The emotions of finding out through autoethnography

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Abstract

The paper unfolds a new way of engaging emotion in organisations and develops a new form of organisational practice entitled "Reflective Emotional Practitioning." As the author unearths emotion and discovers autoethnography he shares how the pain and elation of reflective practice is crucial to innovate at the margins of our organisations. The liminality is an inbetweenness of the immersed reflective practitioner and the organization, a suspension of usual things and a space to see and feel emotions in a lived experience in others and the self.

1   Introduction

This paper argues that research into and about emotions in organisations has been overly dominated by the concept of emotional intelligence (EI). From the 1990s it has been popularised through the work of Daniel Goleman (1995a) and others, and has been deployed in organisations in a way that has repressed rather than embraced emotion; as EI became another tool and output measure to reify power hierarchies. The central problem of organisational power is an obstacle to the creative harnessing, or rather freeing, of emotion at work. This paper shares a unique exposition of literature from wide discourses on emotion and addresses the problem of power, leading to an alternative method and practice.

A central idea of the paper reverses the prison-like, central watch tower "panopticon" model of an organisation by placing instead the individual at the centre of things. From here the individual learns to reflect upon and embrace emotion in collective and self-inquiry, and demonstrates how this may support energised and innovative work.

The long journey to this start-line involved the author pursuing action research workshops into emotional intelligence and performance management at work, but it became clear that power was an obstacle, repressing emotions – pushing them ever more to the margins of organisational consciousness. However, through reflection this research experience became a turning point after the author engaged in deep self-reflection in meditative supervisions, writing and reflective practice. This paper attempts to convey how the author processed this experience into a methodological shift towards an autoethnography and research action

applied to the work situation. This process is called Reflective Emotional Practitioning (REP) and is presented and shown as a tool to venture further on a visceral pathway, uncovering the author's relationship with emotion.

The author began to recognise that the self and the other could be held in reflexive practice and writing. Evidence came slowly through vignettes (Appendix 1 gives some examples) representing the author's pathway and shone a light on a dialogical process between the self and others. Freedom and space were revealed as the research began to demonstrate the inner- and outer-selves working through emotion. Through this process emotion became conceptualised as "felt energy". Felt energy was triggered by the outer world, but was also a place of knowing from which further action could be taken, and then further reflected upon. The reflexive writing process used the vignettes to illustrate how emotion was engaged, fed back and stored as a "return to the self" in a continual learning process (not a fixed knowledge). Through illuminating a new way of both conceptualising and working with emotions, the paper shows how the method underpinned and helped to create some major innovative and sustainable work projects.

The paper concludes by defining a contribution of this research as a transferable approach that can engage emotion in self-empowered actions *within* an organisation's power regime. The contribution is to both methodology and knowledge about the way emotion is experienced, used and conceptualised, although the author acknowledges and discusses the difficulty of producing knowledge through writing the self, particularly within the confines of studying organisations. However, the struggle to write the self has produced rich texts that convey the possibilities of transferring the approach for other organisational researchers and reflective practitioners engaging emotion in their different personal and organisational contexts.

From this point the first person is used in the paper in an effort to better connect with the reader and audience – as is appropriate to the subject at hand.

2. The matters of emotion, power and self

Trying to grasp a literature review on emotions is difficult. I have evolved one to cover a historical and themed account of emotion. From Plato, Spinoza and other ancient philosophers to a focus on the last one hundred years or so, I try to pick up on the complexities and evolution of the subject. At this point I take heed of James Hillman's (1972, p.43) opinion that "emotions are not things but there are such things as emotion." This highlights my position that the literature is dominated by positivist measurement and analysis of affect or emotional intelligence (such as propagated by Goleman (1995b)), rather than emotion as I have come to conceptualise it. I attempt to use a wide literature base to inform a conceptual framework that brings a beginning and access point to the research – a study that has been a deep personal challenge in an area of discourse and practices that is complex and mysterious, but also rewarding and enjoyable.

From Immanuel Kant (1781, 1790) to Duchene de Bologne (1862), Darwin (1872), James and Lange (1885) and James (1890), there has been a biological and physiological

fascination with emotions, or more accurately affectation - the conscious acting out of emotion. Whilst Kant (1790) in "Critique of Judgement" saw that imagination activated the senses, he regarded emotions as "diseases of the mind". Before I proceed I state a difference between affectation (hormonal or endocrinal chemical responses to stimuli in the body) and emotion (a deeper, reflective, and felt understanding of self and other in a context). I will elucidate on these definitions through the text but at this opening stage I need to make this difference clear in order to aid understanding.

As I moved through the literature of the first half of the twentieth century I saw the natural and social sciences explore affective reactions and behaviours, and how reason can be applied to gain a fixed knowledge of behaviours. There were attempts to generalise and collectivise (e.g. Cannon, 1932; Paulhan, 1930) the way emotions were directive and able to give emotive power and energy.

Brain science began to show how emotion and cognition were integrated (e.g. Bloom et al., 1985; and Damasio 1994) but a resurgence of interest in the topic erupted with Goleman's (1995a) emotional intelligence construct. It was Gardner (1983) who first began researching and publishing in this populist approach to emotions. The North American universities and business schools then continued populist treatments of "emotion", including from the likes of Frederickson (1998) and her positive and negative polarities of emotion.

Alongside this Giddens (1990), amongst others like Stacey (1995), was exploring emotions displayed through the outer-self in social relationships, from a sociological perspective, with subjectivity being interpreted cognitively in physical attributes of the person – such as facial expressions and body positions. This links with Hochschild's (1983) work on "emotional labour", whereby workers present or enact superficial emotion in order to do their jobs. This affect can become habitual and erode authenticity or allegiance to work and become confusing for the subjective worker and others in relationships when attempting to gauge emotions. Giddens (ibid.) talked of the juggernaut of modernity running over emotional engagement. This interpretation resonates with how affect in organisational work is incorrectly defined as "emotion" and then managed through knowledge, behavioural control and interventions.

The populist emotional intelligence movement attempts to determine and objectify the subjective nature of emotional states, and link their elusive quality of the felt experience to a rational world of physical reality and work performance. In reading Hillman (1992) we may see, like Fell (1977), that there is no universal theory of emotion – it is more of a syndrome (a pattern of co-occurring responses). Yet today we see the pursuit of models and constructs that add EI to their psychological profiling. These are often "models" or tools that are ad hoc inventions by management consultants promising to teach emotional intelligence competencies to teams and individuals.

Mandler (1984) states that the organisational context and environment intervenes in and impacts on emotions. The individual has to interpret his or her response within the workplace context. I see this resonating with Hillman's (1992) concern with the organisation's rules and power pervading our behaviours and limiting our range of emotional responses. I see how organisational behaviours within a human resource paradigm can seek

to prescribe and control emotions; in Foucault's (1977, p.201) words, this "… assures the automatic functioning of power". This may be seen as conscious control by leaders espousing emotional intelligence to secure their image as caring professionals (whether or not they actually are). Such a use of EI maintains the organisational hegemony and relative obedience of workers who fit within the organisational structure. Foucault (ibid.) sees this as a function of power over workers through surveillance in his metaphorical organisation design of a panopticon prison (see page 7) with workers as the inmates.

Layder (1997) sees social theory and constructionist thinking as avoiding the subjective elements of power, with power relationships commonly rationalised in studies of power over emotion via social structures (e.g. Kemper, 1984) or through interventions seeking to "normalise" emotions (e.g. the emotional intelligence of Goleman,1995a).   This position may be based on fear of the unknown depth of emotions in organisations and an associated lack of imagination to look beyond the collective emotion within organisational power dynamics. The draw is to research and control the measureable affective responses - a very human response to the chaos and complexity of finding out about emotions at work in a practical and sense-making way. However, perhaps a flavour of looking beyond this audit approach is offered in the works of James Hillman. Writing in the 1960s and 1970s he positions the self and subjectivity in the emotion discourse. Then key writers such as Kemper (1984) see emotions as essential in relationships as outcomes of power, and Weymes (2001, 2003) regards emotions as mediating social relationships. Through all this I see the vein of liminality running deep.

3. My changing organisational perspective and reading of the literature

The literature awakened me to my organisation's seemingly limited translation and use of emotional intelligence, and the limited way the concept itself neatly converted into management tools to serve and maintain the organisation, rather than transform it. My connection with the writings of James Hillman (e.g. 1972) enables me to look up from the workplace and connect with how I am situated and feeling in relation to the research into emotion at work. Hillman's (ibid.) emphasis on the inner-self supports a view of how our outer displays are addressed in simplistic frameworks and interventions. Hillman aligns with researchers' view that the complexities of emotion and its definition are often ignored out of fear of the chaos that emotion in organisations is perceived to bring. However, this perspective helps shape a route through the literature.

In a sense, Hillman saved me from reifying the programmatic treatment of emotion and the phenomenological quest for theoretical structural meaning. This was my stepping stone to an opening out with the works of Michel Foucault and his sociological perspective on power and control, revealing my conceptualisation of the central problem as power. Through a reading of Foucault I was able to see the actual and potential power of the subject, the self in the present, and take from that concepts and insights that were meaningful for me. This position can begin to free-up the researcher from a structural and theory obsessed discourse that blends with the competency-driven management and "watch-tower" controlling practices of human resource paradigms.

As a corollary to this I sensed that we could bring forward individuals' ideas in an innovation process that could be sustained in relationship with emotion. Here I recognise Foucault's reading of Baudelaire and his interpretation of modernity as an attitude that seeks transformation and invention in the present moment (with energy from emotion) rather than constructing theories on phenomena without movement or change actions.

This historical and thematic development of the emotion and EI discourse and practice appears to lack the conception and method to make a connection with power. There is a gap in organisational practice and discourse - the lack of reflective-practitioner research where the researcher is fully immersed in the subject and part of the emotions of finding out. I believe this limits the search for conceptual frameworks as transferable tools for contextualised and fundamentally meaningful research in and at work. The desire to generalise, seek grounded theory, control and rationalise emotions in organisations locks research and writing into a tautological cycle. For example, Fineman (2000) asks if there are different ways of knowing emotion and its relationship with individuals. Frustratingly, I cannot find action or findings in the discourse that move beyond this excellent rhetoric.

4. A combined influence of Foucault and Hillman

My reading of Michel Foucault has helped me to open out the problem from emotional intelligence to the sociology of power and control and their acting with and on emotion. The discourse on organisations lacks an exposition of individuals' emotional integration, or lack of it, with power in organisations. Burchell et al. (1991, p.30) sees power in society impinging on individuals in a way that "concerns them at the very heart of themselves by making its rationality the condition of their active freedom". The relationship of our subjectivity with the organisation is expressed in terms of power and not, it seems, with regard to emotion. Foucault (1977) seeks a freeing of individuals from the subjective relationship with power in organisations.

Foucault (1982) maintains that, in fact, discourse and the language it uses regard a "subject-less subject." Foucault was trying to reach beyond boundaries yet without seeing that as revolutionary or different. In 'The Birth of the Clinic' (1973) he calls for us to move away from our fixed identities, for example as an author (which is a social construction). In 'The Order of Things' (1970) he moves that language must take us beyond the mode of subjective expression so that the reader or writer can work out the sense of what is conveyed rather than look for an explanation. I sense that Foucault provides an alternative history of the co-construction of power that can be used to shine a new light on the liminal subjective originality of thought, feelings and action.

Foucault was frustrated with society's inability to transform itself. He went through what he called very intense experiences and argued that universal systems of morality could not provide effective responses to social and political issues or problems. In working alongside Jean-Paul Sartre he moved away from generalisation in protesting about the ills or marginalisation of subjectivity towards making readers aware of their ability to act on the potential for human liberation that is implicit in their contexts or problems. He wished for actions by those in context to get involved with their selves. I later liken this to James

Hillman's (1992) work and his process of ideation and the integration of emotion. Foucault can be considered as a "tool" (it was his wish for all his "histories" or works to be used as tools), as can his description of prison design as a metaphor for the organisation, power and control coupled with his promotion of self-creation in an understanding of the marginalisation - or liminality - of the subject.

Foucault's insight that emotions have a history, and that history is of the present, is a call to bring identity to the self in our organisational contexts in the world. This develops the self in relationship with power on a micro-sociological or micro-political level. This has relevance to transforming practice and research in the discourse of organisational emotional intelligence and power. If reflective practitioning is able to focus on personal and worker relationships and emotion within the context of organisational power then the self may be researched and connected to strategic management and leadership. This provides a corollary to the typical EI competencies training that starts with the EI of leaders and aims for a trickling down the hierarchy towards the base of workers.

Within organisations there is a tension between our emotional selves and the power, rules and procedures that constantly change and restrain what individuals in fact want to create, do and contribute to improve their organisation for themselves and others. Vince and Broussine (1996), through radical participatory research into emotions and imagery in an organisation, argue that a paradox occurs: The tensions between clarity and uncertainty, and the 'self-contradictory' nature of peoples' emotions and organisational action are present in any change process. In Foucault's (1983, p229) 'On the genealogy of ethics' he states that "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous… If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do". I go further in suggesting that the danger elicits emotion and sets up things to be perceived as dangerous. Without such edge people's reactive affective responses circle downwards within their limited liminal experiences. Foucault saw that emotion is beyond reaction or affect but is a substantial movement of the self to a new state within an environment. This new state is then in a new relationship with power in its context.

The literature on emotional intelligence presents attractive cases of rational organisations realising quantitative results. The accounts show how organisations' leaders can use their emotional intelligence to script behaviours and feelings for employees within training and learning sessions – indeed I was one such "expert instructor". The discourse has many examples of research methods and findings reifying this pattern; for example, Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) claimed a link between EI and workplace measures of leadership effectiveness. As articles and papers like this proliferate, EI methodologies become entrenched and popularised in academe and organisations. A programmatic ordering of subjectivity is created that, as Foucault (ibid.) would argue, is of people who cognitively know their place only too well in the power structure. Crucially, however, they are not often able to know themselves emotionally in this context. Their subjectivity is controlled further by emotional intelligence tools and interventions. Foucault (1982) warns that it is within the organisational power regime that power itself can reshape and re-invest in new forms. This suggests that emotional intelligence may bring greater emotional expression and freedom, enacted through schemes such as flexible working or dress code relaxation, but such representations of the organisation are done to people through emotional management

providing what is allowed and what is not. The mix of our private and public emotional selves in the organisation's power regime is exercised by emotional intelligence. In connecting to Foucault's (1977) panopticon metaphor of the surveillent culture of power in an organisation it follows that emotional intelligence is a tool that exposes (emotional) workers so that power regimes can know and manage them. As workers become aware of this, the difference between what we say we feel and what we really feel may widen. Thus, it is likely that Foucault would today see emotional intelligence as a device used by organisations fearful of the uncontrollable emotion of their people and the risk of underperformance in planned areas of work.   In a sense our emotions become or stay sub-liminal in our workplace experience.

Foucault sees power as connected with knowledge, so much so that "they imply one another" (1977, p.27). Knowledge is produced in relation to power and the influence of power. He saw observation and surveillance, like Bentham's (in Miller 1987) panopticon model prison in which prisoners were watched from a central tower but the inmates could not see or know what was being assessed. As such, the power the controllers gained from knowledge in this case was removed from the subjects through "technologies of power of the body" (ibid. p.29). Monarchic power and rule in modern times, Foucault argues, are replaced with hierarchies that can observe and discipline with the aim of controlling and promoting disenfranchised behaviours that fit organisational norms. The worker is allowed no influence in this system or the emotional landscape of the organisation.

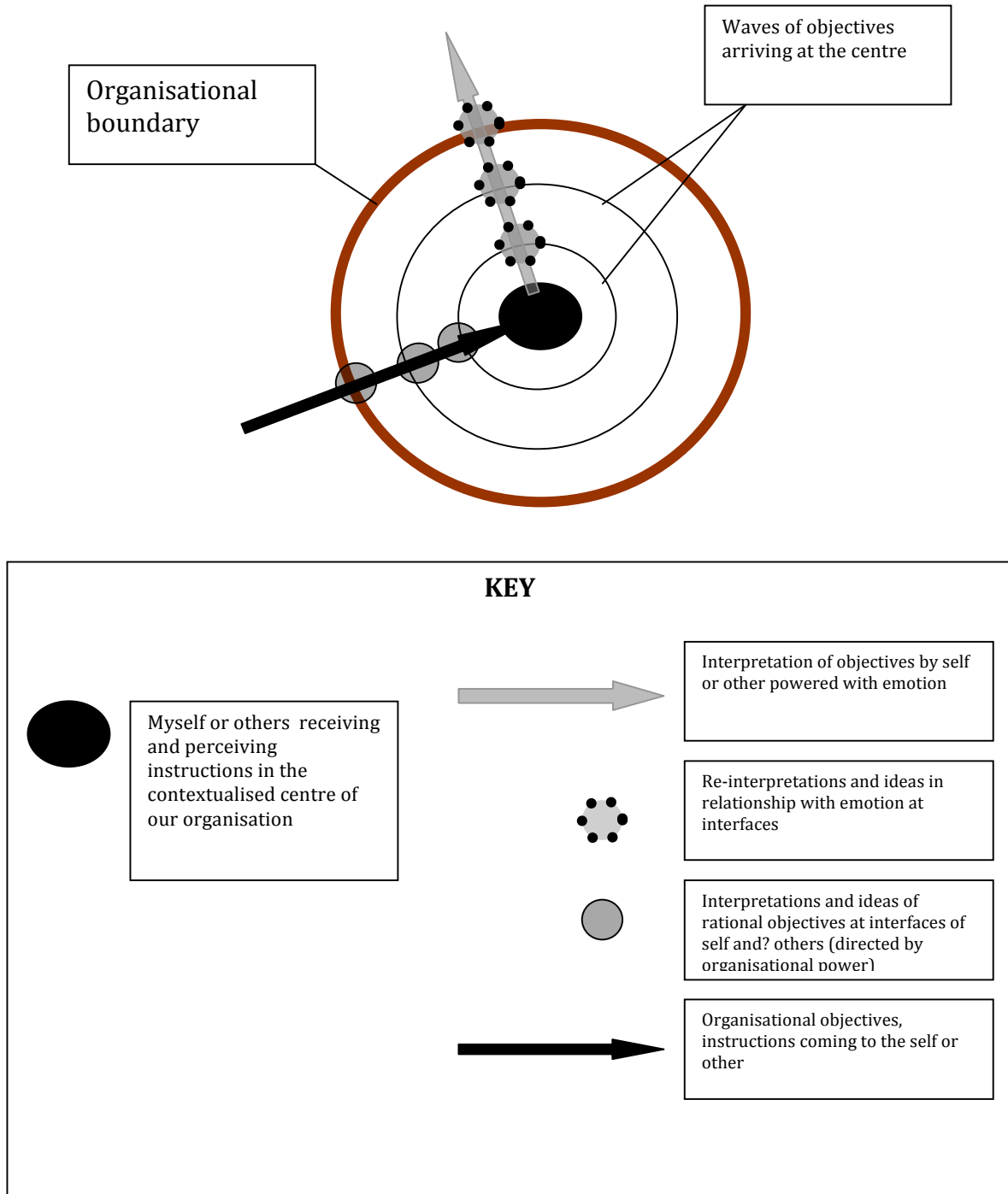## 5.   A reverse panopticon on the world – a key metaphor

Reflecting further on the literature, I draw on Hillman and Foucault in a profound way that has moved me. An enlightening phase arose when I saw what I call a "reverse panopticon" conceptual model.

The Panopticon metaphor has stayed by my side – quite literally in diagrammatic form – throughout the years of reading and reflective practitioning. I began to see EI as serving the central control tower of leaders; EI displays and affect promoted to the surveillent hierarchy, noting and checking-off corporate behaviours. The self is scrutinized by the appraisals, service and business plans of performative culture, with a lack of innovation in the prison cells (interacting only during permitted "exercise yard" sessions) and qualified by the powerful leaders in the watch-tower. I appreciate that this paragraph may seem extreme or exaggerated (or even dangerous!) but it has set up the possibilities for my research.

Following from the above interpretation of the panopticon metaphor I have formed a new conceptual model that is the foundation of my study. I have reversed the central watch-tower of controlling power over the individual.   In this way I hypothesise that emotions with the self at the centre bring a capacity and power to interpret the objectified world impacting on them. At different levels of operation of the organisation the individual receives instructions, work tasks or objectives. These are translated by layers of bureaucracy and processes (shown as boundaries) as they travel to where the individual is situated in the organisation in relation to the other. The individual is at the centre of power in the work they do (they can feel the power through engaging with their emotions) and makes his or her own subjective interpretations of work flows returning back out and within the organisation.

The diagram below gives a simple illustration of my reflective practitioner position in the organisation being empowered by emotion through the self in relation to others, and captures the active process of reinterpretation (with emotion) as a counter to the centralised objective power of an organisation (Figure 1).

Figure 1.   The reverse panopticon conceptual model

Waves of objectives arriving at the centre

Organisational boundary

KEY

Myself or others receiving and perceiving instructions in the contextualised centre of our organisation

Interpretation of objectives by self or other powered with emotion

Re-interpretations and ideas in relationship with emotion at interfaces

Interpretations and ideas of rational objectives at interfaces of self and? others (directed by organisational power)

Organisational objectives, instructions coming to the self or other

6. Self as central to the problem and the paradox of writing the self

An assumption of post-structural thought is that a person is a "subject" who is culturally situated, for example in an organisation, and discursively structured. A focus on the body, language and specific histories can bring forth a meaning that is inside the text. However, Foucault (1977) moves that discourse is controlled by conditions and limits how we may know our world, and so sees discourses as coming and going by chance, showing truth's temporary face. Derrida's (1992) concept of différence suggests that concepts, such as the repression of workers, can be revealed through the text but the meaning is hidden. The language conveys to the reader a meaning and a sense of reality that is there in the moment but also in a reflective and changing movement through time.

If we cannot come to know emotion without finding out and writing about our own experiences, how can we move past the post-structuralist impossibility of writing the self? The paper thus far has led us to a fundamental focus on the self and how we may come to know and relay knowledge. The notions of the post-structural theories problematise humanist, essentialist human self-knowledge, yet set up a call and rationale for personal self-reflexive accounts in research. In reflexive autoethnographies the relationship with emotion can be represented through the text of subjective accounts. However, post-structuralism refutes the idea of writing the self. In order to set up a conceptual framework and methodology, the thesis considers the writings of some post-structuralists that bring some ideas to the quest to explore emotions. The problematic and liminal self is a key thread in this paper and my emerging work.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is an important figure in countering the dualist ontology of body and mind. In his 'Phenomenology of Perception' (1962) he drew together the human body in an engaged perceiving of the world and our consciousness as a relationship between our body and emotions (sensory-motor functions). For Merleau-Ponty (ibid.) the world and our sense of self develop through a continual becoming; he sees that we are involved primordially in our understandings of the world and of the emotional landscapes or gestalt. He progresses from a position of existential unity or, as he calls it, the 'flesh' (chair) of the world.

Husserl's (1936) phenomenology of consciousness of something is about acts of thought and intentional objects of thought in a relationship that is central to the analysis of consciousness. Alternatively, Merleau-Ponty sees a holistic continuum in a phenomenology of the body-subject and the body-object occurring together, subjective time (our consciousness of time is neither a conscious act nor an object of thought) and the other combine in the phenomenology of the body. Husserl (ibid.) suggested that reference to the other just cements the fact that only one's own existence is certain. In moving on from here, Merleau-Ponty (1962) provides a connection to emotion and his notion of corporeity – one's own body in the permanent condition of experience, with perception being an active dimension based on one's primordial openness to the world. Perception is not a causal product of atomic sensations. In his work 'The Perception of Consciousness' (1964, p.13) Merleau-Ponty states that "all consciousness is perceptual consciousness." This underpins the phenomenological turn that helps researchers grapple with the paradox of the post-structural self by calling for conceptualisations to be re-examined in light of the primacy of perception.

This supports the account of experience of the self in autoethnographic research and supports a way of working with the paradox, with the 'corporeity' as Merleau-Ponty (1962) puts it, seeing one's own body in permanent experience in the perceptual; altogether a liminal experience.

It is also helpful to the discussion to see how Dreyfus and Wrathall (2009) replay Merleau-Ponty in critiquing intellectualist psychology and promoting the case that the corporeal, or bodily, knowing process is irreducible. This argument centres on relationships when engaging with the world rather than on linear, objective experiences. The research context of the organisation is about ebbing and flowing living experiences that motivate and change movements of humans. This is not subjective as it is an array of material relationships between bodies at all times. It is not directed by causality or intentionality but by a liminality - an 'inbetweenness'. This brings the dialectic of the subject and object within a primordial reality which Merleau-Ponty (1962) called "the flesh".

Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p.97) develop Merleau-Ponty's embodied mind idea, arguing that "experience is embodied, not ethereal, and that when we use the words mind and body we are imposing bounded conceptual structures artificially on the ongoing integrated process that constitutes our experience." It may be argued that our perception in experiential research (probably all research), and not just by hard Cartesian outcomes, should be shaped reflexively, integrating body and mind as the inquiry is progressed. As Grosz (1993, p.44) expands, "Flesh is being as reversibility, being's capacity to fold in on itself, being's dual orientation inward and outward, being's openness, its reflexivity." In this reference, Grosz (ibid.) strikes at the heart of the possibilities for the self to capture and research both the interior and outer experiences, in deep reflexivity in research – in the field of practice, thinking and feeling.

In returning to the paradox that post-structuralist theories presume subjects can speak for themselves yet also stress the impossibilities of writing the self, Gannon (2006, p. 477) explores a reconfigured post-structural autoethnography that draws on Merleau-Ponty and others in lived experience accounts that "can only ever be tentative, contingent, and situated" (I suggest that also the adjective liminal seems right.) Probyn (2003, p.290, in Gannon, 2006) says that the body is in constant contact with others, and so "… subjectivity [is] a relational matter". Foucault (1982), Derrida (1991) and Cixous (1993) address writing on particular subjects that bring knowledge. For Foucault (ibid.), it is remembering and reflecting on events that can bring an imaginative attention to life. Such imagination and ideas with emotion is the heart of the pathological ideation process, a largely internalised sensing and being in the world. Through working with others, though, as Gannon (2006, p.479) writes, "Truth is not internalised but acquired…particularly by interacting with others in the world".

7. The inner-self in relationship with emotion in organisations

Hillman (1972, p.199) sees that "where there is emotion there is a meaning". However, the strong Weberian traditions appear to live on through dehumanized bureaucracies that suppress emotion. Rao (2012) states simply, "Business success and emotional success are the separated left and right hands of the modern global economy; we need both to be

successful". There is an increasing challenge to the history and current failings of the Western economic model and all its market-led failings in education, consumerism and lifestyles. This is brightly lighting up the imperative for taking action with alternative paradigms. As Gabriel (1996, p.292) emphasizes, the greed of the Western world runs parallel to dehumanised and sterile performance measures which have "haunted the study of organisations ever since". The language of "emotions" is regarded as symptomatic of pathologies such as stress and staff dissatisfaction. Fineman (1993, p.154) recognises that organisations and individuals within them eschew the emotion lifeblood and become "emotionally anorexic" – being worried that too much softness and emotion may damage their competitive spirit or image. Papers like this one are needed to change this unhealthily rationed diet – more fully embracing liminality.

Hillman (1972) talks of the complex nature and lack of concise definition of emotions. This is a fundamental issue to grapple with in any paper examining the role and potential of emotions in the workplace. Emotion is an energy or force that is variously described as being "psychic" or arising from "inner strength". Whatever description we take, there is a fundamental point that emotions are perceived and experienced by people and generated by people, either alone or in collectives in a social context. Ultimately, though, it is the individual who experiences the emotion in a subjective and unique way.

Hillman's concept of "interiority" refers to the soul as being "of the human being" but also deeper and emanating from our "subjectivity". This follows Aristotelian psychology that is based on a registration of our experiences upon an interior unifying sense that is linked to imagination. Emotions, I believe, communicate this poesis (imagination and soul). This can be sensed and emotions understood as the medium through research that is reflexive and polyphonic (giving all the separate voices a chance to be heard and felt without premature cadence, or closure, into flowing harmony).

To quote Blake in Hillman (1992, p.186), "the return of the human psyche to its non-human imaginal essence" suggests a call for the repositioning of research without paradigmatic rigidity. In methodological terms, the power and fount of interiority is reached through a definition of emotion as communication. Essentially, this calls for a beyondness in the research that promotes a work culture that is not built on organisational or co-constructed power but constructed of subjective power with our reflexive inner- and outer-selves in social relationships so as to seek movement, innovation, co-production and a harmonious whole.

 "The soul is desperately seeking the power of the mind to be applied to the powerlessness it experiences. Though we want ideas, we haven't learned how to handle them". In this quote from "Kinds of Power" (1995, p.18) I interpret Hillman as connecting cognition, the inner-self (my term for the soul), power and ideas. However, I add that our liminal relationship with emotion may provide the motive power to reflect on ideas and use them – and remember them. The Latin word *invenire,* from which we get the word "invention", means "coming in". It may be argued that our inner-selves interplay with our minds in creating ideas and visualising their use in work. But Hillman (ibid., p.18) sees that we use up our ideas too quickly and when spent an idea may lose "… its life-generating force" (p.18). Hillman (ibid., p.23) states that ideas "… must be welcomed warmly so that their native power can come fully to mind". I take from Hillman the sense that to see a challenge to

existing power then we need more than a paradigm shift to move on from old ideas or conventions. The argument suggests that a call for practitioners to act is emerging. At work this may mean conveying words and deeds in an emotionally embodied way with people and things, in a process of action-oriented discovery.

This section attempts to bring together the literature on emotion with that on power and frame it within my perspective of an organisational context. In doing so I have concluded that energy and ideas are part of the power phenomenon but distinctly originate from and return to the inner-self of the individual worker. In simplifying for my conceptual framework I have recognised that there is an inadequate emotional intelligence-centred construct based on generalised or *collectivised* knowledge about emotions. As an alternative, I propose that there is an *individualised* emotion among workers that is not constructed or conceptualised in organisational interventions or tools but occurs despite the human resource competency-driven culture of the organisation. Whilst this is liminal it must not be marginalised.

8a. Methodology: the reflective practitioner and the self as problematic

Given the above this discussion it is difficult to see a research methodology that could unearth a deeper understanding of emotion in organisations. Emotions cannot be known from simple qualitative observation. As Newton (1995) stresses, emotions, for example, can be known indirectly through the subjective eyes of the stressed. Knowledge and power are here decoupled in the method and discourse, and discursive development of the subjective is needed to better inform on workers' and organisations' emotional intelligence. It appears to me that unless we can depart from the conventions of social research and get involved in our emotions and those of others in real work contexts (with passionate accounts) we risk reifying the emotional intelligence conspiracy of controlling emotions to perpetuate micro and macro levels of power.

My methodology evolves from and is informed by self reflection – both in the moment and afterward. I am in the moment as an emergent and changing self – not contained in models or norms already formed. Yet whilst I hold this position I am reflecting on experience and writing a paper which seeks to make a "contribution to knowledge". Knowledge implies a given or fixed position or established view rather than a becoming. I invite the reader to experience my radical position as a connection with emotion that is an essential and continuous process of finding out.

I find support in Hillman's idea that one can hold the self and the collective simultaneously. Building on this, and as supported by Merleau-Ponty's work (e.g. 1963), I understand that I can write an autoethnography that emerges to the self from the action experience with others, and the knowledge that this reflexively reveals in plural, situated accounts by me the subject who is close, with felt energy, to the heart of the scenes.

As I set out my methodology I take heed of the many autoethnographers' courage in producing stories that travel against the grain of conventional theory or practice. For example, John Quicke (2010) talks of wanting to move beyond data in surveys or interviews and to write in a storied way not as a finite end point but as a process. I can see directly that

it is my experience and ongoing wish to be like Quicke (ibid.) and his workplace context: a self-writer of a messy text researching somewhere beyond action research or research action. I see the need to open out the fact that the self is problematic, accepting that this will always be challenging for the researcher, reader and academe. To help provide clarity and confidence in this methodology I take heart from the support of Winter (2001) and his call for the writer to be explicit about his or her reflexivity.

In capturing vignettes I aim to illustrate what Quicke would call an ongoing construction process. The problematic self folds in and over the self with the other through a representation of actions and dialogue. Writing and researching as the self is a social process in an organisational context. As Tierney (2002, p.391) puts it, "self conscious reflexivity" reflects in action, in the moment and afterwards. This I find interesting and now informative and supportive of my work as I arrived at this self-conscious reflexivity not at the start, through analysis of myself, but after many years of unfolding discovery in reflective practice.

Alvesson and Sköldberg (2010) are helpful in their description of reflexive empirical research. They cite the fundamental importance of interpretation by the researcher, his or her inward reflection and the form of writing or presentation. They move on to discuss how different levels of reflection "… can endow the interpretation with a quality …" (ibid., p.9). Such "interpretation on interpretation" (p.9) is supportive of my methodology –no clear facts or knowledge are produced through research techniques per se, rather there is a "tilling of the ground" to exercise reflection on the relationship to emotion in my organisational context.

Whitehead and McNiff's "Living Theories" (2006) resonated with my reflective learning and desire to take action in the educative, intuitive and emotional process of finding out about others and myself. Whitehead's (1978) action reflection cycles focusing on problems instil dialogue and take action to gather data. This cycle can then repeat in light of the feedback. Whilst Whitehead's (ibid.) rational model may appear antithetical to my argument, I take comfort from the fact that Whitehead and McNiff (ibid.) discover energy-flowing and life-affirming values coming out as representations of emotion through their research. I argue that there is no ideal model or approach but learning cycles and "interpretation on interpretation" (Alvesson and Sköldberg) can arise through reflection on experience.

8b. Evolving methodology towards autoethnography and using vignettes

My work brings my voice to the discourse through my vignette (little stories or pictures) accounts and creates an identity that offers the reader familiarity and an opportunity to add a new dimension to their perspective and research. I include some example vignettes in Appendix 1. I have found Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) three existential conditions of importance to ethnographic study to be a useful guide to communicating my story authentically: a., the inquiry's purpose is a human experience about and for the research and working community in the widest sense; b., the narrative form finds my signature through experimentation; and c., I attempt to interact with the audience through the narrative and my relationships with them.

In group experiences it is common for an overriding emotion or state to establish itself, with members entering this spell – a lot like throwing themselves in front of Giddens' (1990)

Juggernaut of Modernity. I maintain that the fear of deep reflective emotion permits immediate affective responses to steer and guide group think and actions, and so obfuscates understanding of innovation or change through emotion. This gives rise to my fear of action research creating power through micro-political processes when it is applied to the study of emotion in organisations.   Against this I formed a collection of vignettes in which I seek to develop a reflexive canvas of thick description. Layers of over-painting will build a reflexive canvas that aims to convey the role and place of emotion and subjective individuals through my subjective account. As the subjective reader absorbs my account I intend that sense-making will crystallise in this relationship and co-produce its own rationality.

The vignettes aim to bring out my action-based experience and research in a personal transformation process. As I progressed, the vignettes brought out the process of embodiment of emotion and subjective power. The risk and worry of ideas generation into practice was an emotional development that in turn brought movement and results. I convey the emotions of others and myself in work contexts, and show how the "return to the self" (see Figure 2, page 19) brought clarity to the method and fed back into the discovery process and content.

In line with Bruner (1990, p.67), I can negotiate "meanings by … narrative interpretation". The portraiture is for reflective use by the researcher as well as to present evidence. In this process I have found metaphor and imagery easier to convey. It is, as Munro (1998, p.4) would say, that "the subject is always in production". My reflective practitioning brings interpretation in order to bring out the power of our subjectivity in work. However, that process is personal,   "involving engagement of the senses and the rational and emotional mind of the researcher" (ibid., p.4). Torbert (2000, p.32) proposes a "consciousness in the midst of action". I found this as my dialogic action rose in virtuous circles of understanding of what was happening within my inner-self and played out in my outer-self with others. A discussion with Joanne Waterhouse (2006, p.7) in 2010 about her paper centred on her research into participatory education. This gave me great encouragement to challenge the post-structural difficulties of writing the self through the self-portraiture of the self with others, and how vignettes and reflection may reveal emotion and understanding.

The vignettes are reflected upon in the present. Ellis (1997, p.27) describes this as a narrative truth that "seeks to keep the past alive in the present" and sees our stories as "revisable according to the contingencies of present life circumstances and our projections of our lives into the future". As Mizzi (2010) found, in writing as an autoethnographer we can look back at our shifting feelings and voices as they develop over time and in changing contexts. I see this discussion as a key source of original thinking about our emotional selves and our human ability to flex and shape our relationships to bring things about – whether good, bad and indifferent.

The reflective practitioner paradigm is in a sense inter-paradigmatic. Alvesson and Sköldberg warn against practitioners getting stuck in one paradigm and losing the added value from looking across to other paradigms to explore different approaches and views. My methodology has evolved through experience and reading, the action research informing the move into self or autoethnography.   This is a liminal and revealing experience that takes time (often too much a luxury for resource hungry researchers). Alvesson and Sköldberg

(p.280) promote methodological pluralism within researchers' projects which, in turn, may bring increased and beneficial pluralism to the research community. Through reflection I can question what is true or conventional as an individual (me) within the discourse (and without) and that which will produce knowledge. The findings interplay with the literature but I acknowledge that the literature is selected by me from different disciplines. This will not satisfy one set of "rules of entry" to a single discourse, as Foucault and others refer to it. However, my motivations and sense of who I am and where I am going with the research is of a "regime of truth" – arguably aligned less with structural models, such as critical theory or labour process theory, and more with the changing regime of truth that I have.

The vignettes are more than just pictures of events and reflections that seek to answer research questions in a conceptual framework; they have been selected by me after several versions of writing and embodying to convey my results and learning. The quotations and descriptions are from my field and working notes but as I have re-written them my interiority has been increasingly exercised to enrich my active memory and sensing of my embodied emotion. This REP process is ongoing within me and when I engage my mind and soul in this was I release felt energy.

In progressing through my research apprenticeship I tried different "approved" methodological techniques. I was immersed emotionally in this first-hand experience, which could have produced results with which to progress the thesis. However, that was not my thesis, my belief or my purpose. It was not until some three years in that a Damascene moment occurred in a supervision session when I voiced my felt thesis. I knew then that in a sense my "negative capability" (Keats, ibid.) was crucial -I could get it wrong and learn, iterate through methodological phases and interplay with the literature of major fundamental thinkers such as Foucault, and more recent writers on emotions such as Hillman, towards a new horizon that returned to my experience.

9. Reflective Emotional Practitioning – a return to the self

The idea of freedom from the power discourse and practice may be achievable through engaging our inner-selves with emotion. When power is sensed within us then our ideas and action can connect with emotion in the workplace. I can see through my theory and practice that this goes on in our work and private lives but in work we are in a functional role that we may have aspired to be in but, as job contexts and personal circumstances change, we now find that we have to "perform" for the organisation. We partly become this job and perform the behaviours and functions it apparently demands. In my working groups I was able to momentarily take people out of their job roles to find creative and soulful selves without emotional labour veneers.

An alternative view is given by Fromm in his book "The Fear of Freedom" (1960, p.4), in which he paints a picture that within us there may be an "innate desire for freedom" but also the "instinctive wish for submission". I acknowledge this possibility but my paper is about access to or choices about freedom that can be centred on the self in relation to emotion.

10. Holding our relationships with emotion in innovative outcomes

The REP vignettes begin to reveal how our subjective relationships with emotion produce a felt energy that can enable us to exist outside the commodification of emotion in the "rational" organisation. This brings a freedom or space to think and act. I regard this as a working definition of the role of emotion in work. Every day I see talent coming out in a variety of new ways from colleagues – many of whom I have been working with for many years. At times the skills and insight deployed to achieve come through a wave of turbulence or even turmoil. An intensity of effort is required in order to press out the highest quality and originality of work. My leadership style in these situations is to facilitate and fully participate, steering gently, to let people be fired and supported by their emotions – seeing themselves leading and powering through at the pace and intensity required. It is true that at these times there are arguments and heated discussions but when I reflect in action I see that the reason for this is ultimately that people care and emotions or felt energy are being drawn on. They are passionate that creativity should be valued – "it hasn't been done before, let's work it out" is a regular answer to how, what, when questions about work; a passionate production process is called on.

11. Felt Energy at the edge - discovering "self" in my method

The REP model gave a frame of reference for my research and guided me in a transformative production process founded on felt energy for ideas in others and in me. The crucial aspect of this was my recognition that we own our emotions or emotional states as part of our character and souls, and we can learn to become more self-aware in order to use these flows of energy in multiple loops of giving and receiving in work with others and oneself. In this way emotions are not and cannot be corralled or steered by organisations or their interventions.

As I have become familiar with my methodology I have practised reflection in action more easily and can reflect on my initiation or response just before and during my speaking or action. I sense and draw on powerful energies that can glow with vibrant colours and warm texture when connecting in meetings or workaday conversation. Some call this "flow" (e.g. Goleman, 2001). However, I feel this is more than sporadic flow episodes as there is also a sensing of a background "hum", of a kind that often buoys us up through the frequently unknown chapters of new work. Equally, I recognise when this is absent at nervous or disappointing times. A common reaction from individuals in the team is to form a greater sense of order and administration to process out any arising chaos. Again, as I cite in the vignettes, whilst such episodes are rational and expected, the countering or dealing with these most often does not come from me but from the action, or sometimes the inaction, of others in the team.

There is a felt energy that cuts through with the imperative to do rather than to seek the "right" structure or mandate to act. Through the doing we find our order outside paperwork and audit trails. I remind myself that "audit" comes from the root "to hear" but in our organisations it is all too often a check or recording that is felt to be a negative thing rather than a lively trying out and creative approach to challenges. In essence, the REP process enables me to travel from chaos to order and back in iterations with emotions. On this

journey I embody emotion to power my subjectivity into ideas with others in meaningful, emotion-laden work.

It is interesting to reflect that without this framework for my active and felt process my emotional learning could be lost, or at least not embodied and recognised by me. It is essential that the readers of work like this interconnect in the discourse and community of practice so that we can join in with influencing and balancing the rationalization of emotions in our organisations and work. I can sense that happening and becoming alive to radical movements in the field and related commentary in the media.
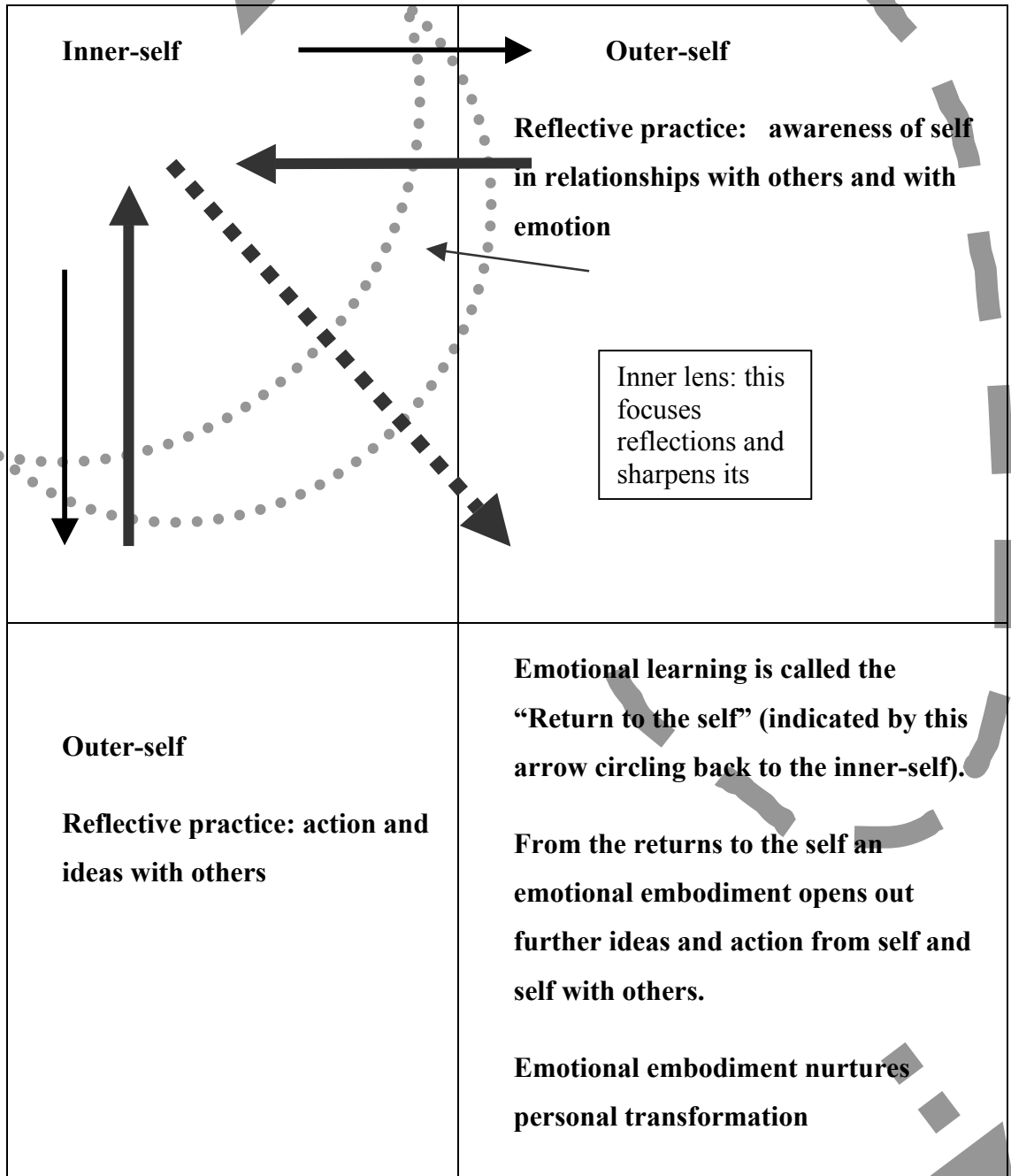
The changing vignettes show my emotional learning in relation to my inner-self. My inner-self reflects on how I am perceived by others in relationships and in deeds. This crystallizes my reflective work with different voices and perspectives being drawn together. In the vignettes I emotionalise about events and feelings through sensing the colour and movement, mood and moments of revelation that become unspoken and unwritten in our very beings and legacies of non-ascribed achievement. A deeper knowing process of fulfillment is realized through an enriching identity fuelled by felt energy rather than just by public or organisational performance recognition.

The methodology resulting from REP is a continuous iterative process whereby the reflective emotional practitioner consciously and subconsciously learns and nurtures emotional understanding and capacity. The reflective practitioner holds emotional "intelligence" and power in a heliocentric field within the emotional organisation. This inverts the typical hierarchy and removes the risk of organisational systems of control commodifying the highly prized "emotional intelligence" – be they performance systems or rational managers in authority.

The paper tries to unwind a complex personal journey that develops a new understanding of emotion and a way to apply this in transformational work through research action. The reflexive approach brings out one part of the contribution to knowledge but methodological and emotional discovery that is contained in my Reflective Emotional Practitioning account makes an equal contribution to the discourse.

My REP account is an explicit analysis of myself in the research. This is an inner-self-study that maps onto outer practice in iterative cycles and gives an analysis of the data through my inner lens. As shown in Figure 2 below, input comes from reflections on work episodes (vignettes) in emotional relationships with colleagues and from reflections on my emotional actions and practice. My cognitive analysis comes through the inner lens and into the conclusions in my account. The process enfolds this with perspectives on literature and a reflexive reframing of the text, as Tierney (1997) and others promote as an ethnographic method.

**Figure 2   A Reflective Emotional Practitioning production process**

Inner-self   **Outer-self**

Reflective practice: awareness of self in relationships with others and with emotion

Inner lens: this focuses reflections and sharpens its

Outer-self

Reflective practice: action and ideas with others

Emotional learning is called the "Return to the self" (indicated by this arrow circling back to the inner-self).

From the returns to the self an emotional embodiment opens out further ideas and action from self and self with others.

Emotional embodiment nurtures personal transformation

In Figure 2 above I show the process of experiencing my reflective emotional practitioning work. I draw together subjective reflection with my inner-self in relationship with emotion, drawing on the experience with my outer- (social) self. Felt energy (my experience of engaging with emotion) is generated through an up-and-down interplay between the inner- and outer-selves (like lungs breathing in and out, refuelling the body with oxygenated blood to power action). I recognise that I experience this in the moment and when reflecting on experiences in thinking and writing processes, and I have come to learn and embed this awareness and perceiving process as part of me and how I am with emotion. Ideas are given air through the mind and body feeling supported and growing in stature and confidence in its relationships with others. The whole reflective process can be represented in two-dimensions here with a "return to the self" loop coming back to the beginning to start the cycle again. In practice, this process oscillates instantaneously in the moment of experience and is felt again in reflective writing.

With REP the practice becomes supportive of the self in evolving ideas. Hillman terms this the ideation process (ideas and action working together) in which ideas are shared and listened to in a continual process that refuels the inner-self. Power resides in and around the individual and the innovation process, rather in than the kind of linear approval process typical of organisations. The flow of how the self is in relationship with others is perceived by what I conceive as the "inner lens", which is shaped to focus more keenly as reflective experience grows. Ideas are in an emotional flow of iterations that builds on others' contributions. Hence both an atmosphere of creativity is achieved and innovation occurs without labelled ownership in the competitive organisational context.

The diagrammatic representation of the REP construct has been a simple yet powerful tool to help me understand my research process. The diagram below (Figure 3) illustrates that the construct does not represent a static state but the component parts grow in significance for me, and the forward direction of movement (the processed outcomes of emotional learning for the self become embodied, and so feed the ability to do REP, and so on) can in turn shape and influence the landscape in which we work.

In Figure 3 below each bold square represents the growth of the self (as singularly represented in Figure 2). I sense it expanding and deepening as my "Returns to the self" bring confidence, stature and embodied emotion to my inner-self. This enables personal development and growth, and maximises the moments and chances of personal transformation or step-change (depicted here as steps A to B, B to C, C to D). Overall, the diagram depicts the expansive pathway of the REP process of engaging with emotions.

Figure 3   Personal transformation: growing the subjective power of the inner-self.
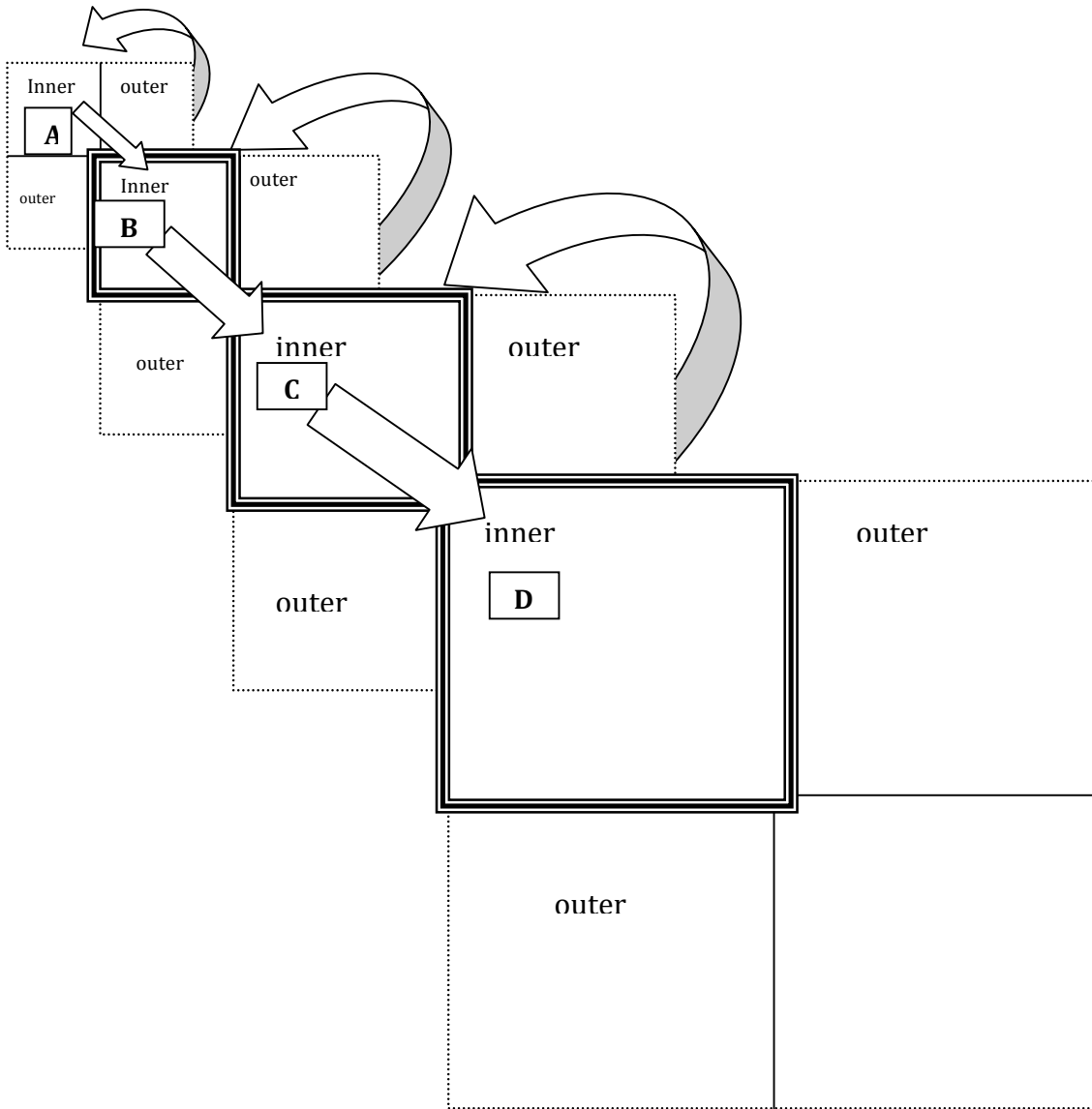
REP brings forth ideas that tip into new territories, rippling across the pool's surface in neat rings. The self is a disturbance to the rhythm that enters and informs and contributes in a renewal of the very landscape. I know myself better through the emotional turmoil bringing me and others into sustainable ideas. The emotions, as well as carrying actions and ideas through with passion, become somehow fixed in the fabric of the landscape and embodied memories in people and the things they create – such as new buildings, training courses, policies or jobs. The energy in these work achievements has an emotional halo effect – a legacy that can be felt by contributors and next-generation workers adding new dimensions to the work. In the terms of the Gestalt school of thought, I believe new emotions are embodied in the landscape and the people.

I arrived at my REP concept and non-conventional thesis after a difficult journey through rough terrain and obstacles within academic and practice fields. The narrative form of the data and my personal analysis is founded upon this experience and knowledge and scholarship over many years of more conventional research. This lends integrity to my departure from standards and my case for the necessity of doing so to break through frontiers of emotions in the workplace. Whilst my postmodernist and post-positivist approach aligns with that of many disciplines over the last 25 years or so, it is less common in the field of business or management research in organisations. However, as social and emotional complexities are recognised in the noise of what makes up organisational life and in how business across sectors is delivered in unstable environmental, political and economic times, the story I present offers resonance to others striving to deliver energized and vital creativity to the workplace – producing work on products, services and processes that connect with our emotional selves. To share and contribute we must care for ourselves and listen to our feelings as we engage our thoughts and actions in reflexive practice. Organisational work is programmed to be linear – human beings are not and cannot be so.

In dark moments of my research I encountered feelings of confusion, angst and frustration with me and my workplace. This could have limited my research but now I know this to be essential emotional learning as I sought my unique path and contribution. I was drawn into an emotional state of flow that was buoyed up by self-reflection on inner and outer data. The imaging of the data and subsequent analysis reified my REP process of finding out and fuelled my emotional actions and speaking out – with others and by myself – against target-driven waves of tasks. My experience fills me with conviction that emotions nurtured in ourselves, supported by like-minded and like-feeling colleagues at work, can be a power source for original and refreshing work and behaviours and attitudes towards the work experience.

12. A spiraling flux of emotion - celebrating liminality and the beyondness of things

The culmination of my contribution to organisational theory and practice is presented in Figure 4 below. I offer a model to help researchers grasp their organisational and researcher situatedness as an opportunity to know emotion through spirals of action and writing. The self remains problematic but this is where the emotion is; feeding the imagination and soul, bringing life to the innovation and transformation within the situation of workplace and producing research findings. I have repositioned the organisational researcher in emotion without paradigmatic rigidity and freed them by way of the self-fuelling power of the self in
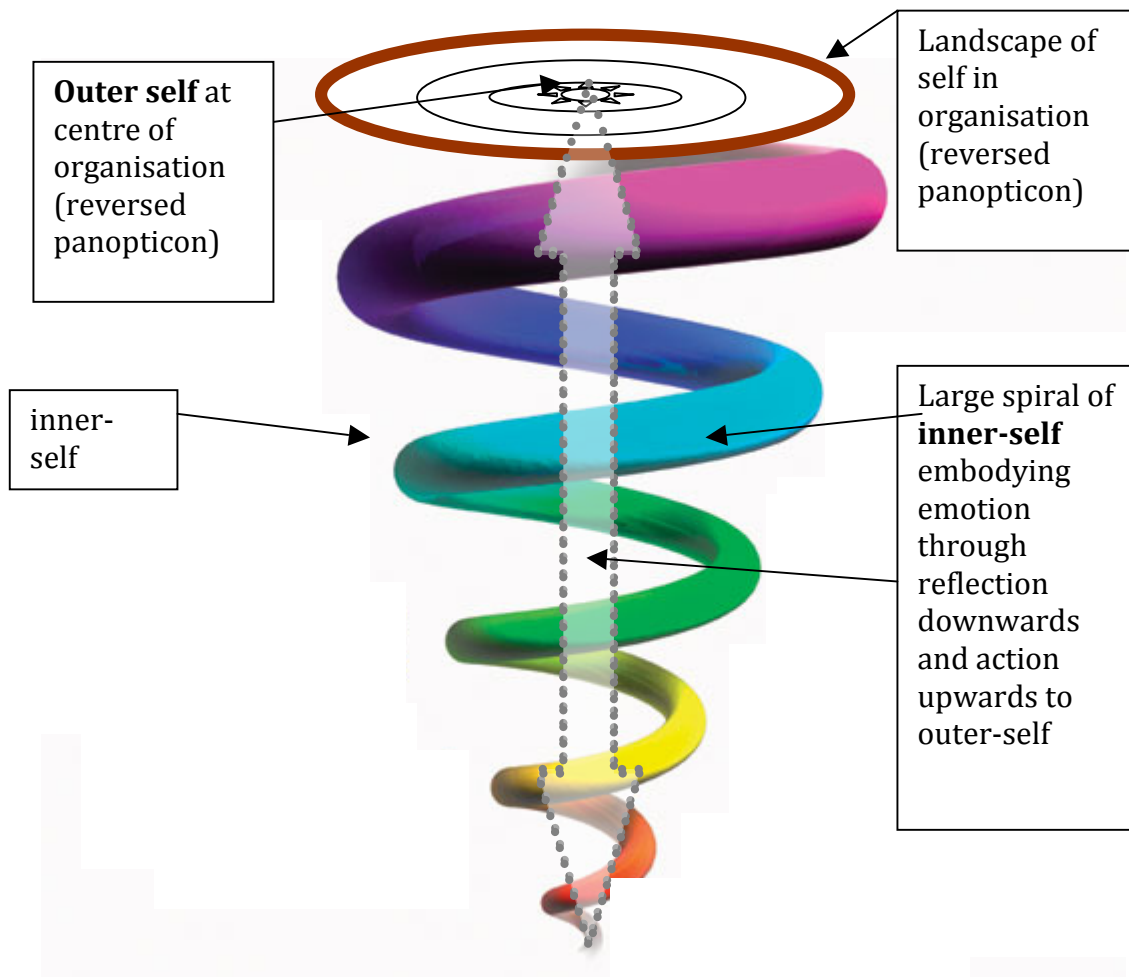
social relationship at work. In echoing Fielding's (ibid.) work on the person-centred school, the emotions of the personal and social relationships can transform the functional hierarchy of an organization.

Figure 4 reveals how I have come to see what lies beneath the two-dimensional representation of ourselves in the organisational landscape. This representation has brought definition and colour into my reflective practitioning, and now into my writing of the self. I have searched and pondered for a long time to find the right image to depict my overall contribution. The model depicts the depth of the reflective spiral beneath the subjective individual - processing and holding the experience with emotion to inform the individual in making interpretations and supporting ideas in a continual learning process in work. In a final reflection on my work I can appreciate the close association with Freire's (ibid.) spiraling "conscientization" process.

As I reflect again on my reflective practice with my developed REP I retain an absolute commitment and belief that this major part of my life must resonate and connect with the reader and practitioner who are motivated to advance our knowledge of emotions in the workplace.   I urge that this perspective be transferred across to other sectors of public, private or third-sector organisations – not least because deeper partnership working must be forged if we are to tackle economic, social and environmental failures in our too often inefficient and unimaginative ways of doing business.   The emotional power and energy of the inner-self must be voiced in multiple conscious and subconscious layers to educate or bring out the liminality of emotions at work.

My contribution is a synthesis of organisational research methodology, theory and practice. It is my exposition of the poststructural problem of writing the self that is at the heart of this necessary synthesis. Truth or knowledge about emotion should not be contained or controlled by organisational theory. Theory and practice need a place for dynamic models that contribute the role of the self to experience and bring out deeper understanding of emotion. I believe the researcher is (and must be) the problematic self on an angst-ridden pathway through the research - reflecting, sharing and painting pictures of lived experience.

Figure 4. The interiority of our subjective selves; spirals of reflection in the inner-self with emotion, returning to the outer-self with cognition of the work landscape

Outer self at centre of organisation (reversed panopticon)

Landscape of self in organisation (reversed panopticon)

inner-self

Large spiral of **inner-self** embodying emotion through reflection downwards and action upwards to outer-self

14. Conclusion

My invention of REP was itself transformational for me. I feel and am coming to know that our research into emotions must not study or intervene in organisational management from a safe distance. The fear of engaging our and others' emotion must be overcome if research is going to connect and help with organisational and personal growth. Then, good work has a chance to reveal itself through motivated and creative people, work that begets organisational management and control.

This paper shares my concept of emotion as felt energy and a methodological construct (Reflective Emotional Practitioning) that can work for the individual reflective practitioner in organisational inquiry and action. My personal transformation has been painful but also tremendously satisfying. It has given me a holistic confidence in looking at my work in the world with others. The REP construct works for me and I hope helps others as a tool emerging from the rich but patient journey on which I will endure.

I believe that my paper gives me definition and a sense of place in the otherwise perplexing arena of emotions in organisations and work. A last word is given in memory of William James (1906, p.47) and his call to respect emotion as a "gift". I hope my work in some way respects and shares this gift with you.

Appendix 1   Example vignettes

Vignette 8 - Transformational and powerful REP resonance through ideas and actions in a landmark initiative: December 2006.

My position and purpose: my organisation was faced with being the lead change agent for local carbon reduction and low-carbon development in our communities. Sustainability was and is a huge concept that is poorly understood in terms of social, cultural and economic factors, and so, for example, practical actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change were challenging. We were excellent at thinking about it - a plethora of strategies, plans and laws were setting legally binding targets for carbon reductions and growth. We had been doing a good deal within its own service areas, such as sustainable transport, but seemed powerless to influence and work directly with business, industry and education communities. A sustainable built environment (especially new build and existing homes) needed an integrated approach across professional disciplines, industry, education and business sectors, and above all lifestyles and choices for customers.

Through a process of engagement with all the sectors and communities engaged in promoting a sustainable built environment we originated a multi-million pound education and enterprise park. This was to be a single place (community) bringing forward social and clean technology enterprise, skills, training, education and qualifications for low carbon jobs, along with a public involvement centre where low-carbon technologies and learning were to be made freely accessible.

I devote more space and thick description to this formative vignette as it represents a fundamental transformation in my REP and its account.

Reflective Emotional Practitioning: in my new role I was ready to move on from the suffocating manipulation of emotion in meeting the ends of others' interpretations of objectives. Within the service planning workshops we had freed up our relationship with emotion to some degree and brought it into play in the organisation's work planning cycle but in pursuing my conceptual framework I was motivated about how I could develop my new REP approach in reflexive action.

We scoped the idea as above and travelled to organisations around Europe to seek partnership and views to shape it. Fundamentally, it was an idea of interconnection that people could in principle only support. I gave presentations on the need to work together and in these drew on conviction and excitement about the transformational prospects of the project and how it connected with me and the various audiences. However, before these inaugural sessions I needed to know my and the team's positions. The team and I had open sessions of debate amongst ourselves. We had a communal belief in the idea but many different views about the future shape, scope and content. It was critical here that we held respect for the subjective and different views amongst the team. We agreed that, in any case, as we went out to others we would have different views to

absorb and reflect on so we must have an open approach. Our "collective" was not co-constructed or singular but a mosaic of subjective and unique selves in a give-and-take pattern – paralleling the up and down spirals of my REP construct.

I was challenged directly by a manager after I had worked up a diagram of the idea as I saw it. She said, very directly:

> *"This is great. It may be excellent but we [the management team of four managers] don't have all the good ideas you know. Others will have ideas about this."*

I was rather taken aback by the force of this statement but was in agreement with the point and made it clear that this was just a starting point. My enthusiasm for the idea (a joining together of the education, government and industry sectors to comprise the education and enterprise park) had engrossed me. Probably this came across as too developed and insular. I was able to reflect and could see my work was making steps without sufficiently involving others. I was able to agree with this challenge and imagine different positions within the team. This was crucial for me and the team at the start. I see this formative stage as holding the crucible of ideas, thoughts and feelings within the concept as we invited others in on it. I reflect that this built respect for each other and coalesced a set of subjective relationships with emotions such as excitement, trepidation and anxiety that we all could relate to without needing to close them down.

I kept pausing to reflect on my ownership of the idea. My confidence and belief in the idea was vital, and the felt energy was becoming almost visceral – so strong was my intent and life-purpose to do my best on this agenda, I was experiencing even more stomach-churning nervousness before presentations to funding Boards. I even felt panic at times. My endocrinal reaction was providing the hormonal releases to help me perform and I was able to seize these to make a good impact at the right time. This helped me understand my emotions and those of others at times of warm success but also consoled me during and after my black times of despair (see also Vignette 8 below). At these times I had my REP model clearly in mind and felt the closeness of my interiority as a deep warm store on which to pull – each experience with others and my outer-self adding to this harvest.

I began to see a wider vista of cooperation that gave ownership of the idea to the widest possible family of stakeholders. As I drew into my interiority I sensed how I could maintain my felt energy by recognising that I could convert anger or frustration (for example, when funding secretariats' rules and red tape delayed our funding bid progress to fit critical path milestones) into increased empathy for others – trying to imagine their positions and helping to find ways of communicating and forming relationships.

We had to work around problems as nothing of what we were doing was ordained or planned; there were no "off the peg" solutions available.

The team were concerned at times about failure and uncertain futures if no funding was found. In a similar way to my Part 1 workshops, I found that we broke down the formal boundaries of meetings that would have rationalised and solved problems. Rather, we shared issues and feelings in ad hoc meetings (we called these "huddles") as and when necessary. If people were not available for these meetings it was not always necessary to formalise a note of them – somehow the continuous open and free dialogue and sense of direction carried the team along with a sense of purpose and of themselves located in the work.

Alongside my REP engagement of emotion with myself and others in the team I needed the support of directors and other "gatekeepers" in the organisation. I had regular formal and informal meetings and conversations where I gave a real but passionate account of the work. In an early discussion with my director and my team in November 2006 I recorded:

"We have a great opportunity to do something really exciting here. It's all set up with policies and programmes [the organisation's climate change plans] but we need to intervene to make connections." (My address to my team and director as we submitted major EU funding bids.)

"I think we have the opportunity to make a big difference here. It's not so complicated an idea it's just getting people lined up to make it happen – now!" (Manager in my team, in response to above.)

This was reminiscent of Vignette 3, where I needed to connect senior managers with the Group/team. Afterwards the director said to me about the proposal:

"This is mind-blowing ... where do we start with this? It seems too ambitious and won't others just do their own thing? (My director's comments at the start of sharing the diagram of the idea.)

The above two incidents have stuck vividly in my memory and been recalled over the months and years. They have been cathartic memories or "still points" of key relationship moments on which to build. These images are embodied and relived in flashes of recall that form reference and guiding points along the journey. They give me energy – felt energy - in different ways according to the emotion they bring. I see the way this works with others as they also recall memories of key moments or what people have said (supportive or challenging). REP has enabled me to become more tuned into sharing this experience and this is mirrored in others in a relaxed and informal way.

I came to know not just the subjective power from emotion that we all had in our gift but that to use this was about connecting with our inner-selves to reveal the felt energy we can get with others. Despite the human resource paradigm and rigid management structure displayed in the Council, the scope for self-direction and creativity was considerable if you had a will to succeed. This is my view and experience and is not promoted as a "right" way to be, just an insight into how we might engage with emotion and use this in our work.

In this vignette my team and I were free to imagine and take a long-term perspective on the way a public organisation could affect change and influence industry, education and government sectors in the growth of sustainable communities and homes. I must say that this "sustainability" agenda motivates many colleagues and customers to act but the organisational imperative for action is largely swamped by an out-of-touch performance management culture. National and local indicators of climate statistics have created their own industry across all councils and other organisations – people qualified and educated to a high level in the broad area of climate change became monitors of another behemoth of modernity and become frustrated by not following their desires to directly change things on the ground.

This irony is disturbing and the emotional angst it creates is palpable. Therefore this was a fertile area for action and innovation. In addition to delivering change programmes within and for an organisation, we sought major international and local partnerships to bring in expertise and open the pool of ideas, and bring in major EU funds.

It was inevitable that as we achieved the first major funding success (European funds) due diligence would require governance and some bureaucracy. I formed a board for the project with my executive director (previously my director and line manager during Part 1 of my research).

I was eager to maintain my team's independence in this work. We did not have a detailed "business case" and struggled to assemble to evidence required to satisfy the criteria of stakeholders or funding programmes. So it was a moment of relief when the executive director and chair of the board said:

"We may not have all the data or case work right now … but what we're doing here seems intuitively right!" (Executive director in a meeting with senior managers and me to assess the terms of reference for the board.)

I reflect that it was interesting that I was recognising how more sensitive and alive I was to what people said, how they said it and what they did. I was sensing beyond the words and emails to really absorb the emotion in this. I replayed these moments to others as markers and somehow this became part of the culture or local "folklore" of how we worked. I heard others replay the same words and other representations of emotion in work.

In hindsight, the complexities of the tasks were huge. If we had engaged our logical brains alone then we would have not started this work or achieved rapid progress to international award status. In going forward in a pioneering sense of adventure our emotions were at a constant height of connection. It was exhausting but also energy-giving thanks to my REP. I can say the Part 1 stage of research was pivotal in getting to this stage of opportunity; it showed me the limits to our subjectivities arising from an abstract understanding of emotion and power. Original and creative solutions were not coming through linear programmes of interventions – we had to be different, and we were.

My return to the self: *this reflective practitioning episode was like nothing else I had felt before. Many more of the activities were connecting with my emotional self. At times I felt a surprising "welling-up" of a painful but exhilarating force when teams and customers were creating new ideas, not done before, and spinning the work in chaotic and energised velocities of excitement. This felt dizzying and heady at times but the spirals of creativity "above" ground in my outer-self were more than matched by my spirals of reflection "below the ground".*

The returns were immense sensations of warm energy and colour that filled-in the blanks of not knowing (yet). The development of my REP helped me pass this on in key moments of singling-out good work and revelling in enjoying the privilege, with others, of making connections and producing results which, most vitally, gave heart-felt appreciation across boundaries of nations, sectors of employment, education, business and government – and within the organisation. It was becoming clear that we were connecting and sharing our inner-selves through our outer-selves in a collective movement and transformation in our work. I was moved by this, I had to seize it, and we did.

Personal transformation: *this vignette draws out important aspects of my REP approach in this venture and my process of transformation. I am the founding director of this initiative and know that it would not have come about (at least not like this or in this timescale) without my reflective practitioning and learning from my research. Overall, I felt energy from the shared joy in the community of connected workers.*

Vignette 10   - Expanding the REP way of working with other organisations and customers: May 2007.

My position and purpose: *the transition through the recent events as highlighted above was exhausting but also incredibly reassuring. We needed to establish our identity beyond our ideas and abilities to partners and win external funding.*

Reflective Emotional Practitioning: *the power of our ideas was given free rein by the organisation and we responded to this by devoting ourselves to the challenge and enjoyment of the work. Some twelve months after the issue described in Vignette 8 played out, the opening of a major centre of learning (our first physical manifestation of the project) that was conceived and developed by the team brought out powerful emotions and release. This was a mix of a sense of pride with a release of the individual histories and emotional energies that produced the innovation. This again was largely unspoken but the welling up of emotions is like no other reward or impetus for driving a team forward.*

One "board member" was keen to find out more about the scheme. We had a brief dialogue:

"You must feel very proud on this opening day to see all the work come to fruition. Why didn't we know more about this kind of work?" "Well, it's not any one person's idea but we all take pride in it ... we don't want to surprise you but we find that our backroom work needs deeper thinking away from the day-to-day business of

the organisation. We keep on until we strike funding and are then able to create days like today. I really appreciate the faith and trust given by my superiors and politicians to let us get on with it!" (Me)

"Well, whatever way you work is fine by me. We need more of this stuff – for our communities and our kids."

"Yes, that's the bit that really comes over today – it's not just for business or skills but the involvement of our fourteen to nineteen year-olds, many of whom are not academic high achievers, who come along and at least build two full-size eco homes in the centre. They learn so much and enjoy the camaraderie of building as a team together." (Me)

I felt that my REP was going through a transition from the vital first stage of the creative process. I was strengthened by the emotional experience and encouraged that my REP had been a personal support to me as I sought creative ideas to launch into making the venture a not-for-profit enterprise.

Too often emotions are seen as negative incidences. However, it is as vital to celebrate and draw out emotions of joy to affirm and reaffirm action, experiences or work. It is a powerful communication method amongst the players of a team and etches a firmly located memory which comes to be a resource as an emotional memory. It also brings a response from other colleagues, partners and customers in society. However, it is not being self-promoting; it is the achievements of the recipients using the new facilities or achieving new qualifications and connecting them to their communities that are the sustainable and emotionally charged lifeblood of the work.

My return to the self: I was moving beyond the constraints of my organisation. I recognised that our micro-politics of power were formed on a different basis from that of the organisation. We were maintaining a team as a group of subjective individuals who needed the organisation and team for functional and resource faculties but not much beyond this.

We guarded against a safe feeling of collectivised emotion or taking on corporate objectives; we were sensing and using our empowered way of acting and seeing the world. A major regional organisation commented on our unbending tenacity in seeking funding. I believe this was possible because of the mix of emotions experienced at any given time, so that excitement could balance despair when needed – we did not "collectify" our emotional experience to suit our ideas.

Personal transformation: through this episode I understood that whilst I see the power and thrust that felt energy brings to transformative practice, this felt energy and reflection must also bring perspective about the need for inner reflections and a slower pace for or settling-in of ideas before intensive and innovative work.

Vignette 11 - Failure recycling as felt energy in my interiority: December 2007.

My position and purpose: settling into an REP pattern of working, we were generating ambitious ideas and plans that were facilitated by our five successful European Union funding bids and international awards. However, our biggest test was to come when our year-long applications for external funding failed.

The team's work continued to be totally externally funded – not funded by local tax-payers like the rest of the organisation's staff. This was a position that enabled the organisation to innovate without direct financial risk to it but it was also a constant risk to my team's work – a risk that brought emotion into our arena of work.

Reflective Emotional Practitioning: We had built up a good professional relationship with the funding programmes secretariats. We appreciated that we would cooperate with all their reasonable requests to meet funding objectives and help promote their programmes but equally we had to remain at a respectable distance in the interests of probity. We had been successful in receiving two major funding awards from the EU and were waiting for the results of our application for our most innovative and ambitious scheme yet. Over a year we had worked with partners and the secretariat to refine a lengthy application. We needed the EU funding as core funds to match other assembled monies and make a start on the ground with building an education and enterprise park.

The rejection of our application in December 2007 came as a complete surprise to us. There was a panic reaction and then a deep sadness seemed to pervade the team. I had imagined this happening and in my thoughts had been to this place before. We took some time out to talk through the news.

Everyone wanted to say how they felt before any plan of action was set. We did not rush to inform others until we had time to reflect. In my words at a memorable team meeting I said:

> *"This is very disappointing… but before we have to think and act practically – not least to work with our co-financiers and their positions - let us find out what each of us feels about where we take all our hard work."*
>
> *"We must remember that we call this a failure but no-one else has come up with this idea or demanded it of us. This is learning, and I can tell we are already trying to use it to power us on to the next course of action."*

In response every team member repeated their feelings of despair, sadness and even anger.

> *"Don't they [funding bodies] realise our year's work in this? We can't re-apply can we? It'll be too long to wait…"*
>
> *"We can't afford to go on without funding – we'll run out of money in a few months' time."*

We explored the anger and found that in all of us there was some sense of the seemingly "unfair" politics at play in the decision. We were continuing to do well at funding applications for ideas but despite this being, in our opinion, the best yet, it was as if we were deemed to have received more than our fair share.

This was a crucial moment for my REP research as the juggernaut of power seemed to have crept up on us and we had fallen into its path, possibly due to our false security about ongoing success. The micro-politics of the EU may have played a part – we will never know – but the concern now was what action to take in order to move on.

Before we could move on we had to agree what learning there was in this issue. We accepted that there was little we could do or wanted to do about the micro-politics of power in external bodies, and that we must accept the news and draw energy to seek options for difficult conversations with our other funding backers.

We reflected quickly and very openly. We found ourselves amongst other equally impacted organisations that were, as a result, quickly changing teams and approaches. I knew that we could hold on through my growing REP strength and the bond of other team colleagues. We challenged the interpretations of top managers and even the external funding organisations that were impacted on by the recession. We started to see hope and pieced together pockets of external funding, looked creatively at our reserves and went on the road with presentations full of emotive messages that balanced the climate change crisis with local community benefits such as new skills, jobs and reducing fuel poverty. Such arguments were by now engrained in our psyches so we did not need to think too much about each presentation or meeting.

This was base, raw and visceral emotion that came out in passionate talks and meetings. This maintained the connection first between the staff and then with sponsoring external funders. Through creatively worked solutions based on how we could treat financial risk and lock together non-traditional players we gained a position for our £10m project that was greater than the sum of its parts. It was not the words and certainly not the reports that won the success but reflection amongst ourselves that connected to the same cyclic iterations of sense-making with others which saw the campaign convince gatekeepers to support the initiative. Simply, we used our feelings from finding out about others and ourselves as a comparative advantage in the competitive bidding process, so much so that individually we could not produce a winning formula in a single "business plan" or "business case". Rather, it was an art form of emotional connections alongside intuitive and creative ideas that won through.

I have seen unspoken connections with "rational" or rationally trained accountants, engineers and planners win the case. I do not make any value claims about REP but I know we simply would not have been around to do this work without it. When we approached the other funders we were met with sympathy and immediate ideas to keep hold of our allocated match funds. One senior regional funding manager said to our business manager:

> *"You lot are so resilient - I would have quit by now. We will do all we can to reserve some funding for your next bids. With some creative accounting I hope it will be all right."*

These comments were responses to our reflections on the position. I believe that REP helped me think clearly at this time and not just be informed by the failure of our application. Some funding was lost but the sense of community belief carried us on to find an alternative government backer. This movement enabled us to bid again to smaller and alternative funders. All of the team gave energised talks to new panels of funding organisations. This called for tremendous effort which in the end paid-off as we raised the funds some six months later.

This scenario is interesting in terms of people's sense of privilege about working in this entrepreneurial way but within the public sector. It also places people in relatively risky job tenures that are only as good as the external funding. The way forward is not predetermined or planned as in other service areas. It was essential to maintain the energy and flow of ideas based on the legacy of the past few years' work as described in previous vignettes into working through the opportunities and obstacles. My sense of self was emboldened by the way I was feeling the personal embodiment of REP as part of the unspoken territory of my work and role.

I found myself automatically thinking hard and sensing my responses to live discussions. At the micro level of detail I would suggest an idea and tune into people's responses intently, trying to feel for their emotional response as well as the spoken words. I gauged others doing this either naturally or in reaction to my pondering. In doing so the pace of thinking and dialogue increased and heated discussions (not destructive or negative rows) intensified with a clarity of sense-making - finding ways of coping and crystallising ideas for different routes.

I regarded these "meetings" as productive sessions that often achieved decisions as true collectives. By this I mean that whilst closure and final decisions were often sought from me by others, I deliberately prevented that way out and threw new ideas back into the cauldron until collective agreements were reached and decisions owned by equal participants in the innovative process. This felt liberating to me. In terms of my conceptual framework I could see my outer-self working to change the landscape (of rules and conventions) in which we usually expect to perform. It was not so much escaping the prison but shifting to a different land (something I expand on in my final vignette, no. 15).

My return to the self: the constant risk of failing to attract external funding was a factor that connected with each of us in different ways. Again, our emotions of worry about losing (face, respect, standing or jobs) were balanced with that of excitement at winning.

I now see this period of development as a recycling of the felt energies embodied in our interiorities to motivate us to extend again with ideas.

Personal transformation: the negative positions of our work enabled me to exercise my downward spirals of my interiority in order to deeply reflect and experience the felt energy moving us to act.

A shared perspective from a fellow researcher in my university cohort: self-organising reflective practice

A fellow doctoral researcher grappled with the chaos and complexity of organisations and the possibility of creating ethically reflective practice. Greg O'Shea (2009) sees a consciously self-organising way of giving people at work freedom from controls as an alternative to the hegemony of command and control. This parallels my work on REP as an inner emotional base from which we collectivise around emotional awareness and interpret hierarchies and objectives with emotional meaning and drive. I work with REP within the overarching organisational culture but this makes its impact all the more powerful as it enables acting with good emotional impact despite, at best, an indifference towards emotions in organisations' leadership.

O'Shea (ibid.) researches and works in a commercial organisational context yet he reveals that his research "... led me from a role as observer into that of counsellor or therapist". Agreeing with O'Shea, I also recognise the need for organisational research to become more connected with ongoing processes – understanding these in a continual and adaptive way rather than undertaking an objectifying search for the truth or knowledge. REP creates a knowing process without ever arriving at final knowledge.

Vignette 12 - Maintaining a place in our organisation: March 2008.

My position and purpose: in the context of tightening local authority budgets there is constant scrutiny of all service areas. We had to establish our way of working in a sensitive fit with other services and commercial challenges to our work.

Reflective Emotional Practitioning: my team and I have become known as "public sector entrepreneurs" or "nice mavericks" within the organisation. We have a mixture of respect and a little envy amongst our organisation's colleagues for the "exciting" and different work we do. This is their response to the way we work and the outcomes we produce. To an extent this reifies and supports our work as we play this role with good humour and respect for others, and it is often referred to in our informal team meetings. As the service leader I encourage this sense of identity and encourage us to feel the privilege that is gifted to us and sustain good relationships with other colleagues.

Following a traditional structure of three teams we work with a wide network of international partners across several projects. In our main project our business and training centres forge new " vocational" learning and courses for students and industry in the sustainable built environment. This focuses on the capacity building of skills and new networks with which to connect and communicate across traditional boundaries.

The emotional cathexis was in the project but was hidden. Friendships sprung up as people found a common purpose in rapidly developing new facilities and thinking. I can now see I was motivated by the way our ideas

were contributing to a wider offering to all the partners and, crucially, stories were emerging that voiced our deeper sense of ourselves and our life purposes. For example, some of the schoolchildren we were reaching in outreach work with feeder schools were making decisions to work in the new area we had created. Two steered a course through the project to begin their own ethical business. This business recruits from the projects' students. I feel that the legacy of our efforts has come alive with rebirths of success linking up with our collective emotional efforts.

It is common to find loops of despair from people about lack of security in funding and jobs. My REP approach seeks to move people back from this pathological trend and out into living-out ideas and tapping our imagination beyond the dangers of the here and now "do-nothing" scenario. This gives part of the "feel good" factor and helps us recognise the need to sustain the hard and sometimes risky work we do.

The emotions surrounding people in the organisation (public sector) about the threat of redundancy, pay freezes and changing roles are not viewed as things to be done to us in the future. Rather, we internalise these life risks and use our emotional response to drive us on, make educated interpretations of the future and innovate. I use my REP not only so I can reflect on our world from the widest perspective but also to show my desire to understand different feelings. This is different from emotional intelligence because I really want and need to find out in order to share our felt energy and inject it into work we do, not to satisfy a scorecard that awards a badge to an "emotionally intelligent" leader or team.

My return to the self: I see the scrutiny and despair here as emotion that blocks us from sensing our and others' needs. The corollary is hope which, in contrast to despair, I sense moves in an upwards direction. In a simplistic and visual way I draw on and visualise my image of our interiority to understand that as we feel despair we may enter into ourselves fully but knowing that the spiralling downwards also turns on the corkscrew to return upwards and out, from the inner- to the outer-self.

If we feel our capability to retreat inside then I believe we can then make contact with our subjective store of felt energy on our own terms – not in response to programmes or sharp shocks to "snap us out of it". The practice of REP brings and develops that capability which I see as akin to Keats' (1817) "negative capability" – the capability of being in uncertainties.

Personal transformation: the spiral image enables me to conceptualise introspection and meditation as a way of doing REP that builds deep foundations of embodied emotion.

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