

Nurturing Creativity:

A Journey of Personal Transformation

Helen Ferrara, BA (Hons), DipEd

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University,

2011

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

.....

Abstract

The 'idea' of creativity invariably seems to meet with general approval. In fact, together with 'innovation', 'creativity' has become a common catchcry of our times. After all, we are told that we are living in the "Creative Age", and we constantly look to innovation as being the answer to the problems that we perceive to be facing. However, it is one thing to like an 'idea', and quite another to be willing to make the journey to discover some of its possible sources - this is the difference between thinking and doing, the difference between theory and reality. Theory could be described as thinking that has been formalised and reality as the whole where living unfolds; so while there can already be considerable difference between thinking and doing, there is a 'chasm' between theory and reality.

This thesis is a representation in words of an actual occurrence – a personal transformation, a change in attitude. This could be described in more detail as a conscious opening to perceiving with an attitude of creativity by attending to the nurturing of creativity. A personal journey is unique, yet a human life is as much about relationships and connections as it is about personal growth. I have therefore chosen the company of guides to help me travel this journey. The main three are: Carl Jung for his support on exploring the whole of the 'self'; David Bohm for his lucidity in expressing a holistic view of reality; and Robert Nash for his encouragement, through the use of scholarly personal narrative, on including lived experience in academic writing. Besides them, many others have been consulted on creativity and the nurturing of creativity, including some through interviews. By delving into creativity, both within and outside the territory of the 'self', this thesis also explores how perception is affected by societal concerns, with one of the principal influences discussed being the hierarchical order we live by – patriarchy.

It was my search for creativity that made me realise the need of nurturing my creativity in order to find it. This in turn led me to seek wholeness; thereby it was inherent that I should link the personal with the social and the academic. Thus in the writing of this thesis I have found myself weaving webs of connections, often across sheer windy chasms of dissent, to bridge academic writing with lived experience and the nurturing of creativity, through as holistic a perspective as I could access at the time of writing. The beauty of webs is that they hold, having innumerable points of connection to support them. Even if they are broken they can be built again and be made stronger, with ever expanding clusters of creative interconnections, as in our diverse human community new ways of seeing are constantly emerging and growing through the nurturing of creativity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements		v
Prologue:	Nurturing creativity – the beginning of a story ...	1
Introduction:	Being and Becoming	2
Chapter One:	Stepping Out as the Self	19
Chapter Two:	Network of Support	49
Chapter Three:	Creativity	79
Chapter Four:	The Grounding Strength of Time and Trust	110
Chapter Five:	Self-fulfilment: as Within so Without	136
Chapter Six:	A Concert of Voices	163
Chapter Seven:	Celebrating Creativity	195
Chapter Eight	‘Big Picture’ Symbols and Signposts	224
Conclusion:	Being and Becoming Revisited	250
Epilogue:	The story continues ...	256
Bibliography		258

Acknowledgements

There are many people whose help and support made the writing of this thesis possible.

Firstly a big thank you to all those who agreed to be interviewed or who attended a group discussion; your willingness to dialogue was instrumental in shaping the direction of this study.

I would also like to thank my supervisors David Moody, Martin Mhando, Alex Main and Peter Wright, for their guidance, support, inspiring conversations, and feedback on my writing.

A PhD journey is a long one and there were a number of times that I questioned whether the effort was worthwhile. At those times it was connecting with people who were interested in creativity and in what I was doing that invariably kept me going; so to all those who were at the right place at the right time – friends, relatives, colleagues, acquaintances and even total strangers – I am infinitely grateful for your timely interventions.

In addition I would like to thank all those who suggested to me specific books or authors that provided me with valuable insights, particularly Brigitte Nödler for recommending David Bohm's work.

Ultimately it is the love and support of my family that have enabled the writing of this thesis, for this I thank my husband and daughters as well as my parents, sisters and their families.

And finally, thank you to Dina for helping me to keep my environment beautiful and in harmony.

Nurturing Creativity: a journey of personal transformation

Prologue:

Nurturing creativity – the beginning of a story...

She smiles, letting her gaze sweep across the universe as stars of all sizes and brightness come into view, some clumped close together and some scattered thinly across vast and dark expanses of space and time. She reaches for the more brightly coloured ones that look to be just the right distance from each other and unravels a strand of light from each, holding them yet leaving them attached to their stars. Singing to them she fashions each beam's dimensions to suit her design and with an intricate dance she fastens them together to form a loom.

It looks just as it had in her dream - a sparkling living web of light waiting to be woven onto! Excitedly she claps her hands and laughs; then awed as the sound ricochets across the loom, she watches it spread until it catches and is held fast, glistening and humming as its vibrations are sent rippling throughout the universe...

Introduction:

Being and Becoming

All of the creativity and free-ranging mobility that we have come to associate with the human intellect is, in truth, an elaboration, or recapitulation, of a profound creativity already underway at the most immediate level of sensory perception.

(Abram 1997:49)

There is something deep within me that keeps me striving, that keeps me going. I have recognised it to be that which gets me out of bed in the morning and that which somehow infuses me with a willingness to 'return to the world' all the times I have felt nothing but dismay. It is equally present whether I am facing challenges, feeling fearful, or am releasing myself to laughter and pleasure, as in all cases it can bring me to a profound awareness that I am alive. Although this 'something' is obviously extremely important to me, I have spent much of my time unconscious of 'it'. Constantly pushed to ignoring its subtle messages I became somewhat deaf to its quiet voice and have thus often lived disconnected from it.

Upon embarking on a PhD degree I felt as though I had finally grown up; having had the impression that I had for a long time been preparing for 'something', I had a strong sensation that this was 'it' - now I could do what I really wanted to (or so I simplistically thought). And yet ... the interior discord between the 'deep something' within me and the many other facets of my life started to become more obvious and therefore harder

to ignore. In retrospect, I know that this was especially due to the fact that having chosen to look at the nurturing of creativity as my topic, this served to enhance my awareness of my internal world to an extent that I never would have thought possible. Beyond this however, the dissonance between the ‘deep something’ within me and the way my life was unfolding was due to pressures which, apart from a few personal ones, could be termed as being societal, and thus likely to be relevant to many people.

This thesis describes the process of transformation that I underwent as, through the nurturing of creativity, I gained greater understanding of both my inner world as well as of the exterior world I perceive, and furthermore began to see how these mesh.

It was my recognition of the emergence of this more holistic understanding that led me to use scholarly personal narrative (SPN), discussed extensively by Robert Nash (2004) in his book: *Liberating Scholarly Writing – The Power of Personal Narrative*, as the overarching style for writing this thesis. After much deliberating over academic methodologies, and just as I was approaching the final writing stage, I came across this book via one of my supervisors. In reading it I felt a sense of release and freedom as I realised that I had finally found an ideal tool to help me weave my thesis together; something that would allow me to tell *my research story*. Being “writing that begins from the inside out, rather than from the outside in” (Nash 2004:59), SPN lends itself well to my topic and thesis, and facilitates a flowing exposition. This it does by allowing a holistic approach as full a revelation as possible so that the topic’s richness may be garnered in multiple ways. In Nash’s words (2004:29):

... scholarly personal narrative writing can take many different forms. While it is personal, it is also social. While it is practical, it is also theoretical. While it is reflective, it is also public. While it is local, it is also political. While it narrates, it also proposes. While it is self-revealing, it also evokes

self-examination from readers. Whatever its unique shape and style of communicating to readers, a SPN's central purpose is to make an impact on both writer and reader, on both the individual and the community. Its overall goal, in the words of David Bleich and Deborah H. Holdstein, is "to admit the full range of human experience into formal scholarly writing".

It certainly seems reasonable to want to allow the full range of human experience into writing that we purport to use for research, study and discovery. I use the word 'reasonable' throughout the thesis in the Socratic sense. Socrates, who many (including Plato) have epitomised as the ideal of reasonableness, endeavoured "to discover the truth ... and to arrive at justified beliefs through inquiry and deliberation" (Nathanson, 1994:6). In other words, the sense of the 'reasonable' imparted here is one that is arrived at 'through inquiry and deliberation', this being undertaken thoroughly and being inclusive of all we can discover. In other words, the sense of the 'reasonable' imparted here is one that is arrived at 'through inquiry and deliberation', this being undertaken thoroughly and being inclusive of all we can discover.

Inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi is an instruction: "Know thyself". This phrase, attributed by Plato to the "Seven Wise Men" (Oxford Dictionary of Quotations) might appear 'obvious'. Repeated by Socrates and countless other philosophers, teachers, spiritual guides, writers, and so on, it is arguably not only at the foundation of philosophy itself but also at the heart of all major spiritual teachings. However, it is at the same time so deep and elusive that in practice it has mostly been overlooked by Western civilization in its quest for knowledge. For me the counsel given by this phrase: "know thyself", goes hand in hand with Shakespeare's: "to thine own self be true", (taken from *Hamlet*, this is Polonius' advice to his son Laertes, though the 'original' meaning of this is not necessarily a profound one). I see these two phrases as being linked, for it is only by being true to yourself that you can come to know yourself, and

only through knowing yourself that you can be true to yourself. This is not just paradoxical rhetoric, but rather shorthand for explaining a process which can be clearly perceived by going beyond basic linear thinking. As in a dynamic dance, over time forming a spiral, the two recommendations flow in and out of each other, each taking turns in informing and being informed by the other so that together they gradually gain fulfilment and depth.

I would explain being true to oneself as akin to being honest with yourself in the process of getting to know your-self. This would allow one to experience emotions, thoughts, attitudes and life openly as they occur, without the control and filters of rationalising processes which have *a priori* agendas. Of course this is 'easier said than done' and likely to be only discovered as desirable by one in retrospect, as in the raising (often seen and referred to as the 'civilising') of a child are used many layers of rationalising filters which are taught as being 'right', and we therefore grow up believing that what we internalise as 'supposedly unquestionable' is necessarily part of life. At this point some might argue that a person is made up of all that she/he is taught including all those controls and filters. However, it is also plausible to believe that we are not initially a '*tabula rasa*' (Latin for 'blank slate') when we are born, but that we are already each a being with a unique 'essence' or 'self'.

More controversy might be seen as being brought in by the use of these problematic words – essence and self – but this Introduction is not the place to argue for the validity of any term I choose to use; here I just want to 'introduce' the terms I use in this thesis and give the reasons for my choices. Jung calls a human being's essence "the "Self" and describes it as the totality of the whole psyche, in order to distinguish it from the "ego", which constitutes only a small part of the total psyche ... [or] inner center ..." (Franz,

1978:161-162). Through the exploration of the 'Self', Jung emphasises the importance of knowing and understanding oneself. This is a simple explanation for something which is very complex and in-depth; I will therefore repeat and elucidate this further at many points throughout the thesis, as it needs to be approached from many angles and linked to numerous and varied explanations so that a more complete picture of the 'self' may emerge.

Biologically it is a fact that we each start life as an invisible tiny core which, despite differing beliefs, we might all agree also contains a unique combination of genes. Daniel Goleman points out in *Social Intelligence*, that (2006:151):

It is biologically impossible for a gene to operate independently of its environment: genes are designed to be regulated by signals from their immediate surround, including hormones from the endocrine system and neurotransmitters in the brain – some of which are profoundly influenced by our social interactions.

This starts to occur from the moment we are conceived and continues throughout our life, as is explained by the science of epigenetics - "the study of ways the experiences we undergo change how our genes operate" (2006:150). We could therefore see ourselves - who we are (even when we are first born) and become - as being a unique result of a combination of nature and nurture. A nature that, I would maintain, is therefore essentially creative given its varied choices of responses to all that we experience. In being open to being deeply affected by these experiences it is also a nature that is vulnerable, and therefore needs nurturing so as to be able to express itself and come to fulfilment. An in-depth explanation of this is given in Chapter Three, where the nurturing of creativity is discussed at length. While from this brief introduction explaining the thesis and its title, I now move on to elucidate how I arrived at it.

I had a dream soon after I began the final writing of the thesis: *I was in a maze-like labyrinth that was open to the sky, with walls made of sheets of blue cobalt steel welded together. The passages were the size of common corridors, neither wide nor narrow, but in some spots there were lots of people so that it was crowded and difficult to get through. I could see that there were rooms in places attached to the corridor, where people lived. I kept walking and soon found that I encountered less and less people, I felt that I was getting to the edges. Eventually, where there were no more people, I turned a corner and came to what looked like a 'dead end'. The way seemed blocked ahead by two panels of steel joined side by side, but as I walked towards them the perspective changed and I realised that they were not in fact attached to each other, and that the panel on the right was further away from me. As I kept walking towards it and past the panel on the left I saw that there were no more panels beyond these two, but an opening onto beautiful countryside which, from where I was standing still inside the labyrinth, revealed a copse of trees on the right and a gentle grassy incline on the left leading to what looked like a lush and scenic valley. I felt my heart start beating in my throat, excited at the thought that I would soon be running down to that valley, finally free from constraint. But then I was surprised by an unexpected thought: "Now that I know this is here, I must remember it and not go too far from it, so that I can come back and show it to others." And with this I turned from the opening and started winding my way back through the labyrinth again... the dream ended there.*

Dreams have, throughout the ages, been seen as both sources of mystery and revelation. While there remains much speculation on what dreams are specifically for, and research on dreaming continues within the fields of psychology and neurology, they are also explained as being an integral part of how we process our experiences and a way for our subconscious (I use the term 'subconscious' in place of the term 'unconscious', used by Jung, to highlight the possibility of becoming aware of what we are unconscious of) to communicate with our conscious minds. According to Marie-Louise von Franz "Jung

discovered that dreams can also give civilized man [sic] the guidance he needs in finding his way through the problems of both his inner and his outer life” (1978:220). She further stipulates (p.221) that:

In our civilized world, most dreams have to do with the development (by our ego) of the ‘right’ inner attitude toward the Self, for this relationship is far more disturbed in us by modern ways of thinking and behaving than is the case with primitive [sic] people. They generally live directly from the inner center, but we, with our uprooted consciousness, are so entangled with external, completely foreign matters that it is very difficult for the messages of the Self to get through to us. Our conscious mind continually creates the illusion of a clearly shaped, “real” outer world that blocks off many perceptions. Yet through our unconscious nature we are inexplicably connected to our psychic and physical environment.

In other words, by giving intellectual credence almost exclusively to matters that can be scientifically and technologically ‘proven’ and defined, our Western society chooses to ignore all other matters that nonetheless play pivotal parts in our lives and within our beings. Not surprisingly many of our dreams try to correct this self-imposed myopia by helping to point the way to becoming more whole. While it is gratifying to find scholars such as Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz espousing these views, my reasons for including the above dream in my PhD thesis is primarily quite practical. I have included it for the simple reason given in my initial explanation of SPN, which is “to admit the full range of human experience into formal scholarly writing” (Nash, 2004:29). Despite some individuals claiming that they do not dream or hardly ever remember dreaming, with almost a third of our lives spent sleeping our joint experience undoubtedly includes a lot of dreaming; thus it seems to me reasonable to assume that our dreams are a significant part of our human experience.

I have learnt that it is only by being impartially open and honest in my approach to research, rather than deciding *a priori* what will be or will not be included and where I will look for this, that I can gain insights from which to make meaning. It was through this process that my research focus, which formally started out as ‘the nurturing of creativity in education’, became ‘the nurturing of creativity’. In the course of interviewing people from the educational community, including parents, teachers and students, I found that most were disillusioned with high schools. They shared with me that creativity was scarcely nurtured within the confines of formal education; it was according to them more often a case of education stifling creativity. This was something that I could corroborate, having experienced it first-hand while being a ‘prac-teacher’ when gaining a Diploma of Education, and subsequently when teaching part time during the first year of my doctorate degree.

As I was collecting material and data on this topic, reading and interviewing participants about it, I began to feel very uncomfortable about the idea of becoming an ‘expert’. This after all is part of what doing a PhD is all about – you focus your research on a specific topic of interest to you that has not been adequately focused on before (as far as you know and can garner from research), or at least not in the way you intend, and you fill a gap in the knowledge by making a contribution of ‘new and original knowledge’. Though this could be construed to be ambitious in a sense, we do live in a world that is so abundant with distinct ‘things’ (even more than “the ten thousand things” referred to throughout Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching* (Dale, 2002)) that there always seems to be something to be found that has not been looked at before.

We are each of us different, with a uniqueness that permeates all levels, deep ones as well as that which shows itself in appearance. We are different in physical details: we

each have a specific combination of genes giving us a unique mix of characteristics. These include some particularly individual ones such as an exclusive set of finger prints, and irises with so many distinctive features that iris recognition is now being hailed as the most secure way of authenticating people's identities. We each have a unique intelligence, as Sir Ken Robinson pointed out at the 2005 Melbourne held conference "Backing our Creativity" (33):

... your intelligence is different from everybody else's intelligence on Earth. You have a hundred billion neurons, a unique biography, a unique set of experiences, capacities, wishes, longings, and values. There has been no person like you in history, and there won't be again. And we cannot afford to squander the resource. You're unique. Your brain, incidentally, I'm told – your personal brain – is as different from everyone else's brain, it's as different from my brain as your face is different from my face, or as alike as mine, similar, but unique to you.

It could thus be argued that acknowledging and admitting the 'self' within the process of research would ensure that the requirement of 'new and original contribution to knowledge' was amply met. In other words, it would be reasonable to expect our unique intelligence and subjectivity to creatively transform what was being studied into something equally unique. Regardless of what was being looked at, allowing and perhaps even encouraging researchers to be guided by their inner subjective perspective, rather than demanding that they remain 'objective', would go some way to guaranteeing sanctioned collaboration between their subjectivity and the material or topic in question. Hence, this would bring in new knowledge – new ways of looking at things, new applications and so on; the possible list is as endless as there are researchers. Openly promoting subjectivity could result in holistic and rigorous scholarship, grounded not only in methodologies to support and give expert authority

to the topic under investigation, but also buttressed by the context of the bigger picture that the wisdom of self-knowledge can provide.

However, rather than embracing our unique subjectivity as a 'bonus' that could open up inimitable opportunities, it is a much followed academic convention to insist on 'objectivity'. During most of the journey of my PhD I found that I was pressured into constantly meeting specific requirements, and this led my attention away from my inner sense of being, from my awareness of being. As a result I experienced disconnection from my '*beingness*', which became apparent to me as a feeling of being lost. Though not found in a dictionary, '*beingness*' is a word that I have coined from 'awareness' and 'being' to mean a profound sense of self, or in other words - the experience of the continuity of oneself as a living being. Always present in me as an underlying foundation to my consciousness as well as an integral part of my consciousness – metaphorically akin to an iceberg (to use the well known metaphor), where only a small part is the visible part (the consciousness) - my *beingness* has often been ignored and overlooked.

In following the research guidelines I had set for myself, versions of the overall directives set up for all postgraduates, which looked great on paper and made for a rather attractive "programme of study" and subsequent "progress reports", I was feeling stifled and out of time. While I was fulfilling requirements that were meant to further me along the PhD path, ironically these were in fact stopping me from delving into a vast and beautiful new territory to be researched that was opening up before me. I could see it but I was not 'allowed' to go into it because I had not planned for it, and as I had no map for it anyway it would never do to enter the 'fanciful unknown' – there were reports to complete, meetings to keep and books to read, and of course a PhD has to be confined within 'clearly defined boundaries'.

At this time phrases like: “It is after your PhD that you get to write what you really want to write” and “After your PhD comes your really important work”, began floating around. I had a sinking feeling at the pit of my stomach on hearing this – was the PhD just another ‘hoop to jump through’? Was it all for show? And how could I contribute something that was new and original if I could not explore all that I wanted and needed to as it unfolded, but instead had to ‘stick to’ what had been planned? This maze of mind games was making me question the path of becoming an ‘expert’ even more, because if becoming an ‘expert’ meant getting further and further away from where my *beingness* wanted me to go then maybe I did not want to become one after all. In *Writing from the Heart*, Aronie says that “when you’re an expert there’s no room for error. There’s no chance for discovery. There’s no “anything is possible” because the expert has explored all the possibilities and the expert knows exactly how it should be done. Gone is the magic. Gone is the spontaneity” (1998:178). Of course that is literally impossible as nobody can explore ‘all’ of the possibilities in any particular scenario; however it aptly conveys the attitude of an expert – believing to be an expert is synonymous to locking your mind and heart away from any chance of wonder.

I began to consider the idea of dropping much of the educational focus (the external) from my PhD thesis so as to concentrate instead on the actual nurturing of creativity (the internal). But as my supervisors were quick to point out, the ‘nurturing of creativity’ is a huge topic and it needed to be made more specific for a PhD thesis. This is where uncertainty took hold; on one hand I yearned to be ‘true to myself’ and explore the nurturing of creativity however and wherever I was led to it, but on the other hand I found it hard to give up the journey I had planned – it was so neat, a perfect fit within the lines of requirements!

I now see the PhD journey I had originally set up for myself in a very different light: conformist and thus quite incongruous with the 'actual' nurturing of creativity, it was prepared to sacrifice creativity so as to pursue a rigidly methodical exposition of possible ways of 'achieving' (at least in appearance) the nurturing of creativity in high schools. By excluding the subjectivity of the self it would have remained theoretical (and hollow) regardless of how much action research was included in it. While claiming objectivity, it would have skirted around the topic; chasing knowledge, without ever daring to get to the heart of it by not allowing in the 'non-academic' experiences of the 'self' – both myself and the 'selves' of those interviewed. *Regardless of how theoretically sound any amount of knowledge put into words is, or how objective it appears to be, the inescapable fact remains that it has had to be put into words by a 'self'.* With this 'self' being first of all a corporeal reality which, as David Abram puts it, "actually experiences things, this poised and animate power that initiates all our projects and suffers all our passions" (1997:46). Furthermore, as Liz Stanley states: "At a certain point, surely we must accept that material reality exists, that it continually knocks up against us, that texts are not the only thing" (1992:246). I therefore maintain that it is congruent to allow in the subjectivity of all the 'selves' involved in the research; for to exclude them would be to distort the findings.

Honesty without compromise was thus one of the main qualities I felt I needed to commit to in order to come out of the stalemate I was finding myself in, and yet it was difficult to let go of years of training of doing things the 'right way', of 'paying my dues'. It was difficult to even rationalise doing things my way when I could not quite see myself as a 'rebel'. Though I thought I knew the way I wanted to go I found it challenging to bring myself to start heading in that direction. And then something unthinkable

happened, shaking my life to such an extent that I was left reeling from the shock of it and on the verge of abandoning my PhD altogether: one of my sisters died.

Although it has now been over two years since then, I still cannot find the words to describe the pain I felt, the sadness, the endless guilt ... wondering if I could have done something of influence to prevent it from happening – maybe loving more, helping more, being more involved to advocate more strongly a different medical approach ... it was as if I were searching for a way to go back in time and change the outcome. I found her death almost impossible to accept and it made me sharply aware of my own mortality. Many of the things that I thought mattered suddenly lost all importance so that I had little patience with anything I perceived to be an autocratic construct.

At the same time, other things gained in meaning and relevance, like working with nature's gifts of soil, sun and water to cultivate beautiful gardens; while others were revealed to me as being absolutely precious, so that I cherished times with my children, learning to be more present for them and other loved ones. Surprisingly, while the conscious 'busy' side of my research - those things commonly associated with doing a PhD like reading, writing, adding to a bibliography, and so on - slowed down considerably, my relationship to the nurturing of creativity deepened somehow. From being a concept confined inside research and within my thoughts, creativity became something 'real' that could hold me, opening up and making room for me, accepting me and enveloping me as I was, with all the pain, sadness, guilt, confusion, fear, or as the saying goes 'warts and all'. So my focus turned inward, connecting to my *beingness*, as opportunities presented themselves to undertake creative endeavours that involved little known facets of myself, like those exploring dancing and drawing.

All of this has led to the development of a very different thesis to the one I had originally set myself to write, but it is now a thesis which I can wholly own with integrity, being as much a part of it as it is a part of me – it is my *research story*. As Robert Atkinson tells us in *The Gift of Stories* (1995:3-4):

Story is a tool for making us whole ... a tool for self-discovery; stories tell us new things about ourselves that we wouldn't have been as aware of without having told the story ... Our stories illustrate our inherent connectedness with others. ... In the life story of each person is a reflection of another's life story.

Having started with the idea and belief that nurturing creativity is important, my PhD journey has enabled me to uncover many of the times throughout my life where this nurturing has helped me greatly. Being led to consciously nurture creativity I have now unequivocally experienced its worth at a personal level, so that as I write about it from what I have researched the personal experience serves as grounding and nourishment. Furthermore, this experience has helped me 'walk the talk', so that the 'nurturing of creativity' has almost become second nature for me. This has led me to recognise myself as being an advocate for creativity and the nurturing of creativity, which as a 'label' (not something I usually endorse) is more acceptable to me than any others, especially that of 'expert' could be. Being an advocate is something that is dynamic; thus I see myself as part of an ongoing process which allows me to become more and more of an advocate for creativity by growing into and developing my own creativity. Referring back to the dream I tell at the start of this Introduction, perhaps the idea of being an advocate suits me because it is something that may enable me to point the way out of the 'labyrinth'.

Consistent to the idea of working from the inside out, chapters Three and Four are the core of the thesis, with Chapter Three looking at the complex subject of creativity,

including its need of nurturing in order to gain expression, and Chapter Four focusing on time and trust as facets of everyday living which can help to nurture the self's creative nature as well as encourage a joyous expression of it. As core chapters they hold central and holistic arguments that explain the varied nature of creativity, and its need of nurturing. Chapters One and Two serve as introduction to the rest of the thesis, with Chapter One establishing the site of the thesis as the 'self', in this case 'myself' as a unique self who is holistically positioned within a number of contexts. Chapter Two builds metaphorical scaffolding, from many of the various theories and methodologies I have chosen, so as to provide support to the development of the exposition of my reasoning. Moreover, to establish a more holistic overview, it also shows how these theories and methodologies can be brought together and developed by the views I discuss in the thesis. As such, the resultant creative research methodology is basically woven into the body of the whole thesis, and this is explained further in Chapter Two.

Chapters Five to Seven advance the arguments given in the core of the thesis by relating the 'inner' to the 'outer' through an unfolding of narratives, drawn from the nurturing of creativity and interwoven with theoretical discussion. While some of the narratives are a personal sharing of my experiences, others' quotes give insights from some of the stories told to me in interviews. This raises the generative and progressive nature of narratives, whereby they are shown to be interconnected, as each begets another or many others; these being qualities that are also displayed in the process of nurturing creativity. Lastly, the final chapter brings together all the threads of what has been discussed in the thesis and explores what the whole picture might look like. Thus Chapter Eight also includes a thorough deliberation on the value of being aware of 'big picture', or holistic, perspectives as opposed to limiting one's awareness to only

specialised perspectives. Additionally, it outlines possible future directions where the nurturing of creativity, as suggested by the content of the thesis, may have a lasting transformative impact.

In keeping with the aim of scholarly personal narrative: “to admit the full range of human experience into formal scholarly writing” (Nash, 2004:29), as well as to be in harmony with the aim of a holistic perspective, throughout the thesis I weave the personal (mine as well as others’) together with the social and the academic. This makes for differing writing ‘styles’, and while I do not differentiate the personal narrative from the rest of the writing in any overt way, it will be clear to the reader when the transition is made as the texture of the writing changes. The exception to this are quotes from people I have interviewed, as well as recounts of dreams and fables, all of which are in italics; though italics are also used in the conventional way to highlight emphasis.

It is important to point out that, even though the focus of the research has shifted from the initial one of ‘nurturing creativity in education’, quotes from interviews with people from the educational community have been purposely retained; after all they are still about creativity (this is elaborated on in Chapter Six). Allowing other voices to be heard also amplifies a holistic perspective, as such they are written in italics so that they may be recognised but are allowed to stand alone, with no preamble to them. To help with understanding, and at the same time satisfy ethics requirements, the role of the person who has been quoted is given in brackets at the end.

The weaving together of different writing styles throughout the thesis mainly serves to integrate its holistic approach. Because of this however, in order to facilitate ‘keeping track’ of the journey undertaken through each chapter (which by ‘meandering’ covers much ground), at the end of each chapter I revisit the connections that have been made

to central contexts – those which could be seen as being ‘landmarks’ on the journey. These ‘inter-chapters’ also serve to give the reader a sense of the wholeness that is being woven; it is nonetheless important to remember that ‘that is all they are’ – a reminder of some of the journey of transformation that has been shared in order to assist with its recall.

In summary, the main point to reiterate about this thesis is that while it is an academic undertaking, it has nonetheless been developed from a holistic perspective which seeks to reveal the need for wholeness in the academic through the use of scholarly personal narrative. As such, and given the immense potential of studying the nurturing of creativity within many specific contexts, one specific subjective self has been chosen to provide the parameters for the thesis – the self of the author – ‘myself’. Creativity and the nurturing of creativity are therefore looked at subjectively from their effects on the ‘self’, with this being interwoven to scholastic research. Given this, the thesis necessarily departs from following standardised methodological approaches, embarking instead (not without trepidation at times) in open-ended discovery. It is the story of this journey that the thesis tells – a journey of personal transformation through the nurturing of creativity.