my office a picture of my mother with her sister. The work of Formenti (2011) introduced me to the impact that stories about our birth can have on our identity and on our relationships. It was painful to reflect on the story that had haunted my mother all her life and recounted in the previous chapter. She had truly believed that her siblings must have resented her at the very least but Pat had not even known about her baby sister until their father's death when the older siblings had told her. He had apparently been ashamed at having to give away his baby as he had not been able to afford the necessary childcare. The subject had been taboo until after his death. Pat's comment that 'I always wondered what had happened to my baby sister' was not what my mother had expected. My mother had trained and worked as a midwife and district nurse all her life. During WW2 as a young girl she had worked in a hospital in Beverley near Hull. Hull was bombed relentlessly and occasionally a stray plane would drop its load over Beverley instead. One such bomb hit the hospital late one night and my mother pushed many patients in their beds to safety; injuring her arm in the process. Later when we lived in The Sudan she worked in a local hospital theatre repairing the results of female genital mutilation, often done by grandmothers with rusty razor blades.

The 'chosen' profession for my mother was not unusual at the time. Women, if they worked at all, tended towards secretarial work, teaching or nursing. However she might have found herself nursing children, or in a general hospital. She trained and practiced in the community, delivering babies and caring for their mothers. The interest for her was always on the mother, not on the baby. In fact for all of my life she made it clear that, with the reluctant exception of me and my brother, she disliked babies. Is this an example of Savickas' assertion that 'in a career we actively master what we passively suffer' (2011:33)? Or in the seeking for evidence of Adler's Individual Psychology have I read into this story what is not there? Many women of her generation became nurses but her expression of care for mothers, damaged or compromised by childbirth or its expectation, is striking.

So my final picture in this reflection is the face that met me when I went to meet my mother's newly found sister, Pat. Having spent most of my life wrestling with my mixed English/ Sri Lankan ethnicity, mixed Roman Catholic/ Anglican faith, mixed ruling class/middle class/ working class heritage, and mixed English southern/ northern identity, I realise that I had another half, from Jersey, still yet to be explored. Unlike the TV documentaries I have seen there is no quick fix for the severed arm of a family, no instant enveloping of the long lost and thought of. But if identity is as complex as I am beginning to discover, it would be surprising if this were the case. The next step for me, but perhaps not for my mother, will be to find and visit my Jersey grandparents' grave; to complete this particular circle and to leave them as, in part, a Jersey woman too.

Themes from these reflections

Separateness: 'there was also Ali'

I do not know whether it is common to remember the awareness of separateness and 'me' but the memory of looking at my hands at about the age of three was one such memory. In this case



Figure 8. Ali with me and my brother in Omdurman, Sudan

it was not only that the two hands were separate; one mine and one someone else's, but that they were different colours. Later in life the issue was that my skin was darker than others' and certainly my father's was. But it is interesting that at this point it was that mine was lighter that made it different.

Literature offers some thoughts on what this remembered event or image may mean. It is an example of my earliest notion of selfhood which, as Gergen (1991; 1999) asserts, is constructed through social interaction, Ali and I. Gergen also offers some insight into the ongoing process of understanding meaning making that co-constructs self when he explains the role of narrative in this process. I do not recall having

conversations with Ali about who we were but the non-verbal image of our hands tells its own story. Giddens (1991b) in his consideration of the construction of selfhood as distinct to identity, refers to Winnicott's work (1971) and the importance of separateness in its development. This playful space between self and other he asserts is where notions of individuality are constructed. In this memory I am not clear perhaps about who I am but who I am not; Ali.

This awareness of myself and my separateness was however an ongoing and regular feeling throughout my childhood. When my brother and I arrived in a very large school mid-term, he

made pragmatic decisions to take care of himself, even though this meant leaving me to fend for myself. Although he had always been with me through our shared experiences this episode illustrated the distinction and separateness between us too. However that separateness later evolved into a different feeling; that of the outsider. This however brought positive aspects too. Aware that I was not 'one of the crowd' my first experience of speaking to a large group at a conference was self-affirming. I was fascinated with the powerful feeling when 'I remember looking out at the sea of faces; all listening to me.' That feeling still energises me even though it is something that is now part of my everyday job.

My early awareness of separateness and then ongoing struggle with otherness reflects Adler's ideas about feelings of inferiority which, he posited, are only ameliorated by a quest for superiority (1923). Jungian ideas (Fordham, 1991) also offer some insight into what feelings of separateness may mean in the context of this story. His notion of 'individuation' is a gradual bridging between the unconscious and conscious selves throughout a lifetime and could be an additional or alternative explanation for my coming to terms and even welcoming otherness. However I am drawn irresistibly to the Adlerian notion of moving from a felt minus to a desired plus (1927), from inferiority and weakness to superiority and powerfulness, and that as Savickas (2011) goes on to conclude, this is illustrated in career. That such attraction may be due to its inherent neatness, I am aware. However throughout this thesis there are numerous examples of such striving toward reconciliation, such that I suggest this research supports such processes and directions of travel.

Outsider: the Offcomdon

The experience of being the outsider is so common for me that I would have been able to give many more examples from my lifetime and career. It will be an experience that many who moved location as children will be familiar with. However in my case and in my brother's this was accentuated by other identities and associations that were new, different or unwelcome. The first is the difference noted in the 'hands' image discussed above. On returning to the UK, we went to live in Wiltshire where there were very few people of colour or ethnic minority, and few who had lived elsewhere in the world. My attempts to explain myself and my family resulted in ridicule in a department store in the town. Rather than being cross I felt ashamed and misunderstood. From a cultural perspective this may reveal an awareness that contrary to what I had been told, my cultural heritage was neither appreciated nor recognised. Much post-colonial literature records similar experiences. In Said's autobiographical work (1999) he expresses similar feelings of humiliation when expelled from a golf club. Bhabha (2004) also provides some insight into such

feelings when he uses the metaphor of being excluded from rooms in a building and consigned to the liminality of the stairwell. The polarity available for the homogenous identity is not the experience of the mixed race or the immigrant; we move like refugees from one to another, belonging in neither and in both.

This was a recurring experience at each new school, as it is for many. My unconscious resentment and blame for the ongoing experience is barely hidden in my telling of the story; 'my mother had moved us all north to run this business'. Only in hindsight can I see that it was not the moving that caused hostility but the moved.

But my experience was that just as I began to 'assimilate' in one school and community I moved to another with the additional label or identity of being Southern, clever, coloured, posh, Catholic and (worst of all in Scotland) English. I became familiar with the responses of others to my arrival and in particular to my name. I could to some extent pre-empt some of it with humour and could eventually become a temporary member of the group. I learnt too that life was easier if I learned new ways. The washing procedures at boarding school were a good example when I was determined that I would 'never again have to rinse off someone else's scum'. I use the word 'assimilation' consciously as it draws a parallel between my personal experiences and 'troubles' of being other and that of the wider world's 'issues' of multiculturalism (Wright-Mills, 1959). The word 'assimilation' suggests a 'melting pot' where differences are minimised by the outsider taking responsibility for, as I did, learning new ways and fitting in (Ratanssi, 2011; Bhabha, 2004). This could be described as a liberal approach to multiculturalism (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997) where the realities experienced by the 'othered' are not addressed. It could also be described as a step towards acculturation and cultural fusion (Arthur, 2001; Nesbitt, 1998), when increased self-awareness and efficacy may have been more self-affirming.

Of course I was not the only person who felt out of place for most of my childhood. It is not only ethnic minorities or those from different backgrounds that are other. Seeking out other 'odd-bods' was a useful strategy; one successfully employed when I joined the 'Young Scientist of the Year' team from my school. Gergen's work (1991:1999) offers some explanation to the comfort I felt from this experience. He supports the notion that the process of narration enables the teller to recognise socially constructed identity. In my memory and telling of my trip to London with my fellow geeks I recognised myself as 'one of them', if only temporarily. The place and experience of the competition was new to us all and so for a while we were united by representing our school and all being 'out of place'. Why I felt the urge to take part may have been because it offered an opportunity for *action* within which my identity could be clarified. Such action,

although not so dramatic or selfless as that of Weil (1978) nevertheless enabled me to make associations with others in a world that offered little structure or certainty of reference points (Burkitt,1991).

Mixed Heritage and unknown lineage

Having parents of different colour, culture, religion and heritage is explored in the prequel to these case chapters. However the regular dealing with racist taunts and comments is nothing to do with being of mixed race, it is about being foreign. I do not recall any of that being ameliorated or halved for having a white mother and grandmother. It was difference that was noticed. For me too, growing up, it was my Sri Lankan heritage that was paramount in my mind because it was this that affected my day to day life and relationships and made me 'other'. As my mother was adopted there was little to say or think about that part of me, which was a mystery for almost all my life. Other than knowing that my grandmother died in childbirth in Jersey I knew very little. The identity I had was problematic and the side that may have been more acceptable was out of reach. The experience of formulating an identity from mixed heritage is reflected in the writing of Weil (1947) during the Second World War, of Said (1999) and Bhabha (2004) in a post-colonial context, and Walker (2001) in a multicultural western, late modern society of the US. The context seems to be as pertinent as the mixed heritage. My context was and is also a multicultural late modern world, but one in which the notion of nationality is contested and identities struggle for stability (Burkitt,1991). Add to this the almost unknown and certainly mis-communicated nature of half of my heritage, my choice was either to live with the ambiguity of my identity or to construct it for myself out of the fragments available to me.

When my mother's natural sister was finally found in Jersey at the age of 87, my mother was 85. Neither she nor the rest of us had ever seen anyone who looked like her. Even my brother and I looked like my father's family. The picture of my aunt in the doorway of her home looking so much like my mother was almost shocking. This finding of my 'other half' felt healing and resolving. The experience of recognition in the eyes of others is, as Honneth (2009) points out, crucial for self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem.

Pre-occupation

The notion of pre-occupation was described by Savickas (2011) as an Adlerian notion of quest seeking for which earlier felt minuses or deficits are resolved as mastered pluses. It is a process of mending through the choices and direction that life offers or as Savickas asserts 'in a career we actively master what we passively suffer' (2011:33).

My mother's earliest memories were of being told that she had been given away because she had killed her mother by being born. If such processes are real this may be as good an example as can be found. If the pre-occupation was that of babies hurting women, she spent most of her life trying to reduce that harm and in doing so addressing the harm she felt she had done to her own mother. I noted in my reflections that at this time women had few options for their careers and one of these was nursing. But it was the precise area of nursing that is interesting, adult women and those damaged by the fact of their gender. Sadly the assurance before her sister's death that she had not been held responsible for their mother's death did little to change her.

For me there is a stark contrast between my mother's birth and my daughter's. These were different times and circumstances. Had she not died my grandmother may well have recognised her daughter in the way I did mine. Being recognised, being known and belonging are themes that are visited throughout this work and perhaps go to the heart of who we believe ourselves to be. Referring again to Honneth (1995a), his assertion was that the first level of recognition (self-confidence) is that which we gain from the love and support of family. This was missing for my mother, there in part for me and there in abundance for my daughter.

Process and ethnography

As with all re-remembering I cannot assert the accuracy or 'truth' of these recollections. As Bruner explains, memories are not buried treasures to be dug up years later looking much the same (1990). My own memories have undoubtedly been interlaced over the years with photographs, other people's stories and my own re-telling of them. Throughout my life there have been moments such as those described in my reflections that are much clearer than others. The most clear were recalled as a picture. Not all of these were intense, some were quite mundane. However each seemed at the time of writing to be a pause in time, a moment of being able to see the past, present and future all in a single frame. They could be what are referred to as 'turning point moments' or 'epiphanies' by Denzin (1989). Each picture recalled a story, what Savickas (2011) might call a micronarrative; a meaningful story that is part of but also separate from the whole. These pictures have stayed with me all my life. They illustrate an on-going struggle with identity, belonging and acceptance. It has taken a lifetime to accept that I have multiple identities and that this is now fine by me. I am a mother, a Christian, a middle aged woman, a senior lecturer, a PhD student, middle class, upper class, working class, English, mixed race, Sri Lankan, wife, friend, daughter and sister, dog lover, neighbour, employer and employee. Depending on the setting I wear the relevant hat. There is resonance here with the roles we play as expressed by Goffman's masks and stigmatisation (1959:1963), to Jungian personas and archetypes

(Fordman, 1991), and in relation to career, a range of roles in the context of my career (Super, 1951). In the writing of these reflections and the different worlds I move between I am aware that some only see the person that they recognise and are comfortable with. Occasionally the casting and the costume becomes muddled and I feel frustrated by the role I am assumed to take. Values and attitudes are assumed by others to be shared by me; prejudices and accepted truths remain unchallenged. Occasionally I consider that perhaps my real role is to be a conduit between them, an ambassador one to another. However if I am honest with myself, the moments I treasure are those when I appear to others to be 'one of them'. Perhaps this is the driver of my life shape or indeed my pre-occupation; to belong.

Gestalt

The Gestalt of this reflective writing was that unlike for my participants; this research is mine. I decided to do it and I chose the focus and the questions to be asked and illuminated by it. This makes my own story, reflections, pictures and meaning ontologically different to that of my participants; it is at the heart of the research and its driver. The Gestalt is perhaps therefore my need to tell the story.

The meaning I have taken from the exploration of these pictures and memories relates closely to their nature and context. Many of the pictures are of otherness and of being on the outside, or just on the cusp of communities and identities. The younger me appears to often reside in what Bhabha (2004) describes as a liminal space; a stairwell between floors and rooms in a building. This may not be surprising since the focus of this work and my initial interest was of the lives of those with mixed or complex identities, and so less pertinent memories or pictures may not have been chosen. Moreover as Savickas (2011) points out, it is only when something goes wrong, or is surprising, or not usual, that a story is constructed. Uneventful, relatively happy or ordinary days and times were not brought to memory because they were un-noteworthy. Consciously or unconsciously in the telling of our stories we recall and share those elements that stand out and so by their nature do not necessarily represent the full story. From the pictures shared in this exercise my childhood and youth appears to be isolated, unhappy and traumatic.

Notwithstanding the memories and the feelings they recall, I had a happy and optimistic life. My childhood was not dominated by feelings of rejection but I have been reticent to entirely embrace one identity or another. I have had the opportunity to do this but have to some extent chosen not to. This complex and mixed heritage, some of it which is yet to be understood, leaves me sometimes with mixed loyalties, opinions and convictions. The 'heroic me' who would stand firm in the face of the other and eloquently stand up for what I believe, is often seduced by the other,

their arguments and perspectives. Whichever side of an argument I take I find myself against some part of me. As for Rebecca Walker's experiences (2001), there can be no loyalty or peace for a spy who finds herself in both camps. I can readily and convincingly stand in the other's shoes, feel their pain and their passion. Perhaps this is because I have worn so many different shoes myself that none feel truly like my own. Perhaps there is an inherent fear of the mask slipping (Goffman, 1963) and the unrecognisable being laid bare.

The writing of these reflections was cathartic. It was therapeutic but not therapy. I had a story I wanted to tell and it was told. It focused on childhood experiences and personal thoughts and memories. It had little to say about my education and career but much to say about relationships and identity.

The problem with language

Within the exploration of my own story I considered, as with my other participants, the importance of language, words and the meaning we make from them in some depth. I acknowledged that the stories we tell are a product of that language and of the discourse around their construction within families, communities and cultures (Bruner, 1990; Rimmon-Kenan, 2006). However as well as being illuminating in itself and its use, language can also restrict meaning making, particularly as we self-edit in response to the listener or reader or indeed to the self in this case;

'knowledge or understanding is not always reducible to language.....Thus not only does knowledge come in different forms, the forms of its creation differ.' (Eisner, 2008:5).

In my research I encountered rich non-language based materials such as photographs and family artefacts as well as creative expressions such as poetry. I had a strong sense that creative, non-language based methods can introduce meaning hitherto unexpressed. For these epistemological reasons, examined in chapter three, including the limited reflections of insight into my career, I chose collage to explore my story further. What follows is an analysis of the material that came from the making of the collage and its examination.

Themes from the collage

As well as my own reflections on the process and production of the collage, a number of themes and concepts were evident to me in the conversation that was recorded about the making of the collage.

Use of collage and its relationship to the research: 'trying to justify'.

During the process of doing the collage I was aware of my unease and tendency to self-edit and choose pictures that said what I wanted to say. However any narrative process is about trying to say something, but at times this felt as though I had a point to make and that the collage making was equivalent to self-editing in spoken language. It may be that this was because of a vestigial insecurity about the methodology. Speaking in the recorded conversation with my supervisor about the choice of some pictures of flowers; a bunch of mixed blooms and a single floret I suggested;

...there's also a self-justification that mixture's OK, mixture can be wonderful and um people might say things like 'it's much healthier to be mixed' and that sort of thing. So maybe it's a bit of self-justification, but also that colours in this case and people in other cases, do quite well when they're with others of the same. Because it enhances you....I mean one of these little flowers on its own would be ignored but there's a whole load together they look stunning and have an impact.

There is some tension in these comments. I may be celebrating mixture or saying that we are stronger, and perhaps more 'recognised' and impactful when we are with others of the same; or that perhaps mixture weakens in some way. This is echoed later when I comment that,

'If I had found a picture of a less attractive bouquet it would have been interesting, [one] that really didn't go well together....'

However despite these subjective reservations, during the conversation I began to see the way in which this method had illuminated my thoughts in a way that conversation alone may not have done.

You can see juxtaposition, you can see relationships between places much more clearly and you're taken out of the knowledge you have of that landscape. I mean I know how to drive from one place to another. But when you're in a hot air balloon it's a very different picture and you're not quite sure where you are.

...doing this collage has also enabled me to look at these aspects of life and identity and relationships between them that I haven't been able to do before.

...you can spot things and put your gaze upon it in a way that when you're down there in amongst it you can't...yes because when you're down there you... the auto/biographical – I'd never really thought of it like that but I suppose - it's me but it's also being able to step back from that as well and I suppose that's what it is.

But still the concerns and doubts persist about this approach:

But I was constantly worried about being too self-editing. What am I trying to say? Am I trying to make a point? So I'll choose this - these pictures because they make the point..... It feels like I'm inventing or trying to justify...

On reflection I am not so alarmed by this. I did and do have something to say. It was about how it feels to have a mixed heritage; mixed and uncertain.

'Recognition'

As discussed earlier in this chapter, being recognised and belonging is important to me. This is at the heart of the research and, notwithstanding my concerns above about intentionally demonstrating the links between my personal and career identity, I illustrate such parallels in the collage itself and also in the conversation about it.

I first saw this picture of this bouquet of different coloured flowers and that seemed to me to be something rather lovely; that mixture can work really well together and be harmonious. But I also saw these pictures of flowers of a single colour and how distinct they are. And it was that distinctness that I thought had some meaning to the mixture that was my family, as opposed to the mixture....And I suppose it's just a commentary that both can be celebrated and lovely but in different ways. And I suppose it depends how it's put together and how harmonious it is.

The parallels here are clear to me. Having been told many times that being mixed race is a good thing; healthy and interesting, I am expressing my doubts. I may feel stronger in a more homogenous identity. But then the alternative, and in fact the reality, pricks my conscience. So long as the combination is harmonious then it is just as lovely. The unanswered question here is whether or not my and my family's combination IS harmonious, or just a bunch of random mixture.

I explained the significance of the Blue-footed Booby in terms of discomfort but also recognition. It represents what I believed I looked like and what that might mean to others. It may also be the beginnings of acceptance of myself and an example of the process of Jungian individuation (Fordham, 1991) as my conscious self is resolved with unconscious fears of not belonging.

...a creature put together [laughing] by two completely different species. And – er – that's how I've felt for a lot of my life - a bit um – um – rather than the beautiful bouquet – more the blue footed booby! [laughing] and although I wouldn't say it's a painful memory it's not a comfortable feeling. You're neither one thing nor another and....look a bit odd let's be honest....look like you don't really fit in.

Bringing together the images of bouquets, masks and odd birds;

...then I saw this picture of a broken mask and just thinking about masks and if you feel like the blue footed booby you put a mask on that's more like the bouquet and that's an attempt perhaps to put that facade on.

A mixture of metaphors here express my familiarity with the notion of playing a part or presenting a self that is not congruent with who I believe myself to be. Such masks were said by Goffman (1959), and to some extent Jung (Fordham, 1991) to be a way for society to function without having to start from the beginning with each person; a kind of shorthand to who people are in relation to each other. This excerpt also however illustrates the fear of stigma (Goffman, 1963) when such masks slip and the 'true' self is revealed to be not what society has prescribed.

Then in the conversation, there followed a list of all the conflicting elements and influences. Each is recognisable by its image and had touched the development of my own identity:

I suppose is the juxtaposition; the Englishness, black and white Englishness, then a picture of an African tribal man – then Buddhism which we were very much surrounded by in Sri Lanka and Christianity which has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. Those juxtapositions of one culture, one idea with another was.....er....the other side of this story really.

However it is clear that some choices have been made about my preferred identity; what I would like to be recognised as being. I chose some small union flags as a border to one side of the collage;

I'm very pleased to be British, English. It's something I like to celebrate – um – if I'd seen pictures of the Sri Lankan flag I don't think I would have picked it out. It's not something that I particularly want to be. I've always wanted to be English so when I saw those [St George's flags] - that was a kind of border to it all.

This illustrates the option of the self-construction of identity which is perhaps particularly pertinent for those of mixed or ambiguous identity. In a post-colonial world, those of mixed race may (this excerpt suggests) feel the need to be predominantly one thing or another. My father chose to be Sri Lankan. Walker (2001) and Weil (1947) struggled but eventually resolved their identities, one to be 'both' and the other to be 'neither'. I chose to be English. The messages of 'west is best' have left their mark. Both Said (1999) and Bhabha (2004) agree that the colonial claims of superiority echo in the post-colonial era and that such subliminal messages continue, particularly for those living in the liminal space of otherness or insecure identity.

A border defines, separates and clarifies; it gives structure and shape. It may be that the use of a border and its nature reflected my need to clarify my identity in my own terms. Later this agency is recognised. In the collage two clear sides to my career are apparent in the past, but a fusion of worlds and direction is also embraced:

‘.. this two-sided thing of the logical, the puzzles and the white mice, the lab coat and all that and then on the other side music and voice; someone speaking out and saying what they think. And I started to join those worlds together bit by bit in life really and....er...I think, there’s a picture of the symbol of Canterbury Christ Church because I think that was part of enabling me to do that I think; connecting and this whole piece of research has enabled me to connectand I thought those words ‘I am a coalition’ is absolutely is me. I’m a kind ofdifferent ideas and....er...ethics and values....and views and other things that hopefully work well together

The reflections not explored in my initial thoughts on visual memories, those of career, are considered here. I draw parallels clearly between my mixed identity and my exploration of two very different careers. Unable to choose between one and the other I discuss my thoughts on my present research and career and how it enables me to combine both the investigative and the creative aspects of my identity, through what I do. What I believe this reveals is the synergy between who I am and what I do. It is, as Weil (1947) and Arendt (1958) proposed, through action that the self is explored and our vocation is illuminated.

‘The me and the pre me’

Again, notwithstanding my concerns about self-editing, a substantial part of the collage illustrated ‘mixture’. It is almost as though I am trying to say ‘just look at how mixed up I really am!’ Other excerpts already mentioned listed the diversity of my early life. But this is only after I have made it clear that mixture and conflict was there long before me. A photograph of my parents with some friends on a walk, included in the collage, seemed to speak volumes,

...what really stood out was this sign behind my parents’ head saying ‘this footpath is dangerous’. And there’s this coloured man with a white woman looking very confident, but I don’t know if they realised how different that relationship was from others and what that might mean for them and for the rest of their family.



Figure 9. My parents with their friends before they were married

And such acknowledgement of the impact of mixture, conflict and difference is echoed in my current life and career.

‘So - um – if I’m talking to someone...um..about Sunday school – and that’s part of my life and aspects of what I do in my life – and I sort of erase – in those conversations and in those relationships – other aspects of me – that don’t work there. They would surprise people – they wouldn’t know how to deal with it.’

There is a fear exposed here of being revealed, the mask slipping to explore the ‘real’ stigmatised me; a fraud (Goffman, 1963).

Indeed I am keen to emphasise the significance of my experience of difference and conflicting influences; noting the diversity of my background and of my career in comparison with others, including my participants:

‘quite stark...very very different parts and ways of being – different parts of me. And when you go back to my origins they’re pretty stark too – you know if you go back [pointing to picture] ‘it’s a dangerous world out there’. Whereas my cousin although mixed race lived in the same place and with the same culture all her life - and my other participant – she came from the same – her parents were of the same background but her geography and where she lived and the influences were very different so the mixtures and the conflicts and the searches for identity are all quite different types I think and um – I think this one [pointing to collage] just shows the influence on career a little more starkly.’

The Eraser

The choice of the image of a two-sided eraser was interesting and at the time of doing the collage not entirely clear. Just as I had influenced the content and meaning of interviews with S and G, so my supervisor was part of the meaning making in this conversation about the collage (See App Bi, ref 1). It was only when I was asked why I had chosen the eraser that I began to think more deeply about what it might mean. Clearly it had caught my supervisor’s eye. Had it not done so this meaning may not have emerged:

that sort of eraser – in my school days I remember the blue end was harsh and removed one kind of stuff and the red end was softer and rubbed out other kinds of things. And I never found the blue end terribly effective because it just tore up your paper – and made a hole ...

in the giving of this response a thought came to my mind:

And that's quite interesting in itself because I think what I often do is when I'm with people from one part of my world to another, I erase the other side. ... That can be damaging –like the blue end of the rubber because it can tear bits off. ..and that leaves you with various holes which um – which you have to fill in when you return to that world...so um ...talking to family you...there are bits of life that aren't understood and then you fill them with other bits so um..It's the notion of not only building but having to get rid of things as well. A constant process of editing and self-editing of identity as you engage with relationships....

So my conclusion here is that editing identities can be damaging; can make holes that need to be filled. There is a sense of betrayal of one 'side', echoing Walker's dilemma (2001), when it is negated in a context where perhaps it does not seem to fit.

Process and Ethnography

Having now discussed the collage I will move on to discuss the process and ethnographic context for its creation. I chose a day and place where I would not be interrupted and lay all the collected resources to be used in the collage on a table; magazines, brochures, photographs and texts. I used a room in my home that is relatively clear of pictures and images, trophies of my life and family. I was alone for the day with my thoughts and memories. I looked through what I had before me and without too much thought chose images that I felt represented something of myself, my experience of life and of my career. After some time of cutting out I arranged and re-arranged these images. This second level of meaning making began to take shape. One area of the collage seemed to be about my origins; mixed, sometimes a good mixture and sometimes things that do not seem to go together. There was the single coloured flower and the bouquet. Another represented thoughts of myself and another of my mixed experience. In the centre I put a winding road leading up to the separate but connected areas of my career; the scientific, neat and logical and also the creative, expressive and less ordered. These are connected by hands and a recognition of 'coalition' and balance. At the top of the collage is a representation of height and perspective (a hot air balloon) which I felt represented the feeling that by moving high above different things we can see them all, their relationship and contribution. By not 'landing' in any one area I can see all and put a spotlight on whatever I choose. In the top right corner is a picture of a pathway. In contrast to the neat, boundaried and ordered roadway in the centre of the collage, which related to my early scientific career, this is more natural, less ordered and more beautiful. It is nonetheless however a path where others have been before.

I photographed the collage (Appendix C).

A few weeks later I moved onto the third level of meaning making. I arranged to bring the collage to my supervisor's office and for her to interview me about it. I explained and explored my collage with her and recorded and transcribed that conversation. (Appendix B.i.)

The collage had been created in isolation and without discussion with anyone. I was alone for a considerable time with my thoughts, my memories and my awareness of the importance of this exercise for the illumination of my research. This is in contrast to the brief amount of time given in the collage workshop where I first encountered this approach. Then I was in a university in a different country, surrounded by relative strangers and we had a short period of time to do the collage. The materials had been provided for us. For this collage I was in my own home, with the whole day to think about the materials that I had collected and which in the case of the photographs already had meaning for me.

In my first experience of collage we were invited to explain our collages straight away to relative strangers. In this case it was some time before I could meet my supervisor to discuss the content. Although the atmosphere was warm and encouraging and informal, some dynamics of power and status were still evident to me. There had been effort in the meaningful making of the collage and there was effort in the meaningfulness of the subsequent discussion. I felt a strong responsibility to the story, to the people in it and to the collage itself to represent them well. In addition I felt a responsibility to my supervisor too for the offer of time to discuss the collage and to myself to justify the methodology.

In the same way in which the discussions I had had with my participants was a product of our relationships and stories, so was this. Had I explained it to someone else it would have been a different story that I told. The narrative may have been generally the same but the micronarratives may have differed. Her questions directed my attention to aspects that I may not have pondered upon for very long had she not asked me about them. An example is the discussion about the eraser (App.Bi, ref 1). I knew there was an interest and an empathy on the part of my supervisor and so felt enabled to speak freely and thoughtfully. Moreover I felt compelled and a responsibility for doing so.

However it was not only the focus for the discussion that was shaped by us both, meaning also was constructed and shaped through our conversation. A further example (App. Bi, ref 2) was when my supervisor asked me about my enjoyment of 'discovering things' and what I had discovered during this research. This questioning not only pressed me to think more deeply but also to respond. Between us we made sense of it (App Bi, ref 3).

Gestalt

The broader concept of the collage making and subsequent discussion was initially embarked upon because I felt that I did not or could not interview myself. And so if I were to be a part of this research I needed to find a way to tell my story in order to add my perspective to the research question. As referred to earlier I also considered the potential for a creative approach to access unconscious feelings and meaning and this is what was realised. My attempts to avoid self-editing however were not successful as self-editing and intentional meaning-making was evident to me throughout the process, as discussed above.

However the process felt authentic and achieved the level of verisimilitude that I sought. I was enabled by the use of collage to tell my story; a story that I already knew, and had searched for ways in which it could be told. The need to find a pattern, a structure, order and clarity and some meaning in my story was strong. I did not want to choose images randomly; I wanted to choose them pertinently and relevantly. So in a similar way in which words are chosen in a dialogue or in the written word, I chose images. As themes developed in the subsequent discussion, so they were explored in the collage.

The choice of the eraser and my acknowledgement of the damage that could come from denying one part of the self in order to clarify identity, was not something that I had been aware of while making the collage. The balloon too seemed to reveal more during the conversation, both on the reflections about myself but also in terms of the relevance of the auto/biographical methodology of the research; that it was in the stepping back and in the exploration of the relationships between different parts of life that focus and clarity could be found. Some of the meaning was not unconscious; I was clear that I had something to say and was able to express my thoughts about myself, my liminal identity and inherited 'messiness' by the choice of and placing of images.

My participants had their story and I asked them to explore their life's narratives with me. Their stories, I am sure, had unconsciously or consciously been rehearsed beforehand. My story was rehearsed in the making of the collage. This justification apart, I have no hesitation in concluding that had I the opportunity again I would have asked my participants to do their own collage and I would have discussed it with them.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have presented analyses of material sourced from two different approaches to telling my story and to making some sense of it in relation to my research questions.

The first was to analyse my own reflections on images that came to my mind most vividly and regularly and to explore what meaning those memories and images had for me. The story was told through the images and some understanding of the meaning was offered. The themes that came from my memories of these pictures were those of being alone, being an outsider, heritage and preoccupation. Moreover this was echoed by images and experiences of relationships within my own family and some of the untold stories that lie within.

The second was the use of collage which illuminated my later story of education, career and change. Again there were messages of difference, of mixed identity and the straddling of diverse communities.

The use of collage provided a way for me to tell my story and the conversation afterwards enabled some of the unconscious meaning to be explored. A number of interesting and significant themes and concepts came from the collage and its later examination. These included concerns about the methodology itself, my identity and what came before, recognition and the notion of the eraser. The collage, as indicated by Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010), allowed the expression of ambiguity, of tensions and of conflict. The use of both reflexive writing and a discussion about the making of a collage to explore my story, are not separate or in competition to present the most accurate or revealing version of my life. In the analysis and meaning making, each drew upon and informed the other. The meaning of the themes explored in this chapter will be considered further when, in chapter eight, I return to the research questions and examine the themes from all three of we participants' narratives for insights into my response to those questions. As a reminder to the reader in my research I seek to explore lives of multiple and sometimes contested identities and selves, and in particular seek insight into the meaning made by the participants of their own stories. Furthermore my research explores how such understanding contributes to the expression of the influences of multiple heritages in relation to career, and how pre-occupations and lives lived might inform the development of career counselling.

In conclusion, this research has at its heart the nature and choices of an individual within a complex world of work and a complex web of ambiguous identities. I recognise that I am possible an example of both. There is a strong sense of flexibility in both approaches to the exploration of my life story. The need to be flexible in terms of the identities co-constructed in different parts of my life appears to have also offered a strength. A clearly defined, inflexible identity would have been brittle to the point of breaking. The flexibility offered by ambiguity provided a source of resilience; a bending and bouncing back, each time with an adjusted hue and a recalibrated sense of self. My current and longest role as someone who works to help others to navigate their careers, and to research into that profession, is I believe also significant in 'mastering' what was passively suffered or experienced. My preoccupation has indeed become my occupation.

Chapter Six

The Story of G

G is a Jewish woman. She is a friend of mine and the wife of an Anglican Priest who she married at the age of 50. She currently works as a lecturer and quality control officer at a Jewish college in London, but her early story is one of movement from one country to another; always the new girl and the 'other'. The telling of the story is as rich as the content. She rarely uses the first person and is largely pragmatic, resigned and evidently comfortable being different and of living on the periphery of a number of communities. She rarely (until the very end of the second interview with her) refers to feelings, relationships or love but emphasises responsibilities, acceptance and change.

G's father was one of the first Israeli diplomats after the end of World War Two. She spent the majority of her childhood in countries other than Israel including England, Madagascar, Finland and France. She went to school in England and in Paris before returning to Israel to do her National Service and then going to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She worked in Higher Education in Israel for many years before moving to London when her parents, who were becoming frail, needed her care. When both her parents had passed away she remained living in London, working and teaching at a Jewish college.

We became friends after conversations about living abroad as children and we seemed to have some shared experiences. Her new husband was at the time our parish Priest, and my husband and I attended their wedding. This was a memorable event during which the couple's marriage was blessed both by a Church of England Bishop and by a senior Rabbi who had been a close friend of G's late father. A touching and abiding memory of the day was seeing these two clerics walking down the aisle of the church, side by side. It seemed to represent not only harmony between Faiths but also between the two identities that G now lived within. It showed possibilities for her and for the rest of us.

During the years since then we have become friends. As well as being part of the Church family we have fostered our own friendship; sharing stories about working in Higher Education, about family and about my interest in the influences on career choices. G's own interest in psychology, philosophy and sociology, and more broadly in adult learning, has given us much to talk about and share.

When I began to formulate my ideas for my doctoral research, the notion of 'otherness' began to take shape as well as that of identity and mixed identity. G's story appeared to be so rich in this

regard that I asked her whether she would be willing to participate in the research and she said that she would be very pleased to do so.

Although my friendship with G enabled me to identify her as a participant it has also created a feeling of gratitude from me and a feeling of helpfulness for her. Before the first interview she expressed a concern about whether she would be able to provide me with the data I was looking for. Although she understood my interest in her story, I am not sure whether she also knew that it would be her words and their possible meaning, not only her story, which I would be analysing. Such meaning would be a co-construct between us, not a revelation of a truth that was just waiting to be revealed. Such dilemmas are explored by Josselson (2011). She recognises the predicament of the researcher and the researched in terms of ownership of the narrative and also the feelings of guilt and shame of the researcher. I, whilst grateful for her support, was also concerned about analysing and 'using' that most intimate of possessions; our stories. Some of these feelings for Josselson arose because of the fragility of the participants in research who came from socially marginalised communities. G is not from a socially marginalised or deprived community, although a comment from another Jewish friend that 'it is always dangerous to be Jewish' reminded me that marginalisation is not only experienced economically or socially, but also culturally and politically. Josselson, who works at the Hebrew University in Israel will be familiar with such experiences. I share such feelings and concerns and 'consent-giving' does little to alleviate them.

In order to explore G's story I recorded two loosely structured interviews with her. After the first interview I sent her the transcription so that she could check it for accuracy and reflect upon its content and the experience of the interview. The script was returned with corrections; grammatical and spelling but not content. It may have been that there was a misunderstanding of the term 'accuracy'; my meaning being that of content and hers perhaps of grammar and spelling. For someone who had learnt many languages her natural response may have been to check the linguistic accuracy. I then interviewed her again, drawing on the material of the first and also the parts of her story we had not had the time to discuss in the first interview. This was also transcribed and shared. The second transcript was declared as 'fine'.

As in chapter five, I used the Merrill and West (2009) proforma to analyse these interviews, and identified themes across the transcripts of the two conversations I had with G.

National Identity: “well – I’m an Essex girl!”

This was, I think, intended as a humorous comment from G because from what I already knew about her, and what she was aware of me knowing; this was not the label that she would naturally wear. G is a well-educated, multilingual Jewish woman. The ‘Essex girl’ stereotype of a blond, superficial fashionista is so far from the woman sat before me that it raised a smile from us both. But beneath the joke there may be something more profound in this comment. G is not any kind of stereotype, not just, not an ‘Essex Girl’. She would be perhaps equally ill at ease to be called simply English, Jewish, and certainly not German;

...no never German... I’ve never lived in Germany ...I’ve never...it’s not an identity that I associate with myself in any way. If someone said to me...sometimes someone will think that there is perhaps that element in my ...biography, I don’t feel it belongs to me...

There is however also perhaps a pride in the ‘Essex Girl’ statement as well as the humour. The place of her birth was no accident, but rather a well-planned strategy by her parents for her NOT to be German. The theme around her birth story (Formenti et al,2014) is one of planned nationality:

I was born in Chelmsford because cousins of my mother lived there...er..and ..er to understand the significance of that you have to roll back a little bit ... and then we’ll go back.. back to the beginning. And to understand that is to say that I come from a German Jewish family ... and that on my mother’s side the family escaped Germany pre-war ... So (quietly) so er so when a lot, when er (sighs) when it was time for my mother to give birth to me , er she was living at that time in Germany – this is where it gets complicated because she was married to my father who was at that time an Israeli diplomat working in Germany for the Israeli state ... in fact he was part of the mission that was dealing with um the issue of er er what’s the word – German , not compensation it’s, what’s the right word.... reparation. But the thought of having their first born in Germany was not the best idea for obvious reasons so I was born in Chelmsford.

And G is not dismissive of the ‘Essex Girl’ title, rather she embraces it;

..a week later my mum departed with me back to Germany where, as I said, my father was serving as part of the Israeli mission for a certain while. To be honest I don’t know how long , was it a year or something like that and then back to Israel....But that still makes me an Essex girl by birth [smiling]....

More broadly the British identity is one she is comfortable with and claims with some insistence:

I was the third, the third generation with UK identity to their name...and that identity gets stronger later on because that I have lived in the UK a lot in my life

However this was in response to my question about this giving her a British passport; my assumption perhaps that this might be the driver of such decisions. Her response countered such assumptions and reclaimed with stronger deliberation that she was 'third generation'. In this way my response to her story impacted on hers and shaped the meaning we made of it (App Biii, ref 1). A little later I again added my own interpretation based upon my experience (App Biii, ref 2)

G's nationality is something that has been subject to choice, both by her parents and later by herself. This offers an alternative to the notion of preordained cultural identity and dualism; self or other. Rather, as Bhabha (2004) suggests, there is a hybridity driven by agency and purposefulness, a 'social articulation of difference' achieved by 'on-going negotiation' (2004:3). It suggests what Bhabha terms 'cultural temporalities' (2004) in G's experience of identity compared with those of her parents. Her personal identity however is likewise not straightforward.

Personal Identity: "... you're not like the other er children right? ...and that's true wherever you are..."

This comment is presented as a question, to me (App Biii, ref 3). G already knew my story and that I had, like her, often been the new girl and outsider. Shared experiences resonate here and also pre-empt the meaning made of our conversation. Despite the confirmation of her identity in name and nationality there appears to be little confirmation of certainty in identity or in who G feels herself to be. The assumption that as a child, other children are 'other', irrespective of place, is strong here. Despite her clarity about her role as that of 'representative of Israel', there is still a feeling of un-belonging even when in Israel itself;

...well in Israel also...even when I came back to Israel from er...wait let me get the chronology right...yes er er ...I started my schooling in Madagascar in Africa and we came back to Israel when I was about 8 years old. By that time I'd forgotten any Hebrew I'd known as a small infant and ...if you think about it there's this young girl who speaks French and English but can't speak Hebrew and has to integrate into the local school-so-then [quickly] you come back into your country and what is considered home and yet you are again a stranger....So that is something that I very much relived again and again and again in lots of different contexts ...

G explains openly that this feeling of not belonging, of 'otherness', has been repeated throughout her life. In the second interview I asked her for examples of this. Her outsiderdom is 'inevitable', even 'up to this very day':

And so it means that you, if you go into another culture, there are certain things that they take for granted that you can't and that inevitably makes you the outsider and I think that is true for all of my.....up to this very day. So for example, if I er – I er work in a Jewish institution but I'm different from other people in the college.

This is a good example of the liminality described by Bhabha (2004) and the notion of the stairwell inhabited by those who do not belong in any of the rooms it connects. They (we, the non-binary) can visit and be made to feel welcome but ultimately belong, and perhaps feel more 'at home' in the liminal space of the stairwell that entertains difference. It again challenges the notion that identities are preordained but that it is the assumption of the image of an identity (Fanon, 1986) that offers the individual some agency in their own self construct, and that welcomes hybridity.

I was interested in G's lack of a 'mother tongue'; a language in common with those of her mother and father. I asked why G's parents did not teach her to speak Hebrew, the language that would have linked her to her Israeli identity. Again her answer was pragmatic:

I think er my parents partly took pity on er...if you can imagine I was a child having to learn Finish in Finland, and speaking English to my mother, and I think at that pointI had lapsed...and then from Finland we went to Madagascar and I think, which was French speaking so I had to learn French, so I ...[laughing]

...my mother had the idea that... two things really ...my mother had the idea that she'd like us to speak English – which I think was a good thing – and also it has to be said that also my mother was an immigrant to Israel as an adult so her Hebrew was never very good.

So language and geography set her apart from her mother as well as from those around her as she moved from country to country.

G explained how this feeling had manifest itself in terms of her relationships with others and how she approached these 'others'. She explained that it was an approach based upon caution:

[I] waited for people to come to me, waited for to know where I was, I understood the layout, you know, understood the dynamics so that I could....that were in front of me ...and I think I still do it to this very day...

However it was not because she blamed others for making her feel this way, on the contrary she rationalises this expected rejection:

I suppose it's just rejection.....afraid that you're not going to be accepted, that people will think you're strange or different – but you are [smiles]...

On reflection I wondered why I had asked the questions I had. Some were in response to what she said but others reflected what I had noticed in her as a friend, from our earliest meeting. Such 'wondering' guided some of my questions and thereby her answers and the sense that we made of it (App Biii, ref 4).

G is not in these discussions re-presenting a young person who is desperately trying to fit in, but rather of someone resigned to 'otherness'. There is a suggestion of comfort or familiarity in this identity, illustrated in her comments about how often this feeling has been recreated throughout her life. There is no blame, no anger, no rejection of this role, but an acceptance of not being accepted; an agreement with the other of her strangeness. This is however the adult telling the tale. As Langer (1991) discussed, the perspective is that of an adult looking back to their younger or previous self. There have been many years and, according to G, many more times when this role is to be adopted through the years to follow these memories and thus may be coloured by later memories and benefits of hindsight. This rational, thoughtful and now 'accepted' adult is remembering how her younger self had felt in this interview;

'...if your biography is different to other people..err.. you do feel different.'

Throughout the second interview G returns to this theme of being different to others again and again. Even those in the Jewish community with whom she feels a common bond , she says are not quite the same as her;

...they have had the experience of going through various youth programmes, synagogue life ...and...and I don't have the experience of going to Israel ...as the north London Jews...so [but]...they accept me because my biography makes sense to them.

G makes sense of her overlapping identities with a mosaic metaphor; recognising that this is not fixed but continually evolving. But none of the pieces are fully embraced; the Israeli child who

couldn't speak Hebrew and the adult who has a different experience to that of her Jewish colleagues. Then she has emerging identities;

...we are made up of these sort of mosaics where you overlap one thing with someone and overlap something else with someone else.

...and I think..I think that's how one's life is...how one's identity is constructed...so it's infinite..there are infinite patterns er living now in a Surrey village will be again er of those encounters where, on the face of it, I don't have too much in common with, in terms of my biography here, although with time I suppose there is a kind of Surrey identity that builds up and it becomes part of me and I become part of this...world here.

There may be a suggestion here about to whom she chooses to reveal different parts of her identity. And it is clear in the process of these interviews that she is choosing carefully what to share with me. The topic and period in her life that we had not explored in much depth in the first interview was the most present with us in the room; her marrying an Anglican Priest and her coming to live in rural Surrey from London. She explained how that marriage had '...require[d] you to verbalise things that otherwise you take for granted'. Some of those things included matters of faith, culture and ways of seeing things;

...then you perhaps discover that you hadn't thought things through [laughing] or that you hold something very very dear to you or that things are quite happy for you to change and you do things differently. So I think all of these are true and that's very, that's very interesting, exciting, um, it sends you on a kind of journey and it's a journey that makes you reassess who you are...and what your identity is and what new bits of identity you're prepared to take on and ... yes and it's all that, that kind of evolution which is happening. So in that sense it's kind of never ending and yeh...it's a work in progress.

There is a great deal of rich detail in this passage. I am conscious that in this interpretative research any 'truth' espoused is mine and the meaning she expresses here as elsewhere is also my interpretation. That said however the words spoken recount a rare insight into G's personal experience of changing identity. The notion of having to re-think 'things' which here I interpret as religious beliefs and challenges, for G goes to the core of her Jewish and by association, Israeli identity. These 'very very dear' ideas and ways of doing (and perhaps being) are not painful for her to reassess or change; in fact she appears to be happy to do so. The space between the personal and the public which I have in this thesis referred to as the meso space, I earlier reflected upon as that space wherein career lay and which Jung (1938) suggested that religious

belief also inhabited as a communication between the conscious and unconscious mind in what he termed 'individuation'. With respect to Jung's suggestion of stages in life (Fordham,1991), individuation is he suggests, a process of becoming whole (in or un-divided). G's own words relate these thoughts to her identity, co-constructed and in this context re-constructed also in this meso space where the personal and public meet. The psychosocial processes that have shaped G's identity in the past continue to do so and she appears comfortable and thrives in this shifting sand. She speaks fondly of the Church community that 'have embraced me in a way' rather than rejecting her. However she also admits to many surreal moment such as attending the Bishop's garden party;

...oh I pinch myself every day! ...But here I am!

The familiarity with change and its expectation is expressed with joy.

Responsibility and belonging: "...it's a very formative event in anybody's development.."

All young people in Israel must do two or three years of national service in the Israeli military. G is pragmatic about the experience; summarising it as;

.... it has to do a lot, first of all the personal development that occurs in that two or three years, which is tremendous ...and also building people..ummm...a sense of the importance of giving back to the community...because that's what you're doing...for 3 years you're working hard....

Whilst clear that it had a personal development element and was 'building people', she finds it difficult to identify what it was that was developed or built in herself when asked directly. She pauses a lot and hesitates;

...yeh...you...[sighs]youknow, I , I , I suppose [pause] ..oh I don't know, I'd have to really think about ..specifically about that..it might come back to that later...yeh ..so....."

Returning to this question in the second interview G seemed more willing to talk about what this experience meant both to young Israelis generally and to her more personally:

You are given responsibilities you would never be given in civilian life. So suddenly while you're young you find yourself in a completely different frame of mind. And it's a challenge. You either rise to it...most people do...or ...and I think that makes a huge difference because it changes your image of yourself.

So did it change her image of herself?

...suddenly you realise that you're capable of those things...and after two or three years of doing that ...it's lovely to get back, being a civilian again , but you now know that you can do so much more...in terms of confidence, your skills, finding yourself in unusual situations and rising to the challenges.

This may be an insight into the beginnings of her interest in adult learning which I will explore later in this chapter. It may be significant that she expresses her recognition of the transformative power of learning here rather than at school or under her mother's tutelage. But the collective, common experience of national service, being part of something bigger than one person's experience seems also very important;

...the society around you is very supportive because they realise that you are doing something for society and giving a lot of time and energy – something that is valued.. yes it binds you to your friends and it binds you to the rest of society and this experience is fundamental to being an Israeli...because it's a common experience for the country...everybody does it ...and it's a common experience...talk to people as far back as...and it's common ...everybody had done it and that's very bonding. So it is I think a very important thing to go through.

The othered outsider is now part of the collective, of history and this links to her work today;

...in a way it's making a contribution to a chain that ...that chain...chains of tradition....it binds you to those who came before you and those who'll come after...and you add something to that chain. So in my case ...I'm just adding my little bit....to help other people to become educators and Rabbis and to continue that great chain ...

And for her personally '...for me it was transformational ..'.

This clarity of identity and place in the world was challenged in the context of working with Israeli children from many different places, during her national service. She goes on to talk about the identities of these children and there is clearly an important tale to tell:

I have a little story to tell you about that. The settlement consisted mainly of immigrants who came from either North Africa, or India, Cochin Indians, or Georgian Jews ..yes, a very interesting combination of settlers there..immigrants really....and that was the framework , that was what they knew, the children. So when I came to the school I was asked was I North African, Georgian..they realised I couldn't have been Cochin Indian because my skin wasn't dark enough, but you can have pale skinned North AfricansSo

that was the frame of reference..yeh..yeh. That was the question I was asked..that's what they wanted to know ..to which identity I belonged"

I felt later that I should have asked what the answer was to that question at that point. In the second interview I did so. Her answer was ambiguous; 'I can't remember [laughing]. I probably told them a bit of my biography...'

In the first interview I had asked her how she felt being questioned about her origins. Her answer did not reveal feelings but rather was an intellectual explanation. The answer begins with 'no' – to what isn't clear;

...no... it just showed what..... the world they inhabited and what their frames of reference were and what you needed to do to expand that frame of reference ...

When pressed in the second interview she replied:

I'm a er Jew who came from Europe. I knew there wouldn't be a simple answer to that...

This possible avoidance of the emotional is explored further in my consideration of the process, ethnography and Gestalt of these interviews later in this chapter.

The conversation with the children in the school about identity continued around the illusiveness of the Israeli identity;

...yes we have everything in...we have immigrants from every possible continent and any possible mix that you think of..from Ethiopian Jews to ..it's a total mixing pot of every colour, hue imaginable is there ...absolutely not ..there is no 'Israeli' , no single image , it really does, does....I understand that our current um beauty queen is a black Ethiopian.

She emphasises the diverse nature of the Israeli identity here, echoing the conversation with the children in her school. What is needed is for them to 'expand [their] frame of reference'. It could be that G's frame of reference is very wide indeed. However it may be that the broader the 'frame of reference', the less clear the identity. The children in the school had a narrower view of Israeli identity but were clear about who they were. They were not clear who G was. My thoughts return to literature which illuminates the liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000) within which such different notions of national and cultural identity exist side by side. Although Bhabha (2004) and Said (1999) wrote largely about post-colonial identity and the rise of multiculturalism, their ideas are helpful here. Said (1999) recounted in his own experiences, the clashes between East and West and the hierarchy which pervaded and perhaps still pervades that defined him and may also help to understand G's difficulties with this conversation with these children. G, 'from Europe' has

the wider perspective and 'frame of reference' and they 'needed' to expand theirs. However what G was describing was perhaps the same discomfort with the binary that Bhabha (2004) expresses; a need to embrace a wider and less clear yet more inclusive citizenship and cultural heritage. Furthermore he adds insights that, although expressed originally with respect to racial and cultural challenges in South Africa, speak about the tensions also in the identities of Israelis and Jews the world over. Quoting Gordimer (1990) he writes;

Like so many others of this kind, whose families are fragmented in the diaspora of exile.....[are] people for whom a real home and attachments are something for others who will come after.' (Gordimer, 1990:21, cited in Bhabha, 2004:18)

The fragmentation of the Jewish people created by centuries of Jewish diaspora was illustrated by this diverse group of Israeli children taught by G during her national service. The Israel experienced by G during that period felt very different an environment that she was familiar with, despite the fact that she was no stranger to travelling to unfamiliar places. But this was Israel, so I wondered how it felt to her;

...such a different environment . It was a very good way of learning about Israel ... I had lived in Israel for about 3 years between the ages of about 8 and 12 and then we left and I came back at 18 so I had to ...relearn. ...[It felt] ...both home and foreign – familiar and unfamiliar... the familiar bits were the bits in the mind. I was Israeli and this was an Israeli existence, it was part of who I was and where I belonged so that was sort of, that was sort of familiar. Other things were unfamiliar ...like this little town where I went to ..

There is an interesting contrast here between what was familiar 'in the mind' and in her practical experience. Being Israeli was something she was very familiar with indeed. In fact it had been the constant in her mobile childhood, the glue that kept her family and stories together. Savickas (2011) relates Bruner's (1990) assertion of the importance for personal identity to the congruence between stories from family and from culture. It is, Savickas (2011) suggests, when there is a mismatch or lack of congruence that a story needs to be told in order to make sense of any dissonance. Perhaps this is why the story of the multi-cultural group of young Israelis was an important story to be told for G.

Loyalty: "I think there was always an expectation that we don't let the side down"

The theme of expectation occurs throughout the conversations but the comment above came after some discussion about her parents' expectation of her in contrast to their expectations of her younger sister. She had commented on how much easier it is for second children to be

'rebellious,' but that this did not seem to be an option for her. When asked about the nature of 'the side' that she must not let down it is clear: 'I would say the Israeli side first and foremost...'

There appears to be a weight of expectation on her young shoulders. Perhaps the weight of a young nation;

...being in the diplomatic service you are representing your country all the time ...it's so in the fore that you don't have to ...talk about it in a way because you breathe it and live it all the time. So I was brought up very much, when we were abroad to think of myself as a representative of Israel...

So perhaps complaining, anger or an attempt to change or reject this role of 'other' would have been 'letting the side down'.

At the risk of trying to see patterns where there may be none, I find myself drawn to what appears to be a repeated description of what is normal in the world in contrast to what is normal for G. There is no attempt for G to emulate such norms, but to accept her difference to them:

When I was young it was more that you lived in one place and you went to one or maybe two schools, and you had your extended family around you, and very much part of the culture around you.

But the 'you' in this excerpt is not G, it is what she sees as the rest of the world; normal. She is again aware that not only her lifestyle is different but so is its context.

Through her National Service and in her younger years G felt an expectation to contribute to the Israeli cause and she was well aware that this had consequences in terms of her own life. In the second interview she talked about how this aim to serve Israel has been resolved along with her career via her work in the Jewish college:

I think the Jewish identity is very central toworking for a Jewish institution is very important to me ...I think it kind of compensates for Israel ...I suppose at some level it's important for me to feel that the work I do is important in some way ...andwhen I lived in Israel I felt I was contributing in some way to society, the culture and the country. And in a way I feel that here, that working in a Jewish environment and working in a college with a mission and a purpose, and that's very important to me. I find that fulfilling, I find that comfortable, I find comfort ...It doesn't mean I'd never work for another university but in a way making that switch I'd also lose something, I'd be lacking...

There is an acknowledgement here that what she does and where has significant meaning for G. The word 'lacking' refers to what she would be if not at this college and therefore links to a wholeness felt and to her feelings of 'fulfilment'. The word 'comfort' suggests comfort from something harmful or painful, or to a process of healing. There is a hint of emotion here which remains under a veil of pragmatism and perhaps her unwillingness to 'go there'. Nonetheless her words illustrate both a Jungian 'individuation' at this stage of her life (Fordham,1991), and also a mastery of earlier passive 'suffering' or experience; an Adlerian achievement of the goal of a self-ideal laid down early in her life (Adler,1923).

Passion: "loved ballet"

There appears to be an element in both interviews of avoidance of, or minimisation of, emotion or personal feelings. At a number of points in the interview I ask G about her feelings. Each time she appears to avoid answering in full. After describing what sounds like sad memories of being the outsider as a child I asked directly:

A – are those sad memories then?

G – pause.....I don't know that I have specific incidents that I can speak about I .. I ..tend to have a very bad memory for these thingsbut ...I suppose this sense of ..of um being different and having to readjust and reintegrate and catch up andis SO familiar.....and er...happened again and again and again [quietly] and...er...er I think it's also sort of ..also fuses with my personality which.. I am slightly an introvert...well not slightly ..I am an introvert ..so if you think about an introvert having to constantly integrate themselves it does bring out a somewhat shy, um quiet, contemplative person who tends to look and ...um ...andWAIT... 'till they feel comfortable . And I think that is very much part of er er my behaviour patterns if you like.

She appears to avoid talking about emotions by forgetting; consciously or unconsciously. It may be that she is taking care not to acknowledge sadness, loneliness or hurt. Perhaps she feels this is not relevant or it is an example again of waiting until she is comfortable enough to share, with me.

When asked directly whether she was lonely she says not:

I don't think I was lonely in as much as I've always had friends - I've always made friends...

However having friends does not always equate with not being lonely. Similarly when asked about her younger sister she does not embrace the opportunity to talk about that relationship

and the possible tensions that there are in all sibling relationships. When asked whether her sister had the same experiences in moving so often, she merely acknowledges as a matter of pragmatism that;

I think she did have those same issues but I think that she coped with things differently because she's a different personality, more outgoing - I think second children often are...you know first born I think are more er..a little bit more..er ..I don't know ...[silence]. I think it's also because they get more attention from the parents and there's a layer of expectation than perhaps the second child doesn't have...they can be a bit more rebellious ...So you've got all of that going on as well....

The section I have underlined shows where a personal reflection moves into a third person; depersonalising it. She might have responded more directly by saying that "she got more attention from my parents than I did and they expected more from me. I was under pressure and she wasn't". The meaning may be the same but the intimacy of the language differs.

G states that she is 'an introvert'. This now familiar term was introduced by Jung (Fordham, 1991) and suggested a bias to the internal world and to thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition, and so to an internalised way of dealing with and responding to experience. The way in which G dealt with and perhaps still deals with experiences, whether positive or negative, was by internalising the meaning of such experiences and thinking them through carefully. As an introvert her emotions are also carefully expressed, not externally broadcast.

Her comments about her and her sister's position in the family are also of interest. Adler (1923) wrote a great deal about family position and its potential impact on his notions of inferiority and quests for superiority. He asserts that the oldest child in a family enjoys power only to lose it when a second child is born. He concludes therefore that oldest children are conservative by nature; believing that the powerful should remain in power. However the feminist ideas about Judasim discussed earlier in this chapter may present an alternative; a strong woman who does indeed challenge authority. Furthermore, for G there are mixed messages in our conversations about her relationship with her sister. There is some rivalry in terms of their parents' attention and also a hint of resentment about the pressure on her and the relative freedom of her sister as they were growing up. From her perspective she may, as Adler would attest, have been superior to and potentially more powerful than her sister, but also carried the bulk of the family's expectations and responsibilities. It was she, not her sister, who moved to England to care for her parents when they became frail. But no resentment or irritation was expressed.

Later in the interview G is asked about what her passions were as a young person. I wanted to find some expression of that internal world; find out what excited her, moved her and perhaps attracted her to pursue any particular pastime. It is notable that her response is to change the word from 'passion' to 'interest', a much less emotive word. The interest is however that of ballet; a highly emotive and creative topic.

Question: what were your passions as a young person?

Answer: – my interests? ..Loved ballet...all of it...I did it , I read about it..I went...

She holds back from talking about it with passion, but rather lists other interests such as reading and travel. The subject of ballet was also further explored in the second interview when I asked again what it was that drew her to it for so many years;

there was something about it that ..I don't know, I liked the movement.....

She goes on to explain that she had been fortunate to be able to go to many performances, but when pressed about her own personal place in this relationship between herself and ballet and why she stopped dancing she turned to humour:

I was flat footed for a start and when spectacles got added [laughing] I just couldn't see spectacles and swan lake and flat feet.....no

Once again she does not belong. This apparent avoidance of emotion may have been to avoid painful memories, or it may be more about her desire to provide me with the material she thought I needed; factual information about her life and career, not the softer information about feelings and emotion. And so I make no claims that she is not, perhaps in other conversations, other topics and to other people, able to talk about her feelings, just that given opportunities in these conversations she often chose not to. As Hollway and Jefferson (2000) remind researchers, it is our responsibility to respect the privacy of participants and to respect their right to include and not to include what they choose. In particular they emphasise the care needed when exploring psychosocial topics such as in this thesis. So I did not pursue G's apparent avoidance of more personal thoughts and feelings but note them here nonetheless.

Career: "I've been one of these terrible people who can't make up their minds."

If G's belief was that as a careers professional I was looking in this research for how people 'made up their minds', then those who could not may, to her, be 'terrible' indeed, and not helpful in my research. That I was as interested in the messiness and the personal story, may have helped her to understand my research more widely.

In our first conversation G commented about her degree choice being a mixture between her mother's and father's influence. Later it became clear that she tried hard NOT to follow in her mother's footsteps or society's expectations;

...and it just felt so obvious that I actually made a conscious decision not take out a teacher's...not become a qualified teacher as such because I wanted to sort of break that mould ..so I really...consciously ..I didn't do the extra year when you get your, after the degree to get the teaching qualification ..I really wanted to challenge myself to find something else yeh to be different ..um..um...

She had been different all her life and didn't seem to want to be ordinary now. However the alternative to the "obvious" choice proved to be difficult to find. One option was that of Law;

...but there's always been a latent interest in the legal profession.. which I think comes from my grandfather..my grandfather was a lawyer ...and perhaps had I been living in one country ...I might have..might have trained as a lawyer..

We talked about how Law can restrict a person to the country they qualified in;

...and that had been the experience of my grandfather um, he'd been a lawyer and when he came to England he couldn't practice and that was a major breakdown in his identity and that story kind of remained in my mind ..and one of the reasons I thought 'no' I won't do that , I will not put myself in that situation ..in a profession that was bound to a specific country or location...that worried me, because of that ..

She had made some connections and linked her career choices in particular to geographic flexibility rather than stability;

...yeh because I think I want [stability]and don't want it...it answers different needs...want it perhaps in terms of identity, and security, but on the other hand having a profession that is international and transportable...should you need to [laughter]...I suppose it's a bit of hedging your bets...

However she went on to consider whether in fact Law might have been a good choice. She concludes that this was definitely an area of interest and relates well to her current professional role;

...yeh it's true..when I was studying international relations I took a seminar in international law which I enjoyed tremendously ..one of the best papers I wrote at university was international law...which just sort of makes you wonder ..you know about

that ..um...and funnily enough..it's not law but my current job which is in quality assurance, requires, playing around and writing regulations ...which is not law but is a kind of mind set you need for it ...

So from a skills and interests profile that she describes as 'wishy washy', there seemed to be a clarity developing about what G had been looking for within her career;

...yeh ..structure..framework..order....it's trying to..to...to regulate ... control..and I think that must be a feeling ..somewhere in all of this..

She acknowledges that some structure in what she does is important, and although she can recognise her parents' influence she is clear that they were not directive about her future career. Describing them she said;

...my father was definitely an intellectual ..my mother was more gregarious and had er ..you know..er her own skills...

Influence came from nation and family and also from father and mother; all contrasting. However the precise future for the young G was not predetermined:

I don't think they had a destiny as such - the expectation was that I go to university but I don't think there was anything beyond that, they weren't thinking of a specific profession...but yes I think there was a definite expectation that I carry on to university and have some sort of good grounding It was never a question in my mind as I was growing up – the end goal was to go to university..... there was no question mark around that. And I remember when I was in secondary school here in England my best friend – it was very interesting because my best friend who remains my friend to this very day - um – her parents expected her to end up being a secretary or something...and I still remember to this day being absolutely shocked that that was all that was expected of her. It was clear to me that she was very bright and could do a lot more and she in fact did ...she went to University and worked afterwards in advertising. But I remember the shock of discovering that that was all that was expected...

What is striking here is not so much the contrast between G and her English friend, but on the frequency of the word 'expected' or 'expectation'. The level of expectation on G and the lack of it for her friend is shocking to her. Expectation of others seems to be normal to G as is her duty to fulfil it. Again, like the 'otherness' of the younger self, this is not rejected or confronted but accepted without complaint. It is of more concern that her friend's parents 'only' expect her to be a secretary when she 'could do a lot more'. However she then goes on to explain that this was

normal for girls at the time, but does not include herself in that norm, despite the use of the word 'you'. Perhaps 'you' did but 'I' didn't:

Women were still thought of in those ways so yes you went to school and you acquire secretarial skills and then you didn't have to do a lot more than that [.....] you worked for a few years as a secretary and then you married and had a family and that was the end of the story...

Although not explored in the conversations for this research, I am aware that G has an interest in feminist issues in Judaism. As in other world religions such as Christianity and Islam, there are tensions between progressive feminist ideas and conservative traditionalists and orthodoxy. Heschel (1983) and Plaskow (1991) both write about their frustrations regarding some of the patriarchy and side-lining of women in worship, leadership and theological arguments evident in some sections of Judaism. There are no indications in the conversations we had as to where G's feminist beliefs were nurtured but her mother does not seem to offer such a role model in her life style.

G's comment that there was a dearth of role models for her in her youth is interesting:

In some ways it was exciting and in some ways it was very confusing because there weren't that many role models ...so there was a sense that there were lots of possibilities but it wasn't very clear what they were.

It is difficult to imagine what kind of role model there could have been for G. A role model may have a similarity or commonality in challenge or barrier; the path or example that can be emulated by a younger person. That role model may have been a woman, Jewish or a migrant. The excerpt from our conversation above indicates that G felt that perhaps her familiarity with difference or with being an outsider may have made a role model hard to find. The role model that was available, that of her mother, did not quite offer the pathways that she wanted at the time;

...where were the examples one could model one's self on, of careers that were accessible, um beyond you know nursing and teaching and being a secretary which were the classical trio that women were directed towards? So that was more difficult..er...to make it real.

The Adlerian notion of the self-ideal (1923) has been used by Savickas (2011) in his model for career counselling based on his Career Construction Theory. He specifically asks clients about their role model as a young child which helps the counsellor to clarify with them the nature of

their emerging 'self ideal' and goal. These role models are not necessarily based on real people in the life of a young person but could be fictional characters from books or TV. It is interesting to wonder, if G was party to such a career counselling conversation, what would have emerged given her apparent lack of role model in our conversation. Her mother, although someone of considerable talent, exemplified at least two of the roles that G did not feel she would follow; the devoted wife and the teacher. For most of her life she did not follow either, but later did both;

..although I don't think the Israeli diplomatic service prohibited wives from working, there were some that did, you did in fact have to in fact spend a lot of time being 'the wife of..' ...but what she did do was ..which was very commendable.. the love of teaching had developed as she tutored me, had become for her a profession...

Earlier in this chapter I commented on her reflections on what being the 'the wife of' an Anglican Priest brought to her life. Similarly there was some need for compromise and re-evaluation of previous expectations.

In contrast to her mother's influence of the love of learning there was that of her father's interest and identity in politics. Ultimately G found that the way forward was that of neither, or rather of both:

I ended up also studying international relations....which was not a million miles away from what my father....in fact what I ended up studying was a ...only in retrospect did I see it..I did a double. [laughter]..I did a double degree.. I studied English Literature and International Relations....if you like, this was a reflection of both my parents...

She acknowledges that she can see this 'in retrospect' but probably not at the time. After some years of working as an administrator in the Hebrew University she heard about new developments of programmes in adult education. She was interested and told the person developing the programmes, " 'if you're looking for people to work with you remember me' and he did!". So again she waited for him to come to her; the ball was in his court. It was the beginning of an exciting and rewarding chapter in her career and her entry into teaching adults. She tells how she '... wanted as it were to stand on the other side of the table...' and 'it was very important for me to feel I could do it'.

Teaching: finding joy and doing things her way

G is keen to emphasise that her career and opportunities have been unplanned. She could have become a teacher years ago but chose not to. There is an echo of her approach to career in her approach to new people; you let them come to you, and wait to be accepted. Speaking of her

move into adult education she speaks of 'joy'. When asked about how it felt to teach after so many years as an educational administrator, she explains that 'there is a different type of joy in it...'. The tone in the conversation changed and G began to express some heartfelt emotions;

...and I found that very interesting and exciting and to this day I love teaching, I love teaching students. And right now frankly at the college the students I'm working with are such wonderful people I wonder what there is in me I can teach them but ...for what it's worth....it's always a joy to do that.

What appears to be the source of the joy is;

...something about enabling people to have second opportunities and finding myself and enabling others to find themselves and suddenly discovering that there was a whole world out there that can be attained in this way.

What seems to be part of this joy is the coming together of her vocation and the responsibilities she feels that she has to Israel and all that she was brought up to be and do; 'not let the side down'.

What is also interesting is why she did not go into teaching earlier and resolve this vocation. She says that becoming a teacher earlier '...would have been a more standard sort of response.' Being 'standard', seems to be something she could not have succumbed to; 'I think I had to discover it in my own way'.

But G's conclusion is despite acknowledging the impact of her family, parents, travel and culture, that;

...it was all quite by accident. No what I'm trying to say is that I'm not a person who had a kind of career plan. Things evolved in quite a natural way in response to travel, to personal development, to opportunities, to the unexpected, came together in some sort of way.

What 'kind of person' does have a career plan remains unanswered. Perhaps it would be the 'normal' person with stability and 'standard' paths. Whether such a person exists other than as a measure against which G can weigh her difference would require exploration outside the remit of this thesis. But she is clear that there was no plan or resolution to be achieved:

I am the kind of person who never knew what she wanted. So serendipity was key for certain situations.

Literature on happenstance in career (Krumboltz,2009) suggests that although some chance or serendipity is prevalent in most careers, it is how such opportunities are sought out, recognised and responded to that is important. Krumboltz (2009) writes about how a positive outlook enables opportunities to be recognised and that attributes such as optimism, flexibility and persistence can produce results in the long-term. G would appear to have many of these qualities and has from her account 'waited' for opportunities to come to her in much the same way as she responded to other unfamiliar situations or people. She took her time, taking steps only when she felt secure in doing so and could see how that new environment would be managed. Returning to her own words;

...[I] waited for people to come to me, waited for to know where I was, I understood the layout, you know, understood the dynamics so that I could....that were in front of me ...and I think I still do it to this very day...

I asked her what she would say to her younger self now:

I'd probably say 'you're good enough' [laughing] ... no I'd definitely say to her 'you're good enough' and 'don't worry too much ..you're stronger than you think' ...and it will be alright.

As someone I know to be well read and interested in human development and psychology her use of the term 'good enough' will not have been accidental. Winnicott's notion of the 'good enough' parent (1971) recognises that it is not perfection that is required for healthy development but an adequate space for playful learning; a transitional space which is good enough to enable the experience different selves. West (in Formenti, West and Horsdal, 2014) considered the contributions of Winnicott, Bourdieu and also Axel Honneth to the understanding of the narratives of adult learners and this may also be helpful in consideration of G's story. West's paper (2014) focused on three non-traditional learners and G could not be described as such. However the bringing together of the ideas of these three is helpful. Winnicott's notion of 'good enough' parenting could be a description of G's upbringing; supportive and caring but with challenge and space to 'play' with different ideas of herself, so that ultimately she has constructed a less defended self with which she appears to be very comfortable. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is something that G was not lacking in an international, well-educated and multilingual family. However in each new cultural context she expresses a Bourdieuan 'fish out of water' feeling with which she has become very familiar. She has become adept at learning new cultural capital quickly. His notion of the embodied culture illustrated in different habitus describes many of the steep learning curves that G has experienced throughout her life. Finally

Honneth's recognition theory (1995;2009), offers some further insight into G's story. A proponent of agentic control over an individual's own destiny, his ideas correspond well to G's experience of having the ability to take her own pathway, without fear of rejection, because of her self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem established through her 'good enough' upbringing.

Process and Ethnography

The place where the interviews were held was at the Vicarage. Although the room was not the one in which her husband met with parishioners, there was a steady flow of Parish business going on around the house; telephone and doorbell ringing, and the remnants of sermons and memos on the table on which I put my recorder. I was grateful to G for helping, in a similar way to how I might feel gratitude for the support of her husband should I have the need for his pastoral care or spiritual guidance. She looked very much the part of the Vicar's wife although in so many ways this was not a natural fit.

I had discussed with G the nature of my research interest and she was intrigued. We shared experience of a nomadic childhood and I wanted to record her account of this. What emerged from the interview was her life story; factual, unemotional and as true to the chronology as she could make it. My efforts to get beneath the story by asking about feelings proved largely unproductive. I wanted to know how it felt to be so different from those around her and how that had affected her identity and selfhood. What emerged was a stoicism and avoidance of the emotional side of her story. However I could not help wonder whether that was her choice; to tell me her story but not include her whole self. Although our friendship is strong, it may still be a time of waiting. Such a notion of the 'defended self', described by Klein (1975) is a natural and healthy guard against the anxiety of rejection (originally according to Klein from the mother and breast) and perhaps here from others. Our conversations may have been similar to those she experienced as a child. Irrespective of our maturity, apparent shared experiences and friendship, she approached this with some wariness, as she says, even 'to this very day'. Perhaps that was not just a figure of speech; she used it often.

After having looked at the transcript of the first interview G expressed her discomfort with her use of English: 'I don't seem to be able to put two words together.'

She had also changed the transcript to read 'yeh' whenever I had typed 'yah'. Neither might be considered to be the correct spoken or written English but time and time again 'yah, yah,..' was corrected to 'yeh, yeh'.

The context and setting for the second interview was much as the first. However this time it was preceded by a chat with her husband about 'how is it going?' As an academic, psychotherapist, Priest and someone intrinsically interested in people, it is no surprise that he would be interested in his wife's story. I felt a little compromised and so talked about some literature instead; in particular Burkitt (1991) and the concept that individuals only exist as constructs of our environment. When G returned to the room there were comments about 'letting you two girls get on with it' and after some slightly uncomfortable laughter we began the second interview. It went smoothly but was a little more structured as this was the follow-up interview and had been labelled as such; perhaps insinuating that the content was not so important and that we were just filling in any gaps and 'correcting' mistakes. I felt, as I had in the first, that she was doing this to help me in my research and that the aim was to establish whether or not there had been influences on her career choices; that there was a conclusion to be drawn. She said so in her early sentences, almost confirming what she perhaps felt I wanted to hear;

...what I thought was interesting was....the fact that...career decisions do seem to be tied to the family..and that I thought was interesting...

Gestalt

My aim was to record the story of the experiences of growing up with mixed contexts and influences and the subsequent career path of my friend G. Hers was to help me to do that, and thereby to help me to achieve the doctorate that she knows is important to me; and something she has also identified she would have liked to have done if circumstances had made it possible. We both achieved these aims. However what was notable for me was the strength of her ownership of the story told. She made it very clear that she was aware of what happened and why, and there were no regrets expressed or vulnerabilities revealed. As noted in the themes of the interview, when feelings or emotions were asked for or explored she often skilfully changed the course of the conversation, even changing the words used:

'what were your passions as a young person? 'my interests?'

'how did that make you feel?' 'no it just showed what...'

Throughout both interviews there was also a notable use of 'one' or 'we' or 'you' rather than 'I' or 'me'. This may have been her style of language or subliminally another way of avoiding intimacy, emotion or closeness with the story. The insistence on grammatically correct speech in the transcript of the first interview may similarly be about her enthusiasm for correct use of language,

but the avoidance of 'yah' could perhaps also be an avoidance of the personally or culturally uncomfortable; a chink in an otherwise exemplary personal armour.

However during the second interview, when her move into adult education was discussed the tone and use of words changed. Words such as 'joy', 'excitement', 'love' were included as we talked about what sounded very much like the discovery of a vocation. When linked then to working in the college, a connection with her heritage and contribution to Israel, the language becomes even more powerful;

...and there is a different type of joy in it, a very different um, ...and I found that very interesting and exciting and to this day I love teaching, I love teaching students. And right now frankly at the college the students I'm working with are such wonderful people I wonder what there is in me I can teach them but ...for what it's worth....it's always a joy to do that.

Both the process and the content of this story through the two interviews appears to be one of control of vulnerability. The child protected herself by standing back and waiting, and avoided 'bold statements'. The adult woman appears to continue to do the same. She allowed me to approach her and to ask questions. She answered them truthfully but under her own terms and gave away little of the vulnerability that may be beneath. Within these conversations however there may be a suggestion of a resolution of the wait, in the finding or construction of a life in which national and personal identities are brought together. However the impression she outwardly gave was simply that she could see that she had indeed been influenced by her parents in her career choices and also by her grandfather: *quod erat demonstrandum* ('which is what had to be shown'). For her a neat and logical conclusion had been reached.

Other themes in these conversations were identity (national and personal) and her embrace of her otherness which seemed ubiquitous. National identity was clearly strong; her loyalty and that of her family to the state of Israel is beyond question. Although some aspects of her faith, she tentatively suggested, were open to discussion and re-evaluation, her national identity and responsibility to that nation goes deep into her being. It was her father's purpose and vocation to defend and to support the new state of Israel, her mother's to support him and G's and her sister's to 'not let the side down'. This is in contrast to her own personal identity which seems more ambiguous; not only because of living in different places but also, I posit, because of the absence of a 'mother tongue'.

The difference and the overlapping between national identity (Israeli) and personal identities (Jewish, British) was illustrated by the discussion she had with children in a school during her national service. They were all Israeli but they wanted to know what *kind* of Israeli she was. This she found very hard to say until eventually 'from Europe' was as close as she could muster. She is open and insistent that she feels that she does not wholly fit into any particular group or identity. She has she says a 'mosaic' of identities that 'continually evolve', enabling her to continue to slip in and out of communities and groups and, if she chooses, to move on.

Finally there is a theme of career. From her school and home education, to national service, university and work, this was what she felt she was there to talk about for this research, and she did. But aside from the detail, there appeared to be a theme of a search for self in the complex mix of roles, identities, responsibilities and loyalties she was trying to balance. If her 'self' was anything it had to be 'different' and then she needed to resolve that difference which, she concedes in the end, she did. The resolution of the search for 'self' appears to be that of enabling others to find 'themselves' through adult learning, satisfying her loyalties to Israel and ultimately following her mother's example of teaching and being a wife; all the while remaining 'different'. If she did passively suffer in her experience of ambiguous identity, this appears to have been mastered (Savickas,2011) through her work and resolution of her career.

In conclusion G's story was explored with loosely structured interviews. Her engagement with the research was supportive and interested. She had expressed an interest, and some of what she went on to say made it clear that she had a need to understand her own story and how it related to her career. As far as could be surmised this was achieved. However such understanding and meaning making was not a construct of hers or of mine but a creation of us both. She knew I was interested in career and had experienced what it is to be an outsider. There was a common understanding between us. 'Our' conclusions, that complexity and ongoing identity construction can be positive and affirming, are not surprising but hitherto not expressed (App Biii, ref 4).

Further to the initial interest in G's story of her career, the material from the two interviews was rich in meaning in terms of her struggles with identity and belonging, her feelings of loyalty and responsibility alongside those of non-conforming, independence and the joy of helping others to do the same. I remain grateful to G for her story and for providing an insight into her family's experience of a pivotal and painful part of Jewish and world history.

Chapter Seven

The Story of S

S is a mixed race woman, and my half cousin. Her story telling is a rich, human mix of the pain of racism, but also, agentially, of a determination to work her way through this to some more 'authentic' identity, chosen, and defined by the complexity of her lived experience. We are also offered an impression of someone who wanted to find a sense of belonging, but often had a feeling of being more complex and different. S tells of the issues of her experience of belonging, both the good and the constraining and there is some insight into early feelings of rejection in her relationship with her mother and later her father.

The influence of her father and Catholicism is strong: her father having died but his presence becoming ever stronger in her own struggles and in the interplay of past and present. Although rejected as a doctrine, there are echoes of the ethical and value base with which she was raised throughout her life and her philosophy. There are a number of told and untold stories that inhabit the backdrop of her life; her father's assimilation into British life and rejection of his country of birth, and the story of her own birth and subsequent relationship with her mother. She tells of her place in the struggle for social justice, the rights of women and the role of adult education in the lives of marginalised people. She places herself within these struggles but also as an agent for them. As S's story continues through her middle years we hear of the recognition and emergence of her sexual orientation and the importance of creativity in her life; both thwarted in earlier years but later central to her identity and emotional health.

Talking to S: a reflective piece of 'writing for enquiry'

The weekend that I spent with S, during which material for this work was collected, was so full of richness, information and insight that I could not capture it all in our recorded conversation. We recorded two hours of conversation but throughout the weekend there were comments and moments that also added to my understanding of S's life and the impact of her mixed heritage and experience of otherness. What follows is a reflective account of our time together that weekend. However, mindful of what Hollway and Jefferson pose relating to the analysis of narratives 'what do we notice?' and...'why do we notice what we notice?' (2013:51), I am aware of and embrace the subjectivity of my weekend and later the exploration of the material

collected. What stood out for me was as much as a result of my own perspective, interest and story as what was said and done. This is therefore an acknowledgement of the 'auto' in the auto/biographical. My understanding of her story is a product of my own and the meaning made is co-constructed through our conversations, both recorded and not (App B ii, ref 1). I can no more stand outside this story and look in than I can do so for my own story. Our roots are tangled, intertwined and share nourishment and weaknesses. As outlined in the prequel of this chapter, we share a Sri Lankan grandfather; our fathers are half-brothers.

S is the archivist of the family. In her apartment are photos, newspaper cuttings, poems and music. S is a psychotherapist as well as a successfully published poet, and explained about the use of phenomenology in her practice "not the past or the future but being in the now". Whether these conversations tapped autoethnographic consciousness or not, it was clear that so much of her life's work is about the past and about her own place within that history. I found this interesting and realised early that weekend that there was much complexity in S's life and work and that she clearly valued the opportunity to explore it with me. The person I knew as a child and the person I spent the weekend with were so different, or perhaps it was that I was allowed to see the whole person where as in childhood what I knew of and about her was filtered through the eyes and ears and thoughts of her parents and mine. White (2007) explores the notion of 're-membering' and the contextual nature of our memories; not a fixed truth but an evolving and changing thing shaped by the memories of others and what we have heard, read and seen since. This is echoed by Josselson's work (2009) when she writes that 'autobiographical memory is a process of reconstruction rather than a faithful depiction' (2009:647). So memories change in time and context and the stories she told me that day may have been different another day or to another person.

When I arrived she was saying goodbye to a poet friend who had been visiting for the weekend. I had not been at this place of hers before. S moved there the previous year after the breakup with her civil partner. We had lunch and she and her friend asked me about my research interests. She was also of mixed race and talked about her life and work as a feminist poet. I asked them both about feminism and they were both clear to stress that all women are feminist, but that the 'literature' could be a barrier to some and a mask to hide behind for others. They were insistent that male feminists were not to be taken very seriously and both said that they would find something for me to read on the matter. The friend left for the station and we left for a concert in which another cousin was singing.

On our way to the concert we talked about her breakup with her partner and her ongoing mending. This had been a devastating event, coming only a year after their civil partnership. The pain was still raw and the break up unexplained. We talked about my struggle with 'losing' my daughter to the love of her life and where that leaves me and my identity and purpose as a mother. We talked about jealousy and love and letting go. The concert was entitled 'Circle of Life' and took us through stages of life with music and also photographs. We cried at some and laughed at others. There was a real sense of a connection with the past; our own and that of our family. We talked in the car about her birth story. Everyone knows in our family that she was born by caesarean section and that both she and her mother nearly died. I talked to her about Laura Formenti's work on birth stories and how they can have an impact on how we see ourselves; the miracle child, or the long awaited treasured baby, or the accident, or in S's case the pain and near disaster (Formenti et al, 2014). I was minded of my own mother's birth story when I first heard Formenti speak; my mother had survived but her mother had died in childbirth resulting in her being 'given away' to a neighbour. This knowledge about both stories coloured our subsequent discussions, consciously or unconsciously (App Bii, ref 2).

When we returned to S's flat she put the heating on and began to cook supper. First she showed me a box of photographs and paper cuttings. Some were of her grandmother, some of mine and some of other members of the family including the 'mad aunt' she had written about in a poem. One of the most amazing to me was a copy of the front page of a local Leeds newspaper from 1927. It was a photograph and article about my grandparents' wedding (see earlier reference and picture in chapter four). In it the writer describes the wedding between my grandmother and 'the native' in St Anthony's church. There was standing room only and there were crowds outside to see the spectacle. In fact children from local schools had evidently been given time off school to come to see this unprecedented event; the marriage of a local 18 year old girl and a 36 year old coloured man. What was even more amazing was that S had met an elderly lady a couple of years ago who recalled being one of those children that had lined the street and she still remembered it. Mixed marriage was big news then and we both wondered why my grandmother's parents had agreed to it. After the wedding they had sailed for Ceylon where she was to meet her step children who were not many years younger than she was (my grandmother), and where she had to take on the responsibility for running a large household with servants who did not speak English. S recalled her father receiving magazines in the 1950s from my grandmother about life in the then independent Sri Lanka. In return they had sent her magazines from England. S commented on the strangeness of this process; each exchanging links to the world they had both

chosen to leave behind. My grandparents returned to England infrequently. S wrote a poem about one of her first meetings with our grandfather in her second book of poems (S, 2007).

The old man breathing in the high green chair
has hands like my dad, but his eyes are browner
and his hair is greyer. He came last night with
stories , presents, kisses to cover my shyness.
I don't know him. My Grandad from Ceylon.

(2007:21)

But S's father never returned to Sri Lanka and rarely talked about it. It was my own family who visited Sri Lanka as part of much of the travelling we did in my early years. Where my father clearly wanted his children to understand and be part of our Asian heritage, S's father did not seem to. The important focus for him was the Catholic Church and being accepted as part of the community in Leeds. Edward Said's autobiographical account 'Out of Place' (2002) similarly describes his experience of parental efforts to adhere to what are seen as respectable, innately superior and preferable Western norms. S recalled that being safe was of great concern to her father, and so she remembers a family life that was full of love and safety but also very little freedom. In Rebecca Walker's writing she explains her wish for safety, for clear designations that were missing from her own mixed race experience:

'I want to know constraints, boundaries. I want to know the limits of who I am.....Let me master myself within articulated limitations. Without these, I feel vast, out of control. Like I can too easily slip outside of my own life and into someone else's. (2002:4)

S's experience of having mixed heritage appears to have been different. She explained to me how she had wanted freedom, and exploited her newly found liberty to the limit when she went away to university. Latterly however she has spent her life defining and redefining herself in very clear terms: Lesbian, Feminist, Black, Poet.

S asked whether we could talk as she cooked but because of the recording equipment that wasn't



Figure 10. My cousins, brother and I with aunty W and my mother

practical so we poured a glass of wine and when everything was in the oven we sat down and began to talk. She had been talking to me all day about family and life and so she was ready to go.

I began by focusing on a photograph of her and my family on a beach in 1960. I am in a pram and my mother is sitting behind me, S is playing with my brother in the sand. Her father and mother are in the picture as are her older brother and sister and her younger sister is in her mother's arms. The contrast in darkness of skin between different members of this group

is clear. My and S's mothers are white and blonde haired. My uncle is dark as are his children. My father, in the second photograph, who had a white mother is tanned but lighter-skinned than his brother.



Figure 11. My father, my brother and S, with J and M

Later S commented on how separate she and my brother had looked in these photos.

'[He] and I are just not interested in the camera at all'. We talked about how both of them had struggled with this 'odd' family as they grew up. Although they had done so in different ways, they had both rejected the identity given to them by the family and forged their own, often painfully. Whether in both these photographs there was a prophetic hint of what was to come for them both, or whether it was a random coincidence, is hard to say. However Barthes (1977) suggests that

photographs do indeed convey a message. There are layers of significance; the objects or actors in the photograph, the photographer who chooses the precise time at which the pose of those actors is what s/he prefers, and then the meaning made of the photograph by the viewer, in this case many years and stories later.

The beginning of the recorded conversation centred on S's Dad, my uncle. She described a tense but loving relationship with him and with her mum. She talked about his death and the unresolved nature of their parting. We also talked about how she felt she was seen by the rest of the family in comparison with her smiley brother, very bright older sister and treasured baby sister.

I found it very difficult not to add my own thoughts as this was my family too. But S rarely paused and spoke effortlessly and eloquently. After an hour the dinner needed to be turned down and I needed to plug the laptop into the mains power. We paused to pour another glass of wine and to attend to these things and then resumed.

It was apparent from her story that she had long thought of herself as the 'naughty' one; the one who didn't fit with her parents' aspirations for her. She was a rebel in many ways: rejecting the Roman Catholicism that was such a big part of her family, going to a 'new university' and studying Sociology which was a radical subject in the 1960s, and later coming out as a Lesbian (although this was never directly spoken about in her parents' lifetimes). However when I asked her about the roots of her strong ethical drive to help others she conceded that it may well have originated from her Christian upbringing, but that also her feeling of 'otherness' had led her to want to help any who also feel 'other'.

It may be that the thoughts and writing of Simone Weil (1947: 1952) resonate with those of S. Weil, whose life was dedicated to action, built upon the Descartes notion of "I think; therefore I am", by posing that "I *act* and therefore I am". It was not enough for her to philosophise but she also felt the need to act; fighting for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War and working in a car factory in her sabbatical to understand the plight of the worker and to experience that directly. S too expressed her lifelong obligation to help others and to right wrongs and like Weil to share the sufferings of others.

Weil, in considering the notion of obligations to our fellow human beings wrote,

'On this point the human conscience has never varied. Thousands of years ago, the Egyptians believed that no soul could justify itself after death unless it could say 'I have never let anyone suffer from hunger'. All Christians know they will hear Christ himself say to them one day 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat.' (Weil,2001:6)

The conversations that weekend offered some additional insights into her need to help. The following morning the conversation continued and S told me about the dichotomy that was her

parents' attitude to race, and I shared that of my own mother's too. She told the story of when she had challenged her parents' comments about new Asian immigrants 'not mixing in and integrating'. When accused of racist attitudes, her mother had slapped her face and said 'how can we be racist – just look at us!' I was minded of some of the comments my mother has made over the years as though completely ignoring the dark skin of her husband. And my father's self-mocking or joking about colour when I didn't think it was funny at all. He always claimed he had never suffered from racism as had S's dad, but it was clear that both of them had, but had chosen in my uncle's words 'to turn the other cheek'.

We discussed some of the literature in her library and she pointed me towards a range of works by those, and about those, of mixed heritage. Some of these were explored in chapter two. Later that morning we went to visit my cousin, S's older sister, and her husband for brunch. She may have wondered why I had asked S and not her or their younger sister to take part in the research. The reason was pragmatic. S was very interested and engaged with life stories and family history when I had first mentioned it. S seemed to enjoy the opportunity to have a voice in my research but also to tell me, a member of the family, her side of the story of our family. Perhaps it was also apparent that S had wrestled more with her identity than the others who seemed to have largely ignored their mixed ethnicity or ethnicity at all, and did not seem as interested in it.

The transcripts from my conversations with S that weekend were analysed using the Merrill and West (2009) proforma, as previously discussed. This holistic approach to the analysis of transcripts considers the process and context of the engagement, the ethnography and unspoken communications and the perceived Gestalt. The open and playful space provided by this proforma and explored in the methodology chapter, gave me permission to embrace the subjective nature of our conversation while also conducting a rigorous and respectful analysis of the material.

What follows are the themes that I identified in the transcripts. These themes were not arbitrarily chosen, emerging magically from the texts. Rather they were identified by listening to the recordings and reading and re-reading the transcripts until themes seemed clear. Walker (2002), explores what stories may hold for us when she writes:

Some sinewy thread of meaning is in there somewhere, putting a new spin on the new utterly simplistic nature-nurture debate. Your job is to listen carefully and let your imagination reconstruct the narrative, pausing on hot spots like hands over a Ouija board. (2002:11).

Themes

Notwithstanding the epistemological conflicts in the tidying up of a life story; the putting of it into categories that may fit the comforts of the researcher, here are the hotspots that I heard. There are seven themes but within them and between them are overlapping spaces, some shared with the macro, some with the meso and some with the intimate and personal, the micro worlds.

There are also themes and threads that I have not explored in depth, such as her personal life and sexuality, and the loss of her close friend. Such omissions are only because of their degree of significance to my research rather than their importance to her and her story and are nonetheless acknowledged with respect.

History and place: this far away place that my father got letters from

S grew up in a mixed race family. However we hear how the differences between her and her parents' views, were starker to her than the difference between her parents' backgrounds. Her mother's white working class family surrounded her in her childhood in Leeds and held little fascination or particular interest for her. Her father's Sri Lankan, landed elite family were largely invisible but entrancing. Perhaps there was some nostalgia and exotic attraction in this.

The reasoning behind his decision to wholeheartedly embrace Britishness in favour of his own heritage we can only guess. Marrying an English woman and making the decision to never return to Sri Lanka and S's description of the mythical reference to Sri Lanka in the family, may suggest that he felt it was better for himself and his family to be one thing or another. As they were in England they would be English. However for S this left a sense of fascination which persisted beyond her childhood:

I've got two uncles. I've got Uncle Frank and Uncle Tony – right? I've always been closer to Uncle Tony – even though - because I've always be drawn more to Uncle Tony than to Uncle Frank. Because I don't need anything – I don't need to know – I know Uncle Frank. It's like I want that connection – I want that connection with Sri Lanka or I feel that connection with Sri Lanka.

The less familiar Sri Lankan side of her family seemed more exotic and exciting, perhaps because of the not knowing. She is 'drawn' perhaps not only to her Sri Lankan uncle (Tony), but to that part of her that was for many years unknown:

I don't know if it was like this for my brother and sisters but what I remember was I always had this romantic idea about Ceylon. It was this faraway place that my father got letters from and....we would get these magazines sent with beautiful pictures in and I remember getting them and looking at them and there were lotus flowers and it was all...

However there was little conversation about Ceylon and her father's relationship with that culture and his family there;

...my dad didn't talk a lot about it. We heard -we overheard them talking about stuff – like a letter had come from the family or....it was never talked about - my mum was always really reluctant to go because of the heat she said – err – but maybe it was fear of travelling that far in those days and because a lot of the letters that they got, were always hearing about often about problems in the family and things going on between different people;

...he was always very loyal to his father even though he probably disagreed with lots of things that he did – he would never say a word against him. He never told us about that and we didn't know about that until we went to Sri Lanka and found out all the back story about the family – and I later found out stuff from your dad about the family – my dad would never have told us.

Her father had to some extent rejected his Sri Lankan-ness and there was a tension in his relationship with his father. S in many ways also rejected what her father stood for and mirrored that tension with him. She appears to have been given little help in trying to work out this complex background to her family, but gradually she pieced together what seemed like some explanation for the way in which he engaged with his family:

And I began to understand when I learnt more about my dad's history why family and children were so important to him. You see because he lost his mother when he was just 6 years old, so to have such a major loss of a parent, and it sounds like his father didn't cope with it very well at first, and so he sort of lost both parents in a way or that sense of family if you like...at that really very early age. So it always felt like to him, keeping the family like this safe place...

Growing up in the 1960's and 70's she embraced the new freedoms and opportunities in society but this was at odds with the values that her father held dear, having fought in the second world war and raised his family as devout Catholics. Then going to a new and politically active university to study Sociology, opened up new ideas and possibilities for her;

...and then when I went to university I got very very radically politicised because it was the time I suppose. We were close to London, the Vietnam war was happening, and I was very anti-war.

But she explains that she was so absorbed in her own life, battles and purpose that she failed to engage with her parents to resolve the differences between her and them, in particular with her father;

if I was reflecting about the past it was always about me...me me me –

we were trying to change the world ...

There were all these battles to fight that I was busy fighting ..so I didn't have time to think about 'why is my dad being so..like that?'

Faith: just because I left Catholicism I wouldn't call myself an atheist

Both of S's parents were Roman Catholic and it was to this identity and the associated community, rather than his Sri Lankan origins, that they were strongly bound. But the outward

signs of his strong faith were sometimes an embarrassment to S and the beginning of her rejection of this way of life;

...he wanted to keep us safe, he wanted family to be a safe place – you know – and um and, and um because he was very religious um...that was all part of it. So you know every time we went on those car trips we had to say prayers in the car to keep us safe. At the time, when I look back on it when I got older I thought ‘Oh God why do we have to say a prayer – what a weird thing to do – and you’d be a bit embarrassed if your friends were there, you know...

These feelings were revisited later when describing her father’s funeral. She recalls her irritation with ritual and the apparent insensitivity it demonstrated;

... and suddenly Uncle Tony pops up again. ... The thing was there was my mum praying over the grave – and there’s the bloody Priest doing the rosary – endless decades of the rosary. She [mother] was gonna – she was falling into the grave!! And this bloody priest was going on and we both looked at each other and – Ah! Here’s someone who feels as pissed off at the bloody Catholic church as I do!

Nonetheless there is an acknowledgement that some of the ethical foundations laid by this faith had stayed with her and influenced some of her actions. However the disconnection between early beliefs and those emerging in this newly liberated young woman was clear:

And it came...it came partly out of my..erm...my ...out of Catholicism in a way. It came out of this sense of doing good in the world and in love and all of those really positive things. And...erm..I was involved in kind of ...I was going to church...even when I first went to university in fact... and I was having serious doubts about whether that was a religion that I wanted to follow in terms of an institution ...So I was going to church and I was volunteering for St Georges Crypt, working with the homeless (that was when I was at school) and doing all of those good work type things – charitable things – and I went to university and suddenly I was in this place where there were no rules at all. Everybody

was like 'yes – do what we want'. People were taking drugs, people were having sex so it was just woahh!

The sentiments about how her father approached life, perhaps rooted in his Christian Faith, appear to be more about 'turning the other cheek' than disagreeing with his daughter's anger about hidden or open racism experienced by her or the family and her desire to do something about it;

... he used to say that thing about 'don't get a chip on your shoulder. Don't let it get to you'... that was his whole attitude you see. So he wouldn't have wanted to tell us, he wouldn't have wanted to kind of foster any kind of antagonism in a way. He wanted everything to be alright.

Her emerging and perhaps current spiritual beliefs were not explicitly expressed, but she indicated an ongoing dialogue with both her now deceased parents and close friend, and an acknowledgement of the importance of the spiritual dimensions in her life. Talking about her deceased parents and friend:

I feel like I have a relationship with them [parents] even though...like I have a relationship with my [late] friend Kate who's a complete Atheist – it's like nothing – 'when you die that's it'So I do have this deep spirituality and I think it's expressed through poetry actually for me... And I feel really blessed by that. That I've been able to do that and be that and just, just experiencing nature and all of those sort of things. I think I do it in a very spiritual way rather than in a materialist way.

And I am quite a spiritual person. Just because I left Catholicism I wouldn't call myself an Atheist in the sense of 'cos that often....I wouldn't call myself a secularist that I don't believe in a spirituality of some kind. I said before that I've spoken to my dad since he died and I do really mean that...

Throughout this part of our discussion I noted that I felt sad and uncomfortable at times. I wanted her to be reconciled with her father and not to blame the Church or his faith in it. When S was upset recalling her dreams about her father I responded with my own meaning:

S - Like there was one dream I had when I remember , being really sorry that we'd disagreed about lots of stuff - and him giving me this really really lovely hug and being really all right and..

A – well I suppose that is what he would have done. Perhaps that was what he did do.

(App Bii, ref 3)

She agreed. We had co-constructed the meaning of her dream, because perhaps we both had an investment in doing so, not only for the research but for the memory too.

Identity: to be somebody who could be from anywhere.

Nearing the end of the interview S directly addressed her own identity at this point in her life:

If someone asks me sometimes I'll say I'm a poet, sometimes I'll say I'm Asian, sometimes I'll say I'm mixed race, sometimes I'll say I'm Sri Lankan; half Sri Lankan half English. Sometimes I'll say I'm a Lesbian, sometimes I won't say that...

This has some resonance with my comments on my multifaceted identities and may be why this stood out for me. However contrary to my experience she explains why she was not always uncomfortable with her identity, because of the impact this might have on the work she was trying to do. Her work and doing the right thing for the women she was working with is the most important thing:

Because there were times in my life when I hid things about myself...well there were times when I've had to hide my sexual choices. When I was working in community education in Sheffield when I first came here - um – er I was just worried about people finding out and what they'd do about it. When I was working in the refuge as well because people could say 'oh that's why you're doing it because you hate men then' So it wasn't always just about fear or comeback, it was about how people use it against you to

stop you doing what you were doing and might turn women away from coming to the refuge.

So her heritage was an important element of her identity, but despite the predominant interest in her Sri Lankan heritage she makes a point of saying that this did not ultimately mean that she turned away from her Englishness:

But I can also tell you that I grew up in England and I'm really proud of that. So I think what I've learnt over the years is to be proud of everything about me.

She is aware that this can be the case for those of mixed parentage and was perhaps the case for her in the past but not for her now;

...there were times when um [pause] I've been aware – I've never really done it but I've been aware of people not wanting to talk about their white parent for example. And I became aware of it and said I'm never going to do that but - maybe there've been times when I've talked a lot more about my Sri Lankan heritage than my Yorkshire heritage because that – I try not to - I don't do that anymore actually. I don't do that anymore. I always kind of, I always reiterate over and over again that it's all of my roots that are just as important, it's not just one that's kind of better or worse than everything else.

However although she acknowledges both (all) heritages she is clear that her experience living in the UK was not so equitable. Identity is subject to the response of others (Goffman, 1959;1963) as well as our own constructions. So however balanced S felt about her two heritages the 'face' responded to by society was not a white one:

I'd never call myself white because I don't think that's been my experience ever. I don't think I've had a white experience in this country...because it was never that you're white it's just that you are who you are in this predominantly white society -and you're fine and

you're Ok and I never...[felt white] – no never, I didn't ever. And I wasn't bothered – I didn't want to be either – I was just who I was.

This was in contrast to my experience and I pressed her about this; perhaps unconsciously challenging this dissonance (App Biii, ref 4). S made it clear that she is now positive about her mixed heritage and never felt ashamed of it, although at times it has attracted painful reactions. But the positivity and resilience fostered in her early childhood remains and she embraces mixture:

And I looked a bit different and that was alright. And you know these days – if I go to Italy people think I'm Italian, if I go to Turkey people think I'm Turkish I love that actually. It's like , it's like mixed race people are the people of the world really. We're the people of the world because we could be from anywhere. And not many people can say that - that they could be from anywhere. And actually the ideal in the world is if boundaries don't matter and - you know – humanity's what it's all about. For me that's like a real gift – to be somebody who could be from anywhere.

From the text already explored it seems clear that S has an ambiguous relationship to her mixed race. Much of what she says illustrates an embracing of mixture; not an acceptance of it but a celebration. As in the quote above she celebrates her ability to 'be from anywhere'. Later she introduced me to the author Audre Lorde whose writing about her mixed nature may have underpinned this positive approach to 'not belonging'. Lorde (2007), as well as bell hooks (1981;1984), criticised white dominated feminism. Lorde claimed that 'the word sisterhood [which] in fact does not exist' (2007:116) and concluded that if feminism was defined by only white women, then women of colour would be 'othered';

...difference became a kind of really really positive thing ... and um ... but people who were different and outside of um, being able to be slotted into a particular category in a way, talking about it in a positive way. [Sister Outsider] was a really important book for me because what she was saying was there's a community of people who don't belong

and it's a really positive community because what is it that people want to belong to, because nobody really belongs...

Both S and Lorde argue that mixture and difference are not just equal, but better. They acknowledge that feeling 'other' is not the prerogative of a race or gender but that the very notion of purity, of single identity and belonging is one to be wary of and rejected;

...there's no pure race ... to have a purity thing which is like a Nationalism thing which is like - like Fascism in a way – it's like a really negative thing like we all have to be pure something and I just think – what I've learned and what I've really valued is this thing of just how rich it is to have so many different influences in my life.

So the outsider and the marginalised is reasserted in S's view; mixture is to be envied, celebrated and considered as preferable. The deficit model of 'neither one thing nor another' is replaced by 'both and best';

...which I'm really really pleased about. I'm glad I'm not totally Sri Lankan or totally Yorkshire ...Let's celebrate this thing about us because people who are mixed of any kind have always been er kind of sidelined and denigrated and no one wants them ...and I remember people saying no one will want them – the blacks won't want them, the whites won't want them ... they don't fit anywhere and all that kind of thing ...

Mixture is where S feels most comfortable because perhaps she understands it and can empathise with those who have been 'othered' by society or circumstances. The place she says she feels most comfortable and 'at home' in is South Africa; the rainbow nation. Here she does not have to feel guilty. Here she feels she belongs in this mix of mixtures;

...so I can walk around in Cape Town and nobody looks at me and thinks I'm a foreigner and then I realised actually all my life in England there's always been that issue that people might think I'm a foreigner, and they said it yes at times and the people that didn't

say it might have thought it or people who were foreigners themselves would speak to me in their language - and I thought 'oh no - I'm from Leeds!' And I'd feel really guilty because I couldn't communicate with them and you know. And so it was so nice to be there. I felt a real sense of belonging there, I loved it.

S presents both the positive and the negative experiences of difference. From her own perspective diversity was something she welcomed;

...'cos there's nobody in the world who is exactly like you, so you're always gonna have a difference with someone and it's great - it's fabulous to have a difference 'cos the more variety the better.

Some racism was direct but also a constant background of fear;

...particularly from the mid 70s onwards ..living in Liverpool...I experienced it on the street ...people being abusive to me...So I did get-I did get kind of um negative attention and um...you know some of the negative stuff you get - you don't ever know what it's about actually. And that was what I was very aware of, that as I've got older I've realised that's part of what you carry. It's not necessarily that people ARE being racist ..it's that there's this question in your head 'are they being like that because of the colour of your skin or is it about something else.

Some experiences she explained still had their impact on her:

So...I've had quite a lot of stuff ..and now I'm older and like you're standing in a bus queue and you get on the bus and they'll say 'we queue in this country' and then I suddenly realise 'OH!' ..That kind of thing really, that sort of identifying you as 'other' ...

...only a few years back now this one girl said to me 'I've never told you this story but when we were about 16 and we were out shopping in Leeds um we were in some shop in Leeds she said, and er and you went downstairs and the woman behind the counter said to the assistant 'follow the black girl' ... 'keep an eye on her''. Yeh – because they thought I was going to steal something downstairs.

This unspoken backdrop of experiencing racism however seems not to have been acknowledged in the family. However despite her father's reluctance to discuss race or racism she discovered after his death that he too had experienced it directly;

... it did happen – he never told us – we found out after he'd died that it had happened to him. I mean I found out ..um..we all found out because somebody who worked at the post office that..'cos my dad worked in Leeds and he worked his way up ..and he was a manager and then he got transferred, he got a promotion to Bradford. ...and then he transferred back to Leeds and then I found out um that um when he went to Bradford he got treated really badly by people there because they were really resentful that, him being their manager , 'cos he was an Asian guy – yeh. And um he got a lot of racism there, and that's why he transferred back..

The family: 'this sense in the family..... we were alright, we were good'.

From the beginning of S's story there is a strong feeling of family and safety;

...and I don't ever remember feeling err..worried. I can always remember feeling really proud about being different and looking different and never felt ..even when I got negative comments and stuff as a child which didn't happen incredibly often but a little bit ...I don't think I ever...it went in..because somehow there was this sense in the family – in the little nuclear family and the extended family which was all sort of Leeds, white working class I guess, we were alright, we were good, we were you know....

This 'little nuclear family' although creating a sense of security and belonging had its own internal tensions as the children grew up. Her early recollections were those of safety and security. But as the years went by S and her siblings , perhaps like most teenagers, wanted more freedom and space;

...as you got older it became oppressive because they cared...too much...

I was speaking to my brother, J..., a few weeks back and um about a piece that I wrote about our childhood and I said 'you know it was all about that wasn't it – it was all about looking after us and keeping us safe', and he said if anything it was all too much looking after if anything, it was , so that as you got older it became oppressive because they cared...too much...

What her parents were keeping them safe from was not so clear at the time. But S reflected that protection may have related to their parents' realisation that their family were indeed vulnerable:

We were sort of seen as a bit odd and a bit different but um....but you know...there were things that happened at school and got called names... and there was one incident that I wrote about, about my dad going up to school and teacher complained about my 'big brown eyes' ...

...so there must have been things like that going on all the time..around us. There was one time I remember going into a [charity shop] with me mum and she was taking some stuff in and with me and A and M I think ...and we were trying something on...and suddenly me mum 'RIGHT we're going' and she took us all out the shop, and I think, and again ... somebody had said something racist about us, and she wasn't having any of it and marched us all out the shop. ... they tried to separate us, to shield us...

As mentioned earlier, S's rejection of so many of her father's beliefs and values and his rejection of hers, gradually caused a chasm to emerge between them. As indicated above one such

disagreement was their relative responses to racism. Another was, later, about her studies and subsequent apparent lack of career ambition;

...my dad, for my dad as someone who'd come to this country and worked really hard and studied ..and I know that he was the one in the family who really wanted us to do well ... in our education and really [...]go to university and do well.

Many of these disagreements and tensions were not dealt with and there were also questions she had not asked and conversations she had not had. After he died she was able to ask:

But I know that when he died ...it was a massive thing...and I spent a lot of time...I'd dream about him a lot and have lots of conversations with him – in my dreams. And that was when I started to understand him more. So I'd dream and I'd have these conversations with him and um - I'm going to get all tearful now. Like there was one dream I had when I remember , being really sorry that we'd disagreed about lots of stuff - and him giving me this really really lovely hug and being really all right and...

She clearly regrets not having had those conversations with him in his lifetime but she concludes that she was possibly not ready to confront him then:

I do not know why I never talked to me dad. The only thing I can think of is, he died in 1988 and I was only 37 which isn't very old actually...So if I've got any sort of....one of the big sadnesses I've got is that I didn't mature to the age I would like to have been to talk to him. You know now or even in my 50s I would have been going there and saying 'right...tell me....what was it like when you went to the war...what was it like in Sri Lanka.....'

However through her conversations in her dreams some resolutions have been found, 'I've made friends with my dad and got to know him after he's died , more than ever than when he was alive'.

Not only did they not talk about Sri Lanka but they didn't talk about what it was like to be Sri Lankan or mixed race in Leeds. So the topic of racism and how to deal with it was not raised. Even his own painful experiences were unknown to his children;

...he never spoke about it to anybody. We found out through C..., A...'s ex-partner who worked in the post office and after me dad had died, chatted to people who said 'oh I remember ..' and this is what happened to him.

S's political activism appeared also to be something they didn't talk about. She was shocked however to discover that contrary to her belief that her father was uninterested in political issues, he had indeed voiced his opinions;

...a letter he sent to Margaret Thatcher complaining to her when she'd, when she'd argued against the boycott – of South African goods and it was a letter he'd sent to her saying it was a terrible thing and saying she should be thinking about the...should be supporting the boycott ..and I was so proud and also so annoyed that he'd never said to me that he'd done that. I don't ever remember him telling me he'd done that. And you see I imagine with the thing about ...what happened to him, he used to say that thing about 'don't get a chip on your shoulder. Don't let it get to you or ...' that was his whole attitude you see. So he wouldn't have wanted to tell us, he wouldn't have wanted to kind of foster any kind of antagonism in a way.

Her siblings responded differently to their notions of ethnicity and identity and their need to define themselves:

I think A's become more aware of it [racism] and taken it on more because it's come up for her in school more recently. M's attitude was always, and it's probably best to ask her this, but when I've had big discussions with her in the past she would always just say 'I'm just me and I'm not prepared to define myself'.

This is in direct contrast to S who seems to have spent a lifetime defining herself. Her siblings also appeared to have a clear view of her in the family dynamics:

M would say 'ooh you're just a muggins you, you're a muggins ... you're always trying to please...

But trying to please sometimes backfired. S explains how whatever the others did she felt she was targeted as being the guilty one; 'You know M... at least got married, J... did the right thing and got married'. Her younger sister however did not marry her boyfriend, but S still got the blame.

OK so M and A both stopped being Catholics in the same way as I did. Although I got blamed for A's lapse 'cos I was older than her and I was a bad influence on her.....

....I need to go and tell me Mum and Dad that C and I are going to live together. Will you come with me? Yeh OK I'll come with you love. And she told them and you know what the first thing was? 'This is all your fault, 'cos you did this and you've given her a bad example'. And I was like 'oh thank you very much!' So um – I don't know, I was the bad guy actually.

Her older sister features a lot in her story. She tells of how they were the first from the family to visit Sri Lanka and earlier acknowledges that;

..it was M who took me to the first Women's Liberation meeting in Leeds. So she was my first introduction to all of that kind of thing really ...

She had been the person she had looked up to as well as being compared to;

I got into trouble a lot more than M did and the head teacher was always saying 'your M would've never done this'....

Her empathy with her older sister and her propensity for taking the blame, even as a new-born baby is striking:

Then there's the story about how M was really jealous of me and used to nip me in the cot and everything. Used to come up to the cot and really nip me and make me cry.[.....] Now we understand don't we ...what had happened to her...her mum had been taken into hospital, come out, she wasn't even a proper mum when she came out...so this baby had really ruined everything. She was only 2- bless her- to be fair. But that story carried on through our childhood into adulthood...that M was the bad one and I was the over-emotional one and yeh – like – she was naughty - I was trouble I used to have nightmares a lot when I was a child and I used to wet the bed....and so maybe all of that was to do with ...stuff like that.

'Trouble': relationship with her mother

I had always known that S's birth had been difficult. It was one of those family legends that persist without further explanation or detail. I knew she had been born by Caesarian section too but that was all. In my recorded conversation with S and in other discussions that weekend it emerged that the story of S's birth was significant in her relationship with her mother and the rest of the family and ultimately perhaps with her own identity. She had been told what a hard time her mother had had, but also so had she;

..but what must it have been like for me..... and no one's holding yer – no one's comforting yer..and you're suddenly in this box..I mean you're a person – you have sensations! it was a few days before I was actually held!

A conversation between her and her mother had provided some insight, 'it sounded like she had post natal depression'. S takes the blame; repeating her mother's inability to care for her. The use of the word 'couldn't' rather than 'wouldn't' is notable:

She couldn't feed me – I was bottle fed - and I don't think she could really – the sense I got was that she couldn't really ...the love I got I think was mostly from me grandma, because she was too traumatised [by me].

This story seems to have been re-told in the family and my memory of that story was only part of what S had lived with. She nearly killed her mother and the mother of her older siblings. The

echoes of my own mother's story discussed in chapter five are striking. Formenti's thoughts (Formenti et al, 2014) on the impact of the stories about our births on our identity both within the family and beyond are significant in S's story too. She took upon herself the role of the problem, who nearly killed her mother and who caused so much disruption in family life in her early days. This role of the problem child is then illustrated throughout her life as she rebels and takes a very different path from that of her family. Nonetheless her tendency to consider others and their feeling and predicaments also continues. She is clear that the empathy illustrated in engaging in the struggles and rights of others is something she has always been aware of having. It may be that the ability to understand the other from the other's perspective was an early skill:

Maybe it came from being a youngish child and being - you know for a while – for 9 years being aware of stuff going on around me. Maybe it was about being responsible for my mother - my mother's state of mind or whatever. I don't know where it came from but ... I was very responsive like 'I'll do the washing up – keep my mum happy....'

I think I'm - I don't know where I learnt it but I think I remember from a very young age being very aware of what's going on for other people.

Racial Struggles: 'but that could be me'

The story S tells of her life could be described as a reflection of the UK in the second half of the 20th Century. As well as her struggles for the rights of women, her political activity against war and intolerance, her experience of multiculturalism and her growing to embrace her sexual orientation, there is her gradual understanding of the complexity of her identity. Multiculturalism entered the common lexicon in the late 1960s (Rattansi,2011) when along with other countries such as Australia and Canada, Britain began to consider the merits of integration rather than assimilation; immigrants bringing with them aspects of their own culture to add to that of the indigenous population. This was different to the immigration of the 1950s from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent after the second world war because it envisaged a changing of British culture, not an assimilation of the other. S's father did not expect or appear to seek integration. He expected to and did assimilate. In S's childhood however society was beginning to reflect the new cultural diversity. These changes were not without their reactions. Racism and oppression may have been aspects of British society that S was sheltered from as a child, but as

she left home and went to University she became quickly aware of the problems in the world around her;

..and I was coming through university and...and I guess it was more into the 70s and 80s when racial identity became a big issue for people who were involved in stuff...so I started to identify myself with other people who were experiencing racism..

In addition to her own struggle to establish her identity amongst the multicultural environment she found herself to be part of, her interest in politics and her studies introduced her to the struggles of others;

...and I got involved with a lot of anti-racist struggles and supporting people who had been deported and - not that I'm being deported – I've got a British passport – I'm OK - but I'm saying 'but that could be me' . I wanted to identify with those people.

But the mixed race heritage she enjoyed was also occasionally a source of additional complexity and potential exclusion;

...it was a struggle ...trying to sort it out...I had a lot of struggles about who am I really racially and who do I identify with and so I had a period of..... I got involved in the Asian youth movement and I'd go along to sort of meetings and then I got involved in sort of , I got involved in women, in black women's organisations and using the word 'black' in an overall political sense ...just exploring all of those things and having all of those battles within it and of course even within that there was this thing about being...oh well you're not black enough.

The writing of Edward Said (1999) illustrates such difficulties in fitting in, being accepted and occasionally wishing he were someone else. He refers to that feeling of envying 'authentic names' (1999:39), those recognisable by those who belong. S, like Said, had a western Christian name and a very un-western surname: mixed heritage by definition. For S discovering that she shared this experience with others may have encouraged her sense of belonging to the non-belonging;

..I met a woman who was exactly the same racial heritage as me – half Sri Lankan, half English – who'd grown up in Sri Lanka until she was 7 years old, so she was actually more Sri Lankan than me and she had blond hair and blue eyes and...I met her at one of these conferences in fact and she'd had a really really terrible life and experience because people wouldn't accept her for who she was because of how she looked.

She appears to carry some sense of guilt that as a mixed race woman she hadn't experienced some of the trauma that others had. She wanted;

... to know what that edge of it is like, you know...

... I didn't face as much racism, I was privileged in lots of ways. I had a good education - I had a good solid sort of foundation and lots of love, and all that kind of thing err – and - and I don't think..and I was shielded from a lot of stuff. I wasn't in a community that was victimised in any way...

Career: 'I just wanted to be me'

From her days at school it was clear that S was not going to follow a conventional path. There appeared to be an echo of otherness in what she might want in life as well as in who she felt herself to be:

And I went [to Essex University] because 'oh this looks interesting' I really should have done languages because I'd done French, Latin and English at A level and did really well in them – all of them. And my French teacher wanted me to do French at University and I thought no I want to do something different. I don't want to do what everyone else is doing

S's career is a mixture of community interaction and activism, and paid employment. There is a strong thread between the two and an acknowledgment of the difference identified in an earlier

theme between her notion of what to do in her life and that of her father. But she claims that this was misunderstood;

...it wasn't that I didn't want a job, I didn't want a career ...a profession, I didn't really know, I've never really known what I wanted to do. I used to know people at school who knew exactly what they wanted to be and I was envious of them 'cos I had no idea what I wanted to be, I just wanted to be me..

Her early steps were focused on her political beliefs rather than on a career in the traditional sense. She described these early days much as a vocation rather than work:

I moved to Liverpool from Essex to be involved in a political group that was producing a newspaper so it wasn't that I didn't want to work ... I worked really hard. I was sometimes up to 4 O'clock in the morning getting the paper out and things but it wasn't paid work and er and..I did that for a short while and I can see why my dad was like 'you haven't got a job? You're signing on the dole?'

Then perhaps as the pressure to engage with the world of work increased and her need to earn a living became difficult to ignore she made her first steps into a career: teaching. Although she says that she enjoyed the course and the early days of working with children, the experience soured and she met a combination of racism by the children and inflexibility in the curriculum;

...but the kids were just horrible to me. They were really horrible to me t...they were six year olds ...Six year olds and they were really tough...

...and I started to read it and said this is my favourite book and this one little lad [laughing] I can see his face now, said 'that's fucken boring miss'!

Nonetheless her compassion showed through and it was not the children that she blamed, 'some kids who really needed a lot of help and attention, which was what I was interested in'.

Although her tutors wanted her to complete her course she was sure that she wasn't able to do this and so left. Although her confidence must have been bruised she found more success when she moved into teaching adults basic skills including literacy, first as a volunteer and then as a college lecturer. She had found what she had been looking for;

And I loved it – I absolutely loved it – and I did that part time for a while and then applied for a job there. So suddenly I was working...

In this work she had rediscovered her interest in language;

I'd got really interested in teaching people to read and write and - which was back to my language stuff actually at school.

However these links between her school life and her later life and passions seem to be rare. Little if any connections had been able to have been made between subjects and the person she became:

All of those things that I gave up at school in a way because I was told – like in Art I was told I was no good, or I got the impression I was no good, so I did sciences ..

...at school it was...I kept journals when I was young but in terms of visual art I just convinced myself I wasn't any good at it ... When it got up to O level choices choose Art or Biology, History or Physics, those were the two things. We had to do chemistry, everybody had to do chemistry. And I couldn't ever remember any dates which was what History was about, so I gave up history which I regret because I like history and really enjoy reading about and understanding history . And I used to go to Art lessons and I felt I didn't know what to do or where to start. It was like 'here's a subject, do a picture' and I couldn't think where to start.

Later in life she explains that she discovered her creativity, and that this became the core of her expression of identity later as a successful poet:

I discovered later in life that, although I am a very creative person, I make things – ceramics and I like sculpture and do painting and that sort of thing. All of those things that I gave up at school in a way because I was told – like in Art I was told I was no good, or I got the impression I was no good...but at heart I wanted to be a writer.

She had been a writer for many years, keeping a journal through good times and difficult times:

It has always been part of ...like I'd written a diary, a journal , so it'd been a sort of anchor for me through everything, a way of keeping in touch with me and how I was feeling and all that...

And her creative self found a voice not only in writing but in singing too;

well I think the writing was what really stayed with me – and the singing – 'cos I realised that..I suppose I discovered myself as a kind of a performer...

Judith Butler (2010) writes about 'performativity' and the acceptance or rejection in particular of gender-given roles and it seems that S was very much a rejecter of expected roles, gender and otherwise, and a seeker of her own identity. She does not elucidate in our conversation on what she meant by performance but the work of Goffman (1959) in terms of roles and masks, Jung in terms of persona (1938) and Inkson (2004) and Super (1951;1957) in terms of role in career, introduced in the literature review of chapter two, will be further considered in chapter eight.

Within the social and political struggles that she engaged with, S found herself sometimes at odds with others. As Lorde (2007) writes, the black feminist movement felt their struggle was two-fold; racial and gendered. S found that in the feminist movement in Sheffield there were also issues of equality of access to services:

I was coming up against racism in the sense that people not being , women who were saying they were feminists actually not being inclusive about all women and making judgements about women who had a different, er background to them or a different upbringing, or not understanding not not being willing to provide services such as setting up the Asian women's refuge which is what I was involved in.

Within the Asian women's refuge she found that there was an assumption that people could be different, and she saw the need for that complexity to be acknowledged:

So – it's just about well they don't all have the same culture because we might have 6 women in a refuge and they all have different take on ... They could be 6 Muslim women but they all have different interpretation on their religion just like we might have 6 Christian women all with a different take on their religion...so I took in that kind of mix thing in a way, into that.

Later in her life she explains that a number of personal and professional strains were taking their toll; she engaged in a counselling course which helped her to support some of the women she worked with, but also helped her to make sense of some of her own preoccupations. This led to further study and eventually to her qualifying as a psychotherapist. She was clear that she had a need to help others that did not always mean looking after herself; 'I'd been giving a lot of support to people in a very unboundaried way'. And that her tendency to tell others that 'I can be your saviour!' was not sustainable.

The way in which she can connect with people; family, friends and colleagues, is a strong part of S's story. She is aware and perhaps proud of her ability to 'read' people:

I'll go in a meeting and I remember when I used to - go in a meeting and I'm already picking up all this stuff that is going on around the room and who's tense with who and what's going on between people.

She believes this to be partly because of the sometimes tense moments in the family when she was a child and perhaps her feelings of responsibility for those tensions and to put it right. However she also explains that when she isn't able to make such links with people she feels very uncomfortable. In the following extract she explains that she believes this is more to do with the other person's feelings than her own:

What makes me nervous or uncomfortable now is if I'm engaged with somebody – or a connection with someone who isn't grounded in themselves and is kind of - in conflict – well kind of – [laughing] a nervous person if you like. Somebody who's not at ease with them self and I'm trying to – I'm trying to make a connection with them. I find that really hard, I find that quite uncomfortable. I get kind of edgy because I don't really know ...

It may be that this material plots the course over 60 years of S constructing and embracing her own identity and its relationship with her selfhood. Perhaps meeting those who have not is an uncomfortable reminder of those years of struggle. Furthermore her story reveals a strong desire, almost need, to help others and to put things right; both in her family and in society. A meeting with someone with whom she is not able to connect and help, would perhaps be very uncomfortable.

Process and Ethnography

Much of the process is explored earlier in this chapter as I told the story of the weekend in which the material was collected. I was in her space, her flat, her life, her sisters and her city. But there was a coming together and sharing of these spaces that I had not anticipated. Her generosity, warmth and openness was moving and I felt an acceptance and belonging that was appreciated as I explored earlier in my own story. The metaphor of a dance comes to my mind as a complex series of interactions took place. We took steps towards each other and at the end of the weekend we withdrew. At the beginning we danced around each other; a step closer and then away again, neither really sure of the steps or where they might lead. At times in the conversation we danced together as we recalled shared memories. At those points we were synchronised and in tune, but for much of the interview I watched and listened while she danced

for me through different stages of her life, with different people and different steps and rhythm. Her dance was one of generosity, passion and kindness. At other points in the weekend we changed places and I danced for her; illuminating some of the parts of my life that she knew little about.

Throughout there were others in the background; shared relationships from different perspectives, historical contexts and stories untold, of why she and I came to be who and where we are.

I instigated this dance when I told her about my research interest. She agreed to take part and initially I took the lead, but quickly she took centre stage and made the dance her own. She had things to explain, stories to put straight and arguments to revisit. But in doing this she brought me in from the wings and I found myself in the dance too. Some of the steps were strangely familiar; dances I had long rejected as intended for someone else. But the steps came easy and felt comfortable and natural.

The context for the interviews and my weekend with S was her space; her flat, friends and community. The block of flats was run as a community of likeminded people and I met others that weekend from different parts of her world. The notion that I could explore this material from the outside is not credible. Not only was the story S told shaped by my questions and area of interest but also by my presence. I was literally in some of the material such as photographs and also in some of the background to her life. Like the title of a mixed heritage project she has been involved in; 'Tangled Roots', our roots were once the same and had since become interwoven with others'. In the process of S telling her story and me taking part in the telling and the hearing, we rediscovered our shared origins.

Perhaps it was the shared nature of the process or the mutually rewarding essence of the dance but the emergence of this material felt wholly balanced and co-constructed. We were talking about how it can feel to not belong and sit on the edges of society observing others, and how a sense of identity can change and be shaped by the world around us and those we meet. This time with S, this dance in and out, around and through her life reflected the story itself.

Gestalt

The overwhelming picture for me of this encounter was of a reconnection between us; half cousins who had drifted apart over the years and for whom this research provided an opportunity to reconnect and heal rifts and divisions, misunderstandings and silences that had been part of

the family story for many years. Although the story has S at its heart, it visits some broader issues and experiences with wider implications for a multicultural society and for our understanding of the importance of recognising the preoccupations and connecting threads which together shape a career.

This conversation and its setting was the story of a person of difference and her gradual embracing and celebration of it. Her difference began before her birth with her parents' unorthodox marriage. It continued in the process and aftermath of her own birth and place in the family and then with her choice to move away geographically, spiritually, sexually, ethically and politically from much she had grown up with. However the notion of choice here should be viewed with some caution. All individual choices and decisions are taken within a cultural context and particularly here in S's case within the context of her position in the family and the changing world around her. The question of whether she chose to rebel and to 'other' herself remains unanswered, but it does seem to be the case that she was only able to know herself and to construct her identity outside the constricts of the identity that she grew up with. She played with a range of identities through her life and has found that those that feel right are those that embrace mixture and diversity.

This conversation was also an embodiment of the way she has lived her life; confrontation of the pain and confusion of an individual who was subject to conflicting influences and experiences of the world. At no point did she steer the conversation away from troubling or painful issues; most if not all of what we talked about I felt had been worked through before. The integrity she talks about as having driven many of her struggles and those on behalf of others is also strong throughout the conversation. No one is blamed; her mother, sister, father, racists, foul-mouthed children or lovers. All are respected, accepted for who they are or were, and empathised with. That seems to exemplify her as a person and the life she has lived.

In conclusion in this chapter I have presented the story that S told me of her life and career. She told it with characteristic openness, creativity and candour. In contrast to the stories told by myself and G, this story naturally embraced a range of genres and overlapped into others' lives and into familial and intimate relationships. Perhaps also more so than myself and G, she had engaged previously with and sometimes struggled with some of the issues, identities and

challenges, and had come to her own conclusions. The post colonial, second generation migrant voice is strong in her story as is support for what Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) would term critical multiculturalism. For her these are not academic notions or philosophies but part of her life's purpose to challenge discrimination and disadvantage, whether in race, gender or sexual orientation.

Chapter Eight

Synthesis and the Co-creation of Meaning

In the preceding chapters I have presented the stories of the three participants; explored and analysed them. The purpose of this chapter is not to repeat such analysis or to reduce or condense it into something else, but to return to the research questions and reflect upon them in the light of the analyses of these stories, accompanied by literature and theoretical friends. Such creation of meaning is a co-construction of the participants' stories, their meaning and my interpretation of it. In auto/biographical research making sense and meaning from narratives is a creative process and the subjective and hermeneutical nature of it embraces the acknowledgment of that shared space between their stories and mine. Moreover it is in that space wherein our relationships live and offer each of us a mirror in which we see ourselves differently.

Returning to the focus for this research; in this work I explore lives with multiple and sometimes contested identities and selves, and seek insight into the meaning made by the participants of their stories.

My research explores questions of how this understanding contributes to:

- the expression of influences of multiple heritages in relation to their career pathways and;
- how pre-occupations and lived lives might inform the development of career counselling in a society and labour market no longer defined by bounded people or careers.

The notion of a 'pre-occupation' (Savickas, 2011) in these stories, a thread which weaves throughout, will be examined in each of the narratives. Whether such pre-occupations persist and whether they relate in any way to mixed identities will also be explored.

I begin with the premise that we are all 'storied' (Sarbin, 1986), as individuals and within our communities, cultures and nationalities. Stories, as has been discussed, (Bruner, 1990; Horsdal, 2012; Denzin, 1989) help us to make sense of our lives, give them meaning and sometimes purpose. The macronarratives (Savickas, 2011) have been explored in this thesis, but the micronarratives (2011) provide insight into meaning by understanding how they link together with the thread (or threads) that weaves between them all. In the analysis it was themes linking such micronarratives that were identified. That these themes reflect the meaning of the story is a subjective claim with which I struggled for a while. Of course such justification is not strained in the case of my own story, as the themes were identified by me and it was my story. However the

claim to have established the meaning of the stories of my fellow participants felt epistemically more complex. My research questions require 'insight into the meaning made by the participants of their stories'. In the analysis and interpretation of the meaning of their stories I use their words, but the insight and interpretation is mine. They are the authors and in them lies the authority to tell me what they chose to, and to leave out what they wish. However the notion of authority in writing is contested itself. It suggests power over the meaning of the text. Both Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1980) further questioned the function and nature of the author. Barthes' (1977) claim of the 'death of the author' raises questions about the hermeneutical relationship between author and reader; a relationship explored in the material and methodology of this thesis. Foucault's assertion that where there is power there is resistance might suggest that if the 'author' has 'authority' then it is the reader who responds to such power by resisting their message or 'truth'. Furthermore the nature of the material in this work is that of autobiography, a contentious and complex genre in itself (Ricoeur, 1985). In autobiography the relationship between author and subject changes gradually through time. Early in the story the young self is talked about as though a third person until ultimately as the story progresses they fuse in the present day (Bruner, 1990). Furthermore at the heart of the construction of a narrative identity, autobiography is reconstructed and reconfigured through both the fictitious and factual stories we tell about ourselves. So in the stories explored in this thesis there is no single author, no single authority over the text and therefore over its meaning. I am not analysing the lives of these participants, but the stories they told me. As Josselson (2011) demonstrated not only are stories co-constructed but their interpretation is subjective and personal. This may be more so in this thesis as one participant is me, one is my cousin and the other is my good friend.

Learning to love the Bluefooted Booby

Beginning with my own story, narrated through image, reflective writing, collage making and discussion, the themes that were identified overall were: separateness, being an outsider, mixed heritage and unknown lineage, pre-occupation, concerns over methodology, recognition, and 'the eraser'. Being separate, an individual, is a topic that has been explored throughout this thesis. It is not the same as being alone although in my story the two overlap a number of times. Separateness in this context was the realisation of my selfhood, my uniqueness and how that was indicated by the separateness of others. Giddens (1991b) distinguished between the development of individuality, a notion of separateness, and that of self-identity, although he acknowledges that the two are inextricably linked. Throughout this thesis I have critiqued the

predominance of the individual in the sense that Burkitt (1991) discusses it, the monad. He (Burkitt, 1991) and Frosh (1991) both insist that it is a fallacy to imagine that the individual can exist and have a sense of selfhood without a context and interaction and relationship with society. Furthermore, Winnicott (1971) explains that such complex relationships with others begin with the need for the very earliest of relationships with our mother or primary carer as infants. Relationships, as they develop create a space for play between the subjective self and objective interactions from when we begin to become aware of ourselves and our separateness but also our dependence on others. My conscious memory does not go back that far but there appears to be a significance in the memory of looking at and acknowledging my hand and in noticing that it was different. The concept of difference appears to permeate the rest of my story, in reflections, memories of images and in the making of the collage later. The feeling of separateness also persists; less so in relationships with individual people but more so with communities and groupings such as professions and careers.

These feelings concur with another theme, that of being an outsider which was also strong in my story. It was illustrated by a series of new encounters, each of which highlighted a difference or otherness between me and them. Such lack of fit echoed in the work of Said (1999), Bhabha (2004) and Lorde (2007), highlighted the importance to a young person (and an adult) of fitting in, being un-noteworthy and without stigma (Goffman, 1963). I am also reminded of Savickas' assertion (2011) that a story is only a story if it narrates something out of the 'usual'. This may be behind the reason why each of us (myself and the other two participants) were so pleased for the opportunity to tell our stories, and indeed that we had a story is illustrative of the 'misfits' we all feel to be.

The issue of mixed heritage and also unknown lineage was a thread through all parts of my story, including the prequel which set the historical scene for these stories. My story narrated an identity that was neither one thing nor another; a narrative identity and later career identity that straddled cultures, communities and professions. This is different from otherness, it is almost anonymity; a not-belonging to either side or sides. There is herein a broader critique of the tidiness and default of the binary; male/female, north/south, rich/poor, in or out. Echoing Bhabha's (2004) suggestion of a liminal space *between*, as more mixed people claim their space such categories may be increasingly under scrutiny. In Massey's (2014) Tangled Roots project to collect and publish the stories and experiences of mixed race families in Yorkshire, she noted that there had been little written previously about mixed race families such as her own. In many of the stories there were similar experiences to mine and S's and G's, of gradually becoming aware of being different to all those around them, including father and mother. Discourses in families

socially construct realities and truths (Gergen, 1991) and if the experience of a mixed race young person does not fit with the experience of those around them inevitably there will be a discomfort and a need to resolve such conflict (Goffman, 1963). In the collage, my mixed background and nature gained a prominence perhaps because of the visual impact of pictures of my parents and grandparents, but also the image of the Bluefooted Booby (which appears to have been made from all kinds of different creatures) and the mixed bouquet where the contingent flowers complement each other; the whole bunch being greater than the sum of its parts. My concerns about the use of collage has resonance with the issue with mixedness, in that I am expressing a concern that by turning toward one such subjective approach in research I am turning away from another, more objective one. In turning from one area of my career I am turning my back on another, equally held dear at the time. There is resonance too with turning away from one identity in order to embrace another with the guilt, hesitancy and pain that can carry. Subjectivity is multifaceted when the identity of the person is not clear, and remains under construction. It is within this conflict that a pre-occupation with clarity and resolution may be found. The use of such a subjective and ambiguous method as collage not surprisingly then elicits feelings of insecurity and concern for me in search of the ratification of clarity.

Recognition has been and remains an important issue for me. There are two aspects of this in my story. The first is the physical recognition of separateness mentioned earlier, and then the recognition of difference or relatedness (my baby and aunty Pat). The other aspect is that of belonging and my search for it as well as my slight discomfort and mistrust of it. Honneth (1995a) proposed that identity is dependent upon recognition; we are no one until someone calls us. The three elements he describes that allow for recognition are first of all the love of family which produces feelings of self-worth and confidence. In my early years I certainly felt loved and valued. Secondly Honneth suggests that of self-worth which he claims is developed largely through the structures and policies of the society we live in that enshrines or diminishes the worth of an individual in Law. This also was not problematic for me. However, the third, that of self-esteem, Honneth claims is developed through the recognition by those around them as to their membership and contribution to society. This may indeed have been significant as in my story I recall many situations where I was not recognised as 'one of them'. Moreover, my contribution to society in terms of work and career has been fractured and difficult to define or recognise. Goffman (1963) also commented upon the stigma of the misfit, the unexpected or uninvited and also how the stigmatised 'plays along' with that role, joining in with the joke. In the prequel to our family backgrounds I explain my pain at hearing my father's cricket team asking him to smile so they could see him as the light faded. He laughed too.

A theme from the collage was that of the eraser. It was a small part of the collage but when discussed its significance became clear to me. It was not just about erasing but also about the damage that can do. This concurs with the notion of mixed identity and choosing one over the other, echoed in career, family and also in this research methodology. It also illustrates that the clarity of identity sought would require some pain. However much the notion of clarity and unambiguous belonging appears, the attainment of it, if that were possible, would require radical surgery. It is perhaps the preserve of the mixed race as well as the adopted, to make a conscious choice about who they are; to write their own narrative identity. Such choices are mitigated by what is possible. Walker's choice (2001) required the turning away from one parent to embrace the culture and heritage of the other. This ongoing process of erasing and re-writing of an identity, editing a script so that it fits with the character we are playing (Goffman, 1959, 1963) is presented in my story as a painful one.

Finally in my story was the essence of a pre-occupation; a thread which is identifiable early and which carries through to the present day. The pre-occupation calls upon all the other themes (Savickas, 2001) in this analysis and could be summarised as a search for clarity of identity and purpose. It embraces other themes from separateness, otherness or being an outsider, to the felt ambiguity of heritage. Savickas (2011) used the term pre-occupation to explain this thread which Adler (1923) would have recognised as the prototype or self-ideal in the mind of a young child, which clarifies their overall goal of turning felt minuses (inferiorities) into desired pluses. Taylor (1992) called this a quest. This may or may not be conscious; it may be only by the processes of psychoanalysis, career construction counselling or indeed research that it is recognised. Savickas' assertion that in career 'we actively master what has been passively suffered' (2011:33) I believe explains my own pre-occupation. The quest has not been to find the perfect match in career between my skills and interests and a particular set of requirements, rather it has been a process of trying on a series of masks, roles, uniforms, career identities, trying to find the one that fits, that defines me and which bestows some clarity.

The meaning therefore to me of these stories is the search for clarity of identity and purpose, and it appears to be evident in both my personal and work life. What was clear in the process of making and discussing the collage was that in career at least some of this clarity has been found. The processes of becoming an academic, a university lecturer and a manager allows for a variety of relationships, roles and identities to co-exist. Moreover my role as a careers practitioner, supporting others in their navigation of career does demonstrate the notion of 'actively mastering'. Perhaps even more so my current engagement with this research demonstrates the same.

The next part of the research to consider is any insight it might offer to career guidance and counselling practice. This will be explored in detail in the next chapter. However first I believe it clarifies a mirroring between my search for clarity in self-identity and in that of career identity. As suggested above my choices, such as they were in career, appear to have had little to do with skill, aptitude or even interest. Theory offered by Parsons, (1909) and Holland (1973) may concur with the matching of some skill and aptitude and to some extent personality, and Super (1951;1957) may recognise a range of roles and phases in my career, but only Savickas' Career Construction theory (2011) comes close to understanding the relentless search for belonging. Choices of direction appear to have had much to do with the composition or construction of an unambiguous identity. However when close to that composition, another option beckons and I appear to feel in fact most at home straddling career identities than in committing to one. The links to the straddling of personal and cultural identities are clear. As Savickas (2011) explained, the story tells what happened, the plot, why, but only the theme provides the meaning.

The Quiet Multilinguist

In G's story the themes that I identified were: personal identity, national identity, responsibility and belonging, loyalty, passion and emotions, career, and teaching adults.

Her national identity was chosen for her by her parents 'for obvious reasons' so that she would not have German nationality. This sculpting of identity was continued by ensuring that she did not speak German and as a consequence had no 'mother tongue'. I found myself wondering what that meant for the early development of personal identity in G. Her difference was clear from a very early age, first to her mother and father in terms of the languages they spoke, and then from new friends and acquaintances. However she does not criticise them for ensuring that English was her first language, rather she sympathises with them and with the young G for trying to reduce the language burden on her. Similarly she does not say how it felt or that she wishes it had been different. Her parents appear to have done their best to bring her up in a complex situation and created a 'good enough' (Winnicott, 1971) space for her to learn and grow. In terms of Honneth's (1995a) notions of recognition she said that she felt loved, had self-confidence and a clear belief in her own worth. As for self-respect she was supported by the knowledge that she and her family had equal rights to take part in society. This had not been the case during the Holocaust of course, which her parents had survived and which was a historical, political and cultural backdrop to her own childhood. The strong loyalty to Israel and the Jewish nation was, she made clear, part of who they were as a family and what they stood for. This strong national identity may also have

had an impact on the third factor; self-esteem. Although moving from country to country she may not have had the recognition of school mates, but this was clearly achieved by her time in national service as she makes clear. This, she asserts was an important and transformative experience and connected her to other Israelis and to the history of the Jewish nation. So I propose that recognition for G was unlikely to be a challenge.

The concept of Alfred Adler's prototype (1923) of the self-ideal a child aspires to become, may also offer some insight into the early years of G and their impact on her life. As the child of an Israeli diplomat her national identity was strongly Israeli, with also a clear sense of Britishness. She makes clear the importance of 'not letting the side down' and takes her responsibility as an Israeli very seriously. Socially constructed truths (Gergen, 2000) about what it meant to be Israeli and Jewish would have been strongly evident in the day to day discourses of the household. Nonetheless her personal identity was less distinct and she recounts the experience of time and time again being different and other as she moved from one country to another as a child. No matter how many languages she learnt she still had no 'mother tongue'. She carries and in fact embraces this otherness throughout her life so that despite her clarity of national affiliation and loyalty it is tinged always with the recognition that she 'has a different biography' to other Israelis, other Jews, other women. Her Adlerian prototype might be characterised by national loyalties and contribution, but also an embracing and mastering of otherness and difference. She confirms this in her story. Perhaps these two factors illustrate her pre-occupation; embracing and mastering otherness within a context of national and religious responsibility. In her career she avoided stereotypic identity. Awareness of the arguments around Jewish feminism may have confirmed her rejection of teaching until she found her own way of doing it, and rejecting ballet before it rejected her. She used the metaphor of a mosaic of identities; creating a unique piece of art from all the identities she has had, has today and will have in the future. This is reminiscent of Winnicott's notion of 'playing' which he posed was synonymous with creativity (1971) in a space in which G can experience an evolving process of becoming, and a recognition that whatever she becomes it will be different to others, unique to her. Congruent with Bandura's social learning theory (1986) and Kelly's (1955) notion of personality and identity not being fixed but emerging through interactions with the world around us, G appears to treat her identity as a project to be savoured but probably unfinished. Savickas (2011:33) may have concluded that indeed within career she has 'actively mastered what was passively suffered', teaching as she now does in a Jewish college. She has not undone or corrected the 'hole in the heart' (Taylor, 1992), but has not only learnt to live with it but also to celebrate it.

The Gestalt of our conversations was first of a friend trying to be helpful in providing me with material for my research, but also as an individual managing that process very carefully. Her agenda was to talk about facts; what happened when and to a small extent why (the story and the plot). She skilfully kept the conversation at an arm's length from feelings and emotions, intimate relationships and certainly away from any acknowledgment of pain or suffering (possible meaning). In the literature about narrative research there is much written about being mindful of the power dynamics (Josselson,2011), the relative agendas and the authorship of the story (Hollway and Jefferson,2000; Merrill and West, 2009). There are possible explanations for this apparent avoidance of emotions. First she is a private person who, although a friend, I was also one of her husband's parishioners and so she may have been aware that some boundaries needed to be maintained. It is even possible that her husband discussed this with her. His presence in the house, and the location of the interviews, was certainly a reminder of this. Secondly in the transcription and analysis of the interviews I was cognisant of her explanation of the approach she had always used to manage new relationships and situations, by staying quiet and;

waited for people to come to me, waited for to know where I was, I understood the layout, you know, understood the dynamics...

It may be that at the time of these interviews and with the boundaries she felt were also necessary, this was where she was still, waiting. But over and above these possible explanations at the time of the interviews, I also wondered whether for a first generation post-holocaust Jew there was an unwritten and perhaps unconscious reticence to complain, particularly about an issue relating to being Jewish (Langer, 1991;Levi, 1969).

In the second interview there was more talk of emotions, although avoiding sentimentality, and certainly there was no expression of emotion in her voice, demeanour or discourse. Such acknowledgment of emotion or feeling was in relation to work rather than relationships. She shared the joy of teaching adults in her current position as lecturer in a Jewish college. Earlier she had robustly avoided any emotional talk in relation to ballet, which although introduced into the conversation as a 'passion' she called an 'interest'. Later she got closer to the emotiveness of dance but did not go so far as to talk about emotional engagement.

Despite a number of attempts there was a real reluctance to talk about relationships, with her parents, her sister and her husband. She was there to talk about her life and her career. That had to be respected and in no way did I wish to make her feel uncomfortable or to exploit our friendship. Another researcher would have found different meaning in this work (Josselson,

2011), the backdrop to these conversations was that of two friends talking and the roles we were playing (Goffman, 1959) were not always clearly defined; they were overlapping and sometimes ambiguous. Her avoidance of talking about relationships may have been her way of maintaining her 'participant' and my 'researcher' masks. Although the transcripts were shared and discussed, there was little appetite by G to explore underpinning feelings or by me to press her to do so.

My interpretation of the meaning of G's story is that she has navigated her own life around expectations and loyalties and had embraced otherness as something to be valued, because it gave her a 'liminal space' (Bhabha, 2004:5) to see other worlds and to create an identity that was wholly hers. In terms of career she acknowledged that she has also tried to straddle aptitudes and interests that were in the family; teaching, law and international relations. Where she had found real joy was in their resolution in her current job; a lecturer but also a quality assurance officer in a Jewish college where people from many countries come to learn about the beliefs and traditions of the Jewish faith and culture. Her pre-occupation continues. In much of her story she says 'to this very day' which suggests that the pre-occupation of embracing otherness and resolving the multifaceted nature of her identity continues; the thread which has created a pattern of her making and linked her past, present and future selves.

What G's story offers in terms of the development of career guidance and counselling practices is significant. She says herself that having talked with me about her choices in the context of her family she could see that elements of her father's, mother's and grandfather's careers and interests had all shaped her own. She had matched her aptitudes and interests and personality to opportunities as they had presented themselves (Parsons, 1909; Holland, 1973). However her own words made clear that she had never really known what she wanted to do, or be. She blames herself as though in that not knowing she was 'letting the side down'. But in the analysis of G's story it becomes clear that security for her meant *not* choosing because that would have shackled her to a permanence that, like me, she was not familiar or comfortable with. Her resolution is a combination, a mosaic of roles and responsibilities that resolve the theme in her life. In careers work there is a dominance of expectation that young people in particular will make a choice of a career direction that will dominate their lives, even though the world of work now requires flexibility rather than rigidity (Bauman, 2000; Krumboltz, 2009). The message G's story may have for career guidance and counselling practice is to take the holistic view, to consider the macronarrative (Savickas, 2011) plot and to explore the thread that gives the story meaning. This would be the case for many as careers and the world of work become more intangible and less predictable. However for those who also carry with them a complex personal or family history I would argue it is even more significant.

Forgiving, forgiveness and changing the world

Finally I turn to S's story which in contrast to G's was full of emotion, intimate and painful stories and also some shared history with me. The themes that came from her story, shared through transcribed interviews, discussions before, around and after the interviews, pictures and her own words in poetry were: history and place, faith, identity, the sense of the family, her relationship with her mother and her father, racial struggles and career.

As explored in chapter 2, Wright-Mills (1959) wrote about the impact of public, political and social changes and events on the private lives of individuals, emphasising the complexities of the interplay between them. He noted the inadequacy of trying to fit the relationship of private troubles and public issues into a clear bounded model or Grand Theory. In S's story the interface if not the theoretical understanding, is clear between the macro world events, the meso family and extended family dynamics and personal micro world. On an historic level the place of Ceylon (later to be renamed Sri Lanka) as a colony in the British Empire brought S's father to the UK after fighting for the British in WW2. S's story too has as its backdrop a period of change in the western society; the rise of multicultural Britain, the struggles for the equality of women, protests against the Vietnam war, the anti-nuclear movement and the liberation of women made possible by the contraceptive pill. The Roman Catholic colonial, patriarchal upbringing of S's father was a contrast to the world his second daughter was embracing and was not the world perhaps that he had in mind when he settled in Britain.

Her private world within which her struggles with her identity would be played out, did so against such a broader historical and sociological stage. And as Adler (1923) and Savickas (2011) would concur, it is not the experiences in early years that shape the person, their goal or prototype, but the meaning that they make of them within such a context. So in S's story, her siblings experienced much that she had in terms of sociological change, being overprotected in the family, being an oddity in the community and being aware of a cultural background that was hardly referred to in the family discourse. However the meaning that her siblings made of these experiences was different to that made by S. Perhaps 'basic trust' (Giddens, 1991; Winnicott, 1971) and that most crucial of early relationships had much to contribute to the impact of S's earliest days and her mother's absence. Her primary carer was her grandmother and she makes the point that she was not cuddled for many days after her birth and then 'only' bottle fed. Formenti's work (2011) on the impact of stories in families about babies' births on those children as they grow up suggests that such family tales capture some narrative truth about their entry into the world and into that family. This was not a joyful story for S but one seated in trauma,

danger, guilt and pain. It eerily echoes the story of my own mother's birth in which her birth had caused the death of her mother. Adler (1923) too would have commented upon early memories of being the bringer of pain and inferiority. S's memory of being pinched by her older sister may be possible evidence of such feelings, particularly because she was not able to retaliate and even now feels empathy with her sister and guilt for the cause of such disruption in the family. She feels sorry for her younger self too, referring to herself in the third person such that, by telling the story she can help by reaching back into the past and comforting herself. Even the photographs of S and her family shared in this work have subtle suggestions that her place in the family was not the same as others'. Barthes (1977) may offer some illumination of the meaning behind our difficulty in finding photographs in which S is looking at the camera as others are doing, by a consideration of what was outside as well as inside the frame.

Her feelings of difference in terms of her personal and cultural identity did not therefore begin with the oddness of this mixed race family in the 1950s and 60s, but beforehand within the safe and close-knit context of the family unit. Perhaps this is why, unlike her siblings she appears to have struggled more with her identity and its complexity throughout her life.

S's career path may have been as much a product of the time as her own struggles with identity. The 1960s were a time of social unrest during which many of the macro-structures of society were collapsing. The public issues of war, women's rights and immigration were reflected in the private troubles of people and of young adults such as S (Wright-Mills, 1959). In particular for S the social structures that had given her childhood some clear shape in a context of cultural ambiguity, such as faith, family, gender and career, were losing their reliability and hold. This provided her with freedom, but also exacerbated the tension between her and her parents. The predominance of the individual in a late modern society and the increasingly complex navigation of the working world (Frosh, 1991; Burkitt, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Alcoff, 2006) provided S with options that 10 years previously she would not have had to 'just be myself'. But in the absence of other anchors, cultural, racial, religious and social, it was a difficult and at times a painful goal. The goal itself appears to have also been to help others (particularly women) who were marginalised, which she did in different ways for many years. She tells of her determination to challenge the simplistic groupings that othered her, feelings echoed by Lorde (2007), Heschel (1983) and others who pointed out the inadequacies found even within movements that purported to support the disadvantaged. Reference to black feminists, gay black men, Jewish women and others straddling two or more socially disadvantaging factors explains that human diversity, contrary to Wright-Mills' homogenous groupings, is complicated. There appeared to be a responsibility for S to act on behalf of others which is resonant of Simone Weil (1947), putting

her own wellbeing far down her list of priorities. She points out that this quest was often to the detriment of her own welfare as she often felt 'unboundaried'. The role she had adopted early in life as the 'mug' who always wanted to do the right thing for others, took its toll. The prototype or self-ideal that Adler (1923) may have identified was cast early as the person who makes things better, the peacemaker, the fixer of all that is wrong, the young woman who would 'change the world'; a quest she clearly followed for much of her life. The dual goals of 'being myself' and saving people are perhaps untenable but that seems to be the meaning of her story as she told it. The tension between these was perhaps only resolved by the gradual realisation that the person she most needed to save was herself, particularly her younger self.

This is my interpretation of the meaning of her story. She tells how she is now able to embrace her creativity, celebrate her mixedness and flexible identity so that she is most at home in heterogeneity. Moreover she claims that this is better than being 'pure'; it is more healthy and ultimately more real. She no longer feels the need to apologise for who she is or is not, and the weight of responsibility to 'change the world' although not relinquished entirely is now shared. Much of S's story was a product of the times in which she emerged from childhood into adulthood; making sense of the world around her as best she could with all the contradictions and missing pieces that there were. However despite her apparent rejection of her early grounding in family, religion and social structure she reconstructed those foundations in her own way throughout her life. Her own life and family had an alternative structure; she was a single mother and then in a same sex relationship but still included her daughter's father in the mix. She embraces spirituality, often expressed in her poetry and art. And she has become part of a strong and visible community of like-minded people; a mixture of people who also inhabited spaces between communities and cultures and who felt marginalised. In S's story perhaps more than the other two in this work, the boundary between personal and career identity is particularly blurred. In her story she stated that it was not that she did not want to work, just that she did not want a career. The idea that a part of life could be separate from her ideals and way of living was an anathema.

Very little established career theory would have offered the young S any insight into her career path. At the core of all of her decisions about her life's direction were not her particular talents or traits (in fact possibly to the contrary) but was her drive to engage with the major issues in society as she saw them and to 'change the world'; that world that in failing to embrace her as she was, made it difficult to be 'just myself'. In the early days she seemed bent on rejecting as many as possible of the received truths she had been raised with, perhaps because she felt that they had rejected her. This is not an unusual scenario for many experienced career practitioners who work

with young people. However this was no temporarily truculent teenager, her rejection of the precious norms of her family continued and was a feature throughout her life. She admits however that looking back she questions some of the insistence with which she rejected or chose to side-line career, marriage and family relationships. But the quest was strong and continues. Today resolution is found in her creativity, that sense of playing (Winnicott, 1971), not least of all in the acceptance, vision and embracing of herself.

It may be however that Career Construction Theory counselling or other Life Design narrative based approaches for the young S would have enabled her to make some sense of her strong and emerging convictions. Reid and West (2011b) found that young people with little preparation or experience were able to make sense of the plot, script and meaning of their lives using the model and structure of questioning proposed by Savickas (2011).

Micro, meso and macro worlds

Having explored the themes and analyses of the three participants in relation to the research questions, I would now like to bring them together under the macro, meso and micro worlds referred to throughout this thesis. These echo the three tasks of life (Adler, 1923) and three requirements for recognition (Honneth, 1995a). It could be argued that they all have their foundations in the *Vita Activa* reflected upon by Arendt (1958) also, perhaps not surprisingly with less recognition of the private or inner world. They all acknowledge that we need to exist in the world through engagement with it, relate to others in that world, and to fulfil personal and intimate goals of love and inner contentedness.

Beginning with the micro world, although not identified as a theme in the analysis of these stories there is an additional topic which is part of each. This is the part played by faith and religion in all three of the cases. It appears in each story as a support act which is nonetheless in each part of the drama. At its most pure, religious faith is perhaps very much part of the micro world, a deep and personal relationship with God or with a way of being. Simone Weil expressed the separation between worldly objectivity and such faith;

The mysteries of faith are degraded if they are made into an object of affirmation and negation, when in reality they should be an object of contemplation. (Weil, 1947: 183)

Nonetheless regarding established religions, to which all three participants had or have affiliations, there is indeed a worldliness that has an impact on how an individual relates to society, and on individual and shared identity.

In G's story her faith is the glue that binds her to her nation, history and to her own narrative. It is the identity which she says she is most associated with and comfortable with although it is almost impossible for her to separate Jewish religion and faith from Israel and being Israeli. According to her, her faith has had to be revisited and re-evaluated after her marriage to an Anglican priest. Nonetheless it is robust and part of the ongoing evolution of her selfhood. In S's story she tells of a very strict Roman Catholic upbringing and way of living and being. Her rejection of her faith beginning with embarrassment and a realisation that other families were not so devout, put her relationship with her father under considerable strain. It was one of many solid structures in her life that she challenged and rebuilt in her own way. She makes it clear in her story that despite rejecting Roman Catholicism she remains deeply spiritual, 'not an atheist' and her determination to do good for others she believes came originally from her religious upbringing. But she found it difficult to resolve what she later saw as indefensible flaws, from her father's insistence to 'turn the other cheek' in the face of racism, to the non-negotiable ritual at her father's funeral and her mother's discomfort with S's sexuality. In my own story religion is another area in which I have straddled two or more loyalties. Brought up as a Roman Catholic but with a Protestant mother, I was familiar with many religious traditions in the places that I lived. That said being RC was perhaps one of the constants in my life and gave me membership of a group that other aspects of my identity did not. Similar to G's explanation of the diversity of Israelis and Jews, Catholics come in many hues and origins, but the important thing is that one is a Catholic (or Jewish); everything else is forgiven. So letting go of that identity (if one ever really does) was quite profound. On reflection I believe there were two drivers to that move. The first was a theological decision to reject the authority of other 'men' in favour of a Protestant claim that a relationship with God is personal and needs no intercessor. The second, I can now see, was that being RC was also 'other'. They are also the rejected, discriminated against and foreign. As indicated in my reflections, being an accepted member of a Church of England community is important, but continues to feel fragile.

The concept of young people growing up with a faith that contrasts with that of society around them was explored by Nesbitt (1998). She was interested in Hindu children in a Christian context, but much of what she established may be helpful in understanding the situations for all three of the stories in this research. Rather than developing binary identities these children self-navigated around a fusion of cultures and beliefs. This insight echoes the experiences narrated in this work, all of whom navigated religious and cultural differences to create their own fusions into an identity that eventually worked for them.

The inner or micro worlds of the psychological rather than the spiritual have been considered in relation to early experiences and relationships (Freud, 1961; Winnicott, 1971), and the emerging notions of self and identity/ies (Ricoeur, 1995; Adler, 1923; Denzin, 1989) for each story. For me there was an early recognition of separateness and difference. For G there was the lack of a 'mother tongue' and difference in biography from all around her. For S there was the strained early and ongoing relationship with her mother and embodiment of guilt which may have led to the need to make things better for others. Such spheres of influence have contributed to each notion of self and their place in the world around them. Savickas insists that 'self is built from the outside in, not from the inside out' (2011:434) because, quoting Vygotsky 'there is nothing in mind that is not first of all in society' (1978:142). Of course inner or micro worlds continue to influence how the individual engages with others as it is in turn shaped by the responses from those with who the individual interacts.

The meso world is that first level of the world experienced by an infant (Winnicott, 1971) as they begin to grow and learn in the playful space created by their primary carer. As 'good enough' care is provided, the infant's horizons expand and by exploration and measured risk-taking they venture further into a relationship with family, communities and society. This story of early experience and adventure becomes the beginning of their narrative (Ricoeur, 1995; Denzin, 1989) around which their biographies and autobiographies will be structured. Ventures into the yet unknown, as in the stories in this research, include unknown places, people, experiences and historical times. Lives are lived forwards in time but understood in retrospect (Bruner, 1990). It is this world that connects the inner self with the world that has shaped it, and is the focus that this thesis has explored in depth. Furthermore it is this world that career inhabits, notwithstanding the impact of the micro and macro worlds that can and do interject. Most career theory concerns itself with the relationship between the individual and the world of work. Matching ideas (Parsons, 1909; Holland, 1973) measure and find a best fit between the individual and an opportunity or context for work. Super's notions of career development (1951; 1957) are concerned with changing roles and relationships over time, and in doing so acknowledge a narrative. Krumboltz (2009) in Planned Happenstance, and Bright and Pryor (2008) in Career Chaos theory, recognise the unpredictable nature of career in a complex story of opportunities and options and the importance of attitudes of optimism and risk taking to navigate through them. But the emerging approaches such as Savickas' Career Construction Theory (2011) and more broadly Life Design (Nota and Rossier, 2015) clearly acknowledge the complexity and increasing unpredictability of career within a life story and the possible place of career in the achievement of, or route towards, the resolution of a life's meaning and quest. All theories about

career and career decision making have something to offer regarding learning and development. As access to career guidance and counselling practitioners is far from universally available (Watts, 2013), and the availability to those skilled in the social constructionist approaches such as Life Design or in particular Career Construction, is even more limited, it may be time to consider what might be possible from learning and development programmes as well as or even instead of individual counselling. Group learning (Westergaard, 2009; Barnes et al, 2011) as well as group or community guidance and counselling (Thomsen, 2012) may need serious reconsideration. The ability to manage opportunities, successes and challenges and to be able to navigate in the understanding of them in the context of a whole life story, termed Biographicity (Alheit, 1995) was developed further by Savickas (2011) in Career Construction Theory. Skills and abilities such as these may be able to be taught and learned. More of this in the next chapter.

The structure of opportunities was examined by Ken Roberts (2005) and takes the discussion into the sociological macro world. This is the big picture, the place of public issues rather than private troubles (Wright-Mills, 1959). It is managed by governments, authorities and world events and is the background to all our life stories. Political decisions close mines and industries or create new opportunities and ways of living. War and political unrest, famine, natural and un-natural disasters cause peoples to flee. Migrations not only destabilise those on the move, but can also have an impact on those for whom there is more competition for jobs in their home towns. Roberts (2005) claims that in the chaos created and structures imposed, people do what they can and in terms of work, take what is available. He argues that not all opportunities are equally available to all and that class in the UK is an ongoing barrier to the progression of many. This argument could be extended to other variables such as race, nationality and sexual orientation.

The historical background to all three stories in this work was that of war and movement of peoples. The characters in these stories responded to not only what was in their hearts and inner selves, but also what was pragmatic for their and their families' survival. The participants, although one generation on from that turmoil, all carry the impressions of those realities and are evident in S's conflict with her father when she does not get a 'proper job', in G's rejection of careers that limit her movement and flexibility, and in my search for belonging. These are not simple cause and effect issues. As stated earlier it is not *what* happens earlier in life or indeed in a family history that has an impact on the life of the person, but the meaning that is made of it.

In all three of these stories I have explored meaning rather than chronological or historical accuracy. In each I have identified a thread linking the themes in their stories, which I assert indicates a pre-occupation that their life course has sought to resolve. These pre-occupations

relate career path and choices made, consciously or not, with the mixed or complex identities of the participants as well as with other contextual factors specific to the individual concerned. The process of establishing these pre-occupations is different to that used by Savickas in his explanation of how career counsellors can use career construction theory in their work with clients (2011). In that approach he uses key questions about favourite books, programmes, magazines, mottos and elicits early stories. Then he helps the client to reflect on these in order to clarify a pre-occupation. In this way he explores the setting, plot, script, and meaning of their story. However the context of such questioning is that of career counselling. The research undertaken for this thesis has a different function and aim; the beneficiaries being the research community and professional practice rather than the participants themselves. That said it is possible that such auto/biographical interviews have a therapeutic outcome even though they are not intended as therapy. Had the three participants taken part in Career Construction Counselling, different threads may have emerged and would have been to some extent subject to the 'problem' brought to the counsellor. Nonetheless I would anticipate that similar themes would be identified and illuminated by such a process as they have in this research.

Each of the participants have been shown to have the shared pre-occupations with identity. The three participants' stories also indicated other pre-occupations specific to their lives as examined above. It is these threads that I will briefly outline and propose as equally meaningful in their careers.

In my own story one of the themes identified was that of recognition. Some of the other themes were closely related (eg. mixedness and otherness) but all, as well as relating to identity, also relate to recognition. As considered earlier, Honneth's (1995) thoughts on recognition suggest three prerequisites: self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect. Memories of my childhood suggest that I had the necessary conditions for all three of these. However in much of my life story I appear to be searching for recognition: of my heritage, of my career identity, of my relatives and of my worth. If, as Honneth's (1995) thoughts suggest, I did have the necessary components for recognition but still sought it, I am left wondering why. My tentative conclusion is that the reason is the underlying pre-occupation, my ambiguous identity.

In G's story also there is a pre-occupation with what she describes as an evolving identity, a mosaic to which pieces have been added and sometimes taken away during her life. Rather than being described as a burden G embraces otherness and difference and creates her own space within which she negotiates expectations and responsibilities. These themes also pervade her story at every stage: at schools in different countries, as the child of an Israeli diplomat, as the

oldest child in the family, as an academic, as a friend to me and as a wife. Each of these responsibilities relates to a role, or indeed to an identity. The two pre-occupations, one with identity and one with responsibilities, go hand in hand.

Finally S's story, as discussed above, also illustrates a pre-occupation with identity. Her complex and evolving identities dominate her narrative but again there is a parallel pre-occupation; that of making things better, if not for everyone then at least for the vulnerable in society. Some of the explanation of this may come from her religious and moral upbringing and also from her role within the family as one who, from her perspective, has 'caused' trouble and unhappiness. Her need to put things right, even at the risk of being the 'mug', was strong. Her need to put the world right was equally strong, even at the risk of going against her parents' wishes and expectations. Her propensity to put such pre-occupation ahead of her own well-being is clear in her story. Again I wonder how this pre-occupation is related to her pre-occupation with identity. It is not clear whether one is related to the other although I could argue that this pre-occupation of 'being the person who saves' is in itself an identity or at least a role. I suggest however that not only one pre-occupation has been at work in her life or in her career but two albeit related pre-occupations.

My tentative conclusion therefore from the synthesis of the meaning made of each of these three participants' stories, is that identity and its construction lay at the heart of the lives of all of them. However, struggles with, and the construction of identity have also been the author of other pre-occupations that are distinct in each of the lives lived. They are different embodiments of the struggles with identity, and relate to the life and career shapes experienced, and the choices and progress made toward the resolution of early 'passive suffering'. Returning to the Adlerian notion of the prototype (1923) or self ideal that he argued is constructed in the mind of a child, there is some insight into the parallel formation of other pre-occupations in these stories. Adler proposed that in searching for a way to become powerful (less inferior), an individual creates in their mind, a prototype of the person that they need to become. He does not suggest that this is a conscious process and so we must conclude that such a prototype occupies the unconscious mind. The Jungian (1938) process of individuation is explained as the unconscious and conscious mind working out, through the stages in life, the nature of the person who can bring together (undivided) both of these states of consciousness. I tentatively conclude therefore that both these processes, individuation and the working towards the self ideal, occur within the meso space; that shared space between the private and public that is first experienced by an infant as a playful space in which to grow, learn and to construct their identity as an individual (Winnicott, 1971). That same space is, I propose, where career identity is co-created. It may be then that

when identity itself remains ambiguous as a child grows up, that the clarity of the self ideal, the prototype to be aimed for, is undermined. What was identified in the meaning of the stories in this thesis appears to be two or more pre-occupations; one with identity itself and another or others that result from an unclear goal. It could be described as trying to complete a jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box. Alternatively it may be that there is one clear pre-occupation with identity in these stories, and three different routes or responses to its resolution. I discuss this in more detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

In the following chapter, however, I consider how such insights from this research might add specifically to the development of careers practice in a rapidly changing and diverse labour market and society. In considering the progress of the second paradigm shift of career theory I question whether, if who we are is so significant in what we do, this is reflected in current and emerging practice and in the training and development of careers practitioners. This is more than the contextualism that is encouraged by those who espouse the inclusion of cultural consciousness and other social factors in careers work (Richardson, 2002,2012; Arulmani ,2012). It goes further to include the construction of identities themselves. Furthermore, I explore the extent to which the technical eclecticism espoused for the modern careers practitioner is sufficient to support those with complex lives and identities.

Chapter Nine

Implications and Contribution to Theory and Practice

In this chapter I shall focus on the latter elements of the research questions. I shall consider what insight and illumination has been provided by this research with regard to the experience of mixed or ambiguous identity, and what that might offer development of career theory, practice and services. Although those with mixed or ambiguous identities, lives and backgrounds have been the focus of this research, it is my aim that insights from it will also have something to offer the development of a counter narrative for careers services and practice as the context for lived and careers become ever more complex.

This research has provided insight into the experiences of three women who have, in different ways, negotiated complexities in their identities as they grew up with contrasting and sometimes conflicting influences around them. Moreover this research has explored the meaning of the stories told by each, illuminating pre-occupations that were identified as threads that connected each part of their lives over time. For each of them these pre-occupations were reflected in both personal identity and in career identity/ies as they sought to master what had been passively 'suffered' in early life. The experience of these women of mixture or difference did have one thing in common; the pre-occupations had to be resolved. These pre-occupations did not only relate to mixture and complexity in identity however, they also reflected issues relating to family dynamics, history and culture. Such resolutions were found not only in clarity of identity, or the embracing of difference, but also in the connections made with all such other factors that shape lives. G resolved her difference with her loyalty and affiliation with the Jewish nation through her work. S resolved her need to help other marginalised people with the need to take care of herself, and I resolved my discomfort with homogeneity by straddling a number of communities, areas of work and identities. All were resolved, not exclusively but very clearly through the medium of work or career.

The directions taken by the participants in this work sought to both clarify their own identities and support others' who may be experiencing similar incongruence. S has spent much of her life working with marginalised communities, G with trainee Rabbis often far from home, and I found myself in careers work, helping others to navigate their lives, and ultimately I engaged with this research. Without seeking to minimise the altruistic, generous and humane nature of their responses to the plight of others, then and now, the significance of their mastery of the pain and challenges experienced by themselves as children has I believe been established in this work.

Career then for each of the participants has been a means of resolution and an integral part of their lives and stories. Taking a psycho-social and social constructionist perspective on career as being an expression of identity and a mask to wear in the world (Goffman, 1950), also presents the careers profession with an opportunity and challenge to adapt to the needs of clients in today's context. Perhaps as well as funding issues, a mis-fit between the world as it is and the traditional approach to services offered by careers practitioners, is in part behind the patchy picture of effectiveness evident in British schools and colleges (Ofsted, 2013a: 2013b).

This context for careers work is very different to that of the early pioneers; this late-modern world with few and porous boundaries and structures with which to frame our lives, provides little stability in which to understand ourselves in the context of our careers (Frosh, 1991). Not only do the goal posts keep moving, they are sometimes removed altogether, as are the rules that we play by. The world of work and the world itself is more connected by travel and technology, leading to more 'mixture' of race, culture, religion and family. This suggests an ongoing increase in the prevalence of mixture, complexity of identity and lives and the reduction in the stability of the factors in a person's life that gave them clarity of identity and sense of selfhood or rootedness in the past. With the danger of becoming nostalgic, it is important to say that this is neither an ultimately good nor bad thing, rather it is part of the ongoing process of change and evolution of what it is to be human. But in terms of how we support people in this context we need to be cognisant of the ongoing trajectory of these changes and understand the implications for the development of an individual's personal and career identity.

Although there will always be a place for established and traditional theories in the activities and services in careers work, at relevant points of need, as a profession we need to be ready to respond to clients as they are or how they will be, and not try to fit evermore complex peoples and their lives into the models of the past, or to try to design ever more complex models to try to explain them.

This research demonstrates that an understanding of the links between personal and career identity lies at the heart of the way forward and resonates with the second paradigm shift in careers theory and the constructionist approaches referred to (Nota and Rossier, 2015; Savickas, 2011). My counter narrative however does not only acknowledge that the narrative provides insights into a preferred goal, navigated by threads and pre-occupations, it points in particular to the pre-occupation of identity. This was evident in each of the stories in this research and I propose that it may be there also, to a greater or lesser extent for others. This is not a generalisation; it is an insight that when identity is less clear, the resolution of other goals,

threads and pre-occupations may be hampered. As societies become more mixed and transient this may be more relevant than we might otherwise suppose. It may also be the case that for individuals at times of transition (such as during adolescence), or crisis, when identity is questioned or unclear, help is needed to clarify pre-occupations so that threads of meaning can be identified. The use of narrative counselling techniques were shown by Reid and West (2014) to be effective for young people during periods of unsettled identity and demonstrates the importance and relevance of such approaches.

There is a place here also for a critique of the movement toward social constructionist approaches. Concerns over neoliberal agendas (Irving, 2009; Hooley and Sultana, 2016) and their impact on careers work can extend to a concern over a focus on the subjective individual and their construction of career. The concern is that it moves careers work away from its social justice and equality remit and responsibility. It is argued that it can pander to the individualistic 'each person for themselves' agenda. However, this argument requires a more nuanced view. Society is made of individuals, some are privileged and others marginalised and disadvantaged. Many are somewhere in-between or in fact unaware of their place on this continuum. Some, like the participants in this research, are privileged in some regards (a good education and supportive families for example) and marginalised and disadvantaged in others; recipients of racism or the uprootedness Weil described (1952). The argument for space in career guidance and counselling for a psychosocial understanding has been made (Reid and West, 2016) and resonates in this thesis. The counter narrative to individualisation, I would argue, is not in denying individuality, but embracing it as the construction of identity through a connection or re-connection with the biography of the person and their community, their family and their roots. This is not about restriction or 'knowing your place'. It is not fatalism or the realism of Roberts (2005), but rather it is about reconnecting who people are with what they do. This can be liberating rather than restricting, as it allows people to regain some agency as they have increased awareness of the whole picture rather than feeling an expectation to make career decisions in a cultural vacuum, ignoring subliminal but very significant drivers and motivations. Such drivers may indeed overwhelm much of the careers services provided for people and leave careers practitioners frustrated by the failure to address gender and social barriers over the years. The very notion of choice is contestable as cultural and other stereotypes and expectations persist in the decision making process. Therefore the recognition of the social and cultural context of individuals may indeed help careers work to re-inhabit the social justice remit, making restrictions, challenges and structures of opportunity more transparent to the client themselves. Such knowledge is powerful

because it addresses the dilemma of who decides what the client needs. This question will be returned to later in this chapter.

The context for careers work is not only the changes in social structures and the labour market, but also wider geopolitical issues. As the world experiences new waves of migration, this also creates challenges for these services. Not only do refugees seek a safe and secure place to live and raise their families, but others from countries whose economies have been devastated by war or natural disasters need to find a new home. This adds to the 'normal' migrations of people seeking new or better lives, travelling the world and establishing homes and relationships; peoples and cultures are becoming more mixed. With respect to the movement of peoples and the possibly resultant rise in nationalism in the host countries, and the radicalisation and extremism in subsequent generations, it would be useful to consider what this research into the experiences of three second generation migrants might offer in terms of insight into ways forward to respond to these challenges.

The first insight from this work in this regard may be that we recognise that second generation migrants have different but equally challenging issues to deal with as did their parents. Their physical safety and security, which their parents struggled to establish, is not so prevalent in their concerns, however their identity is. They may (as S) or may not (as G and I) look different, but we feel different. However as pointed out earlier, it is important to acknowledge that these women were from well-educated and stable, if complex, backgrounds. To some extent they have all responded in their lives and careers by helping others in some way. In reference to Adler's work (1923) and Savickas' subsequent developments, it is clear that in their lives they have turned weaknesses or inferiorities into strengths, at least as far as their stories suggest. This began with a recognition of the challenges they faced and a need to conquer notions of inferiority by clearly constructing their own identity and mastering their place in society. Individuals facing similar challenges, but without the education and support that these women benefited from, may not be able to transcend such feelings and may by contrast, embrace the certainty of identity that extremist or radicalising groups offer.

The second possible insight is that the flexibility or ambiguity in identity expressed by these participants may require more than just opportunities to express such issues; they require time and space. In the decades of the participants' childhoods and young adulthoods when they were making choices about the directions their lives might take, there was little space or time in society and in their lives for such dialogues and conversations. It is likely that there is even less of that time and space today. As West (2016) suggests, marginalised communities and those feeling

vulnerable to poverty and lack of opportunity, have in recent years created their own narratives of identity, common purpose and victimhood. Referring to the work of Biesta (2006) who warns about the threat to democracy from neo-liberalism, West proposes that the diminishing public space for community education and dialogue has enabled such damaging narratives to flourish. Concern for threatened public spaces was also earlier expressed by Arendt (1958) and she proposed that this could be balanced by an increase in creative activities. But referring to the 'rise of the market and.....the individualisation of responsibility' Reid and West (2014:50) appear to be warning of the danger that extremism and fundamental views go unchallenged in such an environment. However, Biesta's (2006) work may counter that view as he suggests that individualisation and democracy are co-dependent. Indigenous extremists who argue against migration into Western societies, and those migrants who turn to other fundamentalist views, are not taking individual responsibility but rather surrendering it to a collective identity and ideology. Both sides of this debate require some space for consideration and the place for career guidance and counselling within such contexts and social dilemmas equally deserves some reflection.

It may be then that in the process of re-establishing the democratic space, dialogue and individuality of thought, more recognition can be given to the needs and circumstances of young second generation migrants. Cultures that have traditionally made decisions collectively may in the first generation find the individuality of their host nation unfamiliar or threatening. When the second generation experience both the collectivism of their family culture and the individuality of Western culture there is a clash, 'a cognitive and narrative dissonance', and ultimately a decision to be made. It may be that within that mixed message and experience, that rejection of individuality of thought and responsibility and a turning to extremist views lies. These are both macro and meso issues; public issues and private troubles (Wright-Mills, 1959) and may require a discussion beyond the remit of this research. However, although education may always be the key to social and personal change, if that education stifles personal debate and individuality then it fails in its potential to support a democratic ideal (Biesta, 2006).

The participants in this research told of the construction of their own identity. Because of their complex circumstances this process took time. None of them could claim a clear given identity and so engaged in the process of self-construction. None of them could be over-reliant on the identities of their parents or families and so created a unique, flexible identity that both celebrates individuality and their cultural origins. With a place in both worlds, cultures and communities they were, to a greater or lesser extent, able to balance loyalties to their history with those of the present and the future. Therefore, it may be that for young people growing up with contested and pliable identities it is the provision of spaces for discussion and debate, for

exploration and individual reflections, that offer hope of belonging. Such young people may be second or third generation or may have other circumstances that have an impact on their understanding of their identity such as having been adopted or being conceived using donated gametes. Furthermore the facilitation of such reflective spaces by those who have been there too, may enable future mastery of self construction. Where in the overcrowded curriculum or in communities such spaces might be found is an issue this research can offer tentative solutions to. Citizenship, like PSHE and Careers work is a contested and variable subject in schools in the UK. Although it may seem a logical space for such civic discussions it, like other personal and social topics, requires the enthusiasm and skill of the teacher to make it effective. It may however be that the broader embracing of careers work as more than that which simply lubricates young people into temporary destinations in the world of work, could provide such a space. Moreover it is important not to forget the many other places that young people interact and learn. Although careers work has traditionally been found, or not, in places of learning, the work of constructing the self, a narrative and career identity goes on in other settings, even if it is not labelled as such. Community and youth groups, faith groups and other organisations as well as providing spaces for learning about the adult world and world of work, explored in Law's Community Action Theory (Law, 1981), also can facilitate reflection and the development of the skills needed for career and identity construction.

Careers work is a diverse and sometimes contested field (Barnes et al, 2011). There are a number of ways in which services can be categorised and referred to; using the age or stage of the client (young people, adults, retirees etc.), the nature of the intervention or service (individual interview, group work, career learning and development, testing), or with level of agency from simple information giving, advice, coaching to career counselling. Savickas (2011:7) compared the processes in three common terms for activities in careers work: vocational guidance, career education and career counselling. He asserts that in vocational guidance the client takes the role of the actor, the one who 'does something'. The processes he claims are those of matching traits and measurements to the opportunity which best resembles the best fit. The client is the object of this process. In career education they are the 'agent' of change, the subject who will learn about where they are in the stages of a career and what they need to know and be able to do to continue on that journey. In career counselling however the client is the author of a story which narrates an ongoing, perhaps lifelong project. This reflexive process, as explored in previous chapters of this thesis deconstructs and reconstructs the narrative using emerging themes and threads. Importantly Savickas (2011) confirms in this model that career counselling, whatever

model is used for it, is only one of the activities or services needed and that established ideas remain helpful in others.

Whatever the service, client group or activity the aim is to provide for the needs of the client or clients at whatever stage of their career journey they are. This presents the careers practitioner with a challenge straight away; as alluded to earlier, who decides what the needs of the clients are? Depending on the age, situation or capacity of the client, they may not know what they need. They may want the career practitioner to tell them. As a profession we fall at the first hurdle of client centredness (Rogers, 1986) if we impose a service based on what we believe to be their needs. So we need some baseline, some fundamental values to start with. Currently these professional values assert the sovereignty of the individual to make their own choices, and the unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1986) in helping them to do so. In the individualistic world of a neoliberal society the individual is all. Within the individual is the responsibility to ask the questions and to find the answers. The locus of control (Rotter, 1966) is internal. It could be argued that the subplot to much careers work is precisely to internalise such a locus. The benefit may be to encourage agency and autonomy but the other side of that liberating coin is that the client is also responsible for the outcome. Not surprisingly the popularity of the notion of resilience has come along hand in hand with agency, individualisation and an internal locus. There is no excuse for failure, for lack of success or for mediocrity. However without the skills and knowledge to manage such liberation and responsibility, clients of any age or stage in life may struggle. Placing the responsibility for the agenda of a careers conversation with the client may respectfully acknowledge their rights to talk about what is important to them, but it is the first hurdle for those not ready or willing to claim those rights. It may be no exaggeration to compare such an invitation as 'what would you like to talk about?' with a medical practitioner asking a patient 'what is wrong with you?' To expand the metaphor the patient may just feel unwell. Alternatively they may present a clear symptom such as a sore throat, or in a careers context may need help with an application or interview process. I do not suggest that careers work go down the path of diagnosis and prescription however, but that a deeper and more holistic approach to finding out what the issue may be is needed in such a complex world. Savickas (2011) responded to this dilemma by replacing the more usual opening gambit of the careers counsellor with the more open ended 'how can I be helpful to you today?' That said there is still the assumption that the client has the language, confidence and self awareness to express what they need to talk through, even if they know what it is.

It may be that a triage system such as proposed by Sampson et al (2004) is a useful approach to exploring, perhaps challenging and then confirming what the current needs are and where in the

process of career management they can be addressed. Career management is perhaps the most unifying of all the terms used. Along with 'biographicity' (Alheit,1995), it suggests an ability on behalf of the client rather than of the professional practitioner to navigate opportunities and challenges. It does not negate the need for information, for someone to talk to or help to develop skills and knowledge, but presumes an overriding responsibility and agency of the person to manage the whole. This, unlike much current practice, by definition, includes the rest of that person's life, background, culture and context. Rather than 'taking into consideration' the culture and context of the client, it is part of it. But the skill and knowledge needed for biographicity and career management is not innate, it needs to be learnt and developed with the help of someone who understands it. Much of what was learnt about the meaning of the stories of the participants in this research was that ambiguity required them to take control of and define their own identities. It has taken a lifetime for these women to understand and to negotiate their identities with themselves and those around them. Their biographicity was learnt through trial and error.

So alongside the further development of career conversation models, driven by the aforementioned second paradigm shift in career theory, models of career learning should also be explored. The term Career Learning and Development (Barnes et al, 2011) is synonymous with careers education referred to earlier in the Savickas classification (2011:7) but assumes a longer term process of development of skills, attributes and attitudes than the traditional stage based careers education programme.

Most of the models for the construction of a CLD programme in schools are based on the triangulation of needs first introduced in the DOTS model of Law and Watts (1977). Subsequent national frameworks (Barnes et al, 2011; Andrews, 2011) adapted and built upon this, changing the wording from passive to active and from objective to subjective learning. Nonetheless the cornerstone of all CLD must be self-awareness or self-development. The premise that one cannot make decisions about education, career or life course unless they have a clear and ongoing notion of who they are, what their skills and aptitudes are, what ethics and values they hold, is difficult to argue with. In all models however there is a distinction between self-knowledge and knowledge of the world around them and the opportunities it offers. A constructivist argument would be that knowledge of the world is reliant upon and often congruent with self-knowledge because it is from the context of the self that it is experienced.

As more recent frameworks and guidance for careers work in England have, although paying some attention to narrative approaches, moved closer to the 'Opportunity awareness' and the 'how to do it' elements of the triad of CLD, (The Career Development Institute, 2015; Gatsby

Foundation, 2015) there is a danger that just as identities and personal and career narratives become increasingly complex, there is less appetite or encouragement in the profession for learning opportunities that would help young people to navigate them. The construction of the self and a career narrative may seem a daunting goal for career practitioners and educators. However it is within the exploration of these processes that individuals can identify their own pre-occupations, life quests and goals of mastery. This will not be achieved necessarily in the choosing of a single profession but in the development of the ability to 'know thy self' as the ancient Greeks at the temple of Delphi instructed (γνώθι σεαυτόν) and Pope reminded us (1711).

However, perhaps one of the reasons why self-awareness or self-knowledge is so often the poor relation in CLD programmes (Barnes et al, 2011; Andrews, 2011) is because it is quite difficult to do, or rather to do well. It easily slides into subject or skill related strengths, often gendered and impersonal. The option of teaching and learning biographicity may be a more tangible alternative, linking as it does with the ongoing skill of Career Management and the currently popular notions of resilience, career happiness and understanding the changing nature of the labour market (Bassot et al, 2014). It may begin with an emphasis on our 'storied' natures, encouragement of exploring and creating possible personal and career narratives, their challenges, opportunities and influences.

As mentioned earlier the access to qualified careers counsellors for young people in England is patchy at best (Ofsted, 2013b). The inclusion of such constructivist concepts and approaches as biographicity in CLD programmes, group guidance and Career Construction counselling, and also the better use of digital technologies and social media (Hooley et al, 2015) may ameliorate some of the deficits in the current provision. However in order for these changes to take place and be sustainable there must be careers professionals who understand it and can manage their introduction and integration into the toolkit of approaches and resources available. This requires a re-visioning of the training and qualifications of careers professionals. Again there are challenges due to funding of training and education of careers practitioners.

Currently there is a layered approach to the training of careers professionals in the UK. The entry point to the sector is a level 4 vocational qualification which focusses on the provision of information and the enabling of action. It is highly output focused. These practitioners are, ironically, often found working with adults with the most complex of personal, financial and work-related issues in public offices linked to the entitlement of welfare benefits. However many of these practitioners are employed by public sector organisations and their training is paid for by the employer. The next stage is a level 6 work based diploma which includes some theoretical

understanding, largely of the established and objective school of thought. This group is also largely financed by employers. Finally there is the Qualification in Career Guidance (now re-named the Qualification in Career Development) which is taught in HEIs and awarded alongside a Post Graduate Diploma or Masters degree. The fees for this programme are, increasingly, paid by the student themselves, which is in contrast to some years ago when there were bursaries available. This programme has considerable theoretical underpinning and attention to skills such as guidance and counselling, group work, reflective practice, and professional ethics and values. However whatever the academic level and rigour of the course or programme, all adopt a similar style of individual intervention which is based on the Egan (2010) three stage model. The model has been developed in a variety of ways (Reid and Fielding, 2007) but the notion of a beginning, middle and end to the conversation remains. This provides a clear model for working with individuals while allowing for flexibility, client centredness and personalisation. Its design allows for and is suited to a single intervention, resulting in a decision or agreement to take some agreed action. A range of tools and models and theories can be employed within this framework, particularly within the second or middle stage. Notwithstanding such flexible frameworks for practice, and despite the rise in popularity of terms such as career coaching, counselling, career management and employability, the style and model of training for careers work has not changed a great deal in response. Although there is scope to adapt the three stage model to a more developmental, multi-conversation relationship, it remains essentially action focussed; agreeing to explore a particular option, to take a particular course of action, to further investigate or apply for a particular opportunity. Moreover, as discussed in chapter two, the client centred ethos of this model places the individual, and not necessarily their familial or cultural context, at the centre of decision making and goal setting. Without the cultural preparedness proposed by Arulmani (2012) there is a danger of such individualistic conversations being unrealistic and unhelpful when the client returns home to a different world view. However cultural preparedness alone is not sufficient in understanding the particularities of the individual's context. As Arthur (2001) pointed out, it is increased self awareness that can enable transitions (and in particular cross-cultural transitions) to be navigated well. This, I propose, is what Career Construction Theory (CCT) (Savickas, 2011) can achieve through the stories such conversations may elicit. The three stage model may therefore be helpful for the micronarrative, but less so for the macronarrative. CCT can indeed support a decision around a micronarrative, but it is by laying out the plot, script and pre-occupation of the macronarrative of the client that this is possible. That said Reid and West (2011) have shown that CCT counselling with young people can have a positive effect even with a single interaction. Age, or the complexity of the story does not appear

to be a barrier to this approach's effectiveness. So before turning our professional and training backs on the Egan model, it is important to acknowledge that its structure may accommodate a range of approaches including CCT counselling.

Clients may be in search of information, or advice or some coaching to help them to navigate the next transition. Not all will be in crisis or suffering what Savickas calls 'writers block'; stuck between chapters in their story. As Kidd asserts (2006), the key I believe is the ability of the practitioner to be able to adapt their approach according to the perceived and actual needs of the client, using theory, tools and models flexibly and dynamically, and combining elements from a range of models. This may be where the aforementioned triage approach of Sampson et al (2004) may be helpful. For some the provision of information or short guidance interview may suffice. However I propose that for an increasing number, a more holistic, social constructivist approach may be needed that enables the client to understand and recognise themselves within their stories, not merely as actor but also author. Importantly the practitioner must be furnished with the understanding, skill and knowledge to be able to see beyond the initial question or issue illustrated by a simple request for information. Their listening and questioning skills need to be forensically honed to be able to detect a narrative that needs to be deconstructed, co-constructed and reconstructed (Savickas, 2011) so that threads and pre-occupations, including those about identity can be understood. Far from an overriding of the agency of the client to direct the agenda and focus of a discussion, this is a process of collaboration over the focus of the conversation and the issue to be explored. It will always be easier for a client to ask for impersonal information about processes or facts about entry requirements, than to ask a stranger to help them to make sense of their life story. The technical eclecticism (Kidd, 2006) required for such negotiation, as well as the theoretical integration needed to be able to respond accordingly is considerable and demands practice, observation and ongoing continuing professional development. What may also be required is the acknowledgment and understanding of the practitioner that their skills and knowledge of new and emerging models are indeed needed and effective in helping clients in the current climate, whether they have complex lives and identities or not. Indeed the complexity of a client's life or identity is not necessarily related to the heterogeneity of their family, culture or geography and it is for them to define, not the practitioner or the profession, or even research. Nonetheless, on a pragmatic level the structure of services may not allow for the time and follow up discussions needed for CCT to work well.

Returning to the neoliberal dogma of individualism, it is notable that within the career guidance and counselling profession, the attendance at careers interviews in schools of parents is not now encouraged. In the early 1990s fresh funds were made available for careers work in English

schools and, leading up the Education Act of 1997 when careers education was made statutory for year 7 – 11, parental attendance was commonplace but not popular with practitioners. However I have long held the view that however dominant the parent or carer is, it is better to have them there because even if they are not physically present, their influence is (Chant,2011). The notion that the practitioner somehow needs to subvert the parental influence is to my mind counterproductive. Any such subversion can backfire on the young person when they are at home and the parents' ideas and aspirations are beyond the reach of the practitioner's challenge. I suggest that it is more effective for a young person to discuss a range of opinions, options and counter-arguments in a profession space with time for reflection and consideration. This will be important for career counselling with any and all clients, irrespective of their cultural background. Arulmani (2012) points out the particular importance of acknowledging culturally situated 'career beliefs' which can include collectivist approaches to decision making as well as beliefs about status, abilities and income. This may be the cultural context for a client; their story however will be their own.

Rather than training future practitioners 'how to' I propose that this research has shown that we need to be first and foremost helping them to understand the context of the presenting need and to ask 'what' and 'why' first. This may entail a move from a focus on the 'education to work' transition to a more psychosocial model; returning to the person and away from the processes. In some countries (e.g France, Croatia) outside the UK there is a psychological approach but these can be focused on the testing obsession of measuring and are, I would argue, a return to the matching days. In the UK careers has traditionally bridged the worlds of education and employment and therefore focussed on the movement from one to the other. In this 'liquid modern' world (Bauman, 2000) the previously recognised and anticipated transitions are less predictable. The bridges between education and work has two-way traffic and are inextricably woven into the rest of life. A more holistic and I argue, narrative approach is needed. The danger is that careers work becomes a treatment of a pathology but it need not. Rather than the training of careers practitioners to help clients to choose, get into and keep a good job, the focus perhaps might be to help clients to understand their personal drivers, pre-occupations and threads in life so that they can navigate better what they do throughout life; their career narrative. Such navigation requires an understanding of the setting, the scenery and landscape and also the ability to know where they are going and why. This is biographicity; it is also Career Management.

The auto/biographic story telling in this research has explored three lives for the purposes of research. Threads and pre-occupations were identifiable both because of the quantity and quality of the material and the eloquence and openness of the participants. In practice clients present

before and during transitions, rarely after them. They are not all able or willing to relate what might be sensitive personal details to a stranger whom they have approached for career or job related help. The structured approach of CCT counselling (Savickas, 2011) provides a clear model that not only helps the counsellor to shape the conversation and build the picture, plot and script and to establish the pre-occupation of the client's narrative, but also provides a safe and structured scaffolding within which the client can deconstruct and reconstruct their story. The cultural context and familial and community influences and interests that I have claimed in this chapter are important contextual elements to be included in the process, are part of the story, part of the person and also part of the solution or resolution to the issue brought to the counsellor. To support this claim I refer back to discussions about the nature of identity earlier in this thesis. Giddens (1991b) claimed that early ontological security, the knowledge that we exist at all, is founded upon the development of self-identity within the stable intimacy of the earliest relationship with a primary carer. Burkitt (1998) wrote that identity is further established when the person moves outside the private and personal world to engage with society, the early stages of agentic identity which begins to be crafted as they 'choose' the role or mask they will prefer to the world (Goffman, 1969). Sarbin (1986) who emphasised the notion that human beings are essentially 'storied' beings, wrote that identity is therefore inseparable from the society in which they live because these stories narrate the interrelationship between the individual and society. Narrative identity (Ricoeur, 1985) is therefore the identity that emerges from the stories we tell about ourselves and those that others tell about us and, so Ricoeur concludes, forms the basis for the formation of autobiography. The stories told by my participants and by clients in CCT counselling, or other narrative approaches, draw therefore upon a narrative identity and in the context of career counselling, a career identity, which is rooted in the social context, culture and community of the client. It is not possible I suggest for a client to reflect effectively upon their engagement with the world through career without acknowledgment of these foundations to their identity.

Concluding, in this chapter I have considered what the research presented in this thesis can offer for the development of careers theory and practice. Insights into the lives of the participants in this research, and the meaning they make from them offers much to the practice of careers work for all clients. It has also examined the use and importance of established and emerging theory in a world of increasingly complex identities and contexts.

The first point is that in 'liquid modernity' lives are more complex and identities can be more ambiguous and negotiable. Within that context further challenges are found in the support of migrant families and their children as they seek to establish cross-cultural identities and navigate

a range of conflicting messages and ways of being. The stories of the three participants bear witness to such struggles.

Secondly careers work, although slowly accepting a paradigm shift in theory, has been slow to reflect this in practice. Despite innovative and rigorously developed new holistic approaches based on the construction of personal and career narrative, the profession has been slow to adopt them as part of the normal toolbox for practitioners. This is partly because of the neoliberal and utilitarian direction taken by policy makers and the economic drivers of government policies, but also because of the short term vision of educators who have long seen careers work as a transitional lubricant rather than a psychosocial practice. Moreover the funding of careers work for young people and adults in the public sector in the UK is ever more tightly bound to measurable outcomes, which have been historically difficult but not impossible to demonstrate (Bimrose,2006; Hooley,2014).

Furthermore the training and professional development of careers practitioners in the UK has been slow to evolve and innovate, perhaps in response to public sector demands but also because of its own lack of self-confidence in its professional identity and credentials. It will be within the professional development context of the profession that a counter narrative for careers work can begin to have its impact. In terms of curriculum development for the education and training of careers practitioners there must be consideration of the place of identity in the practitioners' own career and within theory, but also included within all career counselling models, not only social constructionist or narrative models.

Finally bringing these insights together I conclude that the research in this thesis illustrates the importance of a holistic, psychosocial approach to careers work, both as an integral part of career learning and development (developing biographicity and career management skills) and in the inclusion of narrative approaches to counselling and individual interventions. In particular the trend toward individualisation and away from the social and cultural context should be questioned so that clients are enabled and encouraged to understand their own stories and the possible role of career within them. This may require more work in communities, with families and with 'at risk' groups such as second generation migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, looked after children and others with complex lives and identities. I have posited that psychosocial developments in practice should therefore be reflected in career learning as well as career guidance and counselling practice. This requires an engagement with this counter narrative for both; a re-visioning of the aims of both towards further understanding of the 'who' and 'why', and away from the 'what' and 'how'. The former requires in depth education of

student career counsellors and the engagement of a psychosocial purpose to practice. The latter will continue to be served by training in the outcome and information based services and resources that currently dominate careers work.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

In this final chapter of my thesis I will bring together what it has contributed in relation to the research questions, my reflections on the research and where it could take future work.

The aim of this thesis was to explore the lives of three women with multiple and sometimes contested identities and selves, and to seek insight into the meaning made by the participants of their stories.

In particular my research sought to explore how the understanding of such meaning might contribute to:

- the expression of influences of multiple heritages in my participants' career pathways.

And;

- how the identification of pre-occupations might inform the development of career counselling in a society and labour market no longer defined by bounded people or careers.

No generalizable rule was identified or was sought, but rather a principle and a counter narrative to the understanding of the trajectories of lives. As I stated at the beginning of chapter one, this was the study 'of man by man'; or rather in this case 'of women by woman'. The proposed counter narrative, the main argument of this thesis, is that the complex construction of identities in the stories of the participants in this research, is as much a part of their career as are their skills and interests; who I am, or am becoming, is part of what I do or would like to do. Ultimately an embrace of this counter narrative for career counselling will, I have argued, improve the extent to which clients' needs are met.

The unique and rich stories of the three participants were told, respectfully heard and explored, and in doing so their experiences and perspectives were shared and the meaning of their stories understood. In this thesis the importance of the particular has been celebrated. It is in the details of a life, what it is to be human and live a life that can be recognised as more than narcissistic anecdote, but as a particular lens through which we can further understand the lives of others. I have argued that it is this exploration and understanding that a careers counsellor is engaged in with their client. The client's understanding of their own story (in the past, present and possible futures), is central to the development of the skills of biographicity and career management.

This chapter will also consider what new questions have emerged from this research and what remains unresolved. I will reflect on what I might have done differently with hindsight, and how the work might be disseminated and developed.

First there are key principles and concepts that must be returned to, so that their place in this research and its conclusions can be clarified. I have referred to the work of both Alfred Adler and to Mark Savickas throughout this thesis. Although I have drawn upon the work of many other theories and thinkers, these stand out as my closest theoretical friends; those whose work and ideas relate directly to this research and to its conclusions. Adler (1923), if asked about the stories in this thesis, I think would have claimed that our 'otherness', difference and at times marginalisation, was a clear example of a 'felt minus'. This notion of a felt minus was developed into the concept of the inferiority complex (1923); the idea that all humans are born weak and dependent and therefore powerless, and that in life we seek to ameliorate such feelings by working towards a 'desired plus'. He may have suggested that such feelings were evident in our early stories and that through each of our lives we have made choices to get closer to 'positively mastering what has been passively suffered' (Savickas, 1997b;11). In addition Adler also described what he called a 'prototype' or 'self ideal', which is how that 'desired plus' will be experienced and embodied when it is achieved. Savickas (2011) called the thread that illustrates such processes in people's lives a *pre-occupation*. This is a word full of significance for careers work of course. It could be understood as what comes before an occupation, and indeed I have argued in this thesis that a pre-occupation can guide an individual toward that career or role in society that best 'positively masters what has been passively suffered'. However the word also suggests an occupation of the mind such that other ideas struggle to find their place. A preoccupied person is one who finds it difficult to focus on anything else; they are distracted by their preoccupation. And a pre-occupation in Savickas' terms does this also. Whatever ideas, activities or occupations engaged with may feel unfulfilling if they fail to resolve the 'felt minus'. There are examples of these in each of our stories. So pre-occupation is a concept that is at the heart of my counter-narrative to career counselling; it is the voice of the Adlerian prototype or self ideal that guides the individual through life's opportunities. That self-ideal, I have argued is different for each of us in this research. However each has something in common, the construction of our identities from the ambiguities that inhabited our early lives. What was not the same were the self ideals that such pre-occupation led us to, or towards. So it may be that, as I have tentatively proposed in chapter eight, there are parallel pre-occupations at work, or alternatively that similar pre-occupations led us to different goals because ultimately we have as much difference between us

as we have in common, and we have lived different lives and experienced other influences and opportunities.

So in each of the stories explored in this thesis was the theme and pre-occupation of identity construction, reconstruction or clarification. In each was also a distinct pathway by which the pre-occupation with identity was resolved. Whether these are parallel pre-occupations or not, together they provided a clarity of meaning to the participants of their lives and careers; they helped to make sense of the macro-narrative, the overarching story or gestalt that was told through the series of micro-narratives that otherwise may have seemed fragmented, unconnected and chaotic. In each of the stories a struggle with the complex heritages of the participants was identified, and the rich material gathered in this research provided insight into how these struggles related to the choices that had been made along the way. The notion of pre-occupation with identity was thereby emphasised as an important guiding thread throughout the lives of the participants and mitigated against the ambiguities experienced by each of us. I have argued that this is more than of conceptual interest but that in the rapidly changing late modern context, illustrated by profound geographical, social and cultural movements, such threads of identity construction are increasingly important for the counsellor and client to recognise. They provide a thread of continuity of meaning making which, if identified and understood, could help to guide and make sense of choices in life and career.

Although my, and my co-participants' stories made sense to us in their exploration, such sense was not neat. I found it hard not to search for a clear generalisation, something that now appears to have been part of my own pre-occupation with clarity; a rejection of the messy, the ambiguous or the unresolved in lives and the stories we tell about them. Indeed the very decision to conduct this research and to submit this thesis is perhaps a testament to that pre-occupation.

The relatively simple question that has haunted me for most of my life has been the generally innocent greeting when meeting a person for the first time, 'where are you from?' It is a question that would be familiar in the short vignette at the beginning of this thesis. This elicits a reply from me dependent on who has asked and what I want them to know of me. I might simply give the name of the village in which I have lived for 24 years, or the county or, if overseas 'just outside London'. But if I think the questioner is really interested I will say more. I may jokingly say 'well you might regret asking that question!' or 'from all over the place'. As S concurs, what I say about myself will depend on the context and the relationship or potential relationships.

If someone asks me sometimes I'll say I'm a poet, sometimes I'll say I'm Asian, sometimes I'll say I'm mixed race, sometimes I'll say I'm Sri Lankan; half Sri Lankan half English. Sometimes I'll say I'm a Lesbian, sometimes I won't say that.

I do not claim here that this experience of ambiguous history or geographical belonging is unusual but it has been at the heart of my search for an adequate and unambiguous answer to the innocent question. I have concluded that behind such a question is not an enquiry about geographical belonging, but rather it is about my identity. The real question behind such social interaction is 'who are you?' In this research I have shown that the answering of that question has been a lifetime's work and has significance beyond social intercourse. The answer comes from my actions, and those of my co-participants. What I do and have done both defines me and is crafted by me; the action and the person are mutually constructed and continue to shape each other throughout our lives. None of us have completely resolved our pre-occupation with identity because we are still 'acting' and constructing them. Action within society, how we interact, contribute and take part (our career in the broadest sense) is how we define ourselves to others (Weil,1947; Arendt,1958) and to ourselves. The fact that I have conducted this research and written this thesis, relatively late in my career, has changed me and my identity. Whatever comes next will continue that process of becoming.

In order to explore a career and its relationship with personal identity I had the option of an autobiographical exploration. My own story was what had first made me wonder about possible interdependencies or relationships. However this would have risked alerting the critic of narcissism in my positivist soul. Furthermore I knew of other interesting people and stories about which I was genuinely interested. Within my family there is my mother, father, brother, cousins and many others whose stories, identities and struggles yearn to be told. Outside that sphere there were people who, having heard of my interest in complex identities and career, offered their own stories for exploration. There was G but also P, the son of a miner from South Wales who won a scholarship to university and never went back. There was T, the mixed race boy adopted into a working class family who changed his name twice, 'divorcing' his adopted family and ultimately created his identity and family anew. Perhaps some of these stories will have their chance to be told in the future. It was notable that many of these people wanted to tell their story and to understand it. So my decision to explore my own story, that of my cousin and of my friend was technically opportunistic. What has been learnt is no greater or lesser than if I had focused on my own story or if I had explored all of them. Furthermore my inner critic of narcissism has remained relatively quiet. However there is perhaps a danger of valuing the unusual or striking story over the more mundane. I was drawn to these two stories because of

their richness and congruence with my own. However if it is the context as well as the story that calls for greater inclusion of identity construction in careers work, then this must have some value for other stories of lives and careers.

This leads me to consideration of the questions that this thesis raises as well as those it has illuminated. As well as the other rich stories that I know of, examinations of less fractured lives may help to further explore the relationship between the development of personal and career identity and the value in such constructs within career counselling. Career Construction Theory and the model of counselling that Savickas (2011) proposed, enables the client to deconstruct, co-construct and re-construct their stories by reflecting upon the script (favourite book or film), roles (role models) and principles (motto) in their lives and by clarifying the pre-occupation and goal located in early memories. This approach is not limited to those with dramatic stories or ambiguous identities. Reid and West (2014) also demonstrated the value of this model with young people whose challenges were rooted in sociological processes and those of adolescence rather than of mixed or ambiguous identities. But in all examples and explanations the question of 'who', I argue, is predominant. Identity reflects as well as contributes to the individual's context and resonates in their aspirations, values, expectations and self-esteem; who they believe themselves to be and who they will become.

There are other questions that emerge from this thesis. The construction of identity has particular significance for those of mixed heritage, as has been established in this thesis. This is of particular interest at a time when public discourse is full of questions about national identity, loyalties and inclusive and exclusive practices that include or exclude communities and cultures. The argument for multiculturalism continues to be exercised and countered by those who seek to promote nationalism and separateness. What makes a young person associate more with a radical or extreme group than with their family or local community, is a question that taxes many. That such questions require an understanding of identity construction may seem obvious, but what is also of interest is that it appears that it is the second and third generation of migrant families that have a greater challenge regarding their identity than did their parents or grandparents. This was evident in S's story and to a lesser extent also in my own and G's. However, we were able to explore and reconstruct our notions of identity within contexts of families and communities who provided the scaffolding needed for such construction. All of us, at some point, were able to have the conversations and discussions we needed to have in order to challenge, understand and construct our identities. This is not the case for all migrants, asylum seekers or refugees in their early days of settlement, or a generation or more later as West (2016) illuminated in his work on

the rise of extremist groups in one English town . As this thesis has illustrated, building identities requires the understanding of our stories. If the meaning made of our story is different to that of those around us, a lack of congruence challenges notions of belonging and the acceptance of others.

Such challenges are good examples of public issues resulting in private troubles (Wright-Mills,1959). Related examples are the diaspora illustrated in the stories in this thesis, such as those from the sub-continent (Sri Lanka) to Europe and Jewish people from Europe to the new nation of Israel. Echoes of the journeys taken by parents and grandparents were heard in each of the narratives, as were stories of integration, racism and loyalties, and connections to history, tradition and responsibilities for their continuation. The struggles with identity and belonging in these three narratives were closely entwined and reflected such historical backdrops. Although for each it was their parents and grandparents who had been first to begin such journeys, the eddies in such tides of change continued through the generations and brought with them additional dilemmas, challenges and questions of identity. The work of Said (1999) and Bhabha(2004) highlight that some of those eddies continue; tensions that second generation migrants and those of mixed race continue to live with, such as the dominant and preferable narrative of the West, and place of colour in distinguishing and discriminating against individuals and communities. The questions that have emerged for me in this research are therefore about whether the significance of identity construction in career may also offer some insights into the engagement in careers of a difference sort; extreme political or religious groups, cult sects and other marginal groups with a strong group identity and loyalties. It would be interesting to explore the lives of those who have made such choices and to look for the pre-occupations and threads of meaning and goal seeking, and whether identity is a pre-occupation for them too. As well as different focuses for the research and different participants, and kinds of participants, I have also reflected upon the methods used. I endeavoured to conduct this research with rigour, respect and integrity; I believe it is good research. However the research evolved as it was conducted and a process of iterative reflection was never far away. Excerpts from my research diary are testimony to this (App. F). However if I were to pursue some of the further questions that I have alluded to above I believe I would use a range of methods of material generation with each participant. This is not because I believe that it would make the research more valid, or that comparisons would be more possible (this is never the intention), but because I am aware that each method used elicited a different kind of memory, story, feeling or meaning. The making of the collage allowed me to access meaning that my memories had not, nor do I believe an interview would have. The writing about my weekend with S and other family members provided

context for both our stories and shared histories and helped to make sense of other memories, shared and individual. The inclusion of poems, photographs and other material provided a rich contextualisation for our stories which was not available for G's story. If I were to conduct this research again I would include collage making or other creative arts (McNiff, 1998) for all participants to provide a non-verbal voice for thoughts and feelings. I would also explore not only the stories told but also those untold; the histories of each family. Of course this would introduce new challenges ethically with issues of confidentiality and anonymity to be resolved. Moreover it may have been that if this was the depth to which I had intended to go, my co-participants may not have been as enthusiastic to take part. G in particular was clearly interested in the nature and meaning of her career and may have been reticent about engaging in more personal research. Having looked back at this research I now look ahead. This thesis set out to understand the meaning made of my participants' stories. In doing so, philosophical and theoretical ideas have been explored. However such understanding and meaning making on its own is not enough; if it is to have added value it must also change something. In this case, changes beyond contextualisation for the direction and evolution of careers services could be substantiated by this research, and specifically the importance of understanding the central place of identity in the social and cultural challenges of the 21st Century, particularly in relation to career, are proposed. It will mean a greater willingness to acknowledge the importance of the context of a client's story; their family culture and accepted truths, but further it will require the examination of the construction of the person's selfhood within that context. Such a move toward further establishing the psychosocial nature of careers work will have its challenges. So I must look ahead not only to the exploration of the further questions that this research has raised but also to how I will use this work and disseminate it more widely.

Such dissemination will continue with the critical re-examination of established and newer career theory begun in chapter two of this thesis, with the lens of identity construction. In the literature review I presented the most prevalent theories that both explain and anticipate career. There are many more than I have been able to present in that chapter, but still only some have made their way into the everyday practice of careers practitioners. Each should be further evaluated in terms of the contribution that they can make to identity construction and understanding, and in terms of how that could be translated into models or frameworks of practice, much as Savickas did with CTC (2011).

As suggested in chapter nine, such developments will also need to be represented in the curriculum of students of career. There are three key areas of the curriculum in the education and training of careers practitioners that would be particularly appropriate for the inclusion of

identity construction at any level. The first is within reflective practice such that students of career are enabled to reflect on their own lives and careers, not only in terms of how they have made choices and managed transitions, but also with respect to who they believe themselves to be and how their career reflects, responds to or shapes that identity. The second area of the curriculum would be the exploration and critique of theory which I have discussed above. And the third area of learning would be the development of career guidance and counselling skills, with individuals and with groups. The popular three stage model of Egan (2010) begins with the exploration of the current situation of the client or clients, but other than a brief discussion about their hobbies, interests and preferences, it is rare in my experience to witness much attention being given to the identity of the person or persons, who they are or who they want to become. Therefore as well as introducing social constructionist models such as narrative counselling, the place of identity construction should be an integral part of all models, supported by the critical exploration of theories of identity and career construction.

Furthermore the practice of individual or group career counselling sessions cannot be the only location for such explorations of identity construction and their relationship with emerging career identity. Such processes are those of learning for the individual and should therefore be integrated into programmes of career learning and development too. The scaffolding that allowed myself and my co-participants to learn about and to reconstruct our identities was, I suggested earlier in this chapter, that of our families. Congruent with Bandura's social learning theory (1977), and the community interaction theory of Law (1981), identity can be constructed through experiencing a wide range of social and working contexts. The scaffolding provided by our families and histories created a structure within which our identities could be constructed. In career learning and development programmes such scaffolding would be established in the learning environment and curriculum, as well as through reflections on family, culture and community. Learning about the nature of the scaffolding around which we have and continue to construct our identities is I propose a critical element of the counter narrative to careers work, for clients and for practitioners alike. It is counter to the obsession with individuality, while recognising the unique nature and agency of the client.

Finally, as this thesis draws to its close, I return to my reflections and the words of my co-participants. This research began with our stories and it is only fitting that it ends with them too.

My earliest memory was that of my hand in the hand of Ali:

I remember thinking that this hand was me, and that hand was him. We were different. Although I am sure I was too young to put the thoughts and feelings into words, the feeling was that this hand, mine, would always be with me. It was small but would not always be so.

The thoughts of that 3 year old me resonate with me today. My hand is before me now as I write, and it has grown. That hand has written this thesis; I have grown with it. Ali and I were different then and are now. I have no idea where Ali is today, if indeed he is still alive, but I wonder where life took him and who he became. I noticed that day that my hand was paler than his. Later in my life it was its darkness that was noticed, but still different. This may have been the beginning of my pre-occupation with identity.

The girls who teased me in Debenhams and in the classroom will also have grown and become women. They may have become wives and mothers too, or perhaps nuns or teachers, doctors or home makers.

My father had told me with pride that when people call you names such as 'pakki' or 'nigger' it showed only ignorance.

I do not know whether they were ignorant of my family's background, or whether they wanted to point out to me that I was different to them. They need not have tried so hard. My explanation of my family background I am sure did little to help.

G's story tells of her emerging agency over the construction of her identity. Her earliest identity had been chosen for her, 'I'm an Essex girl!...'. Her place of birth and therefore nationality was dictated by historical and political events many years beforehand and defined her as an outsider for most of her childhood:

... I'd forgotten any Hebrew I'd known as a small infant and ...if you think about it there's this young girl who speaks French and English but can't speak Hebrew and has to integrate into the local school-so-then [quickly] you come back into your country and what is considered home and yet you are again a stranger....So that is something that I very much relived again and again and again in lots of different contexts ...

It made her cautious in new situations accepting of her difference to others:

[I] waited for people to come to me, waited for to know where I was, ...and I think I still do it to this very day...

But she had a growing awareness of how to manage her outsider status and to embrace it as she came to understand the opportunities that it offered:

...we are made up of these sort of mosaics where you overlap one thing with someone and overlap something else with someone else.

...and I think..I think that's how one's life is...how one's identity is constructed...so it's infinite..there are infinite patterns ...

She connects her life course directly with her identity construction here, as well as acknowledging that the process is not over. The picture that mosaic ultimately creates however (the Adlerian prototype), is designed by the pre-occupations. For G that was someone whose identity is different but who nonetheless fulfils the obligations of her community in her own way.

If pre-occupations design the prototype then S's was also that of someone different to others, and to what her family expected and perhaps had hoped for initially. She was going to make the world a better place, right wrongs and save people:

.. racial identity became a big issue for people who were involved in stuff...so I started to identify myself with other people who were experiencing racism...and I got involved with a lot of anti-racist struggles and supporting people who had been deported and - not that I'm being deported – I've got a British passport – I'm OK - but I'm saying 'but that could be me' . I wanted to identify with those people.

Some of this may have been about the times she grew up in, or related to her place in the family and relationship with her parents. However much also echoes with my and G's stories of otherness and the need to understand and have authorship over her own identity, that we can be who and what we choose:

... if I go to Italy people think I'm Italian, if I go to Turkey people think I'm Turkish I love that actually ... For me that's like a real gift – to be somebody who could be from anywhere.

So perhaps we three mongrels really are blessed with ambiguity and the opportunity to define ourselves. We have done so in this thesis through our words and thoughts and we have done so in our lives, and continue to do so in our careers. We are all still 'becoming' our prototypes or self-ideals (Adler,1923); the picture on the box of a jig saw puzzle. But that picture is not static, it is a guide not a goal, and understanding what it means in our lives takes time, perhaps a lifetime.

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App: A



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Xxxxxx
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXX

14th March 2013

Dear X,

Participation in Research Project with Anne Chant

Thank you for your interest in this study. It may be helpful to know a little about the focus of my research interest and the sort of things we might talk about if you agree to be a participant.

The research is part of my studies toward a PhD/MPhil at Canterbury Christ Church University. As a career guidance practitioner my initial interest was in the influences on the choices that individuals make throughout their career. I decided to take an auto/biographical approach to this as I became aware of the influences on my own choices. One of the interesting aspects of my story seems to be the impact of mixed culture and heritage in my early years and how this may have been reflected in the shape of my own life and career.

If you are willing to take part in this work I would like to talk to you about your own life story and we might discuss the things that you feel influenced you including culture, ethnicity and geographic and social settings.

We would need to set aside no more than 2 hours in a place you feel comfortable and where we are not likely to be disturbed. With your permission I will record our conversation and will later transcribe it. I will give you the full transcription to look at. At a later date and at your convenience I would like to have a second conversation with you about that transcription to hear about your reflections on it and on the experience of telling your story. At this point you can ask for sections to be removed if you would prefer.

A plan for this work has been approved by the ethics committee of Canterbury Christ Church University. In line with this I can assure you that all material will be made anonymous and that the recording and transcript of our conversations will be destroyed within five years.

Should you agree to take part please complete the consent form below. You are of course at liberty to withdraw from the study at any point.

Thank you again for your interest



Anne Chant



CONSENT FORM

This is a consent form for the use of recorded and transcribed material to be used in research conducted by Anne Chant as part of her doctoral studies.

By signing this you give your permission for your conversations to be recorded and transcribed by Anne Chant as approved by the research and ethics committee of Canterbury Christ Church University.

Thank you for your support



Anne Chant

Name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

App. B i) Excerpts from transcript of discussion about the collage

Key

In this transcript coloured highlighter was used to initially identify different themes

Green – use of the collage

Blue – construction of identity and the eraser

Yellow – mixed heritage

A – well it goes with the kind of Canterbury Christ Church stage in life. I went up in a hot air balloon once and it seemed to me that from that height you could see a lot more. When you're in a hot air balloon you don't see hills, everything is two dimensional. **You can see juxtaposition, you can see relationships between places much more clearly and you're taken out of the knowledge you have of that landscape. I mean I know how to drive from one place to another. But when you're in a hot air balloon it's a very different picture and you're not quite sure where you are.** And you have a much more.....a much more ...I'm trying not to use the work 'objective' but I can't think of another word...

H – is it about world view?

A – yes - it's a much broader perspective and as I'm getting older I'm almost like in that balloon lifting up and being able – and **doing this collage has also enabled me to look at these aspects of life and identity and relationships between the that I haven't been able to do before.** And that's why I overlapped it with the heart – that wasn't something that was going on in my life earlier on. And I think I do take care of my emotional and psychological health much more than I would have done then.

H – and the spotlight?

A – well the spotlight I suppose - well that's what you can do from on high – **you can spot things and put your gaze upon it in a way that when you're down there in amongst it you can't.** In that same way you can stand back and look less disparagingly...

H – I suppose in terms of methodological approach - to me it suggests – and again I stress that this is what it suggests to me – is that the two things; being up in the hot air balloon and getting this broad perspective as part of the methodology – that holistic view [A – yeh] but at the same time as that we need to have some focus [A – yeh] but we need distance – we need some distance in order to focus...

A – yes because when you're down there you can't [H- when you're in it you're in – the autobiographical...] the auto/biographical – I'd never really thought of it like that but I suppose - it's me but it's also being able to step back from that as well and I suppose that's what it is.

H – what about the eraser? **REF 1**

A – well –that sort of eraser – in my school days I remember the blue end was harsh and removed one kind of stuff and the red end was softer and rubbed out other kinds of things. [H – pencil] And I never found the blue end terribly effective because it just tore up your paper – and made a hole [H – yes made a big hole. Got rid of what was underneath but you were left with a hole!]

precisely! And that's quite interesting in itself because I think what I often do is when I'm with people from one part of my world to another, I erase the other side. So - um - if I'm talking to someone...um..about Sunday school - and that's part of my life and aspects of what I do in my life - and I sort of erase - in those conversations and in those relationships - other aspects of me - that don't work there. They would surprise people - they wouldn't know how to deal with it. That can be damaging -like the blue end of the rubber because it can tear bits off. Similarly if I'm talking at the University about some pedagogical thing or something else to do with my work then I erase other bits of life because they don't fit with that and would not be understood and would be confusing and ...and that leaves you with various holes which um - which you have to fill in when you return to that world...so um ...talking to family you...there are bits of life that aren't understood and then you fill them with other bits so um..It's the notion of not only building but having to get rid of things as well. A constant process of editing and self-editing if identity as you engage with relationships....

H - Before you started recording you said you'd spent..how long [A - most of the day] most of the day ...so how was it for you in terms of enjoyment...? REF 2

A - un - it was quite enjoyable. It was quite a cathartic thing to do - to think about yourself - it's quite a privilege to be able to look back on your life. But I was constantly worried about being too self-editing. What am I trying to say? Am I trying to make a point? So I'll choose this these pictures because they make the point. Um and then trying not to do that - and finding that I had done it and then trying not to beat myself up about it. And so there was a constant battle about that sort of thing and um the chameleon - well oh yes well I'm mixed race so I'm a chameleon because I can make myself part of all sorts of environments. So I felt sort of uncomfortable with choosing that because it's a bit obvious. It feels like I'm inventing or trying to justify um - what a tough time it is being in a mixed race family - which it isn't really tough - there's a lot more toughness for others...Eventually after beating myself up and going round in circles all day - I came to the conclusion that....Whatever! This is what I've chosen and perhaps the reasons behind the reasons I've chosen them are just as interesting as whether or not - we used the word 'verisimilitude' earlier - that really the truth behind it is neither here nor there - this is just what came out. And if that's what I intended to come out then that's quite interesting too...

H - and you used the word - the term 'I enjoyed discovering things' in your previous life as a scientist let's say [A - mmm] so what did you discover doing this?

A - um.....er.....[pause] um...I discovered that I'm OK with who I am now - I think - if ever we are. Um - although it could be that this is trying to make me feel better about who I am....I think what this says to me is that I can celebrate all of this - and by 'celebrate' I don't mean pat myself on the back for being anything - I have no- um - it is of no virtue of my own that I was born into the family I was born into and I take no praise for that at all or fault - it's just what happened. I had no choice. But once I started having choices I can see how some of the influences and some of the tensions - in the choices that I made - of trying to be something very specific - trying to establish my identity in something specific . But the more I discover about who I really am - that is the identity - all of it. So what did I discover - I discovered that - I'm OK [smiles/ laughs]

H- yes - and I might question whether we ever really know who we really are but [REF 3]- and we're always in a process of becoming and I [A - don't know if we ever get there] it's a pathway [A- a pathway] and that's a metaphor that I think is quite powerful and better than the over worn phrase 'journey' ...[A - yes] so ...so this is about of course your story and I wonder Anne what

it...no if it says to you anything about your research and maybe about your participants..does it ...what illumination might it give beyond your story? [A – um] for your two participants....

A – well the two participants and my story...what seems to be evidence – no not evidence...[H- apparent?] there seems to be something about conflict and mixture that relates to identity perhaps in a stronger way than it would without it. Now I can't say that because I haven't explored someone who hasn't got , if there is anyone without any kind of conflict. But where there is a clear conflict or clear difference in earlier experiences – it seems to me in all three of our stories – there's been a - er – a real search for agency in terms of our own identity [H – right] Now in my story in particular that's been very clear in so many ways but in particular in terms of having two very different sorts of career. That isn't the case in my two participants but what does seem to be I think in both of their stories – is their struggle and um almost preoccupation with identity. Um – and there are echoes in both of their stories too I think in how that struggle for identity or that awareness of identity has played out in work choices and career choices as well.

But I don't think in their stories it's quite as crystal clear to me as it is in here [pointing to collage] because it seems.....you know.....quite stark...very very different parts and ways of being – different parts of me. And when you go back to my origins they're pretty stark too – you know if you go back [pointing to picture] 'it's a dangerous world out there'. Whereas my cousin although mixed race lived in the same place and with the same culture all her life - and my other participants – she came from the same – her parents were of the same background but her geography and where she lived and the influences were very different [H- yes] so the mixtures and the conflicts and the searches for identity are all quite different types I think and um – I think this one [pointing to collage] just shows the influence on career a little more starkly - but I think it's there in all of them

App B ii) Excerpts from worked transcript of interview with S

A – so you were accepted by the white working class people of Leeds and your mum’s family

S – of the family yes

A – what about your dad’s family then, because um his dad wasn’t there ..

S – yes, they were a missing um missing element in the er 07:09 whole thing. And I think personally, I don’t know if it was like this for my brothers and sisters but what I remember was always have this romantic idea about Ceylon. It was this far away place that my father got letters from and.....we would get these magazines sent with beautiful pictures in (A- Wow) and I remember getting them and looking at them and there were lotus flowers and it was all...

[...]

S - and now – and I’ve been trying to make sense of it – in the absence of being about to talk to him about it. I do not know why I never talked to me dad. The only thing I can think of is, he died in 1988 and I was only 37 which isn’t very old actually. When I think about it now, er my daughter’s 35 - so 2 years from now - and you just think as it happens and I just think that’s who I am – it’s only now when I’ve got friends who’ve got their parents alive and I think – **how young’s that to lose your father!** So if I’ve got any sort of....one of the big sadnesses I’ve got is **that I didn’t mature to the age I would like to have been to talk to him.** You know now or even in my 50s I would have been going there and saying ‘right...tell me....what was it like when you went to the war...what was it like in Sri Lanka.....

A – so if you had to ask him 3 questions that would have been it would it...what was it like in the war, what was it like in Sri Lanka ..

S – and I’d like to have asked how he and my mum got together. I’d really like to know about that.

A – so you’ve no idea – really

S – not from them....not from actually... more from stories like my aunty Gertrude, my mum’s sister told me more about how they got together.

A - So there weren’t the stories like ‘I remember when...’ and so on like that around the dinner table..

S – they’d talk about the drama club – I think they went to a drama club – something to do with church or sumat like that..and um...yeh I don’t have memories of them talking a lot like ..or us asking those kind of questions. And I think it was partly to do with...um.. where we were all up to with our lives by the time he died in a way. I don’t know about the others but I was even younger than them. But ..you know when you get, you get to that age when you become more reflective about the past and there’s an age when you...I was just on that cusp I guess. Very much about the future and the now and **...if I was reflecting about the past it was always about me...me me me.** And because I had lots of disagreements with my dad, about religion and various things like that (pause) there was a sort of tension there - that then – it’s almost as if we didn’t get through that. **Which we would have done if he’d lived to be older and I’d been older and I’d gone through all my stuff. It’s like I had to become more of who I was in order to be able to understand him (A – yeh).** But I know that when he died **...it was a massive thing...and I spent a lot of time ..I’d dream about him a lot and have lots of conversations with him – in my dreams. (A – did you?) And that was when I started to understand him more. So I’d dream and I’d have these conversations with**

him and um - I'm going to get all tearful now (A – that's alright) . Like there was one dream I had when I remember , being really sorry that we'd disagreed about lots of stuff - and him giving me this really really lovely hug and being really all right and.. 17.57

A – well I suppose that is what he would have done. Perhaps that was what he did do REF 3

S – yeh – yeh and I think in fact when I wrote that thing that is what happened and...I mean we had the starkest disagreements about religion but he never ever...we never really ever fell out in a way that was irretrievable ...they'd always say 'our door is always open'. We'll never ever turn you away. When I told them I was pregnant, with Kate, and I wasn't going to get married...I mean now I don't know why I didn't get married you know?

A – you were making a point..

[...]

S – it was...yeh it was...And I went there because 'oh this looks interesting' I really should have done languages because I'd done French Latin and English at A level and did really well in them – all of them. And my French teacher wanted me to do French at University and I thought no I want to do something different. I don't want to do what everyone else is doing...it was just that kind of ...I was kind of right stropky really. I was always getting into trouble. I got into trouble a lot more than Mary did and the head teacher was always saying 'your Mary would've never done this' and ...(groans) so I was like.....me mum used to say I was highly strung ..you know..well yeh...which , what on earth does that mean? (A – I don't know what that means) it's just like over-emotional I suppose or just mmmm (high pitched)– you're tuned somehow (A –to a higher tone) yeh – frequency or something but errmaybe it was my b.....ok let's go right back to my birth...I was..(this is what you've written about for the project) yeh! I remember once thinking, not so much what people's stories were...but what must it have been like for me! This baby coming into the world – all that stuff going on..you don't have a normal birth (A – hmm) and then you're whipped out of your mother's womb and put in an incubator (A – yes) and (A – do your head in a bit) and no one's holding yer – no one's comforting yer..and you're suddenly in this box..I mean you're a person – you have sensations! You don't ever feel that...it's several weeks before – I don't know how long it was – maybe it was a few days before I was actually held (A- really?) – yes I was in an incubator because, well because I'd nearly died I think. In fact on the way down to the theatre they said that....and when I came out of hospital I think – I found out (I don't think I wrote this in the thing) my mum I think had post-natal depression (A - ahh) REF 2

A – so I wonder whether the story of your birth rather than its experience was a negative one (S – exactly) because not everyone who has a Caesarean has a bad time do they..

[.....]

A – so did you feel at that point that you'd found – that you were in something that made sense – that that linked some of these threads together in some way?

S – yeh – I think it did actually and I think what happened was.....I was doing things that I felt were important and I was also coming up against – I was always very involved in the feminist movement – here in Sheffield – but I was coming up against this thing that [pause] of accessibility in a way – I was coming up against racism in the sense that people not being , women who were saying they were feminists actually not being inclusive about all women (A – right) and making judgements about women who had a different er background to them or a different upbringing or not understanding not not being willing to provide services such as setting up the Asian

women's refuge which is what I was involved in. Not being willing, not making it a priority to provide services for women to make things accessible for women who just wouldn't go to a refuge that was predominantly run by white women or didn't take account of particular difficulties they had in their own communities and all of that kind of thing. So [pause] I suppose my experience of how race impacts on things erm got informed by things as I moved along in life in a way – but it was always, always, never it was never about looking for easy solutions. So it wasn't about like when people said 'yes we must set up an Asian women's refuge because they all have a difference culture, and we've got to look at that. No no no it wasn't about that actually – it's just about well they don't all have the same culture (A – no) because we might have 6 women in a refuge and they all have different take on (A – yeh yeh) they might all have different religions for example (A – just because they're all Asian they might have different...) or they might have different take on their religion. They could be 6 Muslim women but they all have different interpretation on their religion just like we might have 6 Christian women all with a different take on their religion (1.05:10) That kind of thing..so I took in that kind of mix thing in a way, into that. You see if I come from a really kind of [pause] errrr clear This is what the community's like. This is what we do...then it doesn't open me up as much to mix or diversity..

A – so it's still about mix and diversity?

S – Yes it is about mix and diversity. So we set up a project that made it as inclusive as possible, where women who were, women who've been in refuges who are , um, who are kind of, [pause] who are from other parts of the world if you like, who have come here for different reasons and who are finding it hard to get work because of their English or because of whatever. But it's not just gonna be for Muslim women, or south Asian women, it's going to be for Somali women, or Turkish women if they want to come. Anyone who feels different, anyone who feels like it's hard to fit in, then our project is gonna be for you...

A – so it could be now for Romanian or Polish women

S – exactly

A – so it's not about colour then (S – no) – it's about difference

S – so actually what we want to learn then is how to be in a mixed group and what we can learn from each other (A – right) about our different heritages and back grounds..REF 1

A – that's so interesting because in fact that's what you said you didn't have when you were a child

S – yeh – yeh yeh yeh – exactly isn't it. Didn't have that – not at all

A – So...

S – I grew up in quite a monocultural (A – yeh you did)

A – ironically it was more monocultural than many of those you went to school with who may have had an Irish mother or something

S – or people who grew up in another part of the country and were part of other communities and were a lot more mixed (A – yeh yeh) 'Cos Leeds at that time wasn't very...well the area in which we lived wasn't very..If I'd grown up in Chapeltown it would have been different probably because it's a lot more mixed in Chapeltown..

[...]

A – when you said earlier that you sometimes refer to yourself as a black woman (S- hmm) would you also refer to yourself as a Yorkshire woman as well (S – yeh)

S – I'd never call myself white because I don't think that's been my experience ever. I don't think I've had a white experience in this country

A – even though as a child that was what was given to you really?

S – well no because it was never that you're white it's just that you are who you are in this predominantly white society -and you're fine and you're Ok and I never....

A – you didn't feel white REF 4

S – no never, I didn't ever. And I wasn't bothered – I didn't want to be either – I was just who I was. And I looked a bit different and that was alright. And you know these days – if I go to Italy people think I'm Italian, if I go to Turkey people think I'm Turkish (A – yes) I love that actually. It's like , it's like mixed race people are the people of the world really. We're the people of the world because we could be from anywhere. And not many people can say that - that they could be from anywhere. And actually the ideal in the world is if boundaries don't matter and - you know – humanity's what it's all about. For me that's like a real gift – to be somebody who could be from anywhere

A – the lovely thing hearing you talking is although you could be from anywhere you're very grounded here in Sheffield. You've been here for a long time – your family's around you - you're from Sheffield. I mean born and brought up in Leeds – and here. But could be anywhere. So you've got roots and grounding but also the freedom to go anywhere

S – um um the reason I've been in Sheffield for so long is because of my daughter being born here
[.....]

A – Brander Road – 16, Brander Road.....I'm going to stop this now so I can engage with my backup system....(1.07:35....10 minute break)

A – Ok so I think where we were was that you were talking about your work in Liverpool teaching literacy and numeracy to adults...

S – and then I said I did that kind of work when I came over here (A- yes) and all the violence stuff and all that...

A – OK so then what? There you were with a young daughter and you in a sense had found your place (S – yeh) I'm summarising which is probably wrong..but you'd found things to do that were about your values and which you had explored and honed I suppose (S – yeh) so then take me through the next steps then...

S – erm I think [pause] not long afterI think I got into writing more...I got back into my writing ...erm..in the sense of..I mean I'd always been writing in a way. It has always been part of ...like I'd written a diary, a journal [speaking in a very matter of fact, 'it's what everyone does' manner] So it'd been a sort of anchor for me through everything, a way of keeping in touch with me and how I was feeling and all that (A- did you keep them?) Yes I've got all my diaries and journals over years and yearsand I um, I errr got back into writing poetry more..as a way of expressing how I was feeling and ...[pause] and I could say that in a way that whole thing about being a writer ran alongside everything ..things that I did to earn a living, and they were generally things I enjoyed

doing and felt passionate about ...but at heart I wanted to be a writer. It's just that you don't get paid to be a writer...

A – so what would it be...what would it mean to be a writer?

S – well I wanted to be able to spend more time and devote more time to write poetry, write stories, that kind of thing – being creative in my writing really – being creative generally I guess, as I discovered later. I discovered later in life that, although I am a very creative person, I make things – ceramics and I like sculpture and do painting and that sort of thing. All of those things that I gave up at school in a way because I was told – like in Art I was told I was no good, or I got the impression I was no good, so I did sciences ..

App: Biii). Excerpt from transcripts of interviews with G

Key

Yellow – National identity

Purple – Personal identity

Green - Career

Light green font – example of my influence and co-construction of the meaning

I/V #1

G – yep – a week later my mum departed with me back to Germany where, as I said, my father was serving as part of the Israeli mission for a certain while. To be honest I don't know how long, was it a year or something like that and then back to Israel....But that still makes me an Essex girl by birth (smiling) and...

A – and presumably gave you a British passport? **REF 1**

G – yes it gave me a British passport by in fact my mother was already a British Citizen (A, was she..) and so were my grandparents..

A – because they'd come earlier?

G – because they'd come before the war and settled in England and took out UK nationality so...if you like...**I was the third, the third generation with UK identity to their name...and that identity gets stronger later on because that I have lived in the UK a lot in my life**

A – so it's interesting then that you were German in some respects ... because that's where both sides of the family had come from initially..(G, Yes) .. you were British by birth and subsequently lived in this country a lot (G, yeh) and, but also had this connection with Israel (G, yep)

G – and I was also Israeli by birth because as I said my Dad was part of the foreign service so I was automatically Israeli by birth and I've lived for long periods of time in Israel. **So that begins to weave this web of the er weird mixture that I am.....**

A – wellyou can't ask a 1 year old where they're from but if you could have done what do you think your family would have considered themselves and what would you have considered yourself at that time... [Telephone rings – do you want to get that? G – indicated not]

G – it would have depended on when you'd asked them (a, right) [quietly] **in their youth I think German but later that was one part of their nationality that they'd rejected because the country had rejected them ..so er...yes.. for my father he was Israeli full stop – my mother acquired Israeli citizenship once she'd married him and I have always considered myself to be equally Israeli and British. A- not German. G – no never German.....[silence] A, why's that? G – I've never lived in Germany ...I've never...it's not an identity that I associate with myself ...in any way. If someone said to me...sometimes someone will think that there is perhaps that element in my (A, yes) ...biography, I don't feel it belongs to me...**

A – and the identity that you haven't mentioned is being Jewish....(G, yes) is that because being Israeli is exactly the same as being Jewish? Or is there a difference there?

G – no there is , there is a difference er I suppose I was just thinking in terms of nationality..(A, yes) no definitely Jewish by birth and being Jewish is very much part of my core identity...and um...er Ya, being Jewish and Israeli is not the same thing...you can be Israeli and Christian or Moslem (A, yes , yes of course) um Judaism is a very funny kind of er [laughing] of ere r....religion in as much as it's got a lot of er ...um...cultural er elements to it, in addition to the faith so er it's constructed slightly differently ..so er..even secular people could still consider themselves to be Jewish (A, yeh, so even if they don't believe in God) yeh – er so er yes definitely Jewish.

A – so you've got this combination of where you were born – out of choice – your parents' choice – your parents' birth nationality and their chosen nationality by political affiliations and the religious national identity overlaid all of that (G, right) and so within your family was there ever any discussion about identity? Was it something that was encouraged or told, as I was, 'be proud of your ancestry' or...tell me a bit about that. REF 2

G – I don't think my parents were people who particularly spoke about it or had a message to give. But I don't think they needed to because being in the diplomatic service you are representing your country all the time ...it's so in the fore that you don't have to ...talk about it in a way because you breathe it and live it all the time. So I was brought up very much, when we were abroad to think of myself as a representative of Israel.....11.00mins

A – wow that 's a big responsibility...

G – It is ..it is...yes ...and ..and I think that usually happens to children in that kind of situation . I think it also made you feel very different from other people ...because...because you're strange in that way. A, apartness? G, Yes. Because you are different in that sense. You're always...someone who never joins in at the right moment [laughing..] because you're always sort of arriving and leaving your classmates and umm and you're always er the last to sort of join the school or first to leave the school or er ...and er...and you're not like the other er children right? REF 3 [Silence] and that...that's true wherever you are...(A, even in Israel?) G – well in Israel also...even when I came back to Israel from er...wait let me get the chronology right...yes er e r ...I started my schooling in Madagascar in Africa and we came back to Israel when I was about 8 years old. 13:04 By that time I'd forgotten any Hebrew I'd known as a small infant and ...if you think about it there's this young girl who speaks French and English but can't speak Hebrew and has to integrate into the local school-so-then (quickly) you come back into your country (A, Yeh) and what is considered home and yet you are again a stranger....So that is something that I very much relived again and again and again in lots of different contexts ...

A – are those sad memories then? ...I mean you read some of my memories about going into a classroom as a new girl – I mean do you have pictures like that in your mind?

G – pause.....I don't know that I have specific incidents that I can speak about I .. I ..tend to have a very bad memory for these thingsbut ...I suppose this sense of ..of um being different and having to readjust and reintegrate and catch up andis SO familiar.....and er...happened again and again and again (quietly) and...er...er I think it's also sort of ..also fuses with my personality

which.. I am slightly an introvert...well not slightly ..I am an introvert ..so if you think about an introvert having to constantly integrate themselves it does bring out a somewhat shy, um quiet, contemplative person who tends to look and ...um ...andWAIT... - till they feel comfortable . And I think that is very much part of er er my behaviour patterns if you like.

A – your coping strategy?

G – my coping strategy.

A – but not everyone would react like that? Others may cope in a different way...but that was the way..

G – that was the way I did it. So always very careful,

A – careful in case what? What would be the worse case scenario that you were trying to avoid happening....

G – I suppose it's just rejection.....afraid that you're not going to be accepted , that people will think you're strange or different – but you are (smiles)...

A – can't do anything about it....G, No. So so I think I have always been, I suppose always very careful....

A – and just waiting for them to come to you? REF 4

G – yeh. Waited for people to come to me, waited for to know where I was, I understood the layout, you know, understood the dynamics so that I could....that were in front of me (A, right) ...and I think I still do it to this very day...

A – so I'm getting a picture of a little girl – you haven't mentioned your sister yet, perhaps we will in a sec.. of quite a lonely little girl?

G – I don't think I was lonely in as much as I've always had friends - I've always made friends...

A – so it didn't stop you making friends..

G – no but what I'm saying is that my coping mechanism was always to go.. to go very gently, slowly – I wasn't out to make bold statements ..

I/V #2

A - So you've been through the script and you say that in terms of accuracy it's fine

G- yes in terms of accuracy but I'm concerned...I don't seem to be able to string two words together so..

A – it's the way we speak – that's not the same way that we write...so I'll make the changes you've identified..and you'll notice that I also didn't allow you to speak, or to finish sentences so it wasn't just you....so sorry about that!

A – so apart from accuracy, was there anything from that..that you wanted to say more about?

G – I don't think there was anything, I don't think I have a burning need to talk about..unless you have any specific questions...things that might help in your research..

A – I have a few things, a few questions that I thought, why didn't I ask that, when I did the transcribing

G – sure..

A – But before I do that I wanted to ask you what you thought about the last interview. What was your general feeling about, about reliving your early years?

G – that's difficult because there has been such a big time lapse..

A – yes.. that was back in April so over 3 months

G- so I can't really remember how it felt..but what I can say is that when I re-read the transcript this morning , it was interesting...my career decisions do seem to have been tied to..to my parents. And I thought that was interesting

A- Any particular decisions or...

G – the whole process – the cultural assumptions in a family, skills and abilities, temperament...[long pause] and natural abilities common with your parents and grandparents, gets transmitted if you like through nurture and nature, and how these impact somehow on the decisions, through you, that....that sort of came out and was interesting.

A - you're concentrating on the nature?

G – yeh – I think this link with my grandfather...or is it wanting to find things...like my father in his career

A – and what about the nurture side of things?

G – I think also...choosing a career that can be used in different countries and different contexts is like working through some of the things as a child...constantly moving from place to place, which funnily enough is what happened to my grandparents...so I thought these were interesting

A – no I agree – I think you said that in relation to your grandfather, that although interested in law, the notion of being tied to a country was something you didn't want. Which is interesting because you might think that someone who has travelled so much might want to be more tied to a country but in fact you didn't want that....

G – I think I want it and don't want it. It sort of answers different needs. Want it in terms of identity....and on the other hand having a career which is international as much as possible, should you need to.....hedging your bets....(A yeh yeh)

A – and what was interesting that the influence of your mother – which was almost a negative influence (G – oh yes) by saying that 'I'm not going to do that...I'm definitely not going to do that'

G – and what does my sister do?...[smiling]

A – so these are the threads that came through. Is there anything else as you read it that was interesting or discomfort even?

G – no not really....

A – ok well I have only 4 additional questions that I have for you...and then if that's alright and if we have time, I'd like to ask you about the rest of the story because we only really got part way in the last...so my first additional question was....there were a number of times when you talk about being the stranger, the other, in particular in schools...and you said that this had been repeated throughout life, a pattern that had been experienced throughout life. But what I didn't do was ask you for some examples of that

G – well I think what happens is that if your biography is different from other people, you do feel different and er ..and this er this pattern of travelling as a child and also continued to a certain extent into adulthood, er is now perhaps becoming more common. People travel a lot more and move around more....but that wasn't the case when I was young. When I was young it was more that you lived in one place and you went to one or maybe two schools, and you had your extended family around you, and very much part of the culture around you. And so it means that you, if you go into another culture, there are certain things that they take for granted that you can't and that inevitably makes you the outsider and I think that is true for all of my.....up to this very day. So for example, if I er – I er work in a Jewish institution but I'm different from other people in the college who have grown up inthey are Jewish ok but they haven't had the sort of disrupted pattern to life that I've had. So perhaps something in common but not everything in common

A – so there is a connection but ..

G – yeh – so I don't have the experience of growing up in this, with experience of the programmes they go through as a child; synagogue life and....and I don't have the experience of going to Israel as the North London Jews do ...so everything is slightly different. But they accept me because my biography makes sense to them. Being an Israeli ...they....they understand and ...I'm not odd in that sense to them

A – and there must be others too....

G – absolutely...but my experience is not exactly theirs..

A – I remember in your first interview talking about going back to Israel and even through you're Israeli felt that otherness as well..

G – yes...going back at the age of 8 and not being able to speak Hebrew makes you very different indeed ...having been educated entirely in Africa, Finland and England but I didn't have the Israeli experience..and so although I was Israeli my experience as a child was not the same...

A – that surprised me that your parents didn't keep your Hebrew going while you were abroad because you might expect in the family to speak Hebrew..

G – yes...erI think er my parents partly too pity on er...if you can imagine I was a child having to learn Finish in Finland, and speaking English to my mother, and I think at that pointI had lapsed...and then from Finland we went to Madagascar and I think , which was French speaking so I had to learn French, so I ...[laughing]

A – so your mother spoke English to you not Hebrew..

G – yes my mother had the idea that... two things really ...my mother had the idea that she'd like us to speak English – which I think was a good thing – and also it has to be said that also my mother was an immigrant to Israel as an adult so her Hebrew was never very good (A – ahh)

A – so her first language was....

G – German.....

A – and they didn't want you to speak...

G – German – no – no

A – Ok so going back to this feeling of otherness and you've explained that in the college that although there's an identity shared there is also not shared – are there any other aspects of life that have felt that way?

G – As I said I think today this is very common and we are made up of different bits of identity and shared - you share somethings with a certain person and won't share others - or you will share another bit of yourself with someone else - and I think it's made up of these kinds of mosaics which will overlap with someone or something and someone else with something else and REF 4 ...I think that's the important aspect of one's life and how one's identity is constructed . So it's infinite, infinite patterns . And...er...living now in er Surrey village will be again one of those , those encounters where, where on the face of it we don't have too much in common shall we say, in biography , with people here, and yet um with time I suppose there is a Surrey identity that is growing (A – right) and becoming part of me so I'm in a way also partly now part of this world here (A - absolutely)

App. D – Empty Proforma used for analysis

This proforma is taken from Merrill, B. and West, L. (2009) *Using Biographical Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage.

Pen Portrait

A brief outline of who was interviewed

Themes

The patterns or themes that were identified in the conversation

Process

Power balances and unintentional motivations or reservations. The reflexive thoughts of the researcher

Ethnography

The place and context of the interview; what happened before or after and what this might have meant to the meaning of the conversation

Gestalt

The wholeness of the encounter, including its meaning and broader narrative

App. E - Worked Proforma used for analysis

Pen Portrait

~~Griffiths~~ ①

Essex girl - Jewish heritage - political family
my friend/~~Griffiths~~ wife
no mother tongue
her wedding

- faint?

- her interest in
this work/career
- why?

Themes

Nationality/national identity - clear
'Essex girl' - by choice of parents - not hers
Personal identity - not so clear

Responsibility for Israel - belaying it...

Loyalty to Israel/Jewish community/family

Passive feelings - kept private.

career/teaching - joy & fulfillment / Law / teaching

Process

The vicarage - Brian's room for sandwiches

Took up her time - but feminine - interested

and wants to help

Books on the table about psychotherapy etc

- 'ya' to 'yes'?

- nervous recoding / nervous laughter

Ethnography

Power differences between us - Jawant / 'frank's'
Importance of speaking good English
'Girls'? Respect for research / (check?) ^{patronising}
Didn't ask about her love life - why not?
- not making her uncomfortable
- is this what she expected?

Gestalt

? meaning? German word
Helping me
Distance / careful /
no complaints - no pain - no problem
Compromise - healthy - college
'Law' - go Jewish com
& adult ed.

App. F – Excerpts from a research diary

1. January 2013 - First supervision

Had my first supervision meeting today with HR and LW. 30 years on and a very different kind of research in a very different place. It's exciting and I think may be more personal than I'd expected. L asked me to go away and write about myself before I think about interviewing anyone else. That feels really good (love talking about myself) but also a bit indulgent and inward-looking. There are some great stories to tell in my life history but also around my family. I'll have to be careful not to go off-track though – not sure how much of this is relevant to researching about career etc. Also I think I have already got an idea of what's been going on for me and possibly for others with mixed heritage and I think there's a danger I'll just be trying to 'prove it' one way or another. I need to talk to them about this next time.

They gave me some good ideas about literature I must start to explore but already reading Burkitt. Frosh is going to be useful I think too. Identity is the word that keeps coming up. I heard something on the radio about Simone Weil on the way home. I hadn't heard of her but she's buried in Maidstone and sounds interesting too. So now I need to talk to some people to see who I'm going to 'research'. I feel a bit nervous about that but interested too to get started.

2. March 2013

H suggested I talk to L or J about including them in my research. Not keen for lots of reasons. Also I don't think this should be just about mixed race. Although that would be a bit more focused perhaps. I've talked to M about using P – his story is interesting and he seems willing. I could include T but that would be awkward and perhaps too personal. This is way more personal than I thought. Was thinking about the work I did at UCL. Old MR would think this was all a bit nuts but actually what we did there was about relationships and why things do what they do – perhaps this is all a question of scale? I doubt he'd agree. It was definitely clearer what we were trying to find out and how it would be useful. I discussed this all with GS and B and they were really interested and asked lots of questions I didn't know the answer to. They also suggested literature. B knew Frosh apparently! G said she'd be interested in being interviewed. She took part in an interview before for BB so seems she's interested in her career etc so will discuss with H. I'm not sure I should be choosing people who will be useful and interesting – feels a bit like cheating but will discuss with H and L.

3. 19th April on interview 1a

Today I recorded my first interview with a friend of mine – G. I have been discussing my area of interest for my doctoral studies since the very early days and she has always shown an interest both in the topic and in my development. She also previously volunteered for a colleague's research and so does seem to be genuinely interested in 'career' and ideas related to it. So when I had confirmed that my particular interest was that of mixture, mixed identity and early influence, G seemed an obvious person to ask. She is also the wife of a friend, Anglican priest and psychoanalyst, and so no stranger to some of the concepts. I was at their wedding four years ago which was a wonderful affair, culminating the amazing sight of G's Rabbi and the Bishop of Guildford processing down the aisle side by side. Difference came together in apparent harmony but there were tensions too. Members of the bride's family were visibly uncomfortable and when the Bishop blessed the congregation I heard one say 'shameful, disgraceful'. I recall thinking that G and her husband did indeed have challenges ahead of them despite the apparent smiles and

good wishes. I recall thinking that this was probably not the first time that she had met with disapproval.

When I asked G if she was willing to participate in my research and take part in an interview she quickly agreed and only added that she hoped that she had something useful to say. Today as I arrived at the vicarage to interview her it was I who was a little uneasy. The way in which I was to conduct myself, the manner of the interview and my skills or lack of were about to be seen by someone whose opinion I valued and whose view of me mattered. This was not our usual chat between friends about family, work and life. But it was also exactly what it was too.

After the usual pleasantries G told the parish secretary that we were not to be interrupted because I was 'interviewing me for her PhD'. So there were some comments and kind words about that and we went into her lounge and closed the door. I was a little anxious that my 'phone I was using to record the conversation, might run out of power so there was some moving of furniture so that it could be on the table between us and still be plugged into a socket. G sat on an easy chair and I on the sofa. Although I had already explained what we were about to do I did so again; confirming that I was interested in her story and that we'd talk for about 1 hour and that although it was up to her what she focused on I would ask questions when I thought there was something of particular interest. Then we began.

G's story was more rich than I had envisaged and I found at times that I was forgetting that this was an interview for doctoral studies. I think I possibly also got more animated when she said something of particular interest to my topic – I was definitely listening for words, phrases and indications of the impact of her mixed early influence. This was difficult not to do. At times it was clear that either G did not quite understand my question, or that I was touching on something that she preferred not to go into in any depth. Or perhaps she just didn't hear me clearly. It was also difficult for me to remove myself from the story she told; it was very tempting to add 'yes me too...I felt like that'. I was wary throughout not to offend or pry through my questions – conscious that she is doing me a favour by participating. I was also careful not to paint her as a victim by my questions.

At the end of the interview I was perhaps a little too effusive. However I was thrilled with the richness of the material collected and also excited by what seemed to be 'something interesting to look at'. After all this time there is finally something to relate literature and theory to. It was difficult to know what to say when it was all over and I admit feeling a bit awkward. I almost felt that I had taken something from her, intruded into a private world and perhaps even abused our friendship. I felt, and still feel, a heavy responsibility for this material and its owner.

4.21st April

I transcribed the interview with G as soon as I could. I was annoyed with myself for the interruptions, the closed questions and the 'wow's. What must she have thought of me? But I was also excited by the material and what it might potentially contain. It was hard not to immediately start identifying themes and 'messages' emerging from the material. Why did I ask some of the things I did? In particular the final question about speaking to her childhood self, felt artificial and somewhat trite and concocted.

5.2nd May – supervision with H

Great relief to discuss this material with H. I was happy to be held back from looking for themes at this stage and to discuss the proforma/protocol in Merrill and West. This will really help me

NOT to jump to conclusions but to immerse myself in the material itself and use her words not my interpretations. Of course it will still be my interpretation and we talked about 'privileging the text' and whose material it really is. I was reminded that I am analysing the material, not G. Now reading Edward Said's life story; another person of mixture and who struggled with his identity. This is helpful in terms of G's story but will perhaps be even more so looking forward to the story of my cousin and of course me.

6.10th November 2013

Trying to write my first annual review while working here in Zagreb. I feel I have lost my way a bit and I'm not at all sure that any of this is going to contribute to knowledge or practice which is what I'm here to teach. They are interested in skills and competences and how to get people ready for work and into work. I don't think many would be impressed with my auto/biographical work or even think that 'identity' is such an important part of career. For many it's just about earning a living. Certainly I think my research question needs to change because it's not just about mixed heritage. Issues with purpose and identity can be with anyone. So Jadrenka who I'm working with here talks about the days of communism here and how difficult it was for her to 'think differently'. That's about identity too I think and conflict etc.

7.June 2014 Joensuu – E.Finland

Day 3 – Two interesting bits to today. We started with a discussion about language and meaning and although it went on a bit (head of a pin stuff that can be irritating) it was interesting eg is this a chair? Couldn't help but watch the gardener mowing the grass outside and wondered what he'd make of this 'research group'. Nonetheless I think it's important to feel uncomfortable at times. We also did a collage workshop with Elizabetta. I'd heard of this before and it was really enjoyable and I think interesting as we were asked to make a collage based on our notion of research. This was what I needed to try to untangle some of my misgivings but also quite a useful technique for getting underneath ideas and getting to the heart of things.

8.September 2014

Really long discussion with L and H today. L was pretty direct which was difficult but basically he's right that I haven't got my head round qualitative research yet and keep sort of apologising for it and trying to tidy it up. It's true, I know the arguments but it still feels a bit airy fairy, or too subjective for me. The idea that like X who was at Odense last year, I could do something just autobiographical is not what I'd imagined or really feel ok with. Read Ellis and don't think I want to be that open to the world. Josselson came up in one of the theme group meetings and we talked about that which was helpful – all that about why one person noticed something in a conversation and another person notices something else. So that's NOT replicable at all and that seems to be part of the methodology. L's book about auto/biography is good and maybe that's the answer. Not sure about using his approach though just because he's my supervisor. But it does make sense putting myself into a conversation and not trying to leave myself out.

9.April 2015 - Visit to Bruges

Becky and I have had a lovely weekend in Bruges. It was a break from everything – work and study for us both. But it's hard to switch off so just writing down a few thoughts about the art we

saw. It was raining quite a lot so we went to quite a few exhibitions and saw a lot of Van Eyck who was from Bruges. The thing that surprised me was the analysis of the work. These were not just skilful capturing of a picture of people posing but lots of what was in there was symbolic and probably not in the picture at all. The works were beautifully painted and the faces were full of feeling and detail but found out that there's a lot more behind the 'meaning' that the painter wanted to portray than just what he saw. So it made me think about what's expected and understood and why it is that we are respectful of this kind of art and not perhaps more contemporary stuff (well me anyway). Is 'it's not proper art' a similar cry to what I've been worrying about in 'it's not proper research'? I need to think more about this and maybe write something.

10.June 5th 2015

I do have some residual thoughts about some kind of coding for the analysis because I'm worried that either I'll miss something important or that I'll put too much of my own spin on what she's said. But maybe that's the point – I can't be objective because it isn't a one way conversation – I was part of it!! So I'll listen and listen and read and re-read the transcription and like the Walker books says, just hover over it and see what emerges for me. Josselson helpful – I suppose this is the essence of the auto/biographical approach ie neither autobiographical nor biographical but both having their influence on the other. This is not history it's meaning!

11.Sept 2015 - Dog walk chat

My friend Kim asked me today what my PhD was about when we were on a dog walk. I found it very hard to explain at first; slipping into academic language in order, I fear, to cover up my own lack of clarity and understanding. Finally I said 'it's about how who we are relates to what we do'. I told her my mum's story about how her mother died during her birth and how she'd been haunted by feelings of being judged and rejected and spent her working life as a nurse and midwife. I explained the notion of pre-occupation and how it helps to make sense of our lives for us and also can guide our futures. Kim said this was really interesting and I thought 'actually it is!'. I think I've re-established my focus again.

12.September 2015 - Weekend with S

I've written a whole account of this weekend and I am going to include it in the thesis I think as it is full of extra context and background to S's story and mine too. She really wanted to tell me all of this; I hadn't realised what a tough time she had with her parents although I do now remember my dad talking about what a rebel and headache she was to her parents. I just thought she was exciting. It's really interesting how all 4 of them turned out so different.

13.October 2015

Now I've got material from me, G and S so starting to think about what to do next. I've got themes from each but there is definitely a difference between my memories that are mostly about my childhood and not much about my career. I shouldn't have just left it at that – what was I thinking. This is meant to be about career and career counselling but I hardly mentioned my jobs and that was what made me think about doing this in the first place!!! So I think I need to either write more, or get someone to interview me or something. The collage workshop I did in Joensu was really interesting or B does mind maps. Maybe I should do something like that. I'd have to do

that with the others then though and I don't think I can. I wrote a poem called 'dance with me' which was really awful but quite enjoyed writing it. So maybe I could do something different. It doesn't feel right though changing things at this point just because my material doesn't do the job. But this is the process as I keep telling myself.

14.January 2016

I am beginning to wonder about the value of all of this. What difference does any of it make if it doesn't offer anything generalizable? I feel like I'm trying to find some kind of rule or discover something that other people haven't yet noticed. It feels like there needs to be a rule or a truth that explains why we have all done what we have done in our lives but actually there probably isn't one, or maybe there are lots. It's all much messier than I'm comfortable with but I do think that there is something here, in all this material that has something to say. I'm just not sure what it is yet. Also worried about 'stating the bleeding obvious' but actually lots of what I've read does that but I hadn't thought of it in that way – so perhaps it isn't obvious until we write about it and think about it.

15.May 2016

I did my collage today. I didn't do anything except the collage in fact. It was really all-consuming thinking about my life and career and trying to express it with pictures and images. I wish I'd asked S and G to do it but I don't have the chance now. Anyway why do we all need to do it the same way? S has given me lots of material about her career and life so probably didn't need to do this although I think she'd like to have done. Not sure about G – it might be too intrusive for her. I'm not sure she was really ready for the personal side of the story.