

Educational well-being or being well in education: A philosophical and empirical inquiry into the nature of well-being in education



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*'We are a part of the whole. Our well-being and that of the whole of creation is
interwoven and interdependent'* Sister Verena Schiller

Dedication: I dedicate this thesis to the founders, early teachers and students of Girton College, Cambridge with thanks for their courage and vision in the struggle for women's education

Acknowledgements: In South Korea, there is a festival at which adults seek out and thank their former teachers. I would like to thank the many teachers who have taught me over the years. In particular I thank my most recent teachers, my supervisory team Dr Fiona Hallett, Professor Martin Ashley and Dr Damien Shortt for challenging encouragement and help throughout.

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Abstract:

Well-being is increasingly of interest to schools and educational policy makers in the UK and beyond. This thesis is a philosophical and empirical enquiry into the relationship between well-being and education and into the nature of a theory and practice of well-being in educational settings.

Well-being, I will argue, is not a single entity or the private possession of an individual; nor is it an add-on or optional extra for educators. It is rather an intergenerational, shared embodied theory and practice, an intrinsic goal of education and an inherent and constitutive part of how we engage in education. Well-being is not something we 'deliver' and we may not be able to teach or produce it directly. However, we can attempt to create an environment in which it can occur.

*I will argue that the qualities of this environment should be the focus of those who wish to promote well-being in education and that teachers need an educational environment which will allow them and their pupils, to be well. Using Arendt's *The Human Condition* as a key insight into human ways of being and doing I will argue that well-being, being well, occurs when there is balance between the different activities that humans engage in and a balance in **how** they engage in those activities. I will also argue that such a balanced environment will serve a key educational function, the containment of anxiety and the containment of love.*

*Theory and practice are indivisible and this theory arose from 13 years of practice in schools as an advisor into well-being in education. I therefore put my own emergent theory into practice by using it to develop a reflective research methodology, contemplative reflection, with which to study a well-being project I co-created and worked with for 13 years, which is called *Celebrating Strengths*.*

Key words: education, well-being, positive psychology, psychodynamic, somaesthetics, character strengths, virtues, anxiety, love

Contents

.....	0
Contents	5
I. Introduction: A contribution to a theory and practice of well-being in education.	9
1. Purpose of the thesis – to clarify the nature of well-being in education and to outline an educational theory and practice of well-being.....	9
a. The historical context of my own work in well-being.....	10
b. The current policy situation in well-being	12
c. The muddled nature of current discourse about well-being across policy and across disciplines.....	13
d. Consequences of the muddled nature of current discourse	14
2. Key arguments for an educational theory of well-being.	15
a. Well-being is a complex, 'activity-centred' phenomenon and we can and should be well within a range of activities and in a variety of ways.....	15
b. We need to consider the context of education to understand well-being in education	16
c. The ways or modes of being well in an educational context must include democracy, morality, somaesthetics and inter-dependence	16
d. Theory and practice are continuous.....	17
3. Educational theory as cross-disciplinary.....	17
a. My thesis literature as cross disciplinary	17
b. My methodology as cross disciplinary.....	18
4. Empirical Work: Contemplative Reflection.....	18
a. The rationale for my empirical work	18
5. Celebrating Strengths	19
a. Encouraging well-being indirectly.....	20
b. The schools	21
II. Literature review	22
Introduction: creating a balanced environment in which well-being can occur	22
1. Well-being, happiness, flourishing, mental health: definitions and use	23
a. In education and policy	23
b. In psychology and positive psychology	24
c. In psychodynamic theory	26
d. In philosophy	27
2. Theoretical difficulties in the literature	28
a. Complexity and confusion.....	28
b. Problematic, expert and extrinsic.....	31
c. Hierarchical and dichotomous.....	37

d. Unbalanced	39
3. Practical difficulties arising from the theoretical difficulties in the literature ..	41
a. Democratic deficit in the conversation about the good	42
b. Amoralism and individualism	44
c. Beauty and the disembodied nature of well-being.....	50
d. Focus on student well-being but not on teachers	52
4. Contributions from positive psychology and psychodynamic theory	55
5. Essential additions from philosophy	56
6. Conclusions: creating an environment in which well-being can occur.....	58
III. Philosophical Discussion A: the nature of well-being.....	59
1. Introduction	59
2. Happiness, well-being or flourishing?	60
3. Well-being as a complex and multifaceted concept	63
a. Arendt's account: a hierarchy of being and doing	63
c. Continuity rather than hierarchy in ways of acting and being	65
d. Imbalance and the decline in contemplation in the modern world	68
e. Imbalance in ways of acting and being in education	69
f. Being well in education in the here and now	72
4. Well-being and the ends and means of education	73
5. Conclusion	75
IV. Philosophical discussion B: a theory and practice of educational well-being 76	
1. Well-being as context specific	77
a. The intergenerational context of education	78
b. Degrees of care	79
2. The essential elements of a composite theory of educational well-being	80
a. Democratic	81
b. Moral	84
c. Interpersonal	85
d. Somaesthetic.....	87
3. A working definition of educational well-being	88
4. The purpose of a theory of educational well-being	91
a. Containing anxiety	92
b. Containing love.....	93
5. Conclusion	96
V. Empirical methodology: contemplative reflection	98
1. Introduction	98
2. Continuity of theory and practice	99

a.	Means and ends: democratic, somaesthetic, moral and inter-personal	99
b.	Action and contemplation	100
c.	Theory: ontology and epistemology	101
3.	Traditions and assumptions underlying contemplative reflection	105
a.	Action research and living theory	105
b.	Infant observation and psychodynamic theory	106
c.	Lectio Divina	107
d.	Character strengths and virtues, positive psychology and virtue ethics..	108
4.	Ethical issues	110
a.	Working with colleagues	110
b.	Working with children.....	113
c.	The pros and cons of synthesis and creativity.....	115
5.	Contemplative Reflection in Practice	116
a.	The material record	117
b.	The strengths conversation.....	118
c.	Philosophical extracts	119
d.	Post reverie data analysis.....	122
6.	Conclusion	123
VI.	Empirical Findings.....	123
1.	Introduction	123
2.	Results.....	125
a.	Democracy	125
b.	Morality.....	132
c.	Somaesthetics.....	137
d.	Inter-personal relationships.....	142
e.	Anxiety	144
f.	Love	146
3.	Conclusions	149
VII.	Discussion of empirical findings	149
1.	Introduction	149
2.	Celebrating Strengths	151
a.	Democratic	151
b.	Moral	153
c.	Somaesthetic.....	154
d.	Inter-personal	155
e.	A balanced environment?	156
f.	A container for love and anxiety.....	157

3.	Contemplative Reflection	160
a.	Democratic, moral, somaesthetic, inter-personal?	160
b.	Containing love and anxiety	162
c.	Difficulties and limitations of contemplative reflection.....	163
4.	Pragmatic somaesthetics	165
5.	Wider implications of a theory and practice of well-being	167
a.	Intelligent habit and evidence-based practice	167
b.	Definitions and direct or indirect approaches to well-being	168
6.	Conclusion	171
VIII.	Conclusions	171
1.	Introduction	171
2.	The chapters	173
a.	Chapter I: Introduction: a contribution to a theory and practice of well-being in education	173
b.	Chapter II: Cross-disciplinary foundations of a theory of well-being	173
c.	Chapter III: Philosophical Discussion A: the complex, activity-centred nature of well-being and the need for balance	174
d.	Chapter IV: Philosophical discussion B: the context, nature, definition and purpose of a theory and practice of educational well-being.....	175
e.	Chapter V: Empirical methodology – contemplative reflection.....	177
f.	Chapter VI: Empirical findings.....	178
g.	Chapter VII: Discussion of empirical findings in the light of a theory of educational well-being	178
3.	Recommendations and areas for further research.....	179
4.	Final Conclusions.....	182
IV.	Bibliography	183

I. Introduction: A contribution to a theory and practice of well-being in education

1. Purpose of the thesis – to clarify the nature of well-being in education and to outline an educational theory and practice of well-being

I am a teacher and, over the past 30 years, I have worked primarily with children with learning difficulties, disabilities, mental health problems and those who have suffered neglect or abuse. The subject of well-being and its relationship to education has therefore always been important in my thinking and in my practice. What does well-being mean in an educational context? How can I, as a teacher, not a therapist, both educate and support the well-being of a troubled child? What is the relationship between the well-being of the child and the well-being of the teacher? To what extent is the well-being of the child the teacher's concern or something beyond the teacher's expertise?

My observation, working in particular with traumatized children, was that educational activities, in and of themselves, could relieve emotional pain. From feeling inadequate as a teacher, when confronted by enormous need, I began to believe that teachers *as teachers* already had tools and resources to help such children. This thesis began as a way of studying and understanding my own work in the area of well-being in schools, which I called Celebrating Strengths. It evolved into an attempt to bring clarity to the relationship between education and well-being and to theorize and research those initial, intuitive observations and convictions in a way that is relevant to teachers other than myself and to the wider field of education. I felt and feel that teachers have something original and important to say in what I will describe as the ongoing conversation about what well-being means in education.

I wish to contribute to the discussion of what well-being means in education and also to provide teachers and policy makers with an *inhabitable philosophy* (Murdoch, 1970) of well-being that informs and is informed by a *practice* of well-being. I will argue that well-being is or should be intrinsic to education, to its ends and to its means. I will also argue that both teachers and pupils ought to be part of an ongoing, democratic conversation about the meaning and practice of well-being in education.

Macintyre said that 'when a tradition is in good order it is always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its

particular point and purpose' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 222). One sign that education is in good order will be that its goods, and I will argue that well-being must be one of those goods, are a subject for argument or debate at all levels, for pupils and teachers alike. This thesis will both argue that such a debate is essential and will itself constitute a contribution to that debate.

Unwin and Yandell say that 'education requires the critical analysis of the taken-for-granted' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 130). I will insist that theories and practices of well-being from other disciplines cannot be imported, without critique, into the context of education. This thesis is an attempt to provide some critical analysis in the area of well-being in education and to 'think what we are doing' (Arendt, 1958, p. 5) when we speak about and attempt to support well-being in our schools.

a. The historical context of my own work in well-being

From 2003 until 2016 I worked in schools as a self-employed education consultant in the area of well-being. In collaboration with two infant and two junior schools in North Lincolnshire in the UK I developed a project which I called 'Celebrating Strengths'. This was initially funded by the Local Education Authority and the funding came from money intended to support mental health in schools. I subsequently personally introduced the project to approximately 20 schools in the UK and to schools and conferences in Australia and Denmark. Materials to support the project have been published by an educational publisher since 2012 and I wrote a book for teachers which was based on the project and which was called *Celebrating Strengths* (Fox Eades, 2008).

My work developed in parallel with government promotion of what was then termed emotional literacy or competence and with the development and promotion of the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme in schools in England (Department for Education and Skills, 2005). This programme was intended to help schools create 'an environment of emotional health and well-being' (2005, p. 15). Its focus was on achieving this through the development of children's 'social, emotional and behavioural skills' (2005, p. 15) and it referenced the work of Daniel Goleman (Goleman, 1996) on emotional intelligence. As I was working in schools, the area of positive psychology also began to gain prominence, with the development of lessons in 'happiness' (Morris, 2009) or personal well-being (Boniwell & Ryan, 2012) and the emergence of the idea of 'positive education' (Positive Education Schools Association, 2015).

I was, to an extent, influenced by positive psychology and took elements of it into my own work. I shared with SEAL a commitment to whole school working and a recognition of the central role of emotions in learning. Where I differed from both approaches was in my belief that teachers did not need another subject to teach and that neither emotional literacy nor well-being could or should be taught directly. I saw them as an inherent part of education and of how we teach and live together in schools not as distinct or separate parts of a curriculum. I felt concern that both SEAL and positive education presented emotion and well-being as something for teachers to deliver as a package instead of as something intrinsic to education and inherent to the teacher-pupil relationship. I also felt that both presented teachers with a top-down, external expert model which risked undermining teachers' confidence in their own professional expertise.

In my work I chose to focus on the environment of the teacher and the pupil. Dewey says that 'we never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment' (Dewey, 1916, p. 14). I felt in my early work and will argue in this thesis that this is particularly true when it comes to well-being. We cannot, I will argue, teach well-being directly. We can only create an environment in which well-being can take place.

Together with the teachers I worked with we thought about how the school day and year was organized, about the pace and rhythm of the day and year. We considered and added to the traditional stories teachers told and considered how they told them, the words they used, the colours and pictures around the school. In one of many documents I created in the course of my work I talked with the teachers about creating or enhancing what I called '*positive habits of thought, speech and behaviour*' (Fox Eades, 2008a unpublished document). The *positive habits* included individual habits and school wide habits or traditions. We deliberately built silence and stillness, beauty and colour into our joint work. We also incorporated into it democratic discussion, in the form of P4C or philosophy for children (Haynes, 2002). We did not create well-being lessons but I very much wanted teachers to enjoy playing with the ideas I suggested and to find them supportive, not onerous. I saw teachers' well-being as fundamental to helping children's well-being, precisely because teachers are such an essential element of the environment of the child.

The unpublished reference above is to one of 10 unpublished and 3 published documents that I selected from the many I created when working in schools. I used this small sample of 13 documents for my empirical study in this thesis. They are all

included within the bibliography and the unpublished articles I used are also listed separately after the bibliography. An example of one of the unpublished documents is included at the end of the thesis.

b. The current policy situation in well-being

The current social and educational climate is one of heightened concern about a 'crisis in children's mental health' (Weale, 2016). The focus on emotional literacy has now shifted to include a focus on emotional health as well as emotional skill or competence and this is coupled with well-being, in documents like *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing* (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 1). This particular document contains advice for schools on how to 'promote social and emotional skills' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 11) and provides links to 'tools' to assess pupils' 'emotional health and wellbeing needs' (2015, p. 18). It also includes information on dedicated wellbeing programmes such as *How to Thrive*, a licensed training model that is used to deliver the UK Resilience Programme/Penn Resilience Programme (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 34). The Penn Resilience Programme is an American psychologist designed 18 lesson curriculum for 11 to 18 year olds linked to the resilience work of Reivich (Reivich & Shatte, 2002; Seligman, et al., 2009).

This focus on well-being now also includes an emphasis on mental health, and the two are often coupled together, as in the title of the government report, *Future in Mind - Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing* (Department of Health; NHS England , 2015, p. 1) and in the document *Mental Health and Behaviour – Advice for Schools* (Department for Education , 2016) which speaks of 'good mental health and emotional wellbeing' (2016, p. 6). These documents advise schools on how to support pupils 'to be resilient and mentally healthy' (Department for Education , 2016, p. 6) and on 'promoting resilience' (Department of Health; NHS England , 2015, p. 11). Character has now started to be referenced in government documents too (Department of Health; NHS England , 2015).

While the SEAL programme was produced by the then Department for Education and Skills, the current reports and guidelines for schools come not only from the Department for Education, but also from the Department of Health, from NHS

England, from Public Health England and from a variety of mental health charities (Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2017).

I will argue that these documents reveal confusion in the use of terms like well-being and that, as with SEAL in previous years, what is presented is a top-down, external expert model that risks undermining teacher confidence. It also assumes a 'taken-for-granted' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 130) understanding of what well-being means in education. I will suggest that the fact that messages come from the fields of health and psychology risks presenting well-being as somehow extrinsic to education and as problematic, instead of as an integral part of education, part of a teacher's normal role and within the teacher's existing expertise.

Moreover, I will argue that these documents position well-being overwhelmingly as the possession of an individual, as a single thing that exists within individuals, rather than looking sufficiently at the individual within their environment and at well-being as complex and multi-faceted. As a result these documents focus almost exclusively on students. They also present well-being or its lack as a problem which is located within the student, rather than considering how the well-being of everybody within the education system, and indeed beyond, is intimately connected.

c. The muddled nature of current discourse about well-being across policy and across disciplines

In my literature chapter I will discuss the muddled use of the language of well-being in current policy documents and set that against the background of the muddled discussion of the topic of well-being, and flourishing, and happiness, and mental health, more broadly. While it is not to be expected that policy documents display the same rigour or the same attention to definitions as academic writing ought to do, the far reaching effects of policy in the area of well-being and its power to influence practice, for good or ill, and indeed to influence well-being itself, justify a critical approach. In chapter II I will therefore critique the language of policy as well as the language of a cross-disciplinary literature from positive psychology, philosophy and theology. I will illustrate the diverse definitions of concepts such as flourishing (MacIntyre, 1981), mental health (WHO, 2016; Faculty of Public Health, 2010; Martin, 2006), happiness (Nussbaum, 2008) and well-being (Snyder & Lopez, 2007; Clark, et al., 2016).

Chapter II will argue that these discussions of well-being are essentially Cartesian, dichotomous and hierarchical, as well as muddled. It will introduce Dewey's concept of continuity (Dewey, 1916) and argue that we need, in education, to at least

attempt to go beyond dichotomous, hierarchical and Cartesian thinking. The chapter will describe well-being as a continuous concept which incorporates different ways or modes of being well. In an educational context, I will argue that these modes or ways of being well must include democratic, moral, somaesthetic and interdependent ways of being.

I am borrowing the word *somaesthetic* from Shusterman. Shusterman describes his philosophical project of somaesthetics as ‘concerned with the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthetics)’ (Shusterman, 2008, p. 1). He is a philosopher who critiques the mind/body split within Western thought and the split between the body and ethics, beauty, morality and spirituality. I am using his term somaesthetics to indicate a concern with beauty and with the spiritual dimension of life, as well as with the body and the full range of bodily human emotions.

d. Consequences of the muddled nature of current discourse

The thesis will discuss the potential impact on teachers of the shifting uses and meaning of terms such as well-being, happiness and flourishing and what messages they send to teachers about well-being in education. Chapter II will argue that well-being has, wrongly, become an extrinsic target for, rather than an internal good of, education and that it has come to be seen as a specialism of experts from other professions beyond education. I will suggest that this is a mistaken view and is to the possible detriment both of teacher confidence and, paradoxically, teacher well-being. It also creates, I will argue further, a democratic deficit in the conversation about the theory and practice of well-being in education. I will also argue against the idea that well-being is either simple or easily measureable or that it can be seen as the possession of an individual, or as a personal phenomenon.

I will critique the imposition of concepts of well-being into educational settings from other disciplines without further thought or discussion and argue for a distinctively educational theory of well-being that is appropriate for current use but always open to democratic challenge and revision from teachers and students themselves.

In chapters III and IV I set out the elements I see as essential to such an educational theory of well-being, drawing from a range of philosophers and psychologists to do this and providing some of the essential ‘critical analysis of the taken-for-granted’ that Unwin and Yandell call for (2016, p. 130). Since one of my arguments is that theory must be continuous with practice Chapters V and VI show

how I applied my theory in the form of an empirical research project, contemplative reflection, into my 13 years of practice and thought in schools.

2. Key arguments for an educational theory of well-being.

Part of my thesis is devoted to a discussion and definition of well-being and what it means in education. My own use of the term is as an adverb rather than a noun. I use it to refer to *how* we go about the daily task of being human and whether we do that *well*. The definitions of other terms, such as flourishing or Eudaimonia, happiness, emotional literacy and resilience are dealt with at length in chapters II and III. Briefly, I suggest that flourishing, Eudaimonia and happiness can all be used synonymously with well-being but I prefer to use the term well-being for reasons that I set out in chapter III. Emotional literacy and resilience I consider to be aspects of being well, where emotional literacy means the ability to notice and engage with the full range of human emotions in an appropriate way and resilience refers to an interpersonal rather than individual characteristic of our relationships to others and the world around us. I will explore the importance of enjoyment. Enjoyment, teachers' enjoyment of teaching and pupil enjoyment of learning was a conscious, consistent and deliberate goal of my well-being work in schools. I will argue that enjoyment is a core element within well-being, where enjoyment implies responding in the right way to a situation or stimulus and has connotations of joy, gratitude and physical pleasure.

More specifically this thesis will argue that

- a. Well-being is a complex, 'activity-centred' phenomenon and we can and should be well within a range of activities and in a variety of ways

Chapter III will argue that rather than considering well-being to be a simple, measurable *thing* we should think of it as being well, or as 'activity-centred' (Toner, 2006, p. 614). I will draw on Arendt's phenomenological account of the human condition (Arendt, 1958) to argue for the complexity of human ways of doing and being. However, while Arendt's account is hierarchical, I will argue against the need for hierarchy and for the notion of continuity in our diverse activities and modes of being well. Continuing to cross disciplines, I will draw on authors such as Ross (Ross, 2014) from theology, and the psychiatrist McGilchrist (McGilchrist, 2009) to suggest that what is needed for well-being is, in fact, a balance in activity and ways of being and an environment that allows this balance to occur.

This will lead into a further discussion of the imbalance which is current in society and in education and, in particular, to what Arendt sees as the dominance of the

values of work over those of action and the complete decline in the value of contemplation in the modern world. Finally, in this section, I will argue that well-being, both the well-being of the individual and the well-being of society is the goal or end of education and that it must therefore be internal to the means of education and not external to it.

b. We need to consider the context of education to understand well-being in education

In Chapter IV I will argue that well-being cannot be understood outside of its context and that education is a unique cultural context which requires its own conversation about and understanding of well-being. I will draw again on Arendt but this time on her discussion of education as an intergenerational encounter (Arendt, 2007). I will explore this idea of education and, in addition, use Dewey to argue that all human interactions can be educational and also democratic (Dewey, 1916). I will use Macintyre's concept of a practice to expand on the notion of what an intergenerational encounter can encompass and to introduce the notion that love and anxiety characterise any intergenerational educational encounter, whatever the age of the participants. I will take the psychodynamic notion of containment from the work of Bion (Bion, 1985) and argue that one key educational purpose of a theory and practice of educational well-being is the containment of love and anxiety.

I accept that, among the broader category of educational settings, both formal and informal, there is something unique about schools but will argue in chapter IV that this is a uniqueness based on intensity not upon a difference in kind and that the theory and practice of well-being in education which I am proposing is therefore applicable to any educational setting, not just to schools.

c. The ways or modes of being well in an educational context must include democracy, morality, somaesthetics and inter-dependence

In chapter II I will introduce the notion that well-being must be categorised by different modes of being well and that within education these should include democracy, morality, somaesthetics and interdependence, or the primacy of interpersonal relationships. I will define these modes of being further in Chapter IV and defend the idea that they are all continuous and all essential ways of being well in education. I will draw principally on Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916) and on Arendt's *Human Condition* (1958) to outline a social definition of democracy. I will then use Murdoch's *Sovereignty of Good* (Murdoch, 1970) and Martin's discussion of morality and mental health (Martin, 2006) in my discussion of morality.

I will draw upon Shusterman's project of somaesthetics (Shusterman, 2008) and Weil's paper '*Reflections on the right use of school studies with a view to the love of God*' (Weil, 1959) to outline how I am using the word somaesthetics within my emergent theory. Finally, I draw on the psychodynamic theory of attachment, as well as on these other authors, to discuss the idea that well-being is primarily an interdependent, rather than an individual, phenomenon.

d. Theory and practice are continuous

Not only do I critique dichotomous thinking in the definition and understanding of well-being, I also argue, with Dewey, against the dichotomous split between theory and practice. In order to closely link theory and practice myself, chapter IV provides what I hope will be a practical working definition of well-being in education for teachers, and indeed students, to work with and to think about and critique for themselves.

I draw again on Shusterman's project of somaesthetics, and in particular on the tripartite nature of his project, to suggest that as he bridges analytic somaesthetics and practical somaesthetics with a middle category of pragmatic somaesthetics, so education and in particular well-being in education, might benefit from a similar bridging category. In Chapter VII I argue that this bridging category of pragmatic somaesthetics may serve what I have argued is the essential educational purpose of containing love and anxiety.

3. Educational theory as cross-disciplinary

a. My thesis literature as cross disciplinary

Education, by its nature, crosses disciplines and the study and theory of education has traditionally been informed by multiple disciplines such as the history of education, sociology, psychology and religion. Well-being is also a term that crosses disciplines and is used in psychology, health, economics, philosophy and theology as well as, increasingly, in education.

My work has likewise always crossed disciplines, partly because of the cross-disciplinary nature of well-being itself and partly because my professional training has encompassed a number of theoretical disciplines beyond education which were then made manifest within my practice.

To do justice to the cross-disciplinary nature of well-being, of education and of the nature of my work, I therefore chose to do a cross-disciplinary study of the topic of

well-being across the disciplines which had influenced my work the most, the relatively new field of positive psychology, psychodynamic theory and theology.

Psychology is a dominant voice in discussions around well-being and positive psychology has become more prominent in this conversation during the course of my work. Therefore the inclusion of positive psychology in my literature is important. Positive psychology can, however, be too prominent a voice so I draw on psychodynamic theory, a very different kind of psychology, to provide balance in that discussion. Psychodynamic theory pays attention to topics such as anxiety and the unconscious which are relatively neglected within positive psychology.

I also draw on moral philosophy and theology. Again, this is partly for balance and to provide some philosophical rigour to discussions of concepts which psychologists use but rarely define. I also use philosophical literature to address the moral deficit which some authors identify within positive psychology (e.g. Sundararajan, 2005) and because positive psychology concerns itself with moral and indeed theological topics, such as virtue, love and spirituality.

b. My methodology as cross disciplinary

In this thesis I will draw on Dewey's arguments about the interdependence of ends and means (Dewey, 1922), as well as his critique of the separation of theory and practice. I wished to ensure that the means I used to study my practice reflected my emerging theory and the nature of that practice. I therefore chose to develop an empirical methodology that itself crosses disciplines and is influenced by positive psychology, psychodynamic theory and theology.

4. Empirical Work: Contemplative Reflection

a. The rationale for my empirical work

The inclusion of empirical work within a largely philosophical study of well-being derives from the conviction that theory and practice are indivisible and from the recognition that my thinking is inescapably rooted in 13 years of practice. I suggest that this practice therefore needs to be represented within my study for that study to have either validity or integrity. Moreover, as well as crossing disciplines, my methodology attempts to pay due respect to the continuity of theory and practice by utilizing both ideas and practices from positive psychology, psychodynamic theory and theology.

Building on what Arendt has characterised as the neglect of contemplation in the modern world, and recognising a corresponding neglect of this way of being and

acting within education, I have chosen to privilege contemplation within my methodology by drawing on a Benedictine monastic practice called *Lectio Divina*. I combined this with a focus on character strengths and virtues from positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and with the concept of psychodynamic reverie (Schoore, 2012).

The resulting methodology I have called *contemplative reflection* and, within that broader term, I created particular methods, an interview technique, *the strengths circle conversation* and a specific, time-bounded period of reflection I term *contemplative reverie*.

My other reason for developing contemplative reflection was the growing realization, during the course of my research, that my practical work in schools was contemplative in nature and could, in fact, be characterised as a contemplative approach to education. Since, as Biesta argues, 'the means and ends of education are internally rather than externally related' (Biesta, 2007, p. 10) I chose to incorporate contemplative theory and practice into a study of my work in schools.

I will detail the underlying theories behind contemplative reflection and how I applied them in Chapter V: Empirical Methodology.

5. Celebrating Strengths

I have noted that my work in schools, which I called Celebrating Strengths, received funding from a Local Education Authority under the heading of supporting mental health. The earliest work I did was based on developing the use of traditional stories, faith stories and oral storytelling by teachers. This was done explicitly to foster the well-being of children, based on Bettelheim's (Bettelheim, 1976) argument that fairy tales are essential to the healthy mental development of young children. It also grew out of my own experience of the way that oral storytelling can foster the relationship between story teller and audience. This early work included the use of philosophy for children, also known as P4C (Haynes, 2002), as a way of following up the practice of oral story telling.

Gradually, in discussion with teachers, and influenced by ideas from anthropology and religious practice, as well as psychodynamic theory, we combined the storytelling work with the practice of daily/termly/yearly rituals, traditions or festivals, some of which were established festivals, like Advent and Easter and some of which we invented, such as a festival of Performing Arts. Finally, I introduced a third element to Celebrating Strengths, character strengths and virtues (Peterson &

Seligman, 2004), derived from the field of positive psychology. The last element was interwoven with the first two – we linked certain stories to particular traditions or festivals and particular strengths to create a yearly cycle in which, at particular times of year, some strengths would be highlighted and some stories always told.

Celebrating Strengths:



a. Encouraging well-being indirectly

Celebrating Strengths was intended as a whole school approach to well-being which wove together oral stories and storytelling, a cycle of regular whole school celebrations and a language of character strengths and virtues. I developed and then fostered it in a small group of UK schools through regular visits to schools to model storytelling and games that incorporated character strengths and virtues and to participate in the celebrations we designed together. Later I ran workshops for teachers and visited schools in Australia as well as writing a book and publishing other resources that supported it.

Dame Alison Peacock, a former UK head teacher and newly appointed CEO of the Chartered College of Teaching (College of Teaching, 2016), said in a key note address that 'education is about creating space for children to flourish' (Peacock, 2016). I agree with Peacock that education is about 'creating space' for children to flourish. Unlike McCallum and Price (2016), I will argue that it may not be either possible or desirable to teach well-being directly but that we can and should try to create an environment in which well-being can exist. I have already noted Dewey's argument that we never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the

environment. He continues this argument by saying 'any environment is a chance environment so far as its educative influence is concerned unless it has been deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect' (Dewey, 1916, p. 14). I will argue that this is true of well-being as well and that we should deliberately consider and attempt to regulate the environment in which education takes place with regard to its contribution towards well-being.

It was my intention, in creating Celebrating Strengths, to attempt precisely this. I wished to help schools foster an environment for teaching and learning in which teacher and pupil might flourish. Since I have always seen the teacher as the most important element within the environment of the pupil, I particularly wanted to support the teacher in maintaining a hopeful stance toward the pupil, even under stressful conditions. The pedagogies which I suggested to teachers in the course of my advisory work, oral storytelling, school wide, regular celebrations, the use of an explicit language of character strengths and virtues, were all pedagogies which I felt would support the teacher in maintaining a hopeful stance toward the pupil. I was certainly encouraging the well-being of pupils, but I was doing so indirectly, via their environment, and most notably via the adults who constituted that environment.

b. The schools

Not all schools that were introduced to Celebrating Strengths persisted with it and of those that did, some adopted particular elements but not others. The 8 adult and 2 pupil colleagues I invited to work with me on the empirical element of this research project were selected because Celebrating Strengths seemed to be significant to them, to hold meaning, and it was that meaning or range of meanings that I wanted to explore. They came from five different schools which represent the range of schools in which I have worked.

Two colleagues were part of the school that helped develop Celebrating Strengths. Two others worked in a UK school which was introduced to Celebrating Strengths, not by me, but by a colleague. They had used it for nearly 10 years and seemed to embrace all elements of it wholeheartedly. Both schools were state schools in one of the most deprived areas of the country, in a rural, coastal area of the UK.

The two pupils were at a school in a less deprived area but one with a broader socio-economic mix. When I introduced Celebrating Strengths to their school I was thinking more about the importance of pupil involvement in the project itself and these children were part of my original project team in Year 3 and, in my opinion,

were largely responsible for keeping the project alive in the intervening four years. Another colleague taught at the most ethnically diverse school I worked with, in East London. The final school was in Australia and was private and relatively privileged. Four of the schools were secular schools, one was an Anglican school. Six of the teachers were very experienced senior leaders and two were in the early years of their careers.

II. Literature review

Introduction: creating a balanced environment in which well-being can occur

This chapter will explore the current use and theoretical underpinnings of the words well-being, happiness and flourishing, crossing disciplines in order to do this. As well as looking at the use of these terms within education, it will also draw upon positive psychology, psychodynamic theory, philosophy and theology because these were the disciplines that underpinned my well-being work in schools. It will draw attention to difficulties in the theoretical discussions of these subjects and critique them as muddled, dichotomous and hierarchical. It will also critique the presentation of well-being as a problem requiring expert solutions. Then it will point to difficulties in the practice of well-being which I see arising from these theoretical difficulties. These are the existence of a democratic deficit in the conversation about what well-being means, a tendency towards an individualist and amoral view of well-being, a disembodied view of well-being together with a limiting of the range of emotions that are allowed to constitute well-being and finally a failure to fully include the teacher in the practice of well-being. The chapter will also highlight the contributions that can be made to a better understanding of well-being in education by these diverse disciplines.

The themes of balance and environment and their relationship with well-being will recur throughout this thesis. Specifically, in this literature chapter, I will argue that no single discipline can provide a sufficiently robust or balanced account of well-being in education with which to inform the theoretical and practical environment in which teachers and pupils operate. I will argue that all of the literatures I have consulted have a contribution to make to a theory and practice of well-being for teachers and pupils but that none of them are sufficient by themselves.

I will use these literatures further in chapters III and IV to develop what I hope is a balanced theory of educational well-being which can inform and sustain well-being

practice. I will argue in these chapters that well-being, rather than being another subject for teachers to teach, is both a characteristic and an outcome, a means and an end, of a balanced theory, practice and educational environment that has well-being at its core.

1. Well-being, happiness, flourishing, mental health: definitions and use

a. In education and policy

Well-being is variously seen in the literature I have surveyed as either an aid to learning or as the goal of education. McCallum and Price argue that there is an 'inextricable link between wellbeing and academic achievement' and that well-being is 'foundational and integral to learning' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 2). Seligman et al argue that '*More well-being is synergistic with better learning*. Increases in well-being are likely to produce increases in learning' (Seligman, Ernst et al. 2009, p. 294, italics in original). Similarly a UK government document for schools notes that 'It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 4).

McCallum and Price advocate what they call a 'positive school ecology' approach to well-being in education, 'integrating a whole school community commitment in promoting individual, social, relational, behavioural, environmental and political wellbeing components' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 23). They themselves define well-being as a 'holistic state that encompasses the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive dimensions of the individual' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 23). White asserts that personal well-being is a central concept in the philosophy of education (White, 2002) and Noddings sees happiness as the goal of education (Noddings, 2003). Reiss and White (Reiss & White, 2014, p. 76) outline two overarching aims of school education, 'to enable each learner to lead a life that is personally flourishing and to help others to do so too'. Higgins argues that conceptions of human flourishing are intertwined in our educational thinking. He writes that without a 'vision of the good life for human beings one would not be able to make the countless qualitative educational decisions all educators must make' (Higgins, 2010e, p. 452).

Such visions and conceptions are, of course, often left implicit. However, Maddux et al. (Maddux, et al., 2004) argue that concepts carry consequences. How we label or classify things has implications for how we behave towards them. Moreover, as I shall argue below, it is only when concepts and ideas are explicit and conscious that

they can be thought about, discussed and challenged and such critique, I suggest, must be at the core of education, not seen as an optional extra.

The application of positive psychology in education is sometimes termed positive education, and this is defined by Seligman et al. as 'education for both traditional skills and for happiness' (Seligman, et al., 2009, p. 293). In Australia, a network of private schools has set up the Positive Education Schools Association, under the patronage of Martin Seligman, to promote 'the implementation and development of positive psychology and its applications in education settings' (Positive Education Schools Association , 2015).

According to McCallum and Price, the interest in well-being in education and in other fields, though not new, has 'emerged in tandem with positive approaches to health and psychology and counter to the predominant reactive medical approaches' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 3). In addition to the development of positive education, this has led to programmes like the Penn Resilience Programme, (Gillham, et al., 2007), a curriculum 'which supports young people to develop skills such as emotional intelligence, flexible and accurate thinking, self-efficacy' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 12) and the Mindfulness in Schools Project which is intended to 'improve health and wellbeing' and to 'help people of all ages to learn more effectively' (mindfulnessinschools.org, 2015). These are among a range of courses which are now recommended to teachers by UK government documents which aim to promote well-being, (e.g. Department of Health; NHS England , 2015; Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015).

b. In psychology and positive psychology

As in education, there are a variety of terms used to discuss the area of well-being within psychology. Some writers use terms like flourishing, well-being and happiness interchangeably. Martin Seligman, known as the founder of positive psychology, uses all three terms in the title of one of his books *Flourish: A new understanding of happiness and well-being – and how to achieve them* (Seligman, 2011). Philosopher Kristján Kristjánsson says that 'positive psychologists follow in the footsteps of most of their psychological colleagues in using the terms "happiness" and "well-being" interchangeably' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 300). He writes, 'I have no hesitation, therefore, in following the lead of Seligman, Peterson and their colleagues in using "happiness" and "well-being" synonymously' (2010, p. 300).

Psychology provides three main types of happiness account, hedonistic accounts, life-satisfaction accounts and eudaimonistic or objective-list accounts (Kristjánsson, 2010). Hedonistic accounts are generally equated with subjective feelings or with pleasure. Utilitarianism is seen as a classic example of a hedonistic account (Arneson, 1999), considering happiness to be identifiable with pleasure as 'raw, undifferentiated subjective feeling' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 300). In psychology, a modern example of a hedonistic account is provided by psychologist Daniel Kahneman. Kahneman et al. note that while the question of what constitutes the good life can be studied at many different levels, 'the experience of pleasure and the achievement of a subjective sense of well-being remain at the centre of the story' (Kahneman, et al., 1999, p. x). Like Seligman, Kahneman sees the terms well-being and happiness as interchangeable. If a person reports, consistently, that they are pleased, rather than distressed, distinguishing between 'good' bad' and 'neutral' moments, then they are happy.

Objective accounts, or objective-list accounts, tend to equate happiness with Aristotle's *eudaimonia* or flourishing (Aristotle, 1954) and to look at life as a whole. They 'suggest that happiness can and must be objectively measured' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 301). While writers like Seligman may use terms like happiness and eudaimonia interchangeably, others disagree. Ryff argues that the translation of eudaimonia as happiness is mistaken and problematic, leading to an equation of hedonia and eudaimonia and the omission of what she sees as the essence of Aristotle's eudemonia, that of striving toward excellence based on one's unique potential. She argues that 'Aristotle was clearly not concerned with the subjective states of feeling happy' (Ryff & Singer, 2008, p. 17). Ryff has highlighted six key dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth and positive relationships. Self-report scales have been developed for all of these dimensions and the resulting measure of psychological well-being is widely used (Ryff, 1989).

Life satisfaction accounts also attempt to assess how satisfied people are with their lives as a whole rather than moment by moment but they are subjective. If a person says they are satisfied with their lives then they are satisfied. Kristjánsson notes that life satisfaction accounts are now usually combined with hedonistic accounts as *subjective well-being*, or SWB, which tracks life satisfaction plus pleasure. The economists Clark et al. (Clark, et al., 2016) argue for a single definition of wellbeing and suggest that 'the right definition, in our view, should be life satisfaction' (2016,

p. 1). They do not suggest combining it with happiness or pleasure but imply that well-being simply equates to life satisfaction.

Snyder and Lopez distinguish between psychological well-being, social well-being and emotional well-being (Snyder & Lopez, 2007) and describe subjective well-being as consisting of 'emotional well-being and happiness' (2007, p. 70). Further permutations on well-being can be found in the literature. Smedegaard et al. (Smedegaard, et al., 2016) use the term 'psycho-social well-being' (Smedegaard, et al., 2016, p. 9) while the UK Faculty of Public Health further distinguishes between 'mental wellbeing', 'social wellbeing' and 'wellbeing', (Faculty of Public Health, 2010).

c. In psychodynamic theory

Psychodynamic theory, which developed out of the work of Sigmund Freud (Freud, 1930), focuses less on promoting happiness and more on the ability to bear a certain level of unhappiness as a normal part of life. Freud does, however, discuss happiness. He saw the 'pleasure principle' as the purpose and driving force of human life, people 'strive after happiness.....It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure. In its narrower sense the word "happiness" only relates to the last' (Freud, 1930, p. 263).

This suggests that Freud, like Kahneman et al, (Kahneman, et al., 1999) is equating happiness with pleasure but clearly also has wider uses of the word in mind. Freud saw happiness as harder to achieve than unhappiness, 'our possibilities of happiness are already restricted by our constitution. Unhappiness is much less difficult to experience' (Freud, 1930, p. 264). The task of avoiding suffering, for Freud, pushes that of obtaining pleasure into the background; he comments that the 'pleasure' principal is usually changed into a more modest 'reality' principal and happiness comes to be seen as the avoidance of suffering rather than the positive presence of pleasure. In the famous conclusion to his Studies on Hysteria he describes the aim of his treatment as 'transforming hysterical misery into common unhappiness' (Freud, 1895, p. 269).

Freud's focus on reality rather than happiness is also found in the writings of Melanie Klein (Klein, 1975). Klein worked as a psychoanalyst with children and developed a conceptualization of an unconscious inner world, present in everyone, peopled by different characters, or objects, representing different aspects of the self. She observed that children, in play, represent their feelings through characters, the

good fairy, the sly fox. This division of feelings into differentiated elements she called splitting. She argued that projection often accompanies splitting and involves locating feelings in others. Thus a child attributes slyness to the fox, goodness to the fairy, cruelty to the wicked witch, exploring and resolving contradictory feelings through play.

Splitting and projection are, according to psychodynamic theory, the predominant defences against pain in early childhood and can recur at times of stress at any age, 'Whenever anxieties increase, defensive processes are fuelled and there is a tendency to return to splitting' (Obholzer, 1994, p. 92). For Klein, the goal of therapy was not happiness but maturity or integration, the ability to bear one's own complex emotions. The state of splitting or projection, Klein called the paranoid schizoid position, where paranoid refers to the location of badness outside oneself and schizoid to splitting (Halton, 1994).

The mature ability to bear conflicting emotions was referred to as the depressive position, because it involves giving up the simplicity, and pleasure, of the idealization of self and other and the acceptance of the complexity of internal and external reality. Reality, from a psychodynamic perspective, 'inevitably stirs up painful feelings of guilt, concern and sadness' (Halton, 1994, p. 14) and pleasure, or happiness, may indicate a state of unrealistic idealization. According to Maiello, (Maiello, 2012), Wilfred Bion based his idea of the container and the contained (Bion, 1985) on Klein's idea of projection. The container is the recipient of projections, good and bad while the projections themselves are what is contained. Integration is then the ability to 'contain' conflict within the self rather than have to expel it.

d. In philosophy

Philosophy, like psychology, splits happiness into subjective and objective accounts, seeing the latter as taking into account the whole course of a life. Nussbaum notes that, for Aristotle, pleasure was something that was normally, but not always, attendant upon worthwhile activity while happiness was conceived of as 'something like flourishing human living' (Nussbaum, 2008, p. 90), a kind of living that is active, including all that is of intrinsic value. Aristotle said that happiness can only be assessed by viewing a person's life as a whole, up to and including their effect on their descendants (Aristotle, 2008, p. 22). He saw it as empirically true that, for humans, flourishing consists of the 'realization of intellectual and moral virtues and in the fulfilment of their other specifically human physical and mental capabilities' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 301).

Again, as with psychology, there are those who defend happiness as pleasure. Davis (Davis, 2008) argues that pleasure and happiness are identical. He notes that the word happy is ambiguous since it can be used to refer to fleeting pleasures and to an overall disposition that frequently enjoys such pleasures. While he admits that pleasure and happiness have different connotations he insists that 'the terms *refer to the same mental state*' (2008, p. 165, italics in original).

Theology, too, divides happiness into subjective and objective. Charry argues that the purpose of theology is 'human flourishing', while noting that Western Christian theology 'is skittish about temporal happiness' (Charry, 2010, p. ix). St Augustine of Hippo, whose thought underpins much of Western Christianity, concluded that full and lasting happiness was impossible in this life. As Charry says, 'His doctrine of happiness remains hopeful that we can have and enjoy what we seek and be healed by that enjoyment. It is cautious in that it discourages high expectations of persistent flourishing as life proceeds' (Charry, 2010, p. 60). Williams points out that in mainstream Christian thought believers are baptised, not into happiness or success, but into the death and suffering of Christ. Jamison, a Benedictine monk, has written a book called 'Finding Happiness' (Jamison, 2008). His focus, like that of Charry and Williams, is not on happiness as a feeling but as an action, on what he calls *knowing* the good and on *doing* good.

Objective happiness is also sometimes called flourishing and used as a translation for Aristotle's eudaimonia (Fowers, 2008). However, MacIntyre says that when Aristotle 'first gives this name to the good for man, he leaves the question of the content of eudaimonia largely open' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 148). Likewise Arendt argues that eudaimonia 'cannot be translated and perhaps cannot even be explained' (Arendt, 1958, p. 193).

2. Theoretical difficulties in the literature

a. Complexity and confusion

Central to this thesis is the argument that teachers and pupils, as well as philosophers and psychologists, have a right to take part in 'the ongoing conversation about what constitutes the good for humans' (Fowers, 2008, p. 638). The philosopher Michael Oakeshott referred to this as 'the conversation of mankind' (Oakeshott, 1981 in Williams, 2007, p.18). I will argue that well-being, which in the next chapter I will explore as *being well*, is precisely what constitutes 'the good' for humans. Taking part in the ongoing conversation about what constitutes well-being is, I suggest, a challenge owing to the existing and indeed increasing complexity,

ambiguity and contradiction inherent in that conversation. I will argue, however, that in education it is a challenge teachers and pupils must be given the opportunity to rise to. As I argue in section 4 below, the question of what is 'good' is an important element of well-being. Questions about what constitute a good life are central to what and how we teach and therefore a central part of how we do that well within education.

The philosopher 'Kristján Kristjánsson says, of happiness, that 'there is hardly a muddier concept in the over 2,000 year history of philosophy itself than that of happiness' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 300). The Faculty of Public Health web page describes the discussions of well-being as 'muddled' (Faculty of Public Health, 2010) and sociologists Morrow and Mayall say that 'well-being is conceptually muddy but has become pervasive' (Morrow & Mayall, 2009, p. 221).

Muddy and muddled do seem particularly apt terms to use. Moreover, not only is there disagreement among philosophers and psychologists about what happiness consists of, whether it is subjective or objective, fleeting or life long, but terms like happiness and well-being are now being used as part of, or alongside, other terms like health, mental health and emotional health. The muddiness, I would argue, is getting muddier.

The link between health and wellbeing is not new. According to McCallum and Price it can be traced back to the World Health Organisation's 1947 definition of health as a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, (McCallum & Price, 2016). However, I suggest that while it may not be new, the association of well-being with health and mental health is increasing. Bruckner argues that today, an 'obsession with health tends to medicalize every moment in life instead of allowing us to live in easy insouciance' (Bruckner, 2000, p. 52). In the policy literature which advises schools on well-being, the focus on emotional literacy of the SEAL programme (Department for Education and Skills , 2005) has now been replaced by a focus on 'emotional health' and 'mental health' which are now frequently coupled with the term well-being. This can be seen in the titles of some recent UK government publications, *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing* (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015), *Future in Mind, Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing* (Department of Health; NHS England , 2015).

This complexity and confusion extends to the contents of the documents. Pages 4 and 5 of *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing* (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015), written for schools and colleges, contain references to 'emotional health and wellbeing', 'mental health', 'emotional difficulties', 'health and wellbeing', 'resilience', 'mental disorder', 'emotional wellbeing', 'good mental health', 'mental health and wellbeing' and 'optimal health and wellbeing'. Nowhere are any of these terms defined. The Ofsted School Inspection handbook, the basis of the UK school government inspection regime, also mentions well-being (Ofsted, 2015). It speaks about 'well-being' (2015, p. 61), 'physical wellbeing' (2015, p. 36) 'mental wellbeing' (2015, p. 51) and 'personal wellbeing' (2015, p. 42). Again, none of these terms are defined.

Adding mental health to the mix makes it muddier still. Martin notes that 'there is no consensus about how to define mental health' (Martin, 2006, p. 8). According to Martin, Freud defined mental health negatively as the absence of pathology, but at the same time he did affirm a positive definition as 'the ability to work and love without excessive anxiety and depression' (Martin, 2006, p. 41) and insisted that there was not a sharp line between normality and neurosis. The World Health Organisation defines mental health as 'a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community' (WHO, 2016). Here, mental health is seen as the same as well-being.

By contrast, the UK charity Faculty of Public Health uses the phrase 'mental health', 'to describe the field which encompasses mental illness/disorder, mental wellbeing and all other states of mental health' (Faculty of Public Health, 2010). Mental health, according to this account, *contains* mental wellbeing but also mental illness. Suldo et al. (Suldo, et al., 2016) define mental health as 'a complete state of being, consisting of the absence of psychopathology and the presence of positive factors such as subjective well-being' (2016, p. 434). They see subjective well-being as *part of* mental health. However, Smedegaard et al. (Smedegaard, et al., 2016) refer to 'mental health and well-being' (2016, p. 1) setting them alongside each other as apparently separate concepts. These authors also use the term 'psycho-social well-being' (2016, p. 9) but as with their other terms they do not define it. Similarly Guang et al. (Guang, et al., 2016), in a study of psychological well-being and resilience use both 'well-being' and 'psychological well-being' as well as 'resilience' but again define none of them.

The UK government document *Mental Health and Behaviour, Advice for Schools* does not define mental health either but goes some way towards a definition by saying that ‘children who are mentally healthy have the ability to develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually; initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships; use and enjoy solitude; become aware of others and empathise with them; play and learn; develop a sense of right and wrong; and resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them’ (Department for Education , 2016, p. 34).

Given this extraordinary complexity, it is not essential or even possible that we will reach any lasting conclusions about well-being or ‘the good for humans’ (Fowers, 2008, p. 638). What is essential, I argue, is that however muddled the field, within education we acknowledge the right of teachers and pupils to take part in the conversation.

The Faculty of Health comments that well-being ‘is pertinent to a wide range of disciplines, all of which have a slightly different take on it relating to underlying beliefs, attitudes and practices’ (Faculty of Public Health, 2010). That is understandable and, I suggest, unproblematic. What becomes problematic within education is, I would argue, when we fail to examine our own underlying beliefs, attitudes and practices and ensure that how we use the word well-being and indeed if we use it at all is compatible with those beliefs, attitudes and practices. One important educational principle is, as Unwin and Yandell point out, that we engage in critical analysis of the ‘taken-for-granted’ (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 130).

In addition to the difficulty of engaging in such critique because of the complexity of the subject, finding the confidence to do so is made even harder, as I will argue further below, by the presentation of well-being as a serious problem which requires what Sugarman calls, ‘the presumed expertise of psychological professionals’ (Sugarman, 2007, p. 176) to solve. To make matters worse, well-being is now also becoming an extrinsic target for teachers to achieve and even a threat to their livelihoods.

b. Problematic, expert and extrinsic

Well-being as a problem to be solved

While some literature points to a positive link between education and wellbeing, and promotes well-being as good for learning, more often discussions of well-being in the literature occur in the context of concern about ill health or depression. As I noted in my introduction, this thesis has been written at a time of heightened public

concern about what is termed a 'crisis' in child and adolescent mental health (Weale, 2016) and about the 'self-harm epidemic' (Bennet, 2016, p. 1). Seligman et al. justify 'positive education' and the use of positive psychology 'interventions' in classrooms by arguing that 'the prevalence of depression among young people is shockingly high worldwide' (Seligman, et al., 2009, p. 294) and citing 'the current flood of depression' (Seligman, 2011, p. 80).

Whether or not an epidemic of mental ill health actually exists or not is contested. Costello et al argue that 'there is no evidence for an increased prevalence of child or adolescent depression over the past 30 years' and suggest that 'public perception of an 'epidemic' may arise from heightened awareness of a disorder that was long under-diagnosed by clinicians' (Costello, et al., 2006, p. 1263). In the UK there has been no survey of child and adolescent mental health problems since 2004, (Department of Health; NHS England , 2015, p. 25). Writing in the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2012, Murphy and Fonagy note that 'self-harm rates have increased sharply over the past decade, as evidenced by rates of hospital admission and calls to helplines, providing further indications of a possible rise in mental health problems among young people. However,' they continue, 'in the absence of up to date epidemiological data, it is uncertain whether there has been a rise in the rates of mental health problems and whether the profile of problems has changed' (Murphy & Fonagy, 2013, p. 3).

Despite this uncertainty, the language used in government documents, as well as in positive psychology publications, clearly positions children's well-being as an urgent problem to be solved. Notwithstanding the stated goal of positive psychology to move away from an exclusive focus on pathology, towards 'optimal functioning' (Linley & Joseph, 2004, p. 5), anxiety about teenage depression and teenage suicide is a significant motivator for the adoption of positive education. A teacher at Geelong Grammar, the private Australian school which first invited Seligman and his team of psychologists to teach them about positive psychology said that, 'If our investment saves one kid from committing suicide in 10 years' time it's worth every single penny' (Akerman, 2012, p. 1). Paradoxically then, the motive for much positive psychology seems to imply as negative a view as the most negative of psychodynamic theory, apparently bearing out Ecclestone and Hayes' criticism that positive psychology is underpinned by beliefs about people's vulnerability (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009).

UK government documents are similarly anxiety driven. One report for schools says that 'in an average class of 30 15 year old pupils: three could have a mental

disorder, ten are likely to have witnessed their parents separate, one could have experienced the death of a parent, seven are likely to have been bullied, six may be self-harming' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 5). The implication seems to be that 27 out of the 30 pupils may be a cause for the concern that the publication seeks to address. And another government document exclaims, 'there is no time to waste' (Department of Health; NHS England, 2015, p. 21). The opening lines of the Evaluation Report of the UK Resilience Programme state, 'There are increasing concerns about children's well-being in the UK, their behaviour, and the low academic attainment of a large fraction of the population. The Every Child Matters agenda stressed schools' potential and duty to promote pupils' well-being' (Challen, et al., 2007, p. 1). Here it is not just well-being that is a cause for concern but 'behaviour' and the 'low academic attainment of a large fraction of the population' too.

Morrow and Mayall note that 'research that focuses on problems and deficits tends to overlook reasonably healthy behaviours by the majority' (2009, p. 227). This, I would argue, runs the risk of distorting the emotional environment for teachers and increasing their anxiety. Morrow and Mayall also comment upon the 'relatively low status of children in the UK' (2009, p. 224) and argue that 'adults tend to construct children and childhood as a social problem' (2009, p. 225). They suggest that 'we need to hold a mirror up to adult worlds and see how they reflect back upon children' (2009, p. 226). I will pick up and explore the necessity of seeing well-being as something that exists between rather than within individuals below. Here I will note that the presentation, to teachers, of well-being as a problem to be solved increases the difficulty of seeing it as a normal part of the discourse and practice of education. A document entitled *Mental health and behaviour: Advice for Schools* says that 'Schools say that this is a difficult area' (Department for Education, 2016, p. 4). I suggest that, in addition to the confusion detailed above, this is very likely to be because this is precisely what they have been told.

Moreover, not only are schools presented with well-being as a problem, it is apparently both a problem that requires expert solutions but, at the same time, a target on which they will be judged.

Expert domain

In positioning themselves as a solution to the problem of 'the flood of depression', (Seligman, 2011, p. 80) positive psychologists stress their scientific credentials. They emphasise positive psychology's 'reliance on empirical research', the 'scientific understanding' of subjects like character strengths and virtues (Peterson

& Seligman, 2004, p. 4) and its goal 'to measure and to build human flourishing' (Seligman, 2011, p. 29) 'with rigor' (2011, p. 28). Seligman et al. insist that 'well-being programmes, in parallel with any medical intervention, *must be evidence-based*' (Seligman, et al., 2009, p. 297, italics in original). By this they mean 'the random-assignment, placebo-controlled design (RCT, or randomized controlled trial)' noting that 'the very same method can be used to validate what, if anything, builds the positive side of life'. Seligman et al. refer to this as 'a royal road of a method for answering questions like these' (Seligman, et al., 2005, p. 414).

This emphasis on science is also evident on web sites that apply positive psychology to 'classroom interventions' (Seligman, et al., 2009, p. 293). The web page of The Positive Education Association proudly speaks of 'best practice in the science of wellbeing' (Positive Education Schools Association, 2015) while the Mindfulness in Schools Project emphasises its reliance upon 'randomized controlled trials' (mindfulnessinschools.org, 2015).

However, other psychologists question whether virtues can be studied 'as if they were natural objects with an a priori essential existence whose components and functioning could be isolated; reductively analysed and classified; formulated in causal, mechanistic laws; and made to yield to the instrumental and technical interests of psychological scientists' (Sugarman, 2007, p. 182). Sugarman expresses concern that an over-emphasis on science and expert assessment runs the risk of reducing our capacity for reflection on human flourishing (Sugarman, 2007).

Cummins, meanwhile, notes that the measurement of subjective well-being (SWB) 'has been and remains a highly contentious issue' (Cummins, 2013, p. 186). He points out that the most fundamental psychometric characteristic of a scale is its 'construct validity' i.e. that the scale measures what it was devised to measure. Therefore before a scale can measure 'well-being' there must be agreement about what well-being consists of and Cummins notes that when it comes to happiness or well-being scales 'understanding construct validity is not easy' (Cummins, 2013, p. 194). Similarly Morrow and Mayall note the many different definitions of well-being and 'the complications of measurement that arise from different interpretations' (2009, p. 227) and Suissa points out 'the obvious problems involved in any experimental method that uses self-reporting as a measure' (Suissa, 2008, p. 577). Moreover Murdoch makes the point that 'as we move and as we look our concepts themselves are changing' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 27). Given that well-being is a complex, contested concept and given that concepts change and human self-

knowledge as well as self-report is fallible, asking people how happy they are tells us something but what it tells us, and how rigorously, is open to interpretation.

Positive psychology has been accused of scientism, (Richardson & Guignon, 2008, p. 606), which incorporates the ideal of the theorist as disinterested observer and suggests that 'everything worth expressing can be expressed in a scientific idiom' (Flanagan, 2007, p. 20). As Sundararajan points out, Seligman's appeal to 'the authority of science' rather than to the Bible or Confucius, when the lay person is not in a position to evaluate 'the empirical findings of the experts' (Sundararajan, 2005, p. 54) can inhibit critical thinking just as much as appealing to the Latin Bible in Medieval times. She notes that 'it is when values are bolstered by scientific facts that they become opaque and impervious to critical reflection' (2005, p. 54). Fowers makes a similar point when he argues that our assumptions about 'the good' must be as open and as visible as possible and available for discussion, not hidden behind problematic claims of 'value-neutral psychological research' (Fowers, 2008, p. 650).

Suissa insists that any 'rigorous understanding of happiness necessarily involves not just empirical study but conceptual philosophical enquiry' (2008, p. 577) and she is highly critical that 'the discourse around this research makes it impossible for us to talk of things that cannot be measured' (2008, p. 577). Speaking of education more generally, Biesta also expresses concern 'about the tension between scientific and democratic control over educational practice and educational research' (Biesta, 2007, p. 5) and emphasises that educational questions are not just questions about 'what works' (Biesta, 2007, p. 1) empirically, but are questions of value.

I suggest that allowing any one profession or mode of research or group of experts to dominate 'the ongoing conversation about what constitutes the good for humans' (Fowers, 2008, p. 638) and suggesting, even unintentionally, that empirical evidence somehow puts practices beyond critique and beyond philosophical reflection risks impeding teachers' democratic participation in the teaching process. Moreover, since education must always involve questions of interpretation, meaning and value it is also, as Suissa argues, 'anti-educational' (Suissa, 2008, p. 579).

According to Biesta, (Biesta, 2016), in his final writings Dewey resisted scientism and argued that knowledge is about the relationship between actions and consequences, about what is possible, not about what is certain. Dewey argued against the hegemony of a modern, mechanistic worldview that had 'stripped the world of the qualities that made it beautiful and congenial to men' (Dewey, 1929, p.

42). The open and dialogic discussion of what it is good to do and to be, of the qualities that make life beautiful, is, I would argue, an essential part of education if not its core, and well-being, flourishing and the virtues themselves should therefore be topics of dialogue and democratic questioning within a flourishing classroom. Pupils must be presented with the reality that moral choices and concepts are complex, not certain, and that understanding them requires time and effort. 'Learning takes place when such words are used, either aloud or privately, in the context of particular acts of attention....words are not timeless, ... word utterances are historical occasions' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 31).

In education, questions about values, virtues, and what it is good to do and to be must not only be asked but must be seen as within the expertise of teachers and pupils to discuss for themselves, not something that is decided, with certainty, once and for all by experts from other professions. As Taylor notes 'articulating the good is very difficult and problematic for us' (Taylor, 1992, p. 96) but we must continually attempt it. Since 'the good' is part of education it is therefore part of well-being and part of what teachers and pupils need to engage with. In section 4 below I will argue that well-being is an essentially moral notion, concerned both with *what* it is good or right to do and be and *how* it is good or right to be.

Nor are positive psychologists the only experts targeting teachers with solutions to the problem of well-being. I noted above that well-being is frequently coupled with the terms health or emotional health or mental health. While some advice to teachers about well-being comes from the department of education, other documents come from health related public bodies such as NHS England and the Department of Health (2015), from Public Health England and The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, (2015). Nor is the health message confined to these bodies since it is also enshrined within the Children's Act 2004 which refers to emotional well-being as 'physical and mental health and emotional well-being' (Children Act, 2004, pp. Pt I, 2.(3)(a) p.6).

To reinforce the message that teachers are in need of help in this problematic area, one document, *Future in Mind: Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing* tells them explicitly that 'not every adult who works with children and young people can be a mental health expert' (Department of Health; NHS England, 2015, p. 5).

Extrinsic target and existential threat

Yet, despite being in need of advice from health and mental health professionals and interventions from positive psychologists and despite the fact that no-one can agree on what well-being actually is, teachers in the UK are also to be measured on how well they promote the well-being of children. The UK government document *Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing* emphasises that 'schools have a duty to promote the wellbeing of students' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 4), citing The Children Act 2004 (2015, p. 5) and providing regular 'Links with the Ofsted inspection framework' (2015, p. 7) to underline this fact.

Schools are therefore being told that they will be measured by Ofsted on how they 'promote the well-being of students', though this document never defines exactly what it is that they are to promote. Ball comments on the 'existential anxiety' that a culture of managerialism and performativity has led to in teachers, (Ball, 2003, p. 219). Since schools which fail to perform well in an Ofsted inspection can be closed down or face the dismissal of staff, the failure to 'promote the wellbeing of students' is being positioned by this document from Public Health England and The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition as having very serious consequences indeed. Well-being cannot be defined but teachers' livelihoods may depend upon an inspector's judgment of its existence or absence. Well-being is being presented here as simultaneously the domain of health, and therefore beyond a teacher's usual expertise, but at the same time as a very high stakes extrinsic target which teachers must promote. Indeed, I think it is not unreasonable to suggest that promoting the well-being of students has now become an existential threat to teachers' own well-being.

The Ofsted School Inspection handbook (Ofsted, 2015) makes reference to well-being. As I noted above it mentions well-being, physical well-being, mental well-being and personal well-being but defines none of them. How schools are to promote a concept, or inspectors to inspect the promotion of a concept, which nobody can define or agree upon is not discussed.

c. Hierarchical and dichotomous

The discussions of well-being as either subjective or objective and the distinctions which are made between psychological well-being and subjective well-being, flourishing and pleasure are both dichotomous and hierarchical. Dewey was sceptical of dichotomous thinking. He critiqued dualisms like body and mind, subject and object, means and ends, self and world, knowing and doing (Shusterman, 2000,

p. 14; Dewey, 1916) because such distinctions quickly take on an evaluative colouring and privilege one term over the other, obscuring or downgrading the value of the dominated term. He argued that such oppositions or dichotomies should be replaced by 'the idea of continuity' (Dewey, 1916, p. 183) and I suggest that this is a more appropriate way for thinking about well-being within education than relying on dichotomies and hierarchies.

An evaluative colouring can clearly be seen in the language with which distinctions between objective and subjective happiness, hedonia and eudaimonia, are discussed. Davis, for example, notes that the word pleasure is usually reserved for what he calls 'trivial' pursuits and happiness for 'profound, noble' ones, (Davis, 2008, p. 165). Similarly, Haybron argues that hedonism fundamentally misconstrues the nature of the mental states that constitute happiness, because pleasures like sex or cheese crackers simply 'don't reach "deeply" enough' to constitute happiness (Haybron, 2008, p. 175). Jamison's distinction between feeling good and knowing or doing good (2008) implies that the former is less important than the latter. Linley and Joseph (Linley & Joseph, 2004b) define psychological well-being as 'engagement with the existential challenges of life' (2004b, p. 721) and equate it with Aristotelian eudaimonia. They dismiss subjective experience as 'fleeting and transitory' and argue that 'psychological well-being can be viewed to be at the head of the applied positive psychology value hierarchy' (Linley & Joseph, 2004b, p. 721). Aristotle's own theory of happiness was certainly hierarchical, with contemplation the highest good and sensual pleasure the lowest, though all were 'goods' (Taylor, 1992, p. 278).

Taylor, (Taylor, 1992) argues that, in the modern era, there has emerged a new understanding of subject and object, 'where the subject is, at it were, over against the object. ...The modern sense is one in which subject and object are separable entities' (1992, p. 188). As Taylor notes, 'we place "within" the subject what was previously seen as existing, as it were, between knower/agent and world, linking them and making them inseparable' (1992, p. 188). The modern sense of the self as 'a disengaged agent of instrumental reason' which emerged with the Enlightenment, is radically different from earlier times, 'For us the subject is a self in a way he or she couldn't be for the ancients' (1992, p. 176) and is 'radically subjectivist'. Christopher argues that 'the very notion of psychological well-being is a Western concept. The very division of well-being into a psychological dimension and a

presumably physical dimension is a direct by-product of our philosophical, particularly Cartesian heritage' (Christopher, 1999, p. 143).

If, for Aristotle, subject and object were inseparable, or as Dewey might argue, continuous, then so were hedonia and eudaimonia, and both were *inter* rather than *intra* personal phenomenon. I suggest that, in education in particular, a theory of well-being needs to attempt to move beyond a radical subjectivism and beyond a dichotomous and hierarchical view of well-being. I argue this partly because the current categories of subjective/objective, psychological well-being/subjective well-being seem to cause more confusion than they clear up. I also argue this because I wish to challenge the strangely disembodied nature of well-being that they give rise to, which I will address more in paragraph 4.c below and the consequent down grading of the body and of pleasure. I will argue that pleasure and bodies must never be undervalued in education.

d. Unbalanced

Positive vs negative

Positive psychologists critique traditional psychodynamic theory which is based on the work of Freud. Hubble and Miller note that Freud had a view of humanity that was 'censorious, even cynical' (Hubble & Miller, 2004, p. 335) and argue that his legacy to therapy has been a vocabulary of deficiency and despair. Peterson and Seligman accuse psychoanalytic theory of encouraging psychologists to 'regard anything positive about people as suspect' (2004, p. 58). I would agree that the focus of psychodynamic theory tends to be on pain and not on pleasure. As Reid comments 'few papers in the psychoanalytic literature seem to describe love, gratitude, beauty or hope' (Reid, 1990, p. 51). Mawson, for example, says 'There are mental pains to be borne in working at any task, and these have to be dealt with by us as individuals, each with a personal history of having developed ways of managing or evading situations of anxiety, pain, fear and depression' (Mawson, 1994, p. 67). He completely omits to point out that any task has potential pleasures attached to it as well.

I will argue that psychodynamic theory's view of anxiety as a normal part of life is important within education. At the same time it does tend to neglect and to be overly sceptical about love, hope and beauty, which are equally real and equally important. Reid says that, in presentations of clinical work, hate, anger and envy are readily interpreted but opportunities to recognize appreciation, hope, love, pleasure and 'the beauty of the psychoanalytic experience' are lost, perhaps through a fear of

being accused of idealisation, or of missing what lies behind them (Reid, 1990, p. 51).

However, Reid's own psychoanalytic paper, entitled '*The Importance of Beauty in the Psychoanalytic Experience*' demonstrates that they are not completely absent. She suggests that it is beauty and its linked attributes, goodness, hope and truth which 'form the bedrock for mental health in all of us' (Reid, 1990, p. 51).

By contrast, positive psychology, I argue, takes an overly negative view of negative emotions. Seligman argues that it is increasing positive emotion which leads to an increase in well-being. An individual who feels negative emotions frequently needs to 'fight these feelings' and not allow them to prevent them living a meaningful life (Seligman, 2011, p. 53). Moreover, the implication is that maximising positive emotion and wellbeing, and getting rid of negative emotion can only be a good thing. Other positive psychologists follow Seligman. A recent book, *Personal Well-being Lessons for Secondary Schools, Positive Psychology in Action for 11 to 14 year olds*, while acknowledging the existence of mixed emotions, provides exercises from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to 'increase positive emotions (and reduce negative feelings)' (Boniwell & Ryan, 2012, p. 81).

However, what positive psychology counts as negative emotions to be got rid of, may also be seen not only as a normal part of learning (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983) but as both an incentive to it and its necessary accompaniment. Learning can be an anxious process precisely because it involves change. Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. refer to the need for a learner to be able to bear the pain of 'not knowing' for long enough for understanding to emerge (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 72). Dewey notes that growth and development take place when the organism falls out of step with its surroundings and then recovers unison with them in a way which enriches it. 'Life grows when a temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of the energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives' (Dewey, 1934, p. 13). And Suissa argues that 'a powerful and central part of all pictures of education since Plato involves the idea that for something to be truly educational it must be challenging, unsettling; possibly liberating but painfully so' (Suissa, 2008, p. 587).

I suggest that seeing discomfort as a normal part of learning is a more appropriate view for education than trying always to minimise negative emotions and maximise positive ones, an approach which, I suggest, might even encourage the denial of emotions deemed somehow unacceptable and their consequent projection. As

Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. point out, 'some degree of anxiety is an inevitable concomitant of engaging in creative work' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 76).

The need for philosophy in education

Suissa argues that a study of happiness cannot rely on empirical work, like positive psychology, alone but must be informed by 'conceptual philosophical enquiry' (2008, p. 577). Similarly, Morrow and Mayall (2009) are critical of the fact that positive psychologists are keen to work on well-being with disciplines like socio-biology, epidemiology, evolutionary theory and neuro biology but make no mention of the need to also collaborate with critical sociology, political or social theory or philosophy. Flanagan argues for crossing disciplines in studying happiness, suggesting an 'empirical-normative inquiry into the nature, causes and conditions of human flourishing' (Flanagan, 2007, p. 1) that 'involves systematic philosophical theorizing that is continuous with science and which therefore takes the picture of persons that science engenders seriously' (2007, p. 2).

I suggest that a 'continuous' theory of well-being that draws on diverse disciplines will allow a balanced and educational discussion about well-being to take place. Such a discussion can then give rise to a distinctively educational theory and practice of well-being. Such a theory, I argue, can include positive psychology and psychodynamic theory, philosophy and theology but none of them by themselves can provide a sufficient account and each perspective requires the others to counter-balance it. Moreover, as Morrow and Mayall (2009) have pointed out, other disciplines besides those I have studied here have a contribution to make. The conversation about what constitutes well-being, or the good in education must be an ongoing conversation that draws on perspectives beyond education but is not dominated or imposed upon by any of them.

3. Practical difficulties arising from the theoretical difficulties in the literature

The theoretical difficulties in the ideas and applications of the words happiness, flourishing, well-being and mental health which I have outlined above are part of the social, cultural and intellectual environment in which teachers teach and pupils learn. In the next chapter I will argue for the use of the word *well-being* within education, unqualified by terms like social, emotional or psychological, and propose that we understand it not as a private possession of a person or as a thing, but as an activity centred concept, an adverb which describes how we are and how we do things, whether we *are well* and can *act well*.

Dewey critiqued the separation of theory and practice, arguing that they are continuous (Dewey, 1916). Insole argues that 'the world discloses itself in certain ways to us which are more fundamental than our theory. Theory is derivative on practice' (Insole, 2005). My own theory, which I will develop further in the next chapter, has certainly arisen from 13 years of practice and from my experience of the world of education prior to that.

The environment in which we operate has a profound effect, I argue, on whether we can be and act well. The theoretical environment cannot fail to affect practice and to be affected in its turn by that practice. I have already touched on some practical areas where theory and practice impinge on each other in the previous section. I will now look in more detail at some practical difficulties which I see arising from this muddy area of educational theory. Chiefly, I will argue that theoretical difficulties such as those I have described serve to close down or limit the space in the educational environment for the practice of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of human relationships and interdependence.

a. Democratic deficit in the conversation about the good

I argued above that a combination of the confusion about the meaning of well-being, the positioning of it as the domain of psychologists and scientific experiment as well as of health experts and its inclusion in the regime of UK school inspection as an extrinsic target on which teachers are to be judged, all contribute to a democratic deficit in the ongoing conversation about what is good in education and for human life, for which education prepares us. This democratic deficit includes teachers and also pupils who have a right to consider and discuss all kinds and aspects of well-being for themselves.

Deprofessionalizing teachers

In the next chapter, I will use Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* to expand upon the idea that the ability to speak and to be heard are fundamental to democracy and to well-being, to being well, as a human generally. Here I wish to comment upon the importance of being able to speak out and to act for the professionalism of teachers and upon problems arising from current discourse which I see as affecting that democratic professionalism.

Dewey, writing in 1916, said that 'Nothing has brought pedagogical theory into greater disrepute than the belief that is identified with handing out to teachers recipes and models to be followed in teaching' (Dewey, 1916, p. 95). Coffield, commenting on this statement, notes that UK governments of the left and right have

both done precisely this, with 459 documents being given to schools on literacy alone in a period of 8 years. Coffield refers to this as an 'avalanche of advice' (Coffield, 2016, p. 76) and notes that the result of this avalanche has been the 'infantilization and deprofessionalization' of teachers (2016, p. 77). Now I suggest that the avalanche of advice about academic subjects has been joined by a similar avalanche, this time about health and well-being, and as I have illustrated, it comes from health bodies and indeed from private organisations (How to Thrive, 2017) as well as from education departments. This is exactly the 'handing out to teachers' of 'recipes and models to be followed' that Dewey was so critical of in 1916.

This advice, this use of recipes and models, sends a clear message to teachers which, as I quoted above, is actually made explicit and not simply left implicit. They are explicitly told that they are not experts in well-being and implicit in this message is that they need help, that well-being is complicated and difficult and problematic. Moreover, not only are teachers being told that they are not experts on well-being, but their opinions, views and creative practices are nowhere invited or valued. This, I suggest, effectively silences teachers as well as infantilizing them. Unwin and Yandell argue that 'In these debates it has become common to marginalize the role of the teacher and to silence teachers' voices' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 126). I suggest that we see both of these processes at work in the area of well-being. Arendt saw teaching as comprising three key roles, instruction in subjects, skills or knowledge, passing on civilisation from one generation to the next and care – care for the individual child and care for the world (Arendt, 2007). The well-being of children is integral to that caring role and this is being undermined by the focus on well-being as difficult, extrinsic to education and the realm of other experts or professions.

The programmes and advice to teachers, written often by psychologists, as is the case with the Penn Resilience Programme, (Gillham, et al., 2007), insist upon 'programme fidelity' (Challen, et al., 2007, p. 7). Teachers do not have the freedom to change the materials even if they have reservations about the quality of teaching materials provided (2007, p. 7). I argue that delivering, faithfully, a scripted programme written by psychologists is not teaching and teachers have not only a right but a duty to speak, to challenge and to innovate in such situations.

However, speaking, challenging and innovating require confidence. Halton points out that the gaps between professions or disciplines encourage 'splitting and projection' (Halton, 1994, p. 15). Feelings of competence and a trust in the value of one's own experience and knowledge can too easily be split off and projected into

the psychologist or the expert or into 'the science of well-being' (Positive Education Schools Association , 2015). I would argue that the idealization of the psychologist as the expert on well-being, in addition to an over emphasis on rigor and what can be measured and the need for randomized controlled trials before we can act in this area, undermines the confidence of the teacher, depletes their role and risks increasing feelings of inadequacy. It is part of the historic role of the teacher to care and they are already able to do this. No measurement or randomized controlled trial of care is required before they do so.

Disenfranchising students

MacIntyre argues that one task of teaching is to educate students so that 'those students will bring to the activities of their adult life questioning attitudes that will put them at odds with the moral temper of the age and with its dominant institutions' (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002, p. 3). He goes on to note that there is little opportunity in education to step back and 'reflect upon what the point and purpose of the whole may be, so that one can better understand the parts' (2002, p. 3). Starratt suggests that 'one of the major lessons of an educating process is the importance of the discussion (not the imposition) of moral values as they are embedded in the circumstances of everyday life' (Starratt, 2003, p. 147).

An essential aspect of well-being in an educational context must be that there is opportunity for pupils as well as teacher to step back and reflect and discuss both education and well-being itself. In chapter IV I will use Dewey's argument that democracy and education cannot be separated, to argue that an educational philosophy of well-being must enable dialogue and democratic discussion of the good or goods on which that well-being is said to be based. It is also essential that teachers and pupils alike have the time, the opportunity as well as the confidence in their right and ability to engage in such democratic discussion and this is not a situation that the current, muddled nature of the discourse encourages.

I will argue further in Chapter III that such discussions about well-being or the good are not add-ons to education or distractions from education, they *are* education, its end as well as its means.

b. Amoralism and individualism

In this section I will discuss the claims of positive psychology to be 'ahistorical, value - and culture - free science' (Christopher & Campbell, 2008, p. 675) and the appropriateness of such a stance within a theory of educational well-being. I suggest that the tendency to over focus upon the supposed neutrality of science

and to medicalize well-being obscures the essentially moral nature of well-being, at least in education. I will also suggest that our dichotomous view of well-being, which Christopher links to 'Western individualistic assumptions' (Christopher, 1999, p. 143) is problematic both morally and practically. I will argue that in education we need to acknowledge the essential interdependence of human beings, both with each other and with their wider environment.

I will also argue that a mature theory of educational well-being will take what Dewey called the 'speckled' (Dewey, 1922, p. 23) nature of human character, our capacity to cause suffering to self and others, very seriously.

Value free?

Hackney (Hackney, 2007) queries what he sees as an over optimistic view of human nature in positive psychology. He cites Linley and Joseph's rejection of any "evil" component to humanity, and their view that it is entirely due to 'the absence of 'facilitative socio-environmental conditions' (Linley & Joseph, 2004b, p. 715). Other theologians and philosophers share his caution. Williams says that all human beings live with 'quite a lot of inhumanity and muddle inside us' (Williams, 2014, p. 5). Murdoch accepted Freud's 'realistic and detailed picture of the fallen man' arguing that neither objectivity nor unselfishness are natural to human beings (Murdoch, 1970, p. 50). She spoke of 'a darker, less fully conscious, less steadily rational image of the dynamics of the human personality' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 42).

The idea that flourishing is an intrinsically moral concept is one widely discussed in the philosophical literature but positive psychology lays claim to moral neutrality and has little to say about it. Seligman says, very explicitly, that positive psychology 'is not a morality or a world-view' and that science is morally neutral (Seligman, 2002, p. 303). For him, the terrorist who flew the plane into the World Trade Centre had achieved the 'meaningful life' (2002, p. 303). Given that positive psychology explicitly claims to draw on Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 18) and that, according to Aristotle, eudaimonia is an explicitly moral notion such that it 'is impossible to achieve eudaimonia without being morally good' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 301), this is an extraordinary claim. It helps to explain criticisms of Seligman as committing an 'Aristotelian heresy' (Kristjánsson, 2012, p. 308) and of positive psychology as 'seriously underdetermined, morally and practically' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 303).

Other philosophers describe the moral element of the theory of positive psychology as 'conflicting' (Martin, 2007, p. 90) 'underdeveloped' (Fowers, 2008, p. 629) and as 'a model of the good life devoid of a moral map' (Sundararajan, 2005, p. 36).

Whether or not science is or can be morally neutral and this is, of course, contested, (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) education is not. Whatever we may or may not be aiming for in education, I doubt that many if any teachers would agree that it is the creation of criminals or terrorists.

Not only do scientific claims of neutrality obscure the essentially moral nature of well-being, so too, I argue, does the medicalization of well-being and its increasing links with health, which I commented on in Section 3.a. above. Again, there is a tendency to dichotomize and if something is about health then, we assume, there is no question of responsibility. I am ill so I cannot help or be held responsible for my behaviour. However, Martin argues not only that 'moral values are embedded in positive definitions of mental health as well-being' (Martin, 2006, p. 8) but he is also critical of a 'morality-therapy dichotomy that polarizes responsibility and sickness' (2006, p. 18). He calls for an integration of ideas of mental health and morality. I argue that this integration is particularly essential within education owing to education's 'essentially moral character' (Pring, 2000, p. 21) and suggest that we must always keep sight of the moral component of well-being.

Beista says 'education is a moral practice, rather than a technical or technological one' (Biesta, 2007, p. 10) and that the 'most important question for educational professionals is therefore not about the effectiveness of their actions but about the potential educational value of what they do, that is, about the educational desirability of the opportunities for learning that follow from their actions' (Biesta, 2007, p. 10). He argues that we need to regain a sense that it 'matters what pupils and students learn and what they learn it for' (Biesta, 2009, p. 39). Suissa notes that 'education is inherently connected to our ethical environment' and adds 'as R.S. Peters famously argued, for something to coherently be described as 'educational' it must involve some notion of the good' (Suissa, 2008, p. 580).

I agree with Biesta that education is a moral practice but I want to go further and suggest that potentially there is a moral element to every technical or technological practice as well; not only does it matter what students learn and what they learn it for, it matters *how* they learn it, too and it matters *how* teachers, teach. What constitutes a good education is a profoundly moral question, a question of what is valuable, of what it is good to do in a school and of how it is good to be. If positive

psychology's amoral vision of a scientifically proven path to well-being, plus the increasingly medical tone of advice to teachers, closes down the moral space of discussion of what it means to lead a good life then teachers and pupils must be equipped and encouraged to defend their right to such discussion. One task of a theory and practice of well-being in education must be to do that.

Individualist?

Positive psychology has been accused of a 'disguised ideology of individualism' (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). Christopher defines individualism as 'an atomistic understanding of the person as being metaphysically discrete and separate from other persons' (Christopher, 1999, p. 142). Morrow and Mayall point to 'the individualistic nature' (2009, p. 220) of debates about well-being and ask whether a focus on well-being is a way of not talking about welfare and the responsibilities of governments towards children. Fowers suggests that relying too much on subjective criteria for the good can encourage an 'egocentric, inward-looking perspective on what is worthwhile' and argues that positive psychology's use of terms such as well-being, contentment, happiness and satisfaction 'have a resoundingly individualistic ring to them' (Fowers, 2008, p. 634).

That well-being practices might encourage egoism or individualism is, I suggest, problematic on at least two counts, one is moral and theoretical and one is pragmatic and concerned with mental health.

Egoism argues that we ought always, at all times, to pursue our own best interests. Some philosophers defend egoism as ethical (Hunt, 1999) while others reject it, (Toner, 2006). Murdoch argues against the cultivation of the 'fat, relentless ego' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 51). She says we are blinded by 'self-centred aims and images' and that 'what counteracts the system is attention to reality inspired by, consisting of, love' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 65). Murdoch is arguing for an outward focus on reality and on the *other*, rather than an inward focus on *me* and my well-being. 'It is an attachment to what lies outside the fantasy mechanism, and not a scrutiny of the mechanism itself, that liberates' (1970, p. 66).

Murdoch's objections to egoism touch on both of the ways in which I argue that it is problematic for an educational theory of well-being. The first, moral issue is whether a life devoted to the self is a good life. According to Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Arendt, 1958) the modern world has come to be dominated by the idea that labour, earning a living for oneself and one's family, is the only end of life. I will explore the

implications of this for educational well-being in more detail in the next chapter. Here I wish to emphasise that the idea that personal happiness is and always ought to be my chief goal in life is *assumed* by much of the positive psychology and positive education literature but is, as Christopher points out, based on Western individualistic assumptions and ought to be part of the critical discourse of teachers and pupils themselves, not accepted as a given.

The second issue I wish to raise with individualism is pragmatic and concerned with mental health. Murdoch suggests that looking outside ourselves is what 'liberates'. Smeyers et al. comment upon an 'inward turn' which they see in society and in education (Smeyers, et al., 2007, p. 9). While meditation and other therapeutic approaches that encourage young people to examine themselves are well meant, I increasingly wonder, with Murdoch, whether unhappiness is best addressed by yet more focus on myself. As the evaluation report on the UK Resilience Programme comments 'The role of facilitator can be emotionally demanding due to the distressing nature of some real life problems raised by pupils' (Challen, et al., 2007, p. 6). I suggest that while it is reasonable to expect teachers to deal with distress that is revealed spontaneously by pupils in an ordinary lesson, it is questionable whether such distress should be actively provoked by practices, such as those of the UK Resilience Programme, that deliberately encourage a focus on the self in a school context.

Moreover Skelton et al. (Skelton, et al., 2010) note the increasing emphasis on the individual as the source of success or failure at school, which has placed 'enormous pressures' (2010, p. 186) on middle-class girls in particular, and has been linked to an increase in the level of self-harm and eating disorders reported among this group. Christopher argues that 'subjective well-being places the onus of well-being on the individual' (1999, p. 199) while Morrow and Mayall caution that 'well-being (emphasising responsibilities of individuals to be happy or to seek therapy if they are not) has replaced welfare (emphasising responsibilities of states to their citizens)' and they suggest that there is a 'danger that a focus on well-being is ultimately an individualistic, subjective approach that risks depoliticizing children's lives' (2009).

I suggest that the view of positive psychology that resilience is a skill of the individual (Reivich & Shatte, 2002) may not only divert attention from the political and social factors that affect children's well-being in ways completely beyond the control of either themselves or the adults around them but may also unintentionally

label vulnerable children as failing in yet another way. Inadvertently adding the need to be perfectly happy or resilient to the requirement to be beautiful, thin, sporting, musical and academically high achieving would, I suggest, be unfortunate and probably counter-productive.

It is certainly the case that solutions to what has come to be seen as the problem of well-being or to what are variously referred to as 'mental health difficulties' (Department for Education , 2016, p. 16) or 'mental health problems or disorders' (2016, p. 34) in children are often presented as lying within the children themselves. Personal, social, health and economic lessons will now teach children about mental health, 'they will address such topics as self-harm and eating disorders, as well as issues directly concerned with school life, such as managing anxiety and stress round exams' (Department of Health; NHS England , 2015, p. 34). Children are to be given the tools to cure their own distress though the possible causes of that distress may still be left intact. The whole trend of documents such as *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing* (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015) as well as positive psychology interventions like the Penn Resilience Programme, (Gillham, et al., 2007) is on supporting children 'to be resilient and mentally healthy' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 5) and, by implication, to tackle their unhappiness themselves.

There is little or no acknowledgement that well-being derives from the environment in which we find ourselves at least as much, if not more than, from within ourselves. The document *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing* (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015) acknowledges that 'the physical, social and emotional environment in which staff and students spend a high proportion of every week day has been shown to affect their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing as well as impacting on attainment' (2015, p. 9) but then says nothing at all about that physical environment and, in a 38 page document, devotes just one paragraph to the well-being of the teachers who form a crucial part of the pupils' social and emotional environment. Self and environment are fundamentally inextricable and 'individual development for a flourishing life' is 'inconceivable outside of a flourishing community' (Kristjánsson, 2010, p. 299). The theologian Stephen Cherry argues for a 'relational self' noting that self and society 'are not two separate spheres, both are products of relationship' (Cherry, 2016, p. 2). Moreover, as Morrow and Mayall point out, 'the interconnections and interdependencies of childhood with adulthood

have yet to be fully elaborated' (2009, p. 226). A lack of well-being, even a mental health problem or disorder, might actually be an appropriate response to an intolerable, atomistic and inhumane environment.

Dewey refers to the 'illusion of being really able to stand and act alone – an unnamed form of insanity which is responsible for a large part of the remediable suffering in the world' (Dewey, 1916, p. 27). I argue that an educational theory and practice of well-being cannot be morally unengaged, cannot ignore the challenges of individualism and cannot fail to take the human capacity to cause suffering to self and other, very seriously indeed.

The private possession of the individual

Linked to the positioning of well-being as value free and concerned with the individual, is an understanding of well-being as a private possession that is *within* the individual. Christopher notes that after the Enlightenment there arose a view of the self which he calls possessive individualism, 'the individual as possessor or owner of his or her own being' (1999, p. 143). I suggest that what is emerging now is a view of well-being as, similarly, a private possession, owned by the individual or to which the individual is entitled.

This focus on the individual is, I suggest, accompanied by a reification of well-being. In the next chapter I will argue, following Toner's argument from virtue ethics, for an activity centred conception of well-being as being well. This is one reason why, throughout my own writing in this thesis, I am keeping the hyphenated spelling of well-being. I wish to emphasise that 'well' is descriptive of a prior state of *being*. However, I have observed, in recent academic and especially in recent policy documents, that the hyphen is being omitted. It is now 'wellbeing' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015) that is to be encouraged and possessed. 'Wellbeing' appears now to be a simple and single *thing*.

This reification may, I suggest, have been encouraged by the idea that well-being can be measured in a straightforward way. If we can measure something, this suggests that it must exist as a single entity and since it is measured largely by self-report, the logical place for that entity to exist is within the self.

c. Beauty and the disembodied nature of well-being

I have already noted criticism of positive psychology as underpinned by unexamined, essentially Cartesian assumptions, (Christopher, 1999; Sugarman, 2007). Shusterman points out a similar phenomenon in Western philosophy,

(Shusterman, 2008). It is not, he argues, that philosophers ignore the body, rather that it exerts a powerful and generally negative presence in 'philosophy's persistent privileging of mind and spirit' (2008, p. ix). Fitzgerald notes that it is virtually impossible to discuss the inseparability of mind and body in Western languages 'without recourse to Cartesian metaphors that inherently contradict the notion of unity of mind and body, of subject and self' (Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 17).

Shilling notes that education literature does the same. He comments that in books and articles he has studied on schools 'no one seemed to possess a living, sensing *body*' (Shilling, 2016, p. xiii) and that it was 'rare to hear much about education's role in imparting to students particular physical experiences, habits, disciplines and practical techniques'. He goes on to say that 'even more lacking was a sense of how thought and knowledge, of *whatever* variety, was engaged in and acquired by humans who, as embodied organisms, were always *physically* located in and engaged with the environments in which they lived, worked, and rested' (Shilling, 2016, p. xiv, italics in original).

Shilling points out that 'embodied individuals are always situated within a wider social and material environment that they both shape and are shaped by' (2016, p. 108) and that in neuroscience 'the body is viewed as the foundation of the mind' (2016, p. 20). This view is echoed in robotics which no longer sees the body as 'a slave to the brain' but acknowledges that 'brains and bodies develop together' (Allen, 2016, p. 18).

However, in the psychological and philosophical literature I have looked at on well-being the role of the body in happiness is hardly mentioned, an absence Shusterman attributes to an 'idealistic bias and disregard for somatic cultivation' (Shusterman, 2008, p. ix). Perhaps surprisingly, even the research into subjective well-being neglects the physical for the mental. Oishi, Schimmack and Diener note that, despite a plethora of research on personality, emotion and well-being, 'physical pleasures have not received much attention in the context of subjective well-being' (Oishi, et al., 2001, p. 153). Well-being seems, by these accounts, to be a curiously disembodied experience.

Shusterman brings together the body, morality and happiness, seeing the body as the site where 'one's skills of perception and performance can be honed to improve one's cognition and capacities for virtue and happiness' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 11). He calls this project somaesthetics. I use Shusterman's project to develop my

theoretical understanding of my own practice in Chapter VII and to argue that beauty is, along with the body and pleasure, a neglected aspect of well-being that an educational theory and practice of well-being must address. It is an aspect of well-being that is, as I will argue in the next chapter, continuous with morality, drawing on Murdoch's discussion of beauty as 'a completely adequate entry into the good life, since it is the checking of selfishness in the interest of seeing the real' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 63). I suggest that developing our appreciation of beauty as part of well-being is not only continuous with morality but also a corrective and counter-balance to the medicalization of well-being which I have critiqued above.

Dewey rated pleasure highly, noting that 'pleasures are not to be despised in a world full of pain' (Dewey, 1934, p. 16). The philosopher and mystic Simone Weil writes 'The intelligence can only be led by desire. For there to be desire, there must be pleasure and joy in the work, the intelligence only grows and bears fruit in joy. The joy of learning is as indispensable in study as breathing is in running' (Weil, 1959, p. 3).

The philosophical and psychological literature may neglect the body, pleasure and beauty but I suggest that an educational theory and practice of well-being must not and I advocate space for somaesthetics both in theory and in practice. Cartesian language and dichotomous subject/object distinctions may be difficult to avoid but we must, in education, at least make the attempt.

d. Focus on student well-being but not on teachers

Schore draws attention to the inter-subjective nature of human growth and development (Schore, 2012). He notes that 'development arises out of the relationship between the brain/mind/body of both infant and caregiver held within a culture and environment that supports or threatens it' (Schore & Schore, 2008, p. 10), and focuses on the importance of attachment, noting that 'resilience in the face of stress and novelty is an ultimate indicator of attachment security' (Schore & Schore, 2008, p. 11).

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), according to Schore, arose out of an amalgam of psychoanalysis and behavioural biology. It states that our earliest relationships shape us in basic ways and that 'attachment processes lie at the centre of all human emotional and social functions' (Schore, 2012, p. 27) for the rest of our lives. Attachment relationships are created and sustained through 'nonconscious', 'nonverbal' and 'bodily based affective communications' (Schore, 2012, p. 75).

In contrast to the conscious, cognitive and individual emphasis of positive psychology, Schore argues for the importance of 'covert, unconscious affective states of brain/mind/body', and notes 'the critical importance of unconscious forces that drive all human emotion, cognition, and behaviour within a sociocultural matrix' (Schore, 2012, p. 4). Schore uses the word reverie to describe the nonverbal communication of these states (Schore & Schore, 2008, p. 14) and emphasizes its importance in enabling growth and change within a relationship.

Fonagy et al.'s work on 'resilient children' predates positive psychology by nearly a decade (Fonagy, et al., 1994, p. 231). Like Schore, Fonagy is interested in intersubjective and social as well as intra-subjective processes. In contrast to the tendency of positive psychology to see resilience as a learnable and individual skill, (e.g. Gillham, et al., 2007; Reivich & Shatte, 2002), Fonagy notes that resilience is not an attribute born into children or even acquired during development but 'a set of social and intra-psychic processes which take place across time given felicitous combinations of child attributes, family, social and cultural environments' (Fonagy, et al., 1994, p. 233).

If, as Schore argues, the self-organizing of the developing brain occurs within the context of a relationship with another self and another brain, and resilience in the face of stress or novelty is linked to our attachment security, then it seems reasonable to posit that flourishing, or well-being is also a dyadic or intersubjective construct. It does not really make sense to speak of an individual flourishing but only of flourishing individuals-in-relationship. I would go further and argue that it does not really make sense to ask if an individual child is flourishing within a classroom without taking into account the complex web of inter-relationships within the school, and of the school within its wider culture. Well-being I suggest, happens between human beings, between relational selves, rather than within them.

As I have already argued, teachers are an essential, perhaps the most essential element, in children's environment and it does not make sense to consider the well-being of children without considering the well-being of the adults around them. McCallum and Price note that 'throughout the world, researchers, teacher educators, policy writers, curriculum developers and even politicians stress the important role that teachers have in the achievement, satisfaction and health of wellbeing of children and young people' (McCallum & Price, 2016). In the UK, government documents, echoing positive psychology texts and psychodynamic theory, acknowledge the importance of relationships to well-being. The document *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing* for example,

says that 'relationships between staff and students and between students are critical in promoting student wellbeing' (2015, p. 9).

However, as I have already noted, this document then devotes only a single paragraph of its 38 pages to 'promoting staff health and wellbeing' (2015, p. 16). Moreover, the link it makes to the UK Ofsted Inspection criteria that 'all teaching staff benefit from appropriate professional development and that performance is rigorously managed' (2015, p. 16) seems to suggest that the route to the well-being of staff is in fact rigorous management.

Similarly, the document *Future in Mind* notes that 'Inspection is a key lever to drive improvement' (Department of Health; NHS England, 2015, p. 34). It continues 'the new draft Ofsted inspection framework "*Better Inspection for All*" includes a new judgement on personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners' (2015, p. 34). There is no mention of teacher welfare in this statement, nor any acknowledgement that the very regime of inspection and management which is apparently to improve children's well-being has contributed to a situation where 'the daily work of teachers is constantly surveilled, controlled, evaluated and changed' (Coffield, 2016, p. 78) resulting in 'physical and emotional damage to teachers' (Ball, 2003, p. 219). Nor is there any acknowledgement of the impact such emotional damage to the teacher is likely to have upon the children they teach.

Well-being and its lack are located firmly in the child and the interconnectedness of student and teacher well-being is not mentioned. In none of the UK government documents which advise teachers on supporting *student* well-being are teacher anxiety, depression and stress acknowledged as relevant to well-being or seriously addressed in their own right. The reality, as McCallum and Price note, is that 'in Western countries, between 25 and 40 per cent of beginning teachers are likely to leave the teaching profession in the first five years' (2016, p. 113).

I argue that it is paradoxical, if not perverse, to suggest that inspecting teachers more rigorously and providing teachers with more advice is a solution to 'mental health difficulties' (Department for Education, 2016, p. 16) or 'mental health problems or disorders' (2016, p. 34) in children. Our young people are not islands but, I strongly suggest, pick up and mirror the distress that is felt by the adults around them. These adults are part of the environment to which young people are connected and which affects and is affected by them. To address student well-being without equally asking whether the current system of inspection and the wider regime of performativity of which it is part (Ball, 2003) is balanced, appropriate and

conducive to adults' well-being is in itself problematic. I suggest that this omission is both unethical and impractical and will fail to bring about a genuine state of well-being in anybody. I will analyse the regime of performativity, its ethics and its practicality, further in Chapter IV.

4. Contributions from positive psychology and psychodynamic theory

Christopher and Hickinbottom argue that 'the emphasis on human flourishing in positive psychology and the attempt to study it in a culturally sensitive manner are warranted and long overdue' (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008, p. 564). I would agree. Notwithstanding my criticisms of positive psychology as paradoxically often motivated by a negative and pessimistic view of children, I see its focus on positive emotions (Frederickson, 2001) and on virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) as welcome and as having something to contribute to an educational theory and practice of well-being.

The focus on virtues, in particular, restores to educational discourse topics such as love and hope, which I will argue in Chapter IV are crucial to an understanding of well-being in education. The virtues listed by Peterson and Seligman include a love of beauty and may themselves be defined as describing what is beautiful in human beings. Despite Seligman's protestations of moral neutrality, I would argue that a focus on character strengths and virtues also provides an important moral component to discussions of well-being, though I agree with Kristjánsson that 'holding that students can, in principle, lead a morally fulfilling life by concentrating on a few chosen strengths in which they excel, without attention to a coherent, all embracing structure of virtues, may constitute half a loaf—but it is surely not the bread one expects from a program of virtue education' (Kristjánsson, 2012, p. 97). In the next two chapters I will outline a theory of educational well-being that strives for balance across different ways of being and doing. I suggest that drawing on all of Peterson and Seligman's character strengths and virtues encourages such a balanced approach to well-being.

Where I see positive psychology as lacking balance is in its tendency to underestimate and indeed undervalue all emotion. Kraft asks 'where in educational theory do we find rage, outrage, resentment, indignation, annoyance, bitterness, hurt feelings or anger? Where are pleasure, pride, amusement, lust and excitement, satisfaction and joy? What about love, trust, goodness, devotion and affection?' (Kraft, 2012, p. 394). He is asking, I suggest, for attention to be paid to the full-range of human emotion rather than to a carefully selected, positive few.

A psychodynamic perspective, I argue, contributes to a more nuanced and balanced view of emotion in the classroom. Crawford, for example, argues that flourishing occurs when the ego can retain the bad and the good parts of self and object, 'Bearing tension is a more involved process than splitting...a clue to flourishing is that tensions are held, not resolved' (Crawford, 2005, p. 9). This mature, integrated acceptance of the complex emotional flavour of reality, which Klein describes as 'the depressive position' (Klein, 1975, p. 271) is an essential aspect of well-being or flourishing that I argue is neglected in the positive psychology literature.

In the next two chapters I will address the importance not just of love but of anxiety in an educational theory and practice of well-being. Here too, I see positive psychology as failing to provide an adequate account and psychodynamic theory as having an important contribution to make. The focus of psychodynamic theory on anxiety, though perhaps exaggerated at the expense of attributes like love and hope (Reid, 1990) is, I will argue, an essential perspective within the anxious environment that is education. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) and the work of psychotherapists like Schore (Schore, 2012) add to our understanding of the interconnectedness of human beings and the necessity of that interconnectedness for growth and development which are fundamental to well-being as well as learning.

However, I also argue that psychology on its own cannot provide a full account of well-being, either its theory or practice. As I argued in section 4b of this chapter, education is a moral undertaking (Starratt, 1998; Biesta, 2009) and philosophy and theology have always had something to say about the good life and about how we pass on a sense of what is good to the next generation. A theory of educational well-being needs, I suggest, to abandon any pretence at being somehow 'morally neutral' (Seligman, 2002, p. 303) and to grapple with the challenging questions of what constitutes a good education and even, more basically, what constitutes good at all. These are philosophical and metaphysical questions and are intrinsic to what and how we teach. As Higgins points out, 'teachers work at the very site where human cultures preserve themselves and challenge themselves to grow' (2010e, p. 439). Therefore I see philosophy and theology as having an essential contribution to make, both to this thesis and to a theory and practice of educational well-being.

5. Essential additions from philosophy

Part of my argument throughout this thesis is that balance is an essential element within well-being and I have attempted to mirror this theoretical position within the practice of my own research. One way I have done this is by building on my study of

philosophical literature in this chapter by a further use of philosophy and particular philosophers in two distinct ways within this thesis. One use has been analytic and traditional. The other use has been contemplative and unconventional.

The analytic and traditional use of philosophy within the rest of this thesis is to construct a *theory* of educational well-being, which I have touched upon here and expand in the next two chapters. I consult a variety of philosophers to do this but, in particular, I draw extensively on Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Arendt, 1958) and more briefly on her essay *The Crisis in Education* (Arendt, 2007). I also use Toner's discussion of eudaimonia from within virtue ethics (Toner, 2006). I use Arendt's discussion of human action to provide a theoretical framework for thinking about ways of being well and doing well, for considering in more depth the complexity of the construct of well-being and for arguing that well-being is intrinsic to the goal and means of education, not an add-on or the private possession of an individual.

I also use her work to analyse the balance and imbalance inherent within the present context of education which I see as pertinent to well-being and to analyse and theorise the educational context itself. I see Toner's discussions of eudaimonia as particularly relevant to my emerging thesis that well-being is a continuous concept which includes morality, beauty and relationships. I therefore use his definition of well-being to construct one that I hope will be of use within education.

The second way that I use philosophy within this thesis is contemplative and unconventional and has been used to study my *practice*. After the first iteration of my literature study I identified philosophers that felt particularly pertinent to my work in schools. I then used these philosophers within my empirical reflective research, contemplative reflection, precisely as *sources of contemplation*. I did this in an attempt to deepen my understanding of my own work, to enlarge upon it but also to challenge it. I therefore looked for philosopher's whose ideas seemed *relevant* to my work but also those whose ideas *resonated* with me at an emotional level as well as at an intellectual level. That resonance included ideas that attracted but also ideas that shocked, challenged or even repelled me. This method of selection follows the practice of *Lectio Divina* (Paintner, 2012) the monastic prayer tradition that informed the empirical part of my work. I will explain more about how I did this in chapter V.

My work has always included a focus on the physical environment, on spirituality, on mental health and the body. I described it, from its earliest phases, as creating 'positive habits of thought, speech and behaviour' (Fox Eades, 2008, p. 6). Shilling describes Dewey as part of 'a marginalized history' of body relevant writings in

philosophy, going against the trend of 'the dominant Western approach to philosophy' and notes that he 'analysed cycles of habit, crisis and creativity as informing the relationship of embodied subjects to their environments' (Shilling, 2016, p. 3).

This focus on habit and the body and the continuity of self and environment, as well as his critique of body/mind and subjective/objective dualisms led me to focus on Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922) for this contemplative stage of my research. I included Murdoch's work *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) because of its pertinence to the emergent theme of love in my thinking as well as its relevance to an understanding of the connection between beauty and morality. Murdoch's concept of attention, which I saw as particularly important, was based on Weil's work and I found Weil's paper *Reflections on the right use of school studies with a view to the love of God* (Weil, 1959) an uncomfortable critique of my own work, of secular attitudes in education and of the balance between the extrinsic and intrinsic goods of education.

I used Shusterman's project of somaesthetics because it complemented and occasionally contradicted Murdoch's discussions of beauty and morality and bridged all elements of my own work by challenging the boundaries between body/morality/beauty/spirit.

Finally I chose to study further Martin's work *From Morality to Mental Health* (Martin, 2006) because it provided continuity from the earliest days of my work and its inception within the field of mental health to my emerging interest in the essentially moral nature of a theory of educational well-being.

6. Conclusions: creating an environment in which well-being can occur

Like McCallum and Price, I suggest that we need to take a 'positive school ecology' approach to well-being, one that involves 'integrating a whole school community commitment in promoting individual, social, relational, behavioural, environmental and political wellbeing components' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 23) and which includes teacher as well as pupil well-being. I also suggest that we need to go beyond the school in considering the environment in which well-being does or does not exist.

I have said that the field of well-being is confusing, dichotomous and hierarchical. If there is a problem with well-being then I have suggested that the confusing advice from a variety of disciplines and experts which constitutes the environment in which teachers teach and pupils learn is part of that problem and not the solution. I

critiqued the presentation of well-being to teachers as the domain of experts, as an extrinsic target and even as an existential threat.

I said that this problematic presentation of well-being advice can close down an important and necessary conversation about what well-being means in education and have argued that educators cannot and must not simply accept the definitions of other disciplines without critical engagement. Nor must they accept the imposition of well-being practices and ideas without any attempt at such discussion or critique. As Morrow and Mayall argue, 'the use of terms such as well-being should be critically considered' (2009, p. 221) and 'involving children and young people in defining well-being could enhance the potential usefulness of the concept' (2009, p. 227).

I have argued that a theory of well-being should be underpinned by the concept of continuity (Dewey 1916) rather than dichotomy, as an alternative way of thinking about well-being in education, that it should be informed by multiple disciplines including psychology, psychodynamic theory and philosophy and that it should provide teachers and pupils with the confidence, the opportunity and the right to discuss the meaning and practice of well-being for themselves.

I suggested that a continuous theory and practice of well-being should be democratic, moral, somaesthetic and inter-personal in nature and that such a theory and practice might then help to provide a balanced space for a necessary and educational conversation about well-being to take place. I outlined two ways I was proposing to use the philosophical literature in particular in my thesis, both as a way to construct theory and to understand practice.

In the next two chapters I will expand upon the construction of that theory and then, in chapter V, show how I used that theory empirically in order to better understand my own practice.

III. Philosophical Discussion A: the nature of well-being

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I surveyed ideas about happiness, well-being and flourishing from positive psychology, psychodynamic theory, philosophy and theology and argued that, as education itself crosses disciplines, so a theory of educational well-being needs to be informed by diverse disciplines.

In this chapter, I will develop these arguments further. I will argue for well-being as the most helpful term to use within education and suggest that well-being is best thought of as an adverb, as *being well*, as how we *are* and as *how* we engage in life and in education. I will suggest that we consider it an 'ongoing process' (Martin, 2006, p. 12) rather than a fixed state or a thing, a noun, to be possessed, measured and controlled.

Being and doing are inseparable. We cannot exist without a certain level of activity and in order to act, we must first exist. I will use Arendt's discussion of the different activities that constitute the human condition to argue that well-being, *how* we engage in those different activities, is not a unitary or simple concept but a composite idea, comprising disparate elements, like the human condition itself. I will argue further that, in educational contexts, well-being is not separate from or in addition to education but is an inherent, constitutive part of education, part of its aims and part of its means. I will argue that educational settings, and education, aim to prepare humans to live, or to be, *well* and not badly and that the well-being of society and of the individual is the goal of education. As being and doing are inseparable, so are means and ends. If well-being is the end of education then, I will argue, it must also be a part of the ongoing process, the means of education, too.

2. Happiness, well-being or flourishing?

The words we use are important. They contribute to the creation of our social reality and influence what we look for and what we see. I suggest that we need to decide which word, happiness, well-being or flourishing we primarily wish to use in education and to work together to define what it means in practical terms. I will argue that the unqualified term *well-being* is the most appropriate word to use in educational settings. This, I will suggest, is because it avoids evaluative hierarchies, because it has the potential to go beyond the body/mind dichotomy, because it is a modest and achievable word and because it is a word that has the goals of education at its heart.

In the previous chapter I noted that some writers, such as Seligman, use the terms happiness, well-being and flourishing interchangeably, (Seligman, 2011) and that the definitions and differences are not always clear. This can lead to apparent tautology in public discourse, such as the report that depression or poor mental health lowers 'happiness' levels (bbc.co.uk/news, 2016). Where writers do make clear distinctions these can take on an evaluative flavour.

In education, I have argued that we must at least attempt to move beyond hierarchical notions of well-being which seem dismissive of, even blind to, subjective and especially physical pleasures. Our subjective experience of the world is important and so are happiness and pleasure. They all have a part to play in well-being within education though none of them is the whole picture.

I suggest that the word *well-being* can include both the psychological and the physical, the subjective and the objective in a way that is in keeping with Dewey's concept of continuity (Dewey, 1916) and is more appropriate than the use of any single word from a dichotomous pair. To use one word from a dichotomous pair implies either the absence of the opposing word or its inferiority. The use of *psychological* well-being seems to imply that it is more important than *subjective* well-being with which it is often compared in the literature (Linley & Joseph, 2004b). Similarly, if we employ the word *happiness*, unhappiness seems logically to be excluded from the picture.

However, as I argued in the last chapter, struggle and unhappiness are sometimes appropriate in education and therefore have a part to play in an overall picture of well-being. Moreover, the term *psychological* well-being seems a curiously disembodied notion. The word *psychological* implies that some kind of abstract mental process is to be privileged over physical or subjective well-being (Linley & Joseph, 2004b). However, since 'brains and bodies develop together' (Allen, 2016, p. 18) a theory of well-being in education needs to take the body seriously, as does education itself. Neither physical sensation nor physical pleasure can be excluded or deprioritised within education as it is an essential part of learning subjects like dance and music and cooking and art appreciation and I would not wish to preclude its presence from literature or mathematics, from science or from languages either.

All emotions are, in essence, physical sensations. Schore refers to emotion as 'bodily based' (Schore, 2012, p. 4) and we use the metaphor of touch, 'feelings' to describe emotions, usually forgetting that it is a metaphor at all (Linden, 2015). Moreover, as Damasio points out, 'emotion is integral to the processes of reasoning and decision making' (2000, p. 41). Since emotion is part of reasoning and decision making and the body is where we feel emotions, we cannot leave our bodies out of either learning or out of well-being. Learning is a physical activity, not a disembodied abstract mental function and so, I argue, is wellbeing. For this reason, *psychological* well-being seems no more appropriate a term to use in education than happiness.

Flourishing and its rigorous measurement is described by Seligman as ‘the goal of positive psychology’ (Seligman, 2011, p. 26). In the previous chapter I discussed my reservations about the very possibility of the rigorous measurement of concepts as complex and contentious as flourishing, well-being or happiness. My main reason, however, for wishing to avoid the term flourishing is the observation that teachers’ well-being has itself suffered in recent years from the imposition of superlatives, such as excellent or outstanding, expressed as extrinsic targets for them to achieve.

I have already noted Ball’s critique of the rise of ‘the market, managerialism and performativity’ which employ measurement and targets as ‘means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions’ (Ball, 2003, p. 216). He suggests that teachers are being required to ‘set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation’ (2003, p. 215). I have been critical of the use of the word well-being itself as a target for teachers to achieve and will expand on this point in the next chapter. For the superlative ‘flourishing’ to be added as another calculation in the existence of teachers and indeed as another superlative against which they would be measured, would, I suggest, be paradoxical, since the very need to ‘strive for excellence’ has, according to Ball, already led to ‘physical and emotional damage’ (Ball, 2003, p. 219). Adding the need to achieve a target for schools to flourish would therefore be, I suggest, perverse. So I am concerned about the potential mis-use of the word *flourishing* in education. I certainly disagree with Seligman’s suggestion that it can be rigorously measured (Seligman, 2011) but even if it could be, I fear that it would become one more metric with which to actually measure teachers themselves and that they would be the losers.

Instead I wish to draw on the example set by Donald Winnicott in the field of child development. Winnicott coined the phrase ‘good-enough’ (Winnicott, 1971, p. 10) and deliberately used it to describe parents, particularly mothers and environments. The ‘good-enough mother is one who makes active adaptation to the infant’s needs, an active adaptation that gradually lessens, according to the infant’s ability to account for failure of adaptation and to tolerate the results of frustration’ (1971, p. 10). Winnicott argued that a perfect parent was not only impossible but undesirable as the infant needed to learn to tolerate frustration and imperfection. For a parent to be ‘good enough’ was not only desirable, it was essential if the child was to develop.

To ask schools to aim at flourishing, either for teachers or pupils is, I would argue, to encourage a perfectionism that is no more possible or desirable within education

than it is in parenting and child development. Pupils and teachers must together cope with frustration, failure and sadness since these are an inherent part of learning. As Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. point out 'Some frustration is inherent in learning' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 46). Such emotions must also, therefore, be an inherent part of well-being in education. Sometimes, I suggest, being frustrated may be the *right* response, may be exactly what is appropriate in being and doing *well* in a particular situation. The word flourishing might be appropriate if and only if it were understood as encompassing space for frustration, failure and sadness. I suggest that the more modest term well-being is better suited to such an understanding and that it is in keeping with the example set by Winnicott's term, 'good enough'. We aim at creating an environment in which pupils and teachers may be well, not perfect. It is both a modest but also importantly an achievable aim.

A final reason for using the word well-being within education is that it is a word that has the goals of education at its heart. I will develop this idea further in paragraph 4, below. First I will argue that, just as human life is characterized by multiple activities and ways of being, so well-being itself is not a single thing but is characterised by multiple elements.

3. Well-being as a complex and multifaceted concept

MacIntyre says that eudaimonia is 'the state of being well and doing well in being well' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 148). Since action or doing and existence or being are inseparable I am going to use Arendt's hierarchical 'phenomenology of practical life' (Higgins, 2010b, p. 275) to explore the range of activities that characterize the human condition and hence the range of ways of being well and doing well. I will argue that, as there are diverse activities involved in the condition of being human, so there must be different ways of being human, *well*. I will argue further that all of these diverse ways of being human contribute to the concept of human well-being and that what is necessary for well-being is balance between these diverse elements rather than hierarchy or the domination of one element over the others.

a. Arendt's account: a hierarchy of being and doing

In *The Human Condition* (1958) Arendt argues that human existence is conditioned by birth and death, natality and mortality and by plurality, 'because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives or will live' (Arendt, 1958, p. 8). She then distinguishes between two fundamental activities or ways of acting and being, the *vita*

contemplativa, and the *vita activa*. The *vita activa* she then subdivides into labour, work and action. Labour consists of the activities necessary for the survival of the human body and the continuity of one's own life and the life of one's family. Work, or fabrication, provides us with an artificial 'world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings' (Arendt, 1958, p. 7). It is 'the work of our hands' of '*homo faber*' (Arendt, 1958, p. 136, italics in original). Finally, action and speech, 'the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter' (1958, p. 7). Arendt argues that this category is closely related to politics and corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world' (1958, p. 7). She notes that the first two, labour and work, can be done alone but that the third is, by its nature, always done in the presence of other human beings.

Arendt notes that in antiquity, the *vita contemplativa* was valued more highly than the *vita activa*. Aristotle saw it as the highest capacity of human beings. Within the *vita activa*, there was also a clear hierarchy. The actions of men among other men, speech and action, were valued more than work or fabrication. Action and speech, 'belonged together and are the highest of all' (Arendt, 1958, p. 25). They provide meaning and 'constitute the fabric of human relationships and affairs' (1958, p. 95). Work was valued more than labour, or survival. The products of work 'guarantee the permanence and durability without which a world would not be possible at all' (Arendt, 1958, p. 94). Labour is 'imposed upon man by the necessity of life' (1958, p. 126). It ensures 'not only individual survival but the life of the species' (1958, p. 8) but at the same time, to labour meant to be 'enslaved by necessity' (Arendt, 1958, p. 83) and freedom and eudaimonia meant to be free of such necessity.

Labour, action and work are all rooted in 'natality', 'the constant influx of newcomers who are born into the world as strangers' (Arendt, 1958, p. 9), but it is action, she argues, that has the 'closest connection' to natality, 'the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of action. In the sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities' (Arendt, 1958, p. 9). Natality, the act of starting something new, has 'inherent unpredictability' (Arendt, 1958, p. 191) because a 'character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings' (Arendt, 1958, p. 178). Plurality, which characterises action, 'has the twofold character of equality and distinction' (Arendt, 1958, p. 175). Humans communicate their distinctiveness through speech and action, 'with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world' (Arendt,

1958, p. 176). If men were not equal, she argues, they could not understand each other or those who came before and might come after. If men were not distinct they would not need to communicate through speech or action. Moreover, through speech and action we communicate not what we are but *who* we are, '*Who* somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero' (1958, p. 186, italics in original). Everything else, including the work he leaves behind, she argues, tell us only *what* he is or was.

Arendt argues that the hierarchical order where contemplation is valued higher than action, action higher than work and work higher than labour has been completely reversed in what she calls 'the modern age' (Arendt, 1958, p. 289). Contemplation 'has become altogether meaningless' (Arendt, 1958, p. 292). Action, she argues, was first eroded by fabrication. She writes, 'exasperation with the threefold frustrations of action – the unpredictability of its outcome, the irreversibility of the process, and the anonymity of its authors – is almost as old as recorded history' leading to continual attempts to 'replace acting with making' (Arendt, 1958, p. 220) in the interests of order and predictability. This, she argues, has resulted in the rise of instrumentality and 'the much deplored devaluation of all things, that is, the loss of all intrinsic worth' and their 'transformation into values or commodities' (1958, p. 165).

Finally, she argues that the modern age has seen the 'glorification of labor as the source of all values' (1958, p. 85) and a situation where, 'Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of "making a living"' (1958, p. 127). To labour, 'to assure the continuity of one's own life and the life of his family, was all that was needed' (1958, p. 321).

c. Continuity rather than hierarchy in ways of acting and being

In my literature chapter I argued that a theory of educational well-being needs to move beyond the hierarchies of subjective versus objective and eudaimonia versus hedonia. I suggested that dichotomous thinking reinforces the body/mind split which we must attempt to transcend and inevitably privileges one half of the pair over the other half.

Similarly, I suggest that all of the activities which Arendt argues are characteristic of the human condition, of human being, have an important part to play in human well-being. They can all be done *well* or badly and can therefore all contribute to our well-being. Moreover, to arrange those activities in a hierarchy is, I would argue, both unnecessary and undesirable. As soon as elements are arranged

hierarchically, the elements at the top dominate time and attention and this leads to the relative neglect of the other elements. For this reason, I prefer to work with Dewey's concept of continuity (Dewey, 1916) and suggest that these activities or ways of being which Arendt highlights are all essential to human well-being and that what is necessary is finding a balance between them. It is when these elements are out of balance, I will argue, that we are likely to see a reduction in well-being. The environment in which teachers teach and pupils learn must make space for all of Arendt's activities if we are to be well.

Arendt describes labour as urgent, necessary, unceasing and essentially futile, 'it is the mark of all labouring that it leaves nothing behind' (Arendt, 1958, p. 87). A utopia, she argues, would emancipate us from both labour and consumption. Work, fabrication, by contrast, serves to 'bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life' (Arendt, 1958, p. 8). The product of work, 'the things of the world' she argues, 'have the function of stabilizing human life' (1958, p. 137). But it is action and speech which reveal the distinction, the plurality of a person and which are the means we use to be human, 'a life without speech and without action...has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men' (1958, p. 176).

I suggest that all three of Arendt's ways of being active, labour, fabrication or the work of our hands, and action, are equally necessary to the well-being of the individual and of society and to dispense with one or more of them would not, in fact, bring about utopia for humans or promote their well-being. The ability to provide for one's own needs and those of a family, to labour, to cook, to clean or work in an office need not, I would argue, be seen negatively. There is a quiet courage and dignity in providing for human needs. The Christian tradition has traditionally valued labour and it sits alongside prayer and contemplation in some monastic traditions as a way of drawing closer to God (TSSF, 2016). Labour can be engaged in well, or badly and provide not just routine and structure for our lives but opportunities for relationship, for a sense of belonging, for the satisfaction of achievement. A study by Damaske et al. reported lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol at work than at home (Damaske, et al., 2014) suggesting that, for some people at least, the labour of earning a living contributes to their well-being. Even the simple movements, postures and breath which we use when engaged in necessary labour can be a source of being well. As Cole writes, there can be a 'simple, almost ineffable pleasure of awareness of movement and of its refined control' (Cole, 2015), which is available to us while we labour.

Turning to work rather than labour, Crawford affirms the importance of craftsmanship. He echoes Arendt's misgivings about modern labour in his book, *The Case for Working with your Hands* (Crawford, 2009). He critiques the depersonalisation of modern work and, like Arendt, the elevation of process over product. Crawford argues for 'work that engages the human capacities as fully as possible' (2009, p. 52). He critiques what he calls "virtualism", 'a vision of the future in which we somehow take leave of material reality and glide about in a pure information economy' (Crawford, 2009, p. 3). He argues for the importance of the 'experience of making things and fixing things' (2009, p. 3), for manual competence and the 'stance it entails toward the built, material world' (2009, p. 2). He links manual work to a sense of 'individual agency' (2009, p. 7). Echoing Ball's critique of performativity (Ball, 2003), he notes that office workers are beset by a 'proliferation of contrived metrics they must meet' while at the same time 'their job lacks objective standards of the sort provided by, for example, a carpenter's level'. He concludes that, 'as a result there is something arbitrary in the dispensing of credit and blame' (2009, p. 8) which increases anxiety and a sense of alienation. I argue that this must be particularly true when credit or blame are dispensed because of the absence or presence of well-being, which lacks clear definitions, never mind objective standards.

While I accept Arendt's description of action, word and deed, as 'one of the decisive human experiences' (Arendt, 1958, p. 230) I argue that labour and work are *also* decisively human experiences. Arendt says that it is only in action that we communicate *who* rather than what we are, 'in acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world, while their physical identities appear without any activity of their own in the unique shape of the body and sound of the voice' (1958, p. 179). However, 'the unique shape of the body and sound of the voice' are also present in labour and in work and therefore can also contribute to a communication of who we are. Labour and work, as well as action, can be characterized by the elements of well-being which I identified in my previous chapter and, as I will explore more below, by democracy and morality, by relationship and somaesthetics.

For example, Kristjánsson notes how in education 'teachers' nuances of walking and talking, their countenances and hand movements, their casual exchanges with students: all are essential extensions of their moral characters' (Kristjánsson, 2007, p. 153). Similarly Crawford argues for the presence of the 'good' within the crafts, of the application of 'the objective standards of his craft' which he calls a 'rare

appearance in contemporary life – a disinterested, articulable, and publicly affirmable idea of the good’ (Crawford, 2009, p. 19). MacIntyre also sees the virtues exemplified within manual practices (MacIntyre, 1981). Work and labour can be characterised by morality and beauty and, like action, can reveal our distinctive humanity and contribute to our well-being. Moreover, while they can, as Arendt points out, be done alone I would argue that humans are never really isolated from or uninfluenced by the web of relationships, past and present, of which they are part so even labour and work happen, effectively, in the presence of other humans.

Arendt’s analysis is useful in highlighting the range of activities and ways of being human which are implicit in the human condition. However, I suggest that there is more overlap between her activities than her analysis implies and that sharp, hierarchical distinctions are unhelpful. Labour, work and action all contribute to our well-being. Moreover, I suggest that it may be the balance between these activities, and *how* we engage in them, rather than the activities in and of themselves that support our well-being the most.

d. Imbalance and the decline in contemplation in the modern world

One source of imbalance in human ways of being and doing is, I suggest, the ability to be still and silent, or contemplation. Arendt describes contemplation as ‘the word given to experience of the eternal’ (Arendt, 1958, p. 20), as ‘complete human stillness’ (1958, p. 15) and as ‘shocked wonder at the miracle of Being’ (1958, p. 302). Aristotle saw contemplation as the beginning of philosophy while, in more recent times, Dewey wrote that ‘Knowledge is contemplation’ (Dewey, 2016, p. 332).

McGilchrist describes ‘two different modes of experience’ both of which are ‘of ultimate importance in bringing about the recognisably human world’ (McGilchrist, 2009, p. 3). One of these modes, which he associates with the right brain hemisphere, is associated more with silence, with belief, with awe and wonder, with relationship and intuition, with the body, with seeing the whole, rather than the part. Schore and Schore (Schore & Schore, 2008) note that research in neuroscience has suggested that the right hemisphere of the brain operates in a more free-associative manner, such as that observed in dreaming or reverie. McGilchrist argues that the self-consciousness of the left-brain was counter-balanced in the past by ‘the embodied nature of our existence, the arts and religion’. He goes on to say that ‘in our time each of these has been subverted’ (2009, p. 6) with the

resulting domination of our lives and our culture by the mode of being associated with the left brain hemisphere.

Ross gives the term 'deep mind' to the right brain mode of experience, which Schore and Schore (Schore & Schore, 2008) and McGilchrist (2009) describe, and she associates it with silence and contemplation. She defines it as 'a specific disposition of attentive and responsive receptivity, which causes self-consciousness and therefore "experience" to recede' (Ross, 2014, p. 75). As McGilchrist sees a decline in the right-brain mode of being in the modern age, Ross and Arendt both see a decline in the importance of contemplation. Ross says that 'in this present time we are disconnected from the wellspring of silence and stillness that is necessary for human beings to thrive' (2014, p. 11). Arendt argues that there been a 'reversal of the hierarchical order between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*' (Arendt, 1958, p. 289) and argues that the modern age has seen 'the elimination of contemplation from the range of meaningful human capacities' (1958, p. 305). Even within religion there has been a decline in contemplation. Bourgeault talks of the fact that contemplation, which she calls a 'crucial step in the "breathing" of Christian spirituality' has in recent centuries 'been slowly allowed to wither and die' (Bourgeault, 2004, p. 68).

Just as I argued for the importance of all the activities within the *vita activa* for humans doing well and being well so, I suggest, the modern neglect of the *vita contemplativa* may detract from human well-being. This is not an original idea. The anonymous author of the 14th century mystical work *The Cloud of Unknowing* writes of two lives, the 'active' and the 'contemplative', adding that 'although they be divers in some part, yet neither of them may be had fully without some part of the other' (Anonymous, 1946, p. 66). I suggest that a balance between these activities and ways of being, all of Arendt's active ways of being plus silence and contemplation, is at the heart of well-being in education.

e. Imbalance in ways of acting and being in education

As I noted above, Ross and McGilchrist both argue for balance, for a restoration of the two modes of being and for the deleterious effect of the absence of contemplation from modern life. Ross notes that 'our minds, overloaded with extraneous information and stressed by the frenetic speed required merely to stay alive in our artificial world, have lost their relationship with the original silence from which and within which, we evolved; silence that is essential to language, insight, poetry, and music' (2014, p. 12).

If, as Ross argues, silence is essential to language and to insight, poetry and music (Ross, 2014) then it is also essential in education. Alerby and Elidottir not only assert that silence is 'an important, an essential and an unavoidable part of human life' (Alerby & Elidottir, 2003, p. 42) they also argue for 'reflection in silence as an important part of teaching and learning'. It may be an essential part of teaching and learning but I suggest that it is becoming a relatively rare one in most teachers' experience. Haskins notes that 'children today are bombarded with such a deluge of daily activity that their young lives are too busy for quiet time' (Haskins, 2010, p. 15) and she adds that 'the notion that non-action merits consideration is a radical departure from the commonly held belief that has taken deep root over the last half century: that activity and productivity are the true measures of success' (2010, p. 16).

Dewey saw learning as consisting of both an active, trying phase and a passive, quiet phase he called 'undergoing' (Dewey, 1916, p. 78). He wrote that 'We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return' and it 'is reflected back into a change made in us' (1916, p. 78). We are changed by the thing, by its otherness and we learn *from* it. I would draw a parallel between Dewey's passive phase of undergoing and contemplation and argue that it is, indeed, essential in learning.

I suggest that what Arendt calls the 'elimination' (1958, p. 305) of contemplation from ways of acting and being in the modern age has led to an imbalance not just generally but also in education. Nor is this the only sign of such an imbalance in education. Arendt has argued that nothing now counts except earning a living, labour. She says that modern society has seen not only the dominance of *the vita activa* over the *vita contemplativa*, but the rise of labour over either work or action. Moreover, 'the priority of life over everything else' has acquired the status of a 'self-evident truth' and has led to the substitution of a 'society of jobholders' for either a society of labourers, (Arendt, 1958, p. 319) or fabricators.

It is important but not sufficient for education to prepare children to labour. There is more to life than holding down a job and there must be more to education than preparing to do so. But I would argue that elements of Arendt's category of work have also become over emphasised within education in recent years, at the expense of either action or labour and certainly at the expense of contemplation.

The positive side of work is that it produces durable products, it is characterized by utility, and by exactitude and measurement. I suggest that these characteristics of

work have been misapplied, or over applied, within education in what Ball calls the 'technology of performativity' (Ball, 2003, p. 215). Ball notes that in recent years, education reform has led to a situation where 'information is collected continuously, recorded and published...and performance is monitored' (2003, p. 220).

I would argue that this rise in performativity, the current focus on measurement, numbers and targets, on external, not internal, rewards and sanctions, is part of the domination of the values of 'work' in education over those of either action, labour or contemplation. This results in an over focus on uniformity and productivity and indeed on commodity, which derive from the realm of the craftsman or fabricator. This leads, in turn, to an imbalance and an over focus on 'measurable outcomes' so that 'the outcomes data become the point of schooling; this truly is education as commodity' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 118).

Arendt attributes the dominance of the ideals of work to a desire to 'escape from the frailty of human affairs into the solidity of quiet and order' (Arendt, 1958, p. 222). As an example she cites Plato, who in his discussion of how human society should be governed, wished to replace the uncertainty and unpredictability of human affairs and action with 'the same absolute "objective" certainty with which the craftsman can be guided' (Arendt, 1958, p. 226). This desire for 'objective certainty' can be clearly seen in the call of politicians and, indeed, some teachers, to know 'what works' (Ball, 2003, p. 225) in education.

Paradoxically however, this desire for certainty on the part of policy makers actually leaves teachers feeling 'a high degree of uncertainty and instability' (Ball, 2003, p. 220) and 'a sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to differing criteria....we become ontologically insecure, unsure about whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as well as others' (2003, p. 220). I would argue that some degree of measurement and control, some elements of Arendt's category of work within education is not in itself problematic. What is a problem is an imbalance in the ways of acting and being in education, the domination of control and conformity over uniqueness and individuality, over speech and action, and I suggest that this imbalance may legitimately be linked with Ball's reported decline in well-being and the widely noted failure in the Western world to retain teachers for more than five years (McCallum & Price, 2016).

I suggested in Chapter II that paying attention to teacher well-being has both a practical and a moral dimension. It is a practical necessity precisely because of the fact that humans are always affected by the other humans around them (Dewey,

1922) and need other humans to grow and develop (Schoore & Schoore, 2008). If the adults that constitute the most vital part of children's environment are not able to be well, this will inevitably affect the children they work or live with and isolated well-being initiatives or lessons directed at the children themselves may help to ameliorate but cannot resolve this situation.

It is a moral necessity for at least two reasons. One is that a failure to care for the teacher, because it impacts upon children and upon their education and their well-being which is at the core of that education, is actually a failure to 'love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable' (Arendt, 2007, p. 192). And a failure to love where love is necessary is a moral failure. The second reason is that a failure to allow teachers to speak and to act is a failure to allow them to be, as Arendt argued, fully human. Governments have a duty to teachers to consider whether the environment in which they ask those teachers to teach is one that allows for human speech and action, initiative and uniqueness. And teachers have a duty to ask the same question and to speak out and to act if the answer is no.

f. Being well in education in the here and now

I have argued that well-being is a complex concept. Just as the human condition, comprises different ways of acting so it comprises different ways of being and hence different ways of being well. I have suggested, following MacIntyre, that we think of well-being as 'being well and doing well in being well' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 148). I argue that well-being is a feature of *how* we engage in being and doing, an adverb, rather than a noun or a possession or a thing to be measured or controlled.

I have also argued that education is not just a preparation for future human life but *is* human life and that it is, or ought to be, therefore characterized by the same range of activities that Arendt attributes to the human condition. Higgins argues that 'Arendt's own conception of teaching is impossible to locate in any one of the categories of her *vita activa*. Within Arendt's own system, however, we find the resources for developing a revised account of teaching as an activity containing elements of labour, work, and action, an activity affording contact with one's natality and a space for self-enactment' (Higgins, 2010, p. 199).

Education is the site where humans learn formally to engage in all three forms of the *vita activa*. Though some preparation for the task of labour, of maintaining our lives, is done in informal settings like the home, much of it occurs in schools. Literacy and

numeracy, I would argue, in a literate, numerate society, have become basic needs without which it is difficult, though of course not impossible, to survive in literate societies. Schools, too, are where we learn to fabricate, to manipulate and transform our environment, to engage in crafts, science, the arts and the production of technology which transform our world.

Educational settings should be sites where humans learn to *be* in all these different ways and learn to do so *well*. Moreover, educational settings should not only prepare humans to engage in these activities in the future. They should also be places where these ways of being can be engaged in, and engaged in well, in the present. Dewey argues that education is not just 'preparation for a more or less remote future' (Dewey, 1938, p. 19) but also 'making the most of the opportunities of present life' (1938, p. 20). Well-being, being well and not badly, is part of what education is aiming for, for each individual and for society, and therefore is also an essential part of what must characterize it in the present.

I suggest that what is required to enable teachers and pupils to be well while they teach and learn is a balance between a preparation for the future and a real engagement with the present, and also between activities that contain elements of labour, work and action, affording both teachers and pupils contact with their own natality. I also suggest that there should be space and time for the *vita contemplativa*, or contemplation in education.

4. Well-being and the ends and means of education

Linley and Joseph discuss the nature of well-being and 'ill-being' within the context of psychology and health (Linley & Joseph, 2004b, p. 724). In the context of education, I wish to avoid medical terms and prefer to discuss humans living or *being* in a way that can be characterized as *well* rather than *badly*, using well-being not as an abstract noun, a thing to be measured, but as the verb *to be*, plus the adverb, *well* building on MacIntyre's description of eudaimonia as 'the state of being well and doing well in being well' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 148).

MacIntyre points out that 'every practice aims at some good' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 148). Reiss and White note that 'education has been credited with diverse aims over the years' (Reiss & White, 2014, p. 77), from John Locke's argument that education must aim at virtue and the control of desire to A.S. Neil's that it should aim at happiness and a decrease in neuroticism and prejudice. While they note diversity in these aims they also suggest 'considerable congruence' (2014, p. 78) between them. One group of aims highlights the development of the individual for his/her own

benefit and the second group highlights the development of the individual so that they may contribute to making the world a better place. Reiss and White conclude, 'there are two fundamental aims of school education, namely to enable each learner to lead a life that is personally flourishing and to help others to do so too' (2014, p. 78).

Rather than using the word flourishing, for the reasons I note above, I am using the word well-being and so I build on Reiss and White to argue that education aims at the good of enabling human beings to achieve 'the state of being well and doing well in being well' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 148) and that this is true both collectively, as a society, and as individuals. We aim for individuals to be well and we aim for those individuals to contribute to the well-being of society. If this is correct, if the well-being of society and of the individual, is a key *end* of education, then it must also inform the *means* of education. Dewey points out that 'Means and ends are two names for the same reality...to think of the end signifies to extend and enlarge our view of the act to be performed' (Dewey, 1922, p. 18) while 'an end is a device of intelligence in guiding action' (1922, p. 91). I submit that grades and jobs are legitimate ends of education but they are not the only ends and that how we help people to achieve those ends matters too. And it matters because, I argue, it is at least in part *how* we do something that affects our well-being.

Well-being is therefore an inherent part of education. If something is undermining the well-being of an individual, or indeed of society, then its place in education must be called into question. As Dewey argues, there is an 'organic connection between education and personal experience' and if an experience 'has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience' then it is 'mis-educative' (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). Nor is it only the pupil's well-being that matters. Higgins argues that 'the eudaimonia of the practitioner is a central concern of professional ethics' and emphasises that professional practices are 'sites where practitioners not only do good, but where they encounter the good' (Higgins, 2010a, p. 238). Ethically, we must be concerned not only for the well-being of the pupil within education but of the teacher, too.

Moreover, I would also argue that our aims, or ends or *telos* is not only a distant future point but is something that shapes our current practice and our present life. As MacIntyre notes, 'Aristotle takes the telos of human life to be a certain kind of life; the telos is not something to be achieved at some future point, but in the way our whole life is constructed' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 175). Our goal or end in education

shapes our day to day practice of education. If well-being is, or ought to be, an end of education then it becomes an integral, defining and shaping factor of the theory and daily practice of education. As Dewey argues, happiness, reasonableness and virtue are 'parts of the present significance of present action...they are indispensable to a present liberation, an enriching growth of action' (Dewey, 1922, p. 104). It is important but not sufficient to prepare pupils for a future as people able to earn a living and contribute to the well-being of society. They must also be enabled to experience well-being in the present and so must their teachers.

5. Conclusion

I have argued, in this chapter, for the use of the word well-being in education, in preference to either happiness or flourishing. Part of this argument was philosophical and intended to avoid the dichotomous and hierarchical implications of the words happiness or flourishing. Part of it was pragmatic and ethical. Teachers' own well-being, it has been argued, has been compromised by the use of superlatives like excellence and outstanding and I wish to avoid flourishing, in particular, being added to that list.

I used Arendt's discussion of the diverse activities that characterize the human condition to draw the parallel conclusion that human being, like human doing, is diverse. I therefore argued that well-being is a multifaceted, complex concept and is better thought of as a dynamic quality that attends on action, as 'activity-centred' (Toner, 2006, p. 614) rather than as a thing or a fixed state. I have argued that well-being is concerned with *how* we go about the daily task of being human and whether we do that *well*. In education it is therefore a factor in how we go about the tasks of teaching and learning and of being teachers and pupils and what it means to do that well. I drew on Arendt's discussion of the human condition to argue that just as being human involves a range of activities and ways of being, so human well-being must also be thought about as involving a range of elements that contribute to us being and doing well. I said that these ways of doing and being well are better thought about as overlapping and continuous rather than as discrete or hierarchical.

I suggested that well-being in education is best supported by a balance between education as engagement in the present and education as preparation for the future and further argued for a balance between the diverse ways of being and doing described by Arendt. I argued that the current situation reflects an imbalance in

these activities and in particular a neglect of the *vita contemplativa*, of contemplation.

In the next chapter I will go onto argue that well-being cannot be thought about as context free and to discuss the unique intergenerational context of education.

IV. Philosophical discussion B: a theory and practice of educational well-being

It is important to remember that there are 'deep conflicts over what human flourishing and well-being do consist of' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 162). And as McCallum and Price note, 'ultimately the definition of wellbeing has been highly debated' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 5) due to the multiplicity of approaches, elusive nature of the construct, lack of specificity and complexity of the subject. In this thesis I am not attempting to resolve these conflicts but to contribute to what must be an ongoing conversation within education.

In this chapter I will argue that well-being cannot be thought about as context free and I will discuss the unique intergenerational context of education. I will argue that all educational settings, formal and informal, whatever the age of the participants, ought to be characterised by care and instruction as well as by what Arendt sees as the specifically educational task of renewing the world and passing it onto the next generation. I will suggest that there is something unique about schools and other settings inhabited by large numbers of children and young people but that this uniqueness is a difference in degree but not in kind. This difference is due to the intensity of the need for care and instruction among the young and the accompanying intensity of the adult love and anxiety that accompany this need.

I will defend the idea that democracy, morality, inter-personal relationships and somaesthetics are essential components of well-being in education. I will define what I mean by these terms and how I see them contributing to educational well-being. I offer a possible definition of educational well-being for teachers and pupils to use which is informed by these elements of democracy, morality, inter-personal relationship and somaesthetics and which implies the interconnectedness of self and other, teacher and pupil.

Finally, again using Arendt's concept of education as inter-generational encounter, I will argue that the unique context of education is particularly characterised by two key emotions, love and anxiety and that being well in education is facilitated by the

existence of a theory and practice of well-being that includes or *contains* (Bion, 1985) love and anxiety. I will explore the nature of anxiety in educational contexts and propose a definition of love that may alleviate the anxiety that educators feel about using what has become a problematic term in professional contexts in the UK.

1. Well-being as context specific

While the human condition may always be characterised by the activities of labour, work and action, *how* we engage in those activities, their relative importance and what they mean will vary according to our context. As McGilchrist points out, 'in reality things are always embedded in a context of relation with other things that alter them, you are not going to succeed in understanding them if you start by taking them out of context' (McGilchrist, 2009, p. 141). Dewey, too, saw the importance of context. He argued that there is no such thing as a self, 'isolated from natural and social surroundings' (Dewey, 1922, p. 11) and said that conduct 'is always shared' (1922, p. 11). To effect change, he wrote, 'We must work on the environment, not merely on the hearts of men' (Dewey, 1922, p. 13).

I suggest that this means that well-being, what it means and how we think about it, is also dependent upon context, upon environment. As McCallum and Price note, 'Wellbeing is different for each individual and the communities they occupy' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 5). If well-being is thought about as doing and being well, and as concerning *how* we go about our daily activities and *how* we are, then both the nature of those activities and the social, cultural and physical environment in which we do them and in which we exist, will necessarily affect our well-being.

Oliver points out that MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (MacIntyre, 1981) stresses the cultural embeddedness of our concepts of virtue, that moral reason 'belongs within particular discourses; that ideas about it change over time' (Oliver, 2005, p. 112). Well-being, I am arguing, cannot be separated from virtue or from moral reason and must be similarly set within a context. Christopher and Hickinbottom point out that by ignoring their own cultural assumptions 'positive psychologists risk distorting the experience of cultures that hold moral visions different from their own' (2008, p. 571). Neither meaning nor happiness, they argue, can be studied 'in a decontextualized manner' (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008, p. 576).

Linley and Joseph accept that positive psychology findings 'are not prototypically exportable to countries or cultures that do not share our modern cultural identity' or 'our inevitable cultural embeddedness' (Linley & Joseph, 2004b, p. 719). While this thesis, and my own work, is situated within the Western cultural context and is of

course affected by my own underlying cultural assumptions, I would argue that education is, itself, a culture within that culture, with a moral vision and a very particular context of its own. This particular context will inevitably affect the nature of well-being within it, what it means to do and be well in educational settings. It is to this particular educational context that I now turn.

a. The intergenerational context of education

According to Higgins, in her essay, *The Crisis in Education*, (Arendt, 2007) Arendt points out that the most basic fact about schooling is that it concerns the relationship between grown-ups and children, in other words it is an intergenerational context (Higgins, 2010c). Higgins goes on to explore what Arendt means by schooling and by education. He argues that she saw education as the sphere placed between the family and the world where the young and the world are introduced to one another. Schools are tasked with education, with introducing the newcomer to the world. They are also tasked with care, a task they share with the family, and they are tasked with instruction in particular subjects. Higgins notes that Arendt 'sees all three as necessary aspects of schooling' (Higgins, 2010c, p. 404) but that 'her focus is on the process by which the young are introduced to the world, outside of the home, and in the context of formal subjects of study' (Higgins, 2010c, p. 403) i.e. on education.

Education can and does, of course, happen outside schools. Dewey, like Arendt, sees education as the way that society renews itself. Moreover, he argues that 'all communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative' (1916, p. 7). Dewey argues that communication 'is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession. It modifies the disposition of both the parties who partake in it' (1916, p. 9). In this sense, any genuine communication involves the education of all those who take part in it and, as I shall argue further below, is therefore a profoundly democratic experience. Dewey distinguishes between 'indirect' education, which happens in less complex societies and in informal settings in our own society and 'formal' education, arguing that 'without such formal education it is not possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society' (Dewey, 1916, p. 8).

I would argue that, in all settings, whether formal or informal, education involves both a degree of care and of instruction and that this forms a fundamental part of the educational context in which well-being needs to occur. Moreover, while the young are very obviously newcomers into the world, one can be introduced to new

elements in the world at any age. In this sense, a 'newcomer' (Higgins, 2010c, p. 404) may be 80 as well as 8. Building upon Dewey's argument that all genuine communication is educative, if I pay attention to those who communicate with me then I allow myself to be educated, to be changed by that encounter. If I communicate with another human being then I also change *them*. This involves me in an ethic of care towards myself and other people that is constant and life-long. Moreover, in any human encounter, I may also be instructed by and instruct others, since humans learn by imitation and mirroring, both consciously and unconsciously, (Iacoboni, 2009) and we may constantly learn new ways of speaking, thinking, moving and acting throughout our lives.

b. Degrees of care

The implications of Dewey's argument that all communication can be educative i.e. lead to growth and change on the part of both participants, implies that all human interactions should be marked by an ethic of care and an openness to learn, i.e. an openness to instruction. However, I also suggest that it is appropriate to think about degrees of care. And I argue that it is when a human is inducted into a new social and cultural practice that the degree of care can be said to increase. MacIntyre describes a practice as 'any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 187). He gives, as examples of practices, football, architecture, farming, physics and chemistry. And he notes that, within a practice 'I find myself part of a history andone of the bearers of a tradition. It was important when I characterized the concept of a practice to notice that practices always have histories' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 221).

I argue that a practice and a tradition stand between the past and the future, whatever the age of the novice, and that to hand them on always requires care and instruction irrespective of age. MacIntyre did not see teaching as a practice (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002). Whether or not teaching is a practice in and of itself, *education* is the site where the diverse practices of a civilisation are passed onto the next generation. When one is inducted into a practice, which has a tradition and a history, one is participating in what Arendt and Dewey both see as the renewal of society. An 80 year old who is learning architecture is learning to participate in that practice, with its internal goods and history and is thereby contributing to the survival of that practice and the renewal of society. She is contributing to the

'continuance of the world' (Arendt, 2007, p. 191), as much as a child would be. In one sense the education of the 80 year old is as much an intergenerational encounter as the education of the 8 year old but the generation in this case is defined not by age but by knowledge, skill and experience. The 80 year old is inducted into the practice by the generation of skilled practitioners and she is a member of the up and coming generation, in skill and knowledge though not in age.

The adept must both instruct the novice in the particular skills of the practice but also in the traditions, history and ethics of that practice, in its internal goods. They must have a care both for the practice itself and for the novice, who may experience at any age the anxieties that constitute a normal part of learning, (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983). I shall argue below that any educational encounter is characterized by love and anxiety, and that this is true whatever the age of the student. I shall also argue that as the need for care is the more intense in the young so is the attendant need for education to contain love and anxiety.

However, an 80 year old may still find it overwhelming to learn a new subject and need encouragement in that process. The need for care in teaching and learning is more intense and urgent when we are younger but I suggest that it is a universal and life-long need and will argue below that it is therefore integral to educational well-being. While this thesis will reflect my experience, which has been primarily in schools and with teachers and children, I argue that the conclusions I reach about educational well-being may apply much more widely to any educational situation where humans pass on their world to one another, whatever their age.

2. The essential elements of a composite theory of educational well-being

I have argued that all of Arendt's ways of action are, or should be, represented within an education that prepares children to be and do well in the future and which allows them to be and do well in the present. I have also said that contemplation, silence and reflection too, should be part of that preparation and present experience. In my literature chapter I critiqued accounts of well-being that were undemocratic, in that they silenced other voices in the human conversation about well-being, which were hierarchical and amoral, which fostered individualism and which prioritized mind over body and emotion. I concluded that, in education, a theory of well-being needed to be democratic, moral, interdependent and somaesthetic. These categories, which are not discrete and certainly overlap, further describe how people engage in the different activities of the human

condition. They are diverse ways of labouring, working, acting and contemplating well and diverse ways of being well.

A theory of well-being:



a. Democratic

Biesta (Biesta, 2016) argues that, despite Dewey's status as the pre-eminent thinker on democracy and education, it is not obvious what Dewey saw as the relationship between democracy and education and that he really made no clear distinction between them. Dewey regarded democracy as the best environment for the growth of the individual towards social aims and he saw social life as democratic when it led to growth. Biesta suggests that the political nature of Dewey's life's work only really becomes clear in his final years and that it was aimed against the hegemony of modern science, and against the rise of the modern and mechanistic worldview that has 'stripped the world of the qualities that made it beautiful and congenial to men' (Dewey, 1929, p. 41).

Dewey's definition of democracy in *Democracy and Education* as 'primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (1916, p. 50) is I suggest more a social than a political definition though it may have political ramifications. He saw democracy as a way of living together and a way of communicating. This view of democracy as more than a process or electoral system is echoed by the philosopher Michael Sandel in a broadcast debate called 'Why Democracy' (Sandel, 2015). In this debate Sandel argued that democracy was a way of living together, of asking the big questions and of listening to people with whom we disagree.

I noted above Dewey's argument that all communication is educative and leads to an enlarged and changed experience for all who take part in it (Dewey, 1916). If democracy is indeed about genuine, two way communication and such communication is always educative, then democracy must involve education and education must be democratic, where democracy is understood in Dewey and Sandel's sense of a social project, a way of living or being together.

This does not imply a particular political organisation or structure for schools – though it might do. It does imply that communication in schools should be equal, respectful and mutual. It also suggests that the more democratic the communication, the more democratic the relationship, the more educative it can become. I am using the word democratic in this social, communicative and educative sense, rather than in an explicitly political sense, within this thesis, as a way of living together and a way of communicating. I also recognise that my particular use of the word does have political implications but that these lie beyond the scope of my discussion.

My use of the word democratic also encompasses resistance to the hegemony of any of the voices in the 'ongoing conversation about what constitutes the good for humans' (Fowers, 2008, p. 638) and this resistance is therefore crucial to my theory of well-being. Within education in particular, teachers and pupils must be able to participate in 'the millennial questions about what is good for humans' (Fowers, 2008, p. 633) without being deterred by what Fowers calls the positive psychology 'mantra of empirical research' (2008, p. 632). In education more generally, Unwin and Yandell argue that 'it has become common to marginalize the role of the teacher and to silence teachers' voices' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 126). That must not happen in the conversation about the good and about well-being. Teachers and pupils alike must be treated 'as a conversation partner with something original to say' (Schwobel, 2005, p. 87). The question of what is good for humans must remain an 'ongoing process of reflection, revision, and revitalization. This means that our understanding of what is good for humans is an open-ended affair. There will be no last word on it' (Fowers, 2008, p. 638). It is, I would argue, of the essence of democracy that not only all humans but all human disciplines speak as equals in such an important conversation.

Since for Dewey, to be a recipient of communication 'is to have an enlarged and changed experience' (1916, p. 7), I suggest that another aspect of democracy that is relevant to educational well-being is the willingness and ability *to be changed by*

our communications with others as well as to change others. In other words communication is two way, not one way and involves an openness to change and a willingness to learn on both parts.

Arendt's concept of speech and action can be used to expand on this idea. Arendt argues, firstly, that 'speech is what makes a man a political being' (Arendt, 1958, p. 3) and then that speech and action reveal the 'unique distinctness' which is the 'paradoxical plurality of unique beings' (1958, p. 176), the story of 'who one is' the 'disclosing and exposing' (1958, p. 186) of one's unique self. Human plurality, as I discussed above, is characterised by both distinctness and equality. I suggest that democracy, in the context of educational well-being, means partly that teachers and pupils can both speak and act to discuss and promote their own well-being. I suggest that it also means that educational settings are where teachers and pupils can tell the unique story of who they are, where they can disclose and expose their unique selves and be changed by one another.

Arendt argues that one can labour and work alone but that action and speech require the presence of other humans. I wish to go further and suggest that they require not only the presence but the *attention* of other humans. This means that there must be those who are willing to listen to and value this story and also that this story, and the attention of other humans, is not completely eclipsed by the priorities of Arendt's category of work or fabrication – by measurements, targets and data. When grades and even children are reified, 'she's a level 5' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 106) and teachers no longer see the child because 'the test score stands in place of the student' (2016, p. 119) then it is *what* the child is rather than *who* the child is that is being communicated to the world. This implies the domination of fabrication and control rather than the communication of action and uniqueness. This, I suggest, then undermines the democratic potential of education and its ability to foster the well-being of unique individuals. As Arendt says 'This attempt to replace action with making is manifest in the whole body of argument against "democracy"' (1958, p. 220).

Unlike Arendt I shall argue below that the story of who we are is not only told in speech and action. I will argue that it can also be told while we labour and work and contemplate. But I agree with Arendt that speech and action are vital to the human condition and to human well-being and therefore they must not be eclipsed within educational settings.

I have argued that the democratic quality of educational well-being is the ability to speak about who we are, and to be listened to, and to participate in the conversation about what well-being is. Teachers ought therefore to resist, perhaps more than they do, the imposition of particular views of education and also particular views of educational well-being.

b. Moral

Teachers, and other professional practitioners do worry, however, about the imposition of moral values. As Fowers points out, 'social scientists and professional practitioners rightly worry about prescribing how individuals should live. They are concerned about bias, ideological distortion and value imposition. It is vitally important that we attend to these worries' (2008, p. 636).

In my literature chapter I argued that well-being, in education, could not be seen as value neutral nor entirely as a matter of personal choice. Rather it should be an openly and deliberately moral concept. Morris challenges the argument 'that as teachers we must remain impartial on moral issues. To feign impartiality is to model moral apathy to our students' (Morris, 2009, p. 67). I noted in Chapter II Starratt's assertion that 'one of the major lessons of an educating process is the importance of the *discussion* (not the imposition) of moral values as they are embedded in the circumstances of everyday life' (Starratt, 2003, p. 147 *italics in original*). Fowers goes on to argue that 'The presence of values in our science and practice is not what threatens our objectivity. It is the denial of the presence of values in our research and applied work that undermines our objectivity' (Fowers, 2008, p. 637). As Morris points out, teachers need to show students that 'part of the life of a responsible adult is to hold reasoned opinions about issues of moral weight' (2009, p. 67). Moreover, Starratt argues that 'learning the formal academic curriculum can be and, furthermore, ought to be a moral activity as well as an intellectual activity' (Starratt, 2005, p. 400) and speaks of the 'intrinsic morality of learning itself' (Starratt, 1998, p. 244).

Morality, as I am defining it within educational well-being, is concerned with what it is right to be and to love (Taylor, 1992) as well as with what it is right to do. It is also concerned with seeing others 'justly and lovingly' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 23). I shall argue below, in defining educational well-being, that seeing others justly and lovingly includes, but goes beyond, human beings. Moreover, it is not how one is or what one loves occasionally, in particular contexts or about seeing others once and then not looking again. It is not 'something that is switched off in between the

occurrence of explicitly moral choices' but rather something 'that goes on continually' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 36) in every classroom encounter, every action, in how teachers and pupils are, how they relate to each other and to their work. It is therefore inherent to being well within the context of education and to the environment in which education takes place.

The element of morality in educational well-being in my theory is continuous with and inseparable from the element of democracy. Part of a democratic educational well-being is the discussion, not the imposition, of ideas about what it is right to be, to love and to do and how we see the other justly and lovingly. It is also continuous with interdependence, since it is a factor of how we are with others, as well as with ourselves.

c. Interpersonal

While Linley and Joseph argue that positive psychology is concerned 'as much with collective well-being as it is with individual well-being' (Linley & Joseph, 2004b, p. 721) I suggest that it is not enough to balance the individual with the collective within education. We need to acknowledge that well-being simply does not exist outside of a web of relationships and is, as I wrote in the last chapter, an interpersonal rather than an intra personal quality. Learning itself is dependent upon relationships. Unwin and Yandell argue against the idea that learning is individual and happens inside a single learner's head, calling it, 'the myth that is most deeply implicated in the history of schooling' (Unwin & Yandell, 2016, p. 107). If it is a myth that learning happens inside a single learner's head, and I agree that it is, then it is also a myth that well-being is either similarly individual or similarly internal. Well-being happens neither in an individual's head, nor in their body for that matter. It involves both but goes beyond them to include their environment.

Dewey critiqued the idea of a self 'isolated from natural and social surroundings' (1922, p. 11). He saw the self as continuous with their environment which, of course, includes other human beings. Dewey puts relationships at the heart of education and education at the heart of relationships. He calls education one of the activities within society 'concerned with rendering human relationships more significant and worthy' (Dewey, 1929, p. 33). And his words imply that they lie at the heart of well-being too. Dewey regards education as concerned with growth, it is a 'fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating process' (1916, p. 10) and it is in relationships that this fostering and nurturing occurs.

I argued in my literature chapter that the findings of attachment theory that human development 'arises out of the relationship between the brain/mind/body of both infant and caregiver held within a culture and environment that supports or threatens it' (Schorre & Schorre, 2008, p. 10) can and should be applied to education. Education involves the continuing development of human beings and that too, arises from and cannot exist apart from relationships. Toner notes that 'Aristotle takes human beings to be essentially in relation to others' (Toner, 2006, p. 610) and adds that attachment to others 'is of the essence of flourishing' (Toner, 2006, p. 613). If we cannot be human without others than we can certainly not be human *well* without others. Arendt notes that action and speech are always done in the presence of other humans. I suggest that this is also a characteristic of education. Even when we learn alone, with a book or the internet, we are always surrounded by a community of teachers and fellow students and by the tradition of a subject that is handed down to us.

Moreover, I suggest that this web of relationships need not and indeed ought not to radiate out from the self. Toner, in a discussion of the self-centredness objection to virtue ethics argues that 'Aquinas does not place each self at the centre of its world: rather each self is, and can recognize itself to be, a node in a web of relationships – the centre of which is God' (Toner, 2006, p. 607). For people of faith, this may still be the case. For others, some greater good such as education, politics, justice or humanitarian love may constitute such a centre. Indeed, a world view in which there is at least one cause/virtue/event that is greater than the self may be essential to our well-being. However, taking Toner's description of a web of relationships quite literally, I suggest that such a web need not have a centre at all. One can be part of an interdependent web of relationships that orientates the focus of the self outwards, beyond itself, without there being a single centre at all. What matters is that the *self* is not the centre of the world and that there is more to life than me.

To be and to do well in education is therefore to be involved in relationship and to recognize that there is more to education than that which I may personally gain from it. Grades and the ability to acquire a job matters but *who* I am matters as well as *what* I am and the well-being of society sits alongside my own well-being as a goal of my education. We are in relationship with those who are physically present, with our teachers and our students, we are in relationship with our society as a whole and we are in an ethical relationship with the inhabitants of the traditions and practices we are engaged in learning, past and present. I suggest that both the existence and the quality of these relationships, whether they involve a democratic

space of equal conversation, the possibility of telling our own story and hearing that of others and whether they involve an ethical stance towards the other is therefore an essential characteristic of educational well-being.

d. Somaesthetic

As I indicated in my introduction, I have borrowed from Shusterman the word somaesthetic (Shusterman, 2008) to indicate a concern with beauty, with the spiritual, with the body and with the accompanying full range of bodily human emotions. The use of this term and the combining of the elements that it contains has gradually emerged as an iterative process as I moved repeatedly from my literature chapter, to my data analysis, to theorizing and writing up and then to re-reading my original literature. I will discuss this process more fully in Chapter VI: Empirical Findings.

Here I suggest that all of Arendt's ways of action and contemplation have a somaesthetic quality to them and therefore all can contribute to our well-being and have a place in a theory and practice of educational well-being. Arendt points out that, for the ancient Greeks, beauty was concerned only with what was neither necessary nor useful. It could characterise bodily pleasures, the life of action and the political life and the life of contemplation. I would recognise and affirm all of these ways in which beauty can be experienced but would add that what is necessary and useful can and indeed ought also to be characterised by beauty. There can be beauty in movement, beauty in creating something useful, beauty in doing what needs to be done to survive. The Navajo refer to 'walking in beauty' as the way we ought to live our lives (Windling, 1996, p. 258).

I am not going to attempt to define beauty. Like other ideals like goodness or the good, I suggest that the definition of beauty and its relationship to educational well-being is an essential part of the subject of the on-going conversation about what it means to be a human, well. Murdoch argues that concepts change and that 'uses of words by persons grouped round a common object is a central and vital human activity' (1970, p. 31). McGilchrist, however, suggests that 'what is to be called beautiful may vary a little over time, but the core concepts of beauty remain' (McGilchrist, 2009, p. 443). These slightly contrasting views suggest that our concepts are characterised by both change and continuity and make their democratic discussion within educational contexts all the more vital. Moreover, if this grouping of people around a central object is to be a genuine communication it

must, as Dewey argued, be democratic, it must be two way communication and not one way instruction or imposition.

Murdoch (1970) saw beauty and morality as inseparable so here, too, there is continuity between my categories. She regarded an appreciation of beauty in art or nature as 'a completely adequate entry into the good life, since it is the checking of selfishness in the interest of seeing the real' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 63). She also noted that great art teaches us how real things can be 'looked at and loved without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy organism of the self' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 64). Beauty, morality and the democratic conversation about well-being are, I suggest, continuous. There is also a link between beauty, contemplation and bodily emotions. Arendt calls contemplation 'shocked wonder at the miracle of Being' (Arendt, 1958, p. 302), a physical response to beauty and existence. MacIntyre describes virtues as dispositions 'not to act in particular ways, but also to feel in particular ways...moral education is an "education sentimentale"' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 149). There is emotion and body involved in virtue as well as will and reason. Moreover, we appreciate beauty with our senses and that appreciation is itself a physical, emotional act not a disembodied state.

The work of contemplation, which I am arguing is part of educational well-being is, of course, linked with spirituality. Seligman and Peterson (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) include both appreciation of beauty and spirituality in their category of transcendent strengths. However, like Ross, (Ross, 2014), I am suspicious of the disembodied implications behind the word transcendent. I suggest that spirituality, like an appreciation of beauty with which it is linked, is an aspect of our physical nature, a way of looking at the world and at creation, what Ross calls 'living the ordinary though continually transfigured perception' (Ross, 2014, p. 83). As morality, according to Murdoch, (1970) is looking justly and lovingly, so I define spirituality as looking at and finding the wonder and beauty 'in the most ordinary material objects' (Ross, 2014, p. 83), not as some kind of virtual, body-less experience. Spirituality as I am using it is not, then, some refined other category of well-being on a kind of higher plane. It is an extension of our physical, emotional selves and potentially part of a daily willingness to stop and look attentively and to appreciate and wonder.

3. A working definition of educational well-being

As I noted in Chapter II, McCallum and Price define well-being as 'a holistic state that encompasses the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive dimensions of the individual' (McCallum & Price, 2016, p. 23). I think that this is a helpful starting

point in indicating the complexity of the construct. I have argued that morality and moral philosophy have an important role to play in understanding well-being in education and see this as lacking in McCallum and Price's account. I therefore turn to the field of virtue ethics to take McCallum and Price's interestingly complex definition a stage further.

I have argued that well-being in education can more helpfully be conceptualised as an adverb than as a noun. I have suggested that it is not a thing but a way of being and of doing things and that it is more concerned with *how* we do education and with *how* we are than a thing we possess. In this I am influenced by Toner's description of eudaimonia as 'standing in the right relation to the good' or 'the right relation to objects according to their degrees and kinds of goodness' (Toner, 2006, p. 609). It is clear from this statement that Toner also sees eudaimonia not as a thing but as a way of being and relating to the world. I suggest that this involves relating to *people* according to their goodness but also to the physical environment as well and even to our own physical and emotional selves.

Toner goes on to define well-being itself as part of eudaimonia and as 'enjoyment of the excellent' (2006, p. 614). Combining his description of flourishing as standing in the right relation to objects according to their degrees and kinds of goodness and of well-being as enjoyment of the excellent provides, I would argue, a robust and helpful definition of well-being for education. Since, according to Starratt, there is an intrinsic morality to learning itself involving a sense of duty and even reverence (Starratt, 1998), then seeing educational well-being as a focus on how we approach the natural and social world around us seems particularly appropriate. Moreover, well-being can, I suggest, include standing in the right relation to objects according to their goodness where the right relation to goodness is defined as enjoyment.

Enjoyment as I am using it here is not meant in a light or trivial sense but in the sense of treating objects, as Starratt notes, with 'a careful attention to the known' and 'a profound respect for and sensitivity to its sacredness' (Starratt, 1998, p. 248). It has connotations of joy, which Weil argues 'is as indispensable in study as breathing is in running' (Weil, 1959, p. 3). It implies the right response, in the right way, to the right degree, so it also has connotations of Aristotelian wisdom. If sadness or even frustration are what is called for by the object we relate to, then there is an appropriateness to feeling sadness and frustration that can be characterized, I suggest, as enjoyment. We are enjoying feeling the right emotion,

responding in an appropriate way, even though we may simultaneously feel discomfort.

This definition is, as Toner argues, 'activity-centred' (2006, p. 614) and allows us to focus on how we engage in any activity, including educational activities. It is a moral definition because of the 'intrinsic morality' (Starratt, 1998, p. 244) in learning itself and because being in relationship with the natural and social world 'implies mutual involvement and mutual respect' (1998, p. 246). Study is 'a moral as well as an intellectual enterprise' (Starratt, 1998, p. 248) precisely because it requires us to recognise the goodness and the excellence in our subjects of study as well as in our teachers and our pupils and indeed, within ourselves.

The use of the word 'enjoyment' takes us beyond the intellectual to the physical and emotional realm of joy. Such a definition can include happiness but go beyond it to encompass struggle and awe, discomfort and sadness. Sometimes the 'right relation to an object' will be sadness or confusion, sometimes it will be wonder. We respond appropriately, in the 'right' way to the object and to the goodness or excellence that it contains.

I argued above that I wished to avoid the imposition of the word flourishing and its companion 'excellent' on teachers as another standard or measure for them to fail by. However I do not think there is a contradiction in my use of Toner's 'enjoyment of the excellent' (2006, p. 614). In Toner's definition the word is being used quite differently. In the context of performativity, critiqued by Ball, (Ball, 2003), excellence is used as an arbitrary and extrinsic measure based on a 'proliferation of contrived metrics' (Crawford, 2009, p. 8) which teachers must meet. By contrast, Toner is using the word excellent to indicate an internal good that is recognised or aspired to, not a sanction that is used to control. It is in this sense of an internal good that I wish to use the word excellent. MacIntyre argues that 'a practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods' (MacIntyre, 1981) and that the internal goods of a practice, 'are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, but it is characteristic of them that their achievement is a good for the whole community' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 190). There are no winners or losers in this use of the word excellent. Moreover, the standards of excellence are set by the practice itself, not imposed externally.

The virtues themselves, love, friendship, courage are excellent goods we aspire to, internal to people, actions and activities and the aspiration toward them is, or can be, enjoyable rather than imposed as a means to bestow credit or blame.

My working definition of educational well-being then becomes *enjoyment of the excellent, seeing and relating to the goodness in things and people*. This definition makes it clear, I hope, that well-being is democratic, moral, interdependent and somaesthetic as I have defined these terms. My own well-being involves seeing the goodness, the uniqueness, the beauty in the other. The well-being of the other includes them being perceived in all their beauty and uniqueness, by me. Our well-being is linked internally and constitutively – the well-being of each depends upon the other. Teacher and pupil well-being, learner and subject, self and environment are all intimately linked.

4. The purpose of a theory of educational well-being

I have argued that education is a particular context, characterised by its positioning between the generations and by its core purpose of ‘the continuance of the world’ (Arendt, 2007, p. 191). I suggested that this was true of any educational setting and that an encounter between the generations could occur whatever the age of the persons involved because *generation* can be defined in terms of experience as well as age. I am currently learning the practice of campanology. One of the experienced generation who is inducting me into the tradition, history, skills and internal goods of bell-ringing is 13 years old.

However, while I have argued that care and instruction, as well as education, remain necessary whatever the age of the student, I also suggest that there *is* something distinct about schools and other educational settings where the older generation is instructing the younger generation. What is different, I wish to argue, is not the necessity of care and instruction or even the nature of it, but the sheer *intensity* of it. Schools are full of young people whose need for care and instruction is constant and urgent. Humans remain capable of and characterised by natality, by the ability to start something new, throughout their lives. However, children especially need to ‘insert’ themselves, ‘into the human world’ (Arendt, 1958, p. 176). It is something which they are doing constantly. This means that where there are a lot of children there is a high level of unpredictability, a large if not constant number of new beginnings and a high level of the anxiety that naturally accompanies this.

It also means that there is a high need for care and indeed for love. One purpose of a theory of educational well-being is, I would argue, to create an environment that helps teachers to manage or contain the anxiety and love that characterise education and which I am identifying as the distinguishing features of the context of education.

a. Containing anxiety

The anxiety that characterises the educational environment is at least two-fold. There is the anxiety of the one being instructed. Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. describe the 'anxieties which beset the learner: fear of confusion and chaos in the face of unsorted 'bricks' of experience, helplessness in the face of not knowing, fear of inadequacy, fear of being judged stupid in comparison with others' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 57). This anxiety on the part of the learner is natural and part of the educational environment.

There is another anxiety. This is the anxiety of the older generation confronted by the sheer unpredictability of the next generation. Arendt argues that 'Limitations and boundaries exist within the realm of human affairs, but they can never offer a framework that can reliably withstand the onslaught with which each new generation must insert itself' (Arendt, 1958, p. 191). She refers to the 'inherent boundlessness of action' and its 'inherent unpredictability' (1958, p. 191). Teachers are daily confronted by this 'inherent unpredictability' of the young and anxiety is therefore the natural condition, I would argue, of any school.

The anxieties that, according to Ball, attend upon the relatively recent 'technology of performativity' (Ball, 2003) are therefore in addition to the existence of the natural anxiety of the learner and the natural anxiety of the teacher. It may even be that the imposition of a culture of performativity by politicians in the UK and elsewhere is actually a reaction against 'the onslaught' of the next generation which, given the rate of change in technological innovation in the past 50 years, may be perceived as even more intense an onslaught than in previous generations. Arendt argues that the rise of the ideals of fabrication, measurement, order and control were an attempt to curtail the sheer unpredictability of action, which is always rooted in natality or new beginnings (Arendt, 1958). The imbalance which I have pointed out within education, the dominance of the ideals of measurement, and what Crawford calls 'the proliferation of contrived metrics' (Crawford, 2009, p. 8) may therefore be an attempt to 'eliminate the character of frailty from human affairs' (Arendt, 1958, p. 226) and to 'eliminate action because of its uncertainty' (Arendt, 1958, p. 230). Dewey says that 'love of certainty is a demand for guarantees in advance of action' (1922, p. 93). Performativity within education may be an understandable attempt to ensure at least some guarantees in the face of the immense unpredictability and sheer pace of current technological and social change and its accompanying anxiety.

If anxiety becomes too intense then not only does well-being suffer but so too does learning. Teachers, and any adult who is with children, contains the projections of their powerful emotions and helps them to make sense of them. Parker writes that 'the baby projects, along with love, unbearable feelings into the mother who "detoxifies" these feelings, makes sense of them for the baby in her mind, enabling the baby to feel understood, and in turn to develop her or his capacity to understand' (Parker, 1995, p. 97). Schore and Schore describe these projections as 'implicit nonconscious right brain/mind/body nonverbal communications' (Schore & Schore, 2008, p. 14) and while this process is particularly intense in young children it continues as they get older and recurs at any age in response to stress. The adult becomes a safe place to store, to contain (Bion, 1985), to manage the anxieties of the young child so that they do not impede learning, 'It is only the experience of someone strong enough and caring enough to tolerate painful emotional states which helps the child to feel that they can be lived through, survived and held in mind' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 68).

Those who work with children must contain not only the anxieties of the children and of society but their own too. These, as I have already argued, may be very intense. In Chapter VII, Discussion of empirical findings in the light of a theory of educational well-being, I shall suggest that a theory and practice of well-being may itself be a container for the anxieties of the adults who work with children, particularly if theory and practice are mediated by a clear and robust pedagogical framework. I shall discuss the evidence for whether or not this occurred within Celebrating Strengths.

b. Containing love

Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. note the importance of the presence of 'someone strong enough and caring enough' (1983, p. 68) to help children learn to manage their own emotions and indeed, to learn at all. Arendt said that schools should be characterised by care. I suggest that the care of the teacher can and should be seen as love. Arendt argues that 'education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world' (Arendt, 2007, p. 192). Arendt makes it clear that education is a site where the presence of love is essential, love for the world and love for the next generation. Education must contain love and so, I would argue, must educational well-being.

Arendt saw care as something shared between home and family (Higgins, 2010c), and since the care of the family includes love for the child, that suggests that teachers, too, might show loving care or love to the students they teach. However, many teachers today would hesitate to use the word love to characterize their relationships with children. This is partly, perhaps, because 'the primacy of caring relations in work with pupils and colleagues has no place in the hard world of performativity' (Ball, 2003, p. 222). But it is largely, I suggest, because as a society we have not yet begun to come to terms with the scale and depth of the misuse of power by adults towards children and the harm that this has caused. There were, we are now discovering, a large number of adults in schools and other settings who were neither 'strong enough' nor 'caring enough' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 68) to contain their own powerful feelings, let alone those of the children they were responsible for. These adults perpetrated what Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. call 'the worst situation' where the adult 'uses the student (or child/dependent person) as the container of his own unbearable feelings' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 65). This use of the child as a container can involve physical, emotional and mental abuse. Such abuse may masquerade as love but is, I insist, its antithesis.

However, the fact of historic abuse makes it more, not less important, to reclaim and carefully define what love means in professional and in this case educational contexts. Children have not stopped needing to be loved. We must just be very clear about what that love entails and how it contributes to educational well-being.

I suggest that a combination of attachment theory, psychodynamic theory, positive psychology, moral philosophy and theology can provide a starting point for what constitutes another, essential strand, in the conversation about educational well-being. As I argued in Chapter II, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) states that our earliest relationships shape us in basic ways and that 'attachment processes lie at the centre of all human emotional and social functions' (Schorer, 2012, p. 27) for the rest of our lives. Teachers, whatever the age of the student, are attachment figures. As with anxiety, the younger the student the more powerful the emotions involved but the nature of the emotions remain the same. If we feel secure with our teacher, our attachment figure, if we trust that they will not abandon us if we fail, then we can take the risks necessary to learn and can show resilience 'in the face of stress and novelty' (Schorer & Schorer, 2008, p. 11). One element of the love of the teacher is therefore a willingness to allow the student to make mistakes and to fail.

Another element is hope, one of the central subjects for study in positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Melanie Klein noted that 'hope and trust in the existence of goodness, as can be observed in everyday life, helps people through great adversity and effectively counteracts persecution' (Klein, 1975, p. 194). The teacher needs to have a realistic hope in the capacity of the student because, as Reid noted of her little patient Georgie, children see themselves reflected in the expressions of their teachers. If a teacher has no hope for a student the student will struggle to have hope in themselves. A teacher must see the student as 'worth taking seriously' (Reid, 1990, p. 49).

They must also see them as beautiful. Reid argues that beauty and love are closely linked and suggests that without an appreciation of beauty linked to love there is no impetus to live life, to enjoy it and to seek and embrace experience. Love and beauty are 'what makes us, and our patients in turn, able to keep hope alive and tolerate change' (1990, p. 51). Teachers, too, need to see the beauty in children or children will not be able to see it in themselves and their ability to see it in other people and in the world around them will also be compromised.

While I have argued that there are clear similarities between the role of the teacher and the role of the home and that both are characterized by love, there are also differences. Mostly, as I have argued before for the presence of anxiety in older and younger students, these differences are a question of degree. Teachers ought not to feel the intensity of love for a student that a parent feels for a child, though it may be comprised of the same elements of hope, security, respect and appreciation. One qualitative difference I would argue, however, is the nature of that appreciation. Reid argues that 'an important aspect of mother's love should include the capacity to be uncritically appreciative of her baby' (Reid, 1990, p. 50). I suggest that a teacher ought to be appreciative of each child but not uncritically so. The teacher balances a profound respect for the current worth and achievement of her student with a willingness to be critical and see the greater possibilities that the student can achieve.

Seeing clearly and appreciatively, paying attention to the student in all their humanity, is the final element I wish to bring to a discussion of the nature of educational love. The theologian, Schwobel argues that the character of love is that it is 'directed towards the full appreciation of the being of the other' (Schwobel, 2005, p. 89). Murdoch sees love as essential to moral philosophy. She writes that 'love is knowledge of the individual' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 27) and, as I noted in

paragraph 2 above, she speaks of the ‘moral life’ as ‘something that goes on continually, not something that is switched off in between the occurrence of specific moral choices’ (Murdoch, 1970, p. 36). She calls this the ‘work of attention’, a constant use of moral imagination and effort to see others justly and lovingly and links it to Weil’s concept of attention (Weil, 1959). Arendt argues that, in action, in word and deed, humans communicate not *what* they are but *who* they are (Arendt, 1958). For anybody to successfully communicate to another ‘the story of which he is himself the hero’ (1958, p. 186) there must be an attentive listener, one who pays attention to the speaker and who values their story. That attention has a moral quality – and it is has the quality of love – of seeing justly and lovingly.

While the word love may make us uncomfortable, I would argue that it is an essential component of any educational setting and certainly essential to a discussion of what well-being means in education. If, as Hanley notes, ‘there is something about the best teachers that makes their actions feel as loving as if you were a member of their own family’ (Hanley, 2016) then, despite our uncertainty, we must have the courage to discuss love in education.

Psychodynamic psychotherapists would call the powerful feelings they have for their patients the *counter-transference*. The particular mixture of respect, critical appreciation, hope and loving attention which I am suggesting teachers can and ought to feel for their pupils might be termed a *positive counter-transference*. The use of a term such as positive counter-transference or positive attachment figure might make it easier for education professionals to discuss this difficult area. I will use the term counter-transference on occasions within this thesis but I will also continue to use the word love.

5. Conclusion

Higgins notes that the philosopher Michael Oakeshott used the metaphor of ‘the conversation’ to describe how disciplines like history, literature and science contribute to the way that ‘human beings attempt to understand themselves’ (Higgins, 2010e, p. 439). Education is one of the most important sites where this particular conversation takes place and I argue that part of that conversation must be what it means to be human well, and therefore what constitutes well-being for teachers and pupils. Moreover, this conversation must also include not just what it means to be well in some ideal future state for which education is preparing children but in the here and now, within the present activities of education.

I have said that this conversation, like Oakeshott's conversation about mankind, must not be dominated by any one voice. Such domination is not democratic. If, as I have argued, education and democracy are intimately linked, then it is not educational, either. I do not suggest that this is a complete theory of educational well-being precisely because I cannot claim to have included every relevant voice. For example, one element at least which I do not consider in detail in this thesis is our relationship to the natural environment and there will be others. I suggest rather that my thesis is a contribution to what must be an essential ongoing conversation about what constitutes educational well-being for teachers and pupils.

I argued that well-being is a complex, multifaceted concept and is better thought of as an adverb than as a noun. I said that in addition to being democratic, well-being must be thought of as a moral concept and an interdependent concept, as a quality of being together that is essential for all human beings. This quality of being together brings my argument firmly back to education since, as Dewey argues, open, respectful communication is always educative. I have also said that it must be a somaesthetic concept, where somaesthetic implies paying attention to the full range of bodily emotions, to joy and to beauty, because we learn with all of ourselves and joy and beauty are essential to learning. I offered a working definition of education that is activity centred and which combines these different elements or perspectives.

I have argued that, because education is a unique human context characterized by an encounter between the generations and by the process of society renewing itself, it has the characteristics of love and anxiety. Therefore part of the role of a theory of well-being in education is to contain love and anxiety.

Part of my definition of democracy is the willingness to listen to diverse voices and to engage in what might be called a better class of disagreement. As I wrote in my introductory chapter, MacIntyre notes that 'when a tradition is in good order it is always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its particular point and purpose' (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 222). The ability and opportunity for teachers and pupils to argue about whether well-being is a good of education and what that means in practice must, I suggest, be part of an education system that is in good order.

Critiquing the technology of performativity imposed on schools, Ball has said that, 'the possibilities of being "otherwise" to or within it are extremely limited' (Ball, 2003, p. 218) and that the primacy of caring relationships, 'has no place in the hard world

of performativity' (Ball, 2003, p. 222). My own work in schools, *Celebrating Strengths*, developed in parallel to the rise of the technology of performativity. I suggest that one way my work could be characterised is as doing school 'otherwise', in supporting beauty and the primacy of caring relationships and in helping the schools I worked with, in a small way, to do the same. I will look for evidence, in my findings that this did or did not occur. To pay due respect to the work I did in schools I have also attempted to do my educational research 'otherwise' and I will explore this in the next chapter.

v. Empirical methodology: contemplative reflection

1. Introduction

This chapter will describe my use of a flexible research design which I have called *contemplative reflection*. I developed contemplative reflection in the course of my research and in parallel with my emerging theory of well-being in education. I used it as an empirical reflective process with which to study my own well-being project, *Celebrating Strengths* (Fox Eades, 2008), and contribute to the development of a theory of well-being in education. Contemplative reflection is influenced by a number of research traditions and is cross disciplinary. I locate it broadly within the tradition of action research but it is also influenced by the psychodynamic practice of infant observation and the Christian tradition of listening prayer, *Lectio Divina*. Its development was further influenced by virtue ethics and positive psychology. I will briefly describe these traditions and indicate how I have used them to inform my methodology.

I will outline how contemplative reflection builds on, or is continuous with, my emergent theory of educational well-being and my own well-being practice in schools. The chapter will describe the two main methods which I incorporated within contemplative reflection. The first of these is the strengths circle conversation, an embodied interview technique which I used with colleagues with whom I have worked, including two 11 year old pupils. The second is the contemplative reverie, a time limited cycle of repeated and attentive listening to and reflection on a variety of sources of data, including videos of the strengths circle conversations.

I will discuss the ethics of my empirical reflection, paying particular attention to issues around the inclusion of children, the ethical responsibility of researching within established and friendly relationships, my ethical responsibility to reflect the

integrity of my work in schools and my duty of care to my own well-being as I research.

2. Continuity of theory and practice

a. Means and ends: democratic, somaesthetic, moral and inter-personal

In my literature chapter, I argued that a theory and practice of educational well-being must at least attempt to transcend dichotomous thinking. Biesta argues that in education means and ends are linked ‘internally or constitutively’ (Biesta, 2007, p. 10) while Dewey argues that ‘means and ends are two names for the same reality’ (Dewey, 1922, p. 18). Means and ends are one of the dichotomies challenged by Dewey, together with theory and practice and ‘method and subject matter’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 92). I suggested that Dewey’s idea of continuity was a more appropriate framework for thinking about the multiple constituents of well-being itself and of any environment that seeks to promote well-being.

My ends in this thesis are two-fold: to contribute to the ongoing conversation about what well-being means within education and to understand my own work in that area more fully. I have tried to ensure that the means I use to do this, my empirical methodology, is continuous with those two key ends. Therefore, rather than undertaking what Robson calls ‘fixed design research’ using an established and well-defined research design, which I would then have used to study my work in schools, I have instead adopted a ‘flexible’ research process, which he describes as ‘constructing a one off design likely to help answer your research questions’ (Robson, 2011, p. 131). This has allowed me to make a deliberate attempt to ensure that my research methodology, my *means*, is continuous with and builds upon the work in schools that it researches.

My work in schools, *Celebrating Strengths*, arose out of psychodynamic theory and theology, with the later addition of positive psychology. Contemplative reflection is similarly informed by these traditions, with the addition of virtue ethics which has influenced my thinking since undertaking this PhD. I have tried to ensure that my methodology is continuous with my emergent theory of well-being as well as my work in schools by developing a process of empirical reflection that is democratic, ethical, somaesthetic and inter-personal, or collaborative. Finally, I have paid attention to whether this research methodology contained the anxiety and love which I have identified as characteristic of educational environments. I will examine evidence for whether my methodology of contemplative reflection actually did this in my discussion chapter, Chapter VII.

As I noted in my literature chapter, Suissa (2008) and Flanagan (2007) both argue for the necessity of combining the philosophical with the empirical in studying the topic of well-being. This is partly why I have chosen to include empirical work within a largely philosophical thesis. However, my main reason is that, like Dewey, I see theory and practice as continuous. My work in schools started with an attempt to put psychodynamic theory and theology into practice with four year olds and their teachers. That practice evolved and later incorporated the theories and practices of positive psychology. The theory that I am now articulating within this thesis therefore arose out of at least 13 years of practice in schools and it would feel inappropriate, inaccurate and indeed unethical *not* to incorporate that practice into my thesis.

b. Action and contemplation

In Chapter III I noted Arendt's argument that the modern age has seen not just a reversal of the hierarchical order between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa* but also 'the elimination of contemplation from the range of meaningful human capacities' (1958, p. 305). I also noted Bourgeault's argument that even within religion contemplation has, in recent centuries 'been slowly allowed to wither and die' (Bourgeault, 2004, p. 68). I have already noted that Ross defines contemplation as 'a specific disposition of attentive and responsive receptivity' (Ross, 2014, p. 75) while Arendt calls it 'the word given to the experience of the eternal' (Arendt, 1958, p. 20) and 'a shocked wonder at the miracle of Being' (Arendt, 1958, p. 302). I would argue that contemplation includes what Cooperrider and Srivastva call a 'metaphysical concern' which posits that 'social existence as such is a miracle that can never be fully comprehended' and which attends to 'the miracle and mystery of social organization' (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2008, p. 354). I will explore the ontological implications of this metaphysical concern below. I have attempted, through developing contemplative reflection, and the different research practices of the strengths circle conversation and contemplative reverie, to adopt a receptive and attentive listening to my work and to use this way of listening both to find meaning and to notice the sacred or miraculous within education.

My argument throughout has been that well-being is facilitated by a balanced environment in which different ways of human being and doing can find expression. Therefore, in my own research, I chose to emphasise a contemplative way of knowing and finding meaning precisely because of the neglect of contemplation in modern life and in education. I tried to prioritise, within my research, the characteristics of contemplation, waiting, listening and silence. Moreover, I also hoped in this way to reflect the nature of my work in schools, which prioritised

waiting, listening and silence and to create a research environment in which I could study well-being and facilitate my own well-being.

In Chapter III I noted Alerby & Elidottir's description of 'reflection in silence as an important part of teaching and learning' (Alerby & Elidottir, 2003, p. 42). Dewey also saw reflection as an essential aspect of learning. Experience, he argued, is characterised by two phases, 'trying' and 'undergoing' (Dewey, 1916, p. 78). Dewey described the 'undergoing' phase of this process as 'passive' and said that 'the connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness or value of the experience' (1916, p. 78). He said that without both of them there is no meaning or learning. Attia (Attia, 2016) argues for the importance of paying attention to these two phases of experience in the research process. She suggests that researchers and the reporting of research tends to emphasis the trying phase of this cycle at the expense of the more passive *undergoing*.

In this thesis I am prioritizing Dewey's more passive phase of *undergoing* in order to learn from 13 years of *trying* in schools. I am including Dewey's focus on undergoing and learning within my definition of contemplation to emphasise that contemplation is not the preserve of religion or of monks or adepts but is an important and neglected way of human being and doing, an important and neglected way of doing research and an essential element of well-being in education.

c. Theory: ontology and epistemology

Clearly my methodology and methods reflect my ontological and epistemological beliefs – what I think about the world and about knowledge. They also reflect my beliefs about the nature and purposes of education. I agree with Whitehead and McNiff that 'A strong relationship exists between what you hope to achieve in terms of your existence as a human being, and your ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, which can all influence each other and transform into the other' (2006, p. 24). I suggest that my most relevant ontological assumptions concern the nature of human groups and human beings. I take the position that groups involve many interactions and assumptions that remain unconscious (Todd, 2003); that humans think in highly metaphorical ways (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) and learn, grow and even exist only in relationship with other human beings (Schoore, 2012); I think that education, humans and human relationships are profoundly sacred (Weil, 1959, Paintner, 2012). I think that thought is embodied, (Schmalzl, et al., 2014) and that we co-construct our social, if not our physical realities

(Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). I think that we do that, at least in part, through our use of language (Murdoch, 1970). I also think that we make sense of our lives and our realities as and through stories (MacIntyre, 1981).

I see knowledge as something that is created in company with others. I agree with Cooperrider and Srivastva that knowledge and social theory are 'a communal creation' (2008, p. 360). I am not assuming a 'spectator theory of knowledge' (Elliott, 2006) but rather the interconnectedness of researcher and researched (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). I am not and could not be objective or neutral when the subject of my research is, in the case of education, a life-long preoccupation and vocation and, in the case of Celebrating Strengths, something that I helped to create.

My view of education is that it is, or has the potential to be, emancipatory (Freire, 1970, hooks, 1994) and that 'people educate each other' (Freire, 1970, p. 14). I also think that the educational system serves, or ought to serve, 'our social hope of a better, more democratic and just society' (Elliott, 2006, p. 185). I argued in Chapter III that democracy, education and well-being are internally linked. I agree with Elliott that educational research itself should embody democratic values and I attempt to engage in the kind of educational research that he classifies as a form of 'rational and disciplined inquiry...a disciplined conversation' (Elliott, 2006, p. 169) and which Whitehead and McNiff refer to as 'living action research', the creation of knowledge 'in company with other people' (2006, p. 23).

I reflect this commitment to making meaning with other people in two main ways. Firstly and most traditionally, I do so through the use of interviews which evolved, I am arguing, into democratic conversations. There is, of course, a power imbalance implicit within all research and in particular in an interview setting (see e.g. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I took deliberate steps to subvert my own power within the strengths circle conversations as I will explain below. In my discussion chapter, Chapter VII, I will explore evidence that these steps were at least partly successful and that the conversations became democratic spaces in which the voices of my colleagues could be heard.

The strengths circle conversations were also, I argue, a way to embody my commitment to moral engagement within well-being research and practice. Kvale and Brinkmann argue that 'interview research is saturated with moral and ethical issues' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 62) which they define as '*the oughtness of human existence*' (2009, italics in original). I brought an additional and explicit element to this implicit moral saturation by using 25 cards containing words like

love, courage, honesty, wisdom and friendship as part of my interview technique. These cards were, as I will explain further below, based on the character strengths and virtues of positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The other way in which I tried to embody a commitment to making meaning with other people was by a deeper use of the writings of moral philosophy within my contemplative reflection as I will explain further below. My deliberate and extended use of moral philosophers reflects my commitment to the values of democracy, morality and somaesthetics within well-being, to the scientific values of curiosity, honesty, open-mindedness and to freedom of thought and discussion in research. Elliot (2006) argues that Dewey's account of scientific method was not of a specific procedure but of a manifestation of these particular virtues. Dewey saw scientific inquiry as a process of observation, discrimination and reflection, of testing of ideas and noticing and interpreting the consequences of actions. He saw it as an essential part of learning and teaching (Dewey, 1938) and as fundamental to a democratic way of life. Dewey did not separate scientific method from reflection, writing that 'To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealings with further experiences' (1938, p. 87). While I do *not* make claims that my research will yield 'generalisations based on random controlled and experimental trials' (Elliott, 2006, p. 176) I will and do argue that it is underpinned by such scientific and moral values.

Cooperrider and Srivastva (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2008) argue for a view of science that emphasises meaning making and accepts that the social order is fundamentally unstable and open to infinite revision, rather than subject to law-like generalisations. Their view of science includes space for passion and a vision of the good, for metaphysics and appreciation of the miraculous nature of human organizing (2008), for science as a 'means of helping humanity create itself' (2008, p. 367). They suggest that this model is more appropriate to social science than 'mechanistic research designs intended objectively to establish universal causal linkages between variables' (2008, p. 355). While it cannot be said that either Dewey's broad view of what counts as scientific method, or Cooperrider & Srivastva's view of science as generative and 'non-objective' (2008, p. 361), is always to be found in education, I am once again aiming to achieve balance by adopting what Robson calls the 'scientific attitude' of being systematic, sceptical and ethical (Robson, 2011, p. 15) within an unusual and contemplative reflection. In this way I hope to create a space for the democratic reasoning which both Dewey and Elliot advocate and which I am arguing is at the heart of well-being in education.

While I have not undertaken the kind of research that is usually meant when the phrase evidence-based practice is invoked, I am very committed to engaging in the collection and interpretation of what Hubble and Miller refer to as 'practice-based evidence' (Hubble & Miller, 2004, p. 349). I see my material record, my videoed strengths circle conversations and, indeed, philosophical ideas which are relevant to my practice as different layers of practice-based evidence. My contemplative reflection studies this diverse evidence in order to generate and critique theory, to deepen understanding of the practices which gave rise to it and to support further growth and learning.

In action research, Cooperrider and Srivastva argue that the field is dominated by a problem solving disease orientation, 'taken almost directly from the medical model' (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2008, p. 371) which assumes that 'something is broken, fragmented, not whole and that it needs to be fixed' (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2008, p. 372) . They suggest that this leads to 'an instrumental purpose' tied to what is already known and to an inherent conservatism that serves the status quo.

This view that something is broken and needs fixing is, I would argue, an ontological view and one that, certainly within education, I did not and do not share. My work in schools was not inspired by the view that the education system is broken and needs to be fixed or that teachers lack particular knowledge or skills which they need to acquire. From personal experience and observation, I knew that some children within that system were in pain. I also knew that teaching such children can itself be painful as well as difficult. I wished to support teachers engaged in that task primarily by developing approaches to teaching and learning that enhanced enjoyment, teacher enjoyment of teaching and pupil enjoyment of learning. My additional assumption was that this would benefit the well-being of all pupils, including those who were in pain but not limited to them.

The ontological assumption of wholeness rather than deficit or deficiency is, I suggest, continuous with my commitment to beauty and somaesthetics. Moreover, I suggest that this is not just an ontological but also a metaphysical assumption, where metaphysical implies a concern with the sacred and with beauty and goodness. I am arguing that research and learning can involve seeing the beauty and potential in what we study, in regarding 'the object of our study, the "other", as a "thou" rather than an "it", with 'a profound respect for and sensitivity to its sacredness....a careful attention to the known' (Starratt, 1998, p. 248). I would argue that both Celebrating Strengths and my contemplative reflection share a commitment to this metaphysical concern within education. I suggest further that

both contemplation and a metaphysical concern are neglected and essential aspects of educational well-being.

3. Traditions and assumptions underlying contemplative reflection

a. Action research and living theory

I locate the empirical reflection within my thesis within the broad tradition of action research. McNiff describes action research as ‘a kind of self-reflective practice’ which ‘is always done in company with other people’ (McNiff, 2010, p. 5). This is what I attempt within my empirical reflection. The ‘other people’ in whose company I engage in this reflection include teachers, pupils and moral philosophers. My inclusion of ‘other people’ (McNiff, 2010, p. 5) in my research reflects my commitment to well-being as both a democratic and an interpersonal concept.

Cooperrider and Srivastva critique the discipline of action research for insisting on a ‘sharp separation of theory and practice’ as well as for its problem solving orientation (2008, p. 372). Neither Celebrating Strengths nor this thesis are problem orientated and I discussed above my commitment to trying to ensure the continuity of theory and practice. My empirical reflection certainly does not follow the widely adopted version of action research that involves a cycle of observation, change, reflection and further action planning (Robson, 2011, p. 190). It is, I suggest, closer to the ‘living theory’ or ‘living action research’ perspective taken by Whitehead and McNiff (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Whitehead and McNiff argue that everyone possesses ‘a vast store of tacit knowledge’ and that practitioners come to understand this embodied knowledge ‘as they work with their practice and create their own theories of education’ (2006, p. 24). They suggest that this can involve practitioners in ‘methodological inventiveness’ in the ‘creative struggle of seeking to understand’ (2006, p. 25).

I attempt precisely this methodological inventiveness in my empirical reflection, as I describe in detail below. I use it to reflect upon, and seek to understand, a project I co-created during 13 years of practice, taking account of changes that have taken place over those 13 years and interpreting that practice and change in the light of my colleagues’ comments and the observations of selected passages of moral philosophy. I am certainly attempting to create a theory of education. My aim, however, is that it will not simply be my own theory but go beyond a personal understanding and contribute to a wider educational and cultural conversation about what well-being means within education.

b. Infant observation and psychodynamic theory

In creating contemplative reflection, and in particular in constructing the method of contemplative reverie, I drew on the theory and practice, and my personal experience of, infant observation (Adamo & Rustin, 2001). This is a particular model of observation, based on the Tavistock Clinic in London, informed by psychoanalytic theory and used to train child psychotherapists and others who work with children. I did two, two year courses in infant observation as part of my Master's degree. In infant observation, observers are looking for data to confirm or contradict psychoanalytic assumptions and aim to 'sit back and to think' (2001, p. 9) rather than to react or intervene. They remain alert to their own feelings or counter-transference as a further way to understand the child. Typically, they do not take notes during an observation because such note taking is felt to be a distraction. Rather they learn to pay attention to the emotional tenor of events, to what appeals, amuses, intrigues or concerns them and to what is happening at those moments, writing it up in detail immediately afterwards.

This reflective, thoughtful mode of observation is associated by authors such as Schore & Schore with being attentive to projections and other non-verbal communications (Schore & Schore, 2008). It is sometimes given the term reverie both in the psychoanalytic literature (Parker, 1995) and neuroscience, (Schore & Schore, 2008).

This kind of observation is clearly very different from the more typical kind of observation in school settings which is 'associated with scrutiny, exposure and Ofsted inspections' (Jackson, 2005, p. 5). The aim of infant observation is to deepen an understanding of the meaning of behaviour, to reflect on the observer's internal reactions and to understand these as possible communications from and about the children.

In my contemplative reverie I tried to practice that quality of sitting back and thinking in the presence of my three data streams, rather than in the presence of a child. I paid attention to the emotional tenor within my documents, my philosophical extracts and in the videos of the strengths circle conversations. I also paid attention to my own feelings, to what appealed, concerned, even shocked me and regarded these observations as another kind of data. As in traditional infant observation, I kept note taking to a minimum during these observations but wrote in detail towards the end of each reflection. These notes of my observations, both long hand and in an electronic journal, then formed a further layer of interpretative data and it was this interpretative data that I used in my analysis.

c. Lectio Divina

The development of contemplative reverie was also influenced by the ancient Benedictine practice of Lectio Divina, divine or sacred reading (Paintner, 2012). Traditionally, Lectio Divina is a method of prayer that emphasises listening for the sacred in a text. Lectio Divina, unlike infant observation or psychoanalytic reverie, has a framework and practical steps to follow. It provided me with a structure for creating a reflective process which I could develop and use. It is a practice of deep and respectful listening, with a focus on savouring, listening and waiting for a text to speak before responding to it rather than immediately interpreting it on a purely cognitive level.

Traditionally, Lectio Divina has four stages or phases, *lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio*, (Paintner, 2012) or reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation. Ross calls the stages metaphors which describe 'the work of silence' (Ross, 2014, p. 6). Jamison (Jamison, 2008, p. 62) uses the metaphor of eating:

- Biting: reading the passage
- Chewing: repeating the words that have been read in meditation
- Swallowing: making the words into a prayer
- Enjoying the flavour: sitting with the words in silent contemplation

Paintner extends the practice of sacred listening or reading to include the use of visual images or art, music and nature, arguing that it is possible to go 'beyond scriptural texts to a sacred reading of the world' (2012, p. xvi). It is this broader interpretation of Lectio Divina that I will draw on since my work, clearly, is not a scriptural text but part of the world.

I kept four stages within my contemplative reverie but adapted the stages of Lectio Divina to incorporate a psychodynamic perspective on the unconscious. The stages I developed were:

Reading: *reading the texts, watching the videos, listening to audio recordings, re-reading my emerging notes and journals; making a note of passages, exchanges, comments, words or phrases or objects that stand out for me, which resonate or produce an emotional response*

Playing: *making links between what stood out in the slow reading phase and other ideas, metaphors or images – exploring what stood out by drawing, poem making, free-association, reverie*

Writing: *responding to what emerged during the play phase by writing about what I have seen, thought, wondered, first in long hand and then at the computer*

Waiting: *spending time not actively thinking but being and allowing silence and stillness to quieten the mind and allow the unconscious to speak*

Bourgeault comments that Lectio Divina and prayer more generally is underpinned by what she calls 'the practice of attention' (Bourgeault, 2004, p. 61) in daily life. Weil saw the whole purpose of education as the development of the faculty of attention, writing of the 'spiritual effect' of 'a genuine effort of the attention' (Weil, 1959, p. 1). Moreover, by effort and attention she did not mean a gritting of the teeth kind of will power. She described the effort required for attention as a 'negative effort...of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty and ready to be penetrated by the object...we do not obtain the most precious gifts by going in search of them but by waiting for them' (1959, p. 4).

This recalls the waiting element of Lectio Divina, with its emphasis on listening for the object to speak. I would argue that it also recalls the passivity of Dewey's phase of 'undergoing' (Dewey, 1916, p. 78) and Ross's description of what she calls 'the work of silence' (Ross, 2014, p. 6), which is global, dynamic and multi-dimensional as opposed to linear and self-conscious. I attempted to practice this quality of attention in my contemplative reverie as a way of paying respect to what Starratt calls the 'sacredness' of our objects of study (1998, p. 248) and as a way of practicing Whitehead and McNiff's 'methodological inventiveness' (2006, p. 25). I also used it to reflect the contemplative, silent and ritual nature which characterised some of my practical work in schools and to attempt to create a balance and contrast with more traditional analytic and linear research, dominated by what Schore calls the 'verbal, conscious, rational and serial information processing' of the left hemisphere of the brain (Schore, 2012, p. 7).

d. Character strengths and virtues, positive psychology and virtue ethics

The strengths circle conversation is a practice that I developed in the course of my work in schools. I originally intended to use interviews to gain the insights of colleagues into our shared work, seeing interviewing as 'an active process where interviewer and interviewee through their relationship produce knowledge' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 17) and therefore in keeping with my focus on democracy and interpersonal relationships. I then decided that the strengths circle conversations which I had used in the classroom and in training workshops might provide a richer and more interesting interview method and one which made more space for the

implicit and non-verbal communications described by Schore & Schore (Schore & Schore, 2008). I also felt it would better embody my emerging theory of well-being as democratic, moral, somaesthetic, and inter-personal.

The strengths circle conversation involves the physical creation of a picture that accompanies a conversation. The picture is created out of 25 cards, each containing a cartoon of one of the character strengths used in *Celebrating Strengths*. The cartoons are moved in and out of a circle as the person speaks, the movement and emerging pattern then accompanies and prompts further thought and reflection. The gaze of the participants and of the camera is downwards, onto the emerging, changing picture. The circle is videoed so that the discussion of the participants is captured alongside the picture. The video can be edited so that still images may be placed alongside particular comments, or silences, in the discussion.

The strengths circle conversation is influenced by positive psychology in that it employs character strengths derived from the work of Peterson and Seligman, (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). My own use of character strengths differs in certain key respects from that of Peterson and Seligman in a way that reflects how my practice and theory have influenced one another and, in particular, the growing influence of moral philosophy upon my practice. Higgins argues that patience is an essential virtue for teachers. He points to the need for 'waiting for the student to arrive at insight' (Higgins, 2010d, p. 378). He also links patience to the need for intellectuals to be able to tolerate doubt and uncertainty which Keats referred to as negative capability. The teachers to whom I introduced the character strengths often commented on the absence of patience from Peterson and Seligman's list. My decision to include it explicitly in my work and in my methodology is an example of my attempt to ensure the continuity of theory and practice and the prioritising of morality within my work on well-being.

I commented in my literature chapter on criticisms of Seligman's focus on a few, individually chosen strengths. Kristjánsson, for example, calls for positive psychology to provide 'a coherent, all embracing structure of virtues' (Kristjánsson, 2012, p. 97). Here, too, I was influenced by moral philosophy in my practice in schools and in this methodology. I focused, with teachers and pupils, on paying attention to all the strengths within our conversations. A final example of the influence of moral philosophy upon my work was in my decision to abandon Peterson and Seligman's terminology of 'social and emotional intelligence' (2004, p. 337). I was and am unconvinced that emotional intelligence is a virtue so much as

an ability. I therefore chose to replace it, in my work in schools and in my methodology, with the Aristotelian virtue of friendship (MacIntyre, 1981).

4. Ethical issues

a. Working with colleagues

There are ethical implications to the fact that I am conducting my research, my strengths circle conversations, 'within the context of emerging and well-established relationships among participants and interviewers' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 5). Ellis et al. point out that maintaining and valuing interpersonal ties with your research participants makes 'relational ethics more complicated. Participants often begin as or become friends through the research process' (2011, p. 7). The virtue of friendship is particularly relevant to this thesis since friendship was a key concept in how I thought about my work with schools and attempted to work with colleagues. I was aware of the additional ethical obligation to respect and honour those friendships in the course of my research while retaining a sense of integrity towards my subject and the wider research community.

The fact that I had pre-existing relationships of trust and friendship with my participants made it unlikely that they would be openly critical of the work that we did together. In addition, there are questions of power to be considered within research. The researcher, the expert, has power that is explicit and implicit. Explicitly the researcher designs the research and holds the data, the interpretation and writing is theirs. They take the lead in the interview or conversation, choosing when it starts and ends and how it is done. Implicitly there is status attached to 'experts' and greater knowledge can bestow, or be thought to bestow, greater power.

I see a power imbalance as inevitable within research and within interviews but steps can be taken to mitigate it. It is easier to mitigate against power that is explicit and this can be done through acknowledgement and explanation. When power is made overt and obvious, when it is put into words, it can be challenged. Implicit power is harder to mitigate against because by its nature it is unstated and what is not stated is harder to challenge.

I attempted to mitigate against both explicit and implicit power imbalances, and also to make space for challenging views to be expressed, within my method of the strengths circle conversation. I made attempts to mitigate my explicit power by asking written consent of my adult colleagues and stating clearly, in writing, the goals of my PhD research as I then understood them. Obtaining written consent

within pre-existing relationships is not unproblematic but helps to make it clear that there is a departure from previous ways of working together and that meeting together for the purposes of research has different aims and objectives and some different rules of conduct to meeting together for training or work purposes.

I made a clear statement of my desire to gain their understanding of Celebrating Strengths for my research. I said that I would be looking for patterns and themes rather than at individual words or contributions. I noted that consent could be withdrawn up to 1 month after we had spoken and that I would ask further consent if I wished to quote them directly. Since half of my adult colleagues have subsequently moved on and further consent would be difficult to obtain I have avoided the use of direct quotes entirely so that I fully comply with what they agreed to before the research started.

I did not say so at the time, but all the videos will also be deleted completely 3 months after the final publication of my thesis. That seems to me an appropriate and ethical act.

I also took steps to mitigate my explicit and implicit power by how I conducted the interviews or conversations. I deliberately kept my language simple. The language of academia can exclude and is part of where implicit power resides. I did not use a script but was a participant in the conversations. Again, scripts reinforce distance, knowledge and power. I admitted, in the conversation where children were also present, to the need to learn myself, deliberately exposing myself and my lack of being all knowing. I explained what I was doing and why, what I hoped to gain from our conversations and from my research more widely. I kept the tone friendly, informal. All of my colleagues, especially the children, seemed to enjoy the conversations.

I also attempted to mitigate against the implicit power of the researcher and at the same time to make it safe for my colleagues to challenge me by my use of objects, in this case cards with the names of character strengths and virtues written on them and by my use of silence. The use of the cards made space for silent statements to be made, statements that would be videoed but, because they were not articulated, would be harder for the expert, in this case me, to challenge or contradict. I allowed silence to happen in the conversations and made a conscious effort not to fill it or to break it too quickly. Both the silence, and the use of an embodied interview technique, allowed non- verbal statements to be made. I will discuss in my findings chapter and in the discussion chapter the fact that this strategy appeared to

facilitate challenging comments from both adults and children as well as mitigating against the power of the researcher.

I also attempted to mitigate against the implicit power of the researcher through my body language. In each conversation we sat around a circle and in several instances I sat on the floor, physically lower than my interviewees or at least on a level with them. I physically symbolised a commitment to equality. The gaze, as I discuss further in section 5 below, is not neutral but may be seen as an act of implicit power. To counter this I turned the gaze of the video away from faces and down onto the cards and kept my own gaze there too. My colleagues could look directly at me. I refrained from looking too much at them, particularly where my colleagues were children and thus even less powerful in social terms.

The existence of disagreement and critique in my findings suggest that these steps were at least partly successful as I will discuss below. However, the fact that the interpretation of their words is MY interpretation and that I hold and control that data means that I continue to hold power my colleagues' do not possess. It is therefore incumbent upon me to use it respectfully and as ethically as possible. Therefore, to preserve complete anonymity I have collectivised my adult colleagues' statements and have refrained from any direct quotation of their words. I have changed details and have made every effort to ensure that the schools could not be identified.

There is a tension between the requirements of a university ethics committee and the mutual and unwritten obligations of trusting professional relationships and friendships. The university requires written consent to be obtained. Obtaining written consent allows time for reflection and can bring clarity to what is being asked and agreed to. It means participants are aware of the possibility of withdrawing consent and the use that is intended for their contribution. It is one of the measures researchers can take to return power to the participant. They have the power to pause, to reflect and then to say no.

On the other hand, friends do not generally seek written consent from one another and I was aware that asking colleagues, with whom I already shared a relationship of trust and friendship, to provide written consent might actually damage that trust. The obtaining of written consent therefore necessitated a compromise. To an extent, within the relationships that already existed with my colleagues, I would have preferred our agreements to be verbal and based on a full discussion of the issues above. However, I complied with the requirements of my university in obtaining written consent instead. This meant that they had a copy of what they had agreed to

and that consent could be withdrawn. It also meant that I, too, had a record of what we agreed and could remind myself of, and hold myself to, those agreements.

As I noted in my previous chapter, Starratt (Starratt, 1998) argues that learning and study are fundamentally moral enterprises and that the scholar must listen with both heart and mind, accepting the responsibility of 'care for the integrity of the known' (Starratt, 1998, p. 248). There is an ethical responsibility to honestly represent my work, *Celebrating Strengths*, the views of those I have worked with and, as far as I can, my own changing views. I wish to honestly represent the voice of the project, *Celebrating Strengths*, and as Starratt urges, to respect the integrity of my subject. It is a subject I care deeply about. I have an ethical responsibility to myself and to the care and love I have put into the project over the past 13 years. That does not mean I cannot critique myself and my project, but it does require that I do so with care for my own well-being, with appreciation, understanding and respect.

b. Working with children

Children's insights were instrumental to the development of *Celebrating Strengths* and it would have been inappropriate and a democratic and ethical failure on my part not to include their voices in some way and to acknowledge that essential contribution. My university's guidance for research with children and young people makes the point that children are a 'potentially vulnerable and relatively powerless group in society' (Edge Hill University Research and Enterprise Support Office, 2012, p. 4). In including children in a strengths circle conversation and quoting their words in my research, and in using photographs which include children, I needed to balance children's potential vulnerability against their democratic right to have their contribution to my work acknowledged.

I judged the likelihood of harm in both these cases to be very low and weighed this against what I see as society's failure to involve children in 'meaningful projects with adults' (Hart, 1992, p. 7). In the case of the children, I sought both their written permission and the written permission of their parents. I have not used names, (Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board, 2013) and the video recordings are stored according to the provisions of the Data Protection Act, (DLA Piper, 2013) and will be deleted 3 months after the final publication of my thesis. The written consent forms obtained consent for both recording and use of video and stated that the videos would only be seen by myself and my examiners. I complied with this statement.

To parents and children alike I acknowledged the importance of the children's contribution to the project and of their insights to my research. Again, I said that consent could be withdrawn. I asked the children as well as the adults to sign consent forms to mitigate some of the power imbalance that is implicit and explicit within society between adults and children. The children's forms said substantially the same thing as their parents' but were less formal. I said that if I quoted them I would only use their first names and again I said that they could change their minds later. In fact, I have not used first names or any names at all and have taken steps to completely anonymise their identities for additional protection.

I made the decision to quote children's words directly. I had asked for this in the consent forms and felt that the children would like their words to be used. Moreover, what they said shows insight and understanding and adds to the quality of my research. I see no harm to the individual children in quoting them and I do see harm in failing to give children a voice in research and in society more broadly. The use of direct quotes from children is a tiny contribution towards giving children a greater voice in research as well as being intended to acknowledge the contribution made by children to the development of my work in schools

My attempts to mitigate the power imbalance in our conversations which I discussed above, my custom of sitting on the floor during the strengths circle conversations, my use of a circle and material objects, the turning of the video downwards to the ground and away from faces were parts of my research design intended to mitigate the disparity in power and status which is inherent in research and in adult/child relationships more generally. As I discuss in Chapter VII this seemed to enable the children to challenge and disagree with the researcher in a particularly effective way.

The strengths circle conversations were not formal interviews. They were in keeping with the kind of work I had done with these teachers and pupils in the past, a kind of storytelling, in which we participated together. I kept the atmosphere gentle, I am used to a careful use of inclusive language that permits the expression of different views. Particularly with the children present, though in the adult conversations too, I was playful, self-deprecatory and it was an informal conversation, though within a clearly structured framework. The informality and the structure combine, as I will argue in my discussion chapter, to reduce anxiety if any exists.

I have used several photographs collected at different points within the past 13 years. The permission given at the time they were taken was for the use of

photographs for educational, not research, purposes and I do not know the names of the children in the photographs so cannot trace them. This is not an ideal situation but is one result of using an historic material record for my research. Moreover, I have taken the decision that it is more unethical not to include children in the photographic record since I do not wish to contribute to a view of children as either fragile (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009) or as a problem (Morrow & Mayall, 2009). Where there are children present in these photographs I have obscured or cropped their faces.

When my PhD is complete I will apprise participating schools of my main conclusions and will offer to visit and speak with them further. Though half of my colleagues have now moved on and I am no longer in touch with them, I co-authored a chapter in a book, based on *Celebrating Strengths* and informed by this research, with one of my colleagues before they left. This was because I wanted to publically acknowledge their contribution to that work.

c. The pros and cons of synthesis and creativity

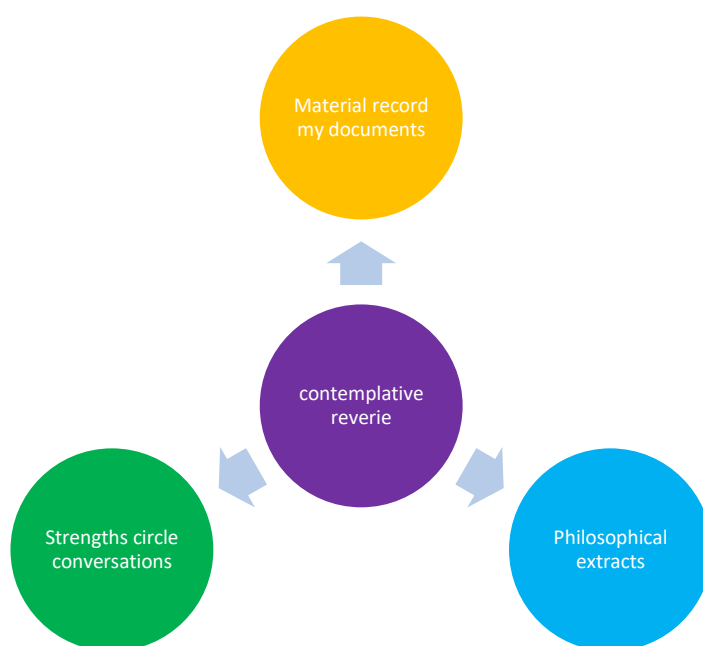
Finally, there are dangers to attempting a synthesis of different approaches from distinct theoretical perspectives and an ethical duty to respect the integrity of each tradition. It is possible to gloss over difference and thereby lose the richness of contrasting voices. What I hope to achieve in this synthesis is a preservation of the different emphases while creating something new and distinctly educational and continuous with my theory of well-being. I wished to include psychodynamic reverie's traditional focus on the unconscious, on discomfort, conflict and ambivalence but to combine this with *Lectio Divina's* attention to the sacred, goodness and beauty. I tried, in this way, to achieve an expanded and more balanced field of awareness that allows space both for the anger, the hurt and the loss of traditional psychoanalytic interpretation and the beauty, love and wonder that Reid noted was lacking in much psychoanalytic literature (Reid, 1990). In the strengths circle conversation I then combined these perspectives with positive psychology's character strengths and virtues but adapted these in the light of the insights of moral philosophy.

I argue that such 'methodological inventiveness' (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 25) and crossing of disciplines is not only justified but necessary precisely because my subject, human well-being, as well as education itself crosses disciplines. It is my ethical obligation, therefore, to attempt to bring the 'scientific attitude' (Robson, 2011, p. 15) of scepticism and systematic rigour to my inventiveness and to be honest with myself and in my reporting about the tensions that my synthesis

entailed. These tensions certainly existed and will form part of my discussion chapter.

5. Contemplative reverie in practice

I chose three distinct data streams as subjects of contemplation within my empirical work. These were my material record, the writings of selected moral philosophers and the videoed strengths circle conversations.



The material record, the files created in the course of my work in schools, I selected to provide insight into my own changing understandings and motivations. The videoed strengths circle conversations were included to provide my colleagues with a space in which to speak and contribute their own insights. The moral philosophers were included to provide balance to the dominance of psychology in the study of well-being (Suissa, 2008) and because of their relevance to my emerging theory of educational well-being.

In *Lectio Divina*, the criteria for selecting what word or part of a text to meditate upon is based on intuition and on the ‘implicit nonconscious right brain/mind/body nonverbal communications’ (Schoore & Schoore, 2008, p. 14) I referenced in Chapter IV. A text is selected which, in Paintner’s words, ‘beckons you, addresses you, unnerves you, disturbs you’ (2012, p. 10). It is an intuitive selection based upon honest observation of the reader’s own emotional response. These selection criteria recall the process of infant observation in which observers are advised to make a note of incidents which attract and amuse or irritate and anger them (Adamo &

Rustin, 2001). Both approaches rely on emotion as a form of evidence, evidence about the reality of what we encounter in the world 'only discernible by personal insight and only checkable by personal experience' (Ward, 2014, p. 137).

I needed to balance the demands of creativity and intuition on the one hand and the traditional research requirement for a 'scientific attitude' of being systematic and rigorous (Robson, 2011, p. 15) on the other. I also wished to develop and test my emergent theory of well-being. I therefore adopted mixed selection criteria in choosing sections from within my three data streams as subjects for contemplation. In some cases I followed my intuition and my emotional responses in selecting passages and documents from all three data streams which either appealed to me or disquieted me. However, I also selected documents and passages that resonated with the emerging themes from my study of the literature and which seemed to merit deeper and further time for study and contemplation.

a. The material record

A folder on my computer contains documents from my work in schools up to and including documents from 2013. It contains a total of 1,147 files, including plans and records of visits to schools, power point presentations for talks about the work at various stages and for different audiences, letters, summaries of the aims and themes of Celebrating Strengths, photographs and documents of lesson ideas and stories later published in book or booklet form. In addition, I have hard copies of 8 articles written for a magazine called Emotional Literacy Update and published between November 2005 and December 2007, by Optimus Education and 7 booklets published by TTS in 2012. As archaeologists study the material remains of a culture for what they reveal about its daily practices and habits, so I decided to study a tiny sample of these files for what they could tell me about my own habits and practices within Celebrating Strengths and for their contribution to my emergent theory of educational well-being.

I chose documents pertaining to the Advent festival, which was the earliest piece of work I developed in collaboration with teachers at an infant school. I chose a selection of documents from different points within the 13 year span of my work. I also chose those which contained summaries of the aims and methods of the work for different audiences for what they could tell me about my own changing understanding.

I selected 13 documents in total. 10 of these are referenced within the thesis as unpublished documents plus the date I wrote them. The two published articles are

Festivals, stories and positive psychology (Fox Eades, 2006) and Christmas emotions (Fox Eades, 2007). The other document is the published booklet *Festival of Lights* (Fox Eades & Catt, 2012). The unpublished documents are included in the bibliography and also listed at the end of the thesis.

b. The strengths conversation

The strengths circle conversations were conducted after my initial literature study and while still working in schools between May and December 2014. There were elements of my method that remained constant through all the videos and elements that changed as I learned about and refined the process. I chose not to follow a script so how I initiated the conversation and the questions I asked changed in each conversation, though remaining broadly the same. In each one I invited the participant or participants to use the strengths cartoon cards to talk about Celebrating Strengths; about what they had wanted from it; about what they saw as its educational value; about what, if anything had changed as a result of their use of it and what they personally had learned from it.

My decision not to use a script is another example of the tensions implicit in cross disciplinary research. While I am committed to rigorous, scientific educational research and my work would be more replicable if I had followed a script I would argue that the presence of a script is one of the mechanisms for causing a power imbalance in interviews. Moreover, the interviews were conducted with existing colleagues within established professional friendships. A conversational and spontaneous approach felt more in keeping with my emergent theory of the democratic and interpersonal nature of well-being in education.

In the course of the interviews I moved from seeing the interactions as interviews to seeing them as conversations and from taking a mostly passive, research role, to being more of an active participant, willing to share my own vulnerability and to be corrected by my colleagues. I learned that a phone is a less intrusive presence than a camera and to hold it pointing down at the circle, not at my colleagues. I learned that I did not need to pause the filming to take snapshots at what felt like appropriate points. A simple film editing programme would allow me to create a snap shot of any moment. I learned that if I asked my colleagues to pay attention to the arrangement of the cards within the circle, as well as whether they were inside or outside the circle, it prompted new insights and discussion.

What remained constant was the embodied nature of the conversations, the physical cards and the circle as an aid to our conversations about Celebrating

Strengths. I also videoed each conversation. I did this partly to capture some aspect of the embodied nature of my work, partly to allow for repeated reflection at a later date and partly to capture evidence of change. I chose to use video to see if I could see and hear change happening.

The use of video in research is not neutral. Jewitt points out that video provides a fragmentary or 'partial' record which both includes and excludes elements of a situation and which requires interpretation (Jewitt, 2012, p. 5) and she notes that some researchers regard video as distorting social interaction to such an extent as to render it of little empirical value. I agree with those who see video as profoundly affecting social interaction. In psychodynamic theory the gaze itself is an act of power that changes the situation that is observed. Heron argues that the human gaze is a basic, unique phenomenal category and advocates the importance of, 'gently sustained and silent mutual gazing' (Heron, 1996). In psychoanalytic theory, the analytic gaze is associated with the anxious sense that the object I am looking at is looking back at me (Felluga, 2011), while Michel Foucault saw the gaze as a site of power and objectification (Bleakley & Bligh, 2009).

My awareness of this aspect of theory influenced the development of the method of the strengths circle conversation in which my own gaze, the gaze of my colleagues and the gaze of the camera were downwards at the emerging picture made by the cards. I did this in an attempt to mitigate both the distortion of filming the interaction and to consciously work against the power differential implicit in me holding the camera and turning it off and on. I also attempted to mitigate the power differential between interviewer and interviewee by increasing my vulnerability within the interaction and by including myself and my thoughts in the conversation. However, the power, of course, remains different and some distortion of the social interactions will have occurred due to the use of the video.

c. Philosophical extracts

As I noted in my literature chapter, in the course of the first iteration of my literature study I identified philosophers that felt particularly pertinent to my work in schools and to the development of a theory of well-being in education. I used these philosophers within my contemplative reverie as sources of contemplation. I selected both the philosophers themselves and then specific passages within their writings according to the dual criteria of relevance to my emerging theory and personal emotional resonance (Paintner, 2012). The latter selection criteria is in keeping with the intuitive focus that characterises both *Lectio Divina* and *Infant Observation*.

The extracts I selected were taken from Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), Weil's *Reflections on the right use of school studies with a view to the love of God* (Weil, 1959), Shusterman's *Body Consciousness: a Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Shusterman, 2008) and Martin's *From Morality to Mental Health* (Martin, 2006).

My initial selection was narrowed down further as my contemplative reverie progressed. I gradually read less and less, in order to allow more time for reverie and repetition, for 'savouring' (Paintner, 2012, p. 12) the passages. To provide continuity with my theory that well-being must be an embodied concept, I took the time to type up, rather than cut and paste, what I regarded as important passages, to help myself ponder and internalize what I was reading.

Contemplative reverie using the data streams

Time limited, iterative phases of repeated reflection

The actual process of contemplative reverie involved the use of repeated, time-limited phases of reflection, which incorporated the four different activities I had adapted from *Lectio Divina*, reading, playing, writing and waiting. Paintner speaks of *Lectio Divina* as 'the act of taking the time and making space for' what exists and of 'allowing ourselves to be moved by what we find there' (Paintner, 2012, p. 136). Time is also an important boundary in the traditional practice of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic hour (which is usually 50 minutes), is a tradition of the profession and keeping to that hour is part of the discipline and power of psychoanalytic therapy. In using these traditions I adopted *time* as one of the parameters for my research. I drew up a timetable with the intention of making time limits part of the process of meaning making and, I hope, part of the power of the process.

The four phases of contemplative reverie suggested four hour time slots in which to work. I chose to label each of these four hour slots a *day* of research since I anticipated, rightly, that four hours of intense study of this kind would be the most I could achieve in a day. I wanted to devote a significant period of time to the reverie. Northcott (Northcott, 2007) talks about the sanctification of time in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the use of time in the bible as a marker of value. I deliberately chose to pay respect to the 'sacredness' (Starratt, 1998, p. 248) of Celebrating Strengths, to the love that my colleagues and myself had invested in it, by spending what would subjectively feel like a significant period of time with it. In one sense the actual period of time I selected was arbitrary. What was important was that, having decided on that period of time I respected the limits, the boundaries of that time

frame. The anthropologist Mary Douglas discusses the importance of ritual 'framing' and how 'the marked off time or place alerts a special kind of expectancy'. In this way, she says, ritual aids us 'in selecting experiences for concentrated attention' (Douglas, 1966, p. 64). Multiplying each day of 4 hours by 10 gave me 40 days for paying this kind of ritualized, concentrated attention to my data streams.

It was a developing process. I made adaptations as I proceeded, some based on the nature of the data streams and some on my awareness of my own physical limitations. I began my contemplative reverie on 1 May 2015 and finished it on 14 July 2015. The 40 days were spread over this period with some days of four hours being split over 2 calendar days due either to time constraints of other work or, occasionally, sheer tiredness and my duty to care for myself and do justice to the object of my study. I started with an 11 day preview phase where I examined the data and familiarised myself with it and made further selections within it, before moving to the four phases of contemplative reverie proper, reading, playing, writing and waiting.

I mixed low and high tech in my record keeping as well as elsewhere in this research. Each day I made a paper record of initial notes and impressions, a brief electronic record of what I had done, a longer electronic record under themed headings and then a longer, more free-associative electronic journal entry. The electronic journal began on Day 12 of my reverie which is when I ended what I saw as the preview phase and started the contemplative reverie proper. The writing in the journal explored themes that emerged and discussed thoughts and my own reactions to my data. I also included snap shots of the videos in the electronic journal to illustrate points of interest.

This mixed record keeping allowed me to cross reference and compare all the entries for a single day. I was attempting to balance the rigour and systematic requirements of research with the intuitive and creative process of reverie, play and exploring the unconscious. My use of a long-hand journal was influenced by the tradition of spiritual journaling associated with *Lectio Divina* (Pickering, 2008). My use of a free-associative electronic journal written largely *after* the process of reverie was based on the practice of Infant Observation, (Adamo & Rustin, 2001).

The electronic records may be seen if required.

d. Post reverie data analysis

Thematic coding

At the end of my 40 day reverie I had produced three new texts: an excel sheet of daily notes (Plan), an eJournal in a word document (eJournal) and two long hand notebooks of daily notes (PJ1 & PJ2). In the long hand notebooks I had folded each page vertically, taking notes on the left side, while thinking, listening, reading and leaving the right side free. At the end of each day of reverie I re-read my long hand notes and made a brief note of strengths and themes I thought it displayed in the right hand column. I added to this right hand summary column as I read and re-read my findings and as my understanding of my themes developed. This column of brief notes and themes is therefore a physical representation of my emerging thought.

In the excel sheet (Plan) I had headed columns with themes derived from my literature review: Emotions/thoughts/images; Pleasure; Pain/conflict/disquiet; Reflection; Virtue; Body; Self/other. Robson notes that it is acceptable to start an analysis 'with predetermined codes or themes, perhaps arising from your reading of the literature' (2011, p. 475). I adopted this approach. However, as Robson adds, the phases of analysis are not 'a linear process where one step is completed before moving to the next one. There is much movement to and fro' (2011, p. 476). I moved to and fro between my emerging theory, my literature and my analysis of my findings and the themes changed and developed during this process.

After the reverie I applied a process of 'constant comparison' (Robson, 2011, p. 474), to my three new texts over at least three iterations. This involves 'comparing each new chunk of data with previous codes so similar chunks will be labelled with the same code' (2011, p. 474). Robson suggests that you 'allow time to immerse yourself in the data so that you are really familiar with what you have collected. This usually involves repeated reading of the data, doing this in an active way where you are searching for meanings and patterns' (Robson, 2011, p. 477). I used the existing themes from my excel document and identified others that emerged as I read and re-read my texts. I identified links between themes and created others; for example some comments I had made under 'virtue' and 'reflection' and some of the comments I had made under 'self/other' are discussed under the later heading of morality. Other comments I made under the heading of 'self/other' seemed to fit better within the emergent themes of either interpersonal relationships or democracy and are therefore discussed under these headings.

This was a cyclical process of reading, thinking, writing and then re-reading which built upon the cyclical nature of my contemplative reverie. I chose not to use a software package for my analysis. I felt that reliance on computer-aided analysis would conflict with the essentially contemplative nature of my study. I also wished to internalise and embody the knowledge I was acquiring and to prioritise interpretation. Robson notes that a disadvantage of specialist qualitative data analysis packages is that 'a focus on coding and other technical aspects can give less emphasis to interpretation' (2011, p. 472).

My theory of well-being emerged and evolved in the course of this iterative study and my emerging theory in turn informed the study of my empirical data.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that an educational philosophy of well-being needs to resist hierarchies in how it characterizes the different facets of well-being and that contemplation and the spiritual facet of life are essential elements of educational well-being. I have noted Arendt's argument that the modern age is characterized by 'the reversal of the hierarchical order between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*' (Arendt, 1958, p. 289), and the consequent privileging of action over contemplation. Not only has the contemplative way of being been demoted in modern educational settings, I would argue that it is usually completely absent and awareness of it as a legitimate way of learning is rare.

I argue that it is possible for educational research to resist the privileging of more active modes of thought and study over the contemplative. Bourgeault argues that contemplation is not a rarefied ability but is 'intrinsic to human nature' (2004, p. 76). I have argued in my literature chapter that it is an essential part of well-being in education. In this methodology chapter I have described how, in my empirical reflection, I attempted to embody my theory by employing a contemplative approach within my research.

VI. Empirical Findings

1. Introduction

As I explained in Chapter V, my theory of educational well-being was developed in parallel with my empirical reflection. In this chapter I will use this theory of well-being to organise my findings. My discussion in the next chapter will then explore these findings under the same headings. I will describe findings that are pertinent to the four elements I identify as key to well-being, democracy, morality, somaesthetics

and inter-personal relationships. I will also describe findings that relate to what I have argued are two key characteristics of educational settings, anxiety and love.

The findings are drawn predominantly from the three texts I produced during my contemplative reverie. These were:

- Plan/Day - the excel sheet of daily notes I had made under the headings
 - Pleasure
 - Pain/conflict/disquiet
 - Reflection
 - Virtue
 - Body
 - Self/other

These are referenced as Plan/Day in this thesis.

- The electronic journal, referenced as eJournal
- The two long hand note books or paper journals, referenced as PJ 1 or 2

In addition, quotations from the 13 documents of my material record are referenced either as unpublished documents or as publications. Quotes from all of these texts are italicised below. Where I quote from or refer to statements made in the videos of the strengths circle conversations I say which video they come from to allow for my original data to be examined and/or give a page reference to one of my three texts. The videos themselves are available to view via Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) if required and will be kept for 3 months after the final publication of this thesis and then deleted.

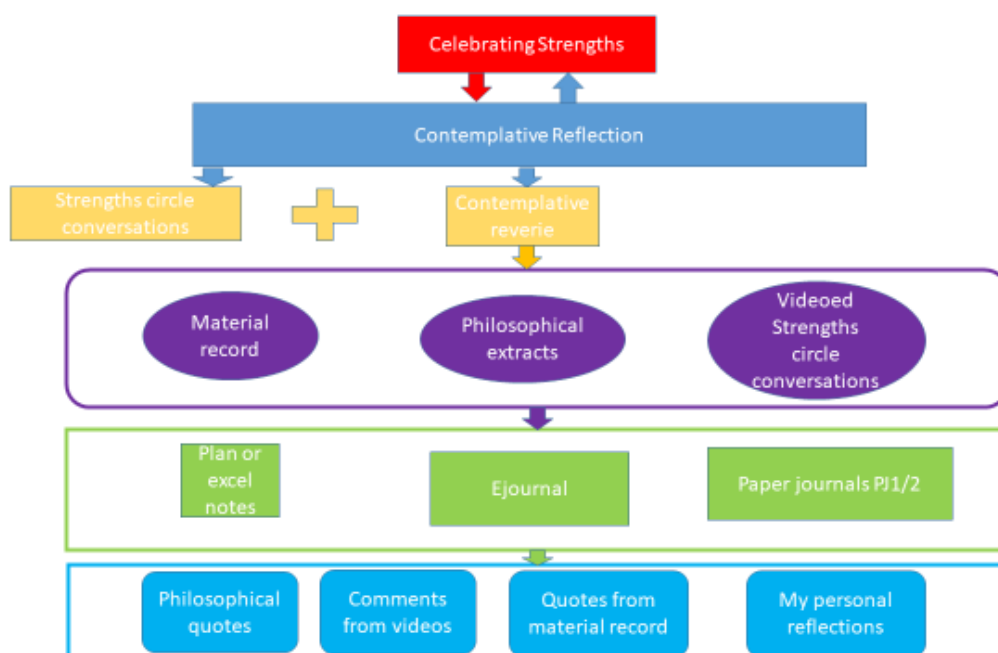
The findings are of four kinds: quotations from the philosophical extracts that I identified during my contemplative reverie as relevant to either my emerging theory or to my understanding of Celebrating Strengths; comments and pictures from the strengths circle conversations which I subsequently commented upon within my three texts; extracts from my material record which I highlighted and finally, my own personal reflections upon what I was reading or hearing or seeing, including my observations of my emotional reactions where these are pertinent to my emerging theory.

I relate the findings mostly to my work in schools, Celebrating Strengths and to the presence or absence of elements of my well-being theory within it. However, since a stated aim of this thesis is to ensure continuity between the means and ends, the

theory and practice of well-being I also include, where appropriate, findings that indicate the presence or absence of those elements within my methodology of contemplative reflection.

I have argued that the different elements within well-being are continuous, not hierarchical. This continuity means that it is not always clear under which heading particular findings belong. Where a quotation or a comment clearly crosses categories I indicate this.

A summary of my findings:



2. Results

a. Democracy

In Chapter IV I defined democracy as a way of living together and a way of communicating and noted that it must involve two-way communication, communication that has the potential to change either party. I argued that such a way of living together would make room for diverse voices, including those of teachers and pupils. I suggested that in order for an individual to speak, in Arendt's sense of speech and action, the environment needed to contain people who would or could listen to the story of *who* that person is, rather than just *what* they are, who could and would pay attention.

I have therefore looked, within my data, for evidence that relates to this two way communication and willingness to change, in myself and others. I have also looked

for evidence of the expression of diverse voices and of paying attention to the story of who a person is.

i. Philosophers

The philosophical selections that I chose for my reverie do not contain explicit references to democracy and I later returned to my philosophical literature to develop my thinking and argument in this area. However, there are comments pertinent to democracy as two way, equal, respectful and attentive communication.

Shusterman writes about the use of the body in power relations, how 'complex hierarchies of power can be widely exercised and reproduced without any need to make them explicit in laws...they are implicitly observed and enforced simply through our bodily habits' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 21). This means they can be 'challenged by alternative somatic practices' (2008, p. 22). Repeated reflection on this quotation, juxtaposed with repeated visits to my material record with its early advice to teachers, helped me to realise '*the extent to which my practice is about the subversion of power relationships in schools – I sit on the floor, I encourage the children to look at each other and form their own questions, now I involve them in leading the project*' (eJournal/30). I gradually saw how my own work contained 'alternative somatic practices' such as adults sitting on the floor, working in a circle and the use of silence.

My own emerging ability to listen to other voices can be seen in two quotations from my reverie '*loved it. Loved the challenge and the counter-cultural nature of their ideas - felt affirmed at points, challenged as 'wrong' at points*' (Plan/Day 14) and on Day 28, '*while Weil is hard and uncompromising and sets an impossibly high standard, I find myself wondering, "what if she is right?"*' (eJournal/32).

My reflection on Dewey's discussion of the need to be responsive to the environment and of 'ordered change' (1934, p. 15) prompted me to write, '*schools always changed what I did. I didn't always approve but that was my problem and quite right, as practice should always be responsive to the environment and they know their environment better than I do*' (eJournal/59). The fact that I no longer disapprove indicates change on my part as a result of two way communication within my research. My research has changed me.

ii. Strengths circle conversations

The strengths circle conversations, like the philosophical selections I made for my reverie, do not contain explicit references to themes of democracy within Celebrating Strengths. However, I interpreted several teacher comments as

showing a willingness by the teacher to pay attention to *who* the child is. Colleagues spoke about Celebrating Strengths as a levelling process, something that was about neither ability nor disability (Video 1/PJ1/52) and said that it was not about levels or ability (Video 7/PJ1/62). These teachers saw Celebrating Strengths as concerned not with what children could do but with who they were.

Some comments indicated a willingness on the part of teachers to engage in the two way communication and change that I include within my definition of democracy. One spoke of the fact that teachers in their school now talked about their own strengths as well as those of the children (Video 6/PJ1/61) while another spoke of teachers recognising their own strengths first (Video 7/eJournal/28). A comment was made about teachers in the participating school becoming more open-minded about what children could do without adults, suggesting perhaps that they had shifted in allowing children to speak and to act more independently, at least within this project (Video 4/PJ1/58).

While these specific instances are limited, I suggest that some of the findings I include under the headings of morality, somaesthetics and inter-personal relationships below, are continuous with the theme of democracy. These are findings which relate to how teachers see or look at each other and their pupils and which echo Arendt's idea of paying attention to the story of *who*, not just what, a person is (Arendt, 1958).

There is more evidence for an explicitly democratic element within my research itself. The simple act of including pupils, together with their teachers, in one of the strengths circle conversations shows, I suggest, more change on my part. There is a growing awareness of the importance of listening to diverse voices together with a desire to put that theory into practice. Moreover, the inclusion of pupils immediately highlighted the power imbalance inherent in the school system. The video shows me calling the teacher by their first name and then correcting myself. As I noted in my journal, '*why is it Miss or Mr Brown, but Jack and Jill?*' (PJ1/16). By comparison, when a colleague speaks of reminding a child of the work I used to do when the pupil was in year 1, the colleague calls me 'Jenny'. I write, '*I made a good decision to be Jenny, a friend as well as a teacher*' (Video 5/PJ1/21). That decision to use my first name in my work, made in 2003, is evidence of my early commitment to democratic teaching.

This picture of the first strengths circle conversation also shows a commitment to levelling the power imbalance and allowing space for other voices. I was using my

own list of character strengths cards (Fox Eades & Catt, 2012) which in turn was based on the classification of strengths and virtues from Peterson and Seligman (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). I did not wish this to limit what my colleagues were able to speak about so I included in the methodology a pile of blank cards, telling



Figure 1 Use of blank cards to equalize power (Video 1/eJournal/17)

colleagues they could use them to mention anything they felt the pre-existing cards left out. One colleague used this invitation at once to talk about the importance, for them, of the storytelling element of Celebrating Strengths, as this picture shows.

In my paper journal I quote one of my own comments in the strengths circle conversation involving children *'What I've learned, if I'm honest, is to involve the pupils and I wish I'd done that right from the word go, really'* (Video 4/PJ1/58). Here

I show that I contribute my own voice to the conversation and admit to the need to learn. I engage in the two way communication which Dewey argues is at the heart of democracy and education (Dewey, 1916).

In a comment in my Plan and daily record I conclude that, within the research, there was space for different voices. I note that *'this is the only video in which pupils speak - and they do most of the speaking. They disagree with us and persist in their disagreement, they disagree with me, the expert researcher and persist in that. They say what they want to say and break my rules, they lead this process'*

(Plan/Day 24). In my eJournal I expand on this, *'But here, there is a lovely example of me glossing over what one of them has said, reinterpreting their 'patience' as 'confidence' and then the pupil persisting, articulating 'patience' again and then putting the patience card in the circle to show what they feel they have learned'* (eJournal/21). The pupil used the card, and the video, to make sure I saw their point as well as heard it.

There is also a power imbalance between two of my colleagues who took part in one of the strengths circle conversations together. One was senior to the other and a more forthright character. They were not speaking about democracy but, as with the pupils, they were using the research process to articulate divergent views and using the cards to do so.



Figure 2 The first picture (Video 5/eJournal/25)



Figure 3 The second picture (Video 5/eJournal/25)

One colleague created a picture to explore their motivation for developing Celebrating Strengths, combining spirituality, love of beauty, persistence, teamwork, leadership, love of learning and enthusiasm. I then asked the other for their perspective. This colleague voiced agreement with the words and the picture of the other but then added cards and rearranged others to create a very different picture (Figures 2 and 3 above). Verbally they agreed with one another. Non-verbally, and using the method I had developed, there was a greater diversity of views expressed.

They also used the cards to voice silent criticism of a former senior leader. They placed the cards for love and hope and honesty in the circle to describe a current leader. Then, without naming any of the virtues in the circle, or the person or people concerned, one of them looked down and said that those virtues had been lost for a while and the other agreed. My interpretation was that my colleagues saw a lack of these particular virtues in the school in the past and were using the cards to voice non-verbal criticism, (Video 5).

I will discuss in the next chapter the potential of an embodied, contemplative methodology and of a language of character strengths and virtues to contain love, anxiety and also, as in this case, critique. I also discuss how the slow and repetitive nature of my methodology helped me to see themes like the pupils' disagreement and the teachers' critique which I missed at the time and in several subsequent reflections.

iii. Material record

One piece of evidence that my practice was informed by democratic ideas from the start of my work was my use of the technique of philosophy for children or community of enquiry (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document). In an early document I suggest its use as a follow up to an oral story and a way of encouraging

children *'to think of their own questions'*. I advise teachers, *'you are not there to provide answers but to encourage the children to articulate and develop their own opinions'* (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document). Here I was advocating space for children to speak for themselves.

However, my material record also shows that this element of my work was, to use my own word 'lost'. Reflection on documents from 2006 to 2009, which I termed my 'middle phase' led me to write *'a sense of my losing my authentic teaching voice, of trying to fit with business and positive psychology and Ofsted; of allowing psychodynamic concepts and spirituality and 'magic' and P4C, which are the 'key notes' of my work to get lost'* (eJournal/9). And an earlier note on the same theme, *'Philosophy for children is mentioned in Document 2 from 2004 but is not mentioned again in the documents I have selected until 2013. This reflects I suspect, not its complete absence from my work but certainly a failure to highlight it as significant'* (eJournal/4). I feel that this indicates a democratic deficit in my work and a potential imbalance in the environment I was helping to create. I discuss this democratic deficit in the next chapter.

My material record contains photographs which show my commitment to working on the floor. I would argue that this, as my colleagues' commented above, is a levelling practice and indicated a willingness on my part to physically enact equal status with children.

These pictures, taken 10 years apart, show that this was a consistent practice on my part. I also invited other adults to do the same. I have cropped the first picture to preserve confidentiality but there was a chief educational psychologist sitting in the circle alongside the children.



Figure 5 Sitting on the floor with children during the Advent spiral (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document)



Figure 6 A storytelling day in schools in 2015 illustrating my use of position, storytelling and gaze

My material record also showed, to my surprise, a discrepancy between my image of myself as promoting democratic practice and some of my actual practice. Document 2, notes on using a story box from 2004, has the language of command, '*When you tell stories, sit in a circle with the children on the same level as them*' and '*Make your own movements slow and deliberate*' (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document). My paper journal shows the start of my thinking on this theme '*I do tell people what to do, though I say I don't*' (PJ1/p.44) which I link with Shusterman's 'normative and prescriptive' (PJ1/43) pragmatic somaesthetics. I explore this apparent discrepancy further in the next chapter.

It is perhaps the fact that I encouraged children and teachers to tell stories at all, which is apparent throughout my material record, which provides the clearest evidence of a persistent democratic practice of education that includes space for Arendt's communication of *who* we are through speech and action (Arendt, 1958). When we tell stories, unless we are word perfect and have learned it by heart, which is not usual, we make changes every time we tell a particular story, adapting the words and how we say them to how we are in the moment and to how we perceive our listeners to be in that moment. We communicate who we are through our storytelling. My emerging understanding of the democratic potential of how I promoted story telling is shown in a mind map I drew towards the end of my reverie. In a section headed 'democratic' I note that stories contain '*no 1 imposed meaning*', that we '*sit in a circle on the floor*', that children are '*equal partners*', that stories '*take stages of children's lives seriously*' that '*I give bags to children*' (PJ2/1). The last comment refers to a technique to encourage children to retell stories themselves using simple props, a technique I had taught to them and to their teachers.

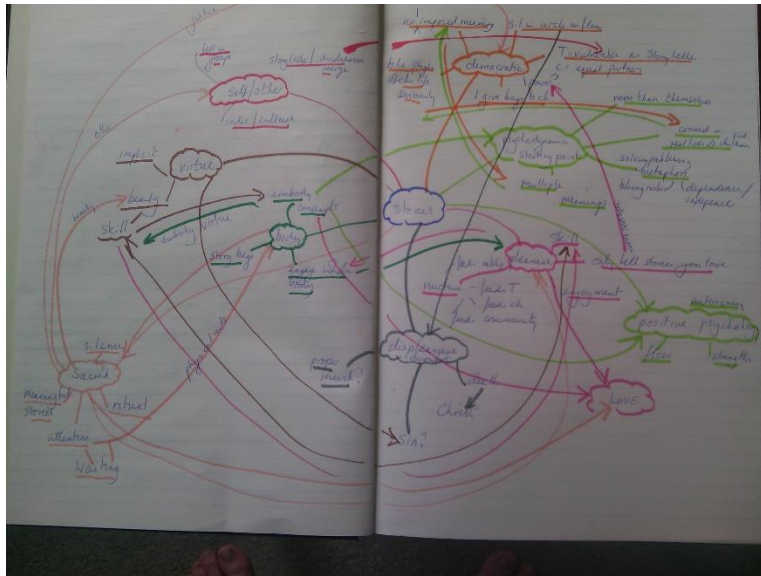


Figure 7 PJ 2/1 Democracy in storytelling

b. Morality

I have defined morality, within my theory of educational well-being, as what it is right to be and to love (Taylor, 1992) and as seeing others 'justly and lovingly' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 23). I will look in a separate section at evidence that my work contained love. Here I will include findings that indicate that my colleagues were looking at children, at one another and at themselves justly and lovingly and that they were aiming at being what it is right to be.

i. Philosophers

Murdoch's definition of the moral life as the 'work of attention', (Murdoch, 1970, p. 36), the constant use of moral imagination and effort to see others justly and lovingly, could fit equally well under the heading of democracy, where democracy is defined as a way of living together as well as communicating and implies the willingness to pay attention to the story of who a person is. The continuity between my categories is also apparent in Murdoch's argument that goodness and beauty are 'not to be contrasted but are largely part of the same structure' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 41) and in Martin's argument that morality and mental health are indivisible and that 'the virtues embody healthy habits' (2006, p. 12). In my reflections on Martin, I noted with surprise the overlap between him and Murdoch, that they both '*want "sin" back on the agenda*' (PJ1/72) and I quoted Martin's defence of 'reasonable blame and self-blame oriented toward growth' (2006, p. 11). I reflected that, '*if you can't "sin" or fail or be mediocre, you have to be perfect, outstanding, A* all the time. And you can't grow. And you don't need anyone else or anything 'beyond' you...you are all in all. And lonely. And fragile*' (PJ1/72). In my eJournal entry for the same day I

added ironically *'And if you CAN be perfect if you try hard enough, if you're not it's your fault'* (eJournal/13). Murdoch challenges such perfectionism when she says that our dealings with each other are characterised by an 'inevitable imperfection' (1970, p. 27).

I later made another connection with Dewey's discussion of bad habits as 'enslavement to old ruts' (Dewey, 1922, p. 29). I reflected that he casts *'an important, added perspective on sin in education and that is the idea of a 'bad' habit (which we might call sin) as being one that is thoughtless or no longer adaptive'* (eJournal/36).

Re-reading Martin, Murdoch and Dewey deepened my reflections on the need for a concept of sin and its connection with love *'I agree with Murdoch that if we take sin out of the equation, as she accuses analytic philosophers of doing, we are left with a 'denuded self' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 46). And she notes, "there is of course no mention of sin, and no mention of love" (1970, p. 48). I wonder, if you take out one, do you automatically take out or limit the other?'* (eJournal/34). My re-reading also led to uncomfortable thoughts about my own 'sin' and shame, which I discuss further below.

My reflections on these philosophical selections were a mixture of discomfort and delight. I concluded that Weil's view of the goal of education was 'love of neighbour' (1959, p. 6) and that Martin's challenge to the dichotomy between mental health and morality *'is as challenging a statement for education today as Weil's belief'* (PJ1/32). I resonated to Murdoch's insistence upon 'moral imagination and moral effort' (1970, p. 34), *'I love this, not easy, no top 10 tips, challenging, effortful, endless'* (PJ1/89).

Less comfortably, in the light of my reflections, I wrote *'What if sin, in a teacher, is losing sight of the beauty of maths and the beauty of her pupils and doing it for "performance"? All deeply understandable but so much less than joy? What if our education system...is inherently sinful?'* (PJ1/87).

In my discussion chapter I will argue that, in *Celebrating Strengths*, our use of the character strengths and virtues derived from positive psychology allowed teachers and pupils to aim 'at goodness' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 69), at being what it is right to be. In the next section I will include findings that I feel illustrate the presence of this moral element in *Celebrating Strengths*.

iv. Strengths circle conversations

Like Martin (2006), one of my colleagues brought together mental health and virtue in our conversation. They arrived, late and breathless, and told me of dealing with

what they described as a significant mental health issue (Video 2/PJ1/54). This colleague also spoke of virtue and described Celebrating Strengths as something to capture all that is good and affirming in students (Video 2/PJ1/54). They spoke not only of goodness but of Celebrating Strengths articulating virtues and values (Video 2/PJ 1/55) and of finding support in it for their personal moral integrity (PJ1/55).

The rest of my colleagues, however, used neither the phrase mental health nor the word virtue. They spoke instead of children who have had traumatic life events (Video 7/PJ1/63), and of seeing beauty in children and positive attributes (Video 6/PJ1/62). Their focus, I suggest, seemed to be on the emotional needs of the children and the children's need to see goodness in themselves, to have positive relationships with themselves.

One said that what teachers liked about Celebrating Strengths was the flow of the year, the festivals and how they know what the strengths are each term. This colleague called it an underlying work that goes on all the time (Video 5/PJ1/60). I suggest that this is evidence that these colleagues are engaging in Murdoch's constant moral imagination and effort, though they would never use those words, and that it is embodied, via the festivals and traditions, in their daily practice.

Like my adult colleagues, the pupils in my conversations did not use the word virtue. However I feel that they did articulate Aristotle's view that virtue is learned through the practice or habit of virtue (Aristotle, 1954). *'I'm thinking.. like it makes kids... like... want to do kind things more...because it's like they know about the strengths and how to do them so it makes them do them more'* (Video 4/PJ1/ 58). In response to my question, *'so, what have we learned?'* (Video 4/PJ1/58) one replied *'We've learned how to use strengths more, 'cos some people don't know what the strength actually is so it's taught them what it is and how to use it'* (Video 4/PJ1/58). Later this child added *'I think it might have helped people's teamwork by trying to get the stickers...but then they know how to do teamwork'* (Video 4/PJ1/58). They seem to be saying that pupils learned virtue through the practice or habit of virtue, as Aristotle advocated, albeit with stickers to help.

There is evidence that the children engaged in moral reflection also. One teacher commented on this specifically, saying that the children reflected and knew that they could do more. The children's words then echoed this, *'I think it's made people think more about what they actually do'* and *'reflect on their actions and stuff'* (Video 4/PJ1/58). Another said that they have learned, *'patience to do stuff'* (PJ1/58) and, as they discussed their growing confidence and willingness to take the initiative in

the project, one said *'It's like you have to wait for your turn to be leaders'* (Video 4/PJ1/58) and another added *'We've sort of grown'* (Video 4/PJ1/58). I would link these comments to Murdoch's 'patient and just discernment and exploration of what confronts one' (1970, p. 37) which results, she says, from moral discipline. In the next chapter I will argue that the children, like the teachers, used Celebrating Strengths to engage in 'the moral life' (Murdoch, 1970. p. 36) and practice moral discipline. In my reflections on this video I write *'I wonder if it's given these thoughtful, reflective children the courage, the permission, to be thoughtful and reflective?'* (PJ1/77).

In my literature chapter, I quoted Kristjánsson's critique of Seligman's approach to character strengths, which advocates pupils focus just on a selected few (Kristjánsson, 2012). My colleagues' comments indicated that they did not do this. One spoke of working with some strengths more than others, depending on what they were trying to achieve (Video 6/PJ/60) while another spoke of trying to encourage the children to choose which strengths they wanted to develop further (Video 7/10.29). They did identify what they called 'top' strengths but were also encouraging the children to move beyond these.

My adult colleagues spoke of Celebrating Strengths helping them to see things in children that they don't see themselves and that teachers wouldn't notice without this language (Video 7/PJ1/62). They spoke of children who couldn't see the goodness in themselves (Video 7/PJ1/80) of Celebrating Strengths being about a love of beauty which helped them develop an appreciation of their environment and people and the things in people (Video 5/PJ1/21). Again, I link these comments to Murdoch's view of morality as the just and loving gaze and suggest that this is what my colleagues have been engaged in.

In the first of the four iterations of my reverie I quantified the number of mentions of each strength in each conversation, noting who mentioned them, the first and last strengths mentioned and those mentioned the most and the least. I would now argue that this kind of analytic research does not fit well within my overall contemplative methodology and I will discuss this tension in the next chapter. However, it does provide a different kind of data to reflect upon.

All 25 of the strengths of Celebrating Strengths were referenced at some point during our conversations. However no single conversation referred to all of the strengths and some were mentioned far more than others. Love was mentioned more than any other strength by my colleagues, followed by self-control and then

teamwork. Prudence was mentioned only once in all the conversations. The pupils did not mention love. They spoke mostly about teamwork and then about courage. Like the pupils, I spoke mostly about teamwork, then about spirituality and self-control. I mentioned love less than my colleagues, a point I will pick up below and explore in the next chapter.

v. Material record

My material record shows contrasting evidence of my own awareness of the moral implications of my work. In my early documents, I do not mention the word virtue. I speak about '*creating a learning environment where children's mental health*' can flourish (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document). While my earliest document, a workshop on using stories in PSHE, (PSHE Association, 2016) does have a reference to '*right and wrong*' (Fox Eades, 2003 unpublished document) this then disappears from sight. As with P4C, I feel that this is a significant absence which I will discuss in my next chapter as a deficit in my own work.

The word '*virtue*' is then explicitly referenced in my documents from 2010 and also occurs in my published work, (Fox Eades & Catt, 2012). And I note in my paper journal '*My understanding of "strengths has changed. I see these now as virtues*' (PJ1/83).

While I have argued that morality, like P4C, went into 'eclipse' (eJournal/46), it was not completely absent. I suggest that this photo shows Murdoch's continuous moral life, or attention, embedded in the school environment and the festival cycle.



Figure 8 Photo taken at a participating school June 2015, illustrating this term's focus on forgiveness and self-control (eJournal/51)

However, the realisation of this failure on my part led me to experience, during my reverie, the shame I read about in Martin (2006). *'I feel a sense of shame which I think is appropriate'* (eJournal/9). This sense of shame was linked to document 9. *'Document 9 is one of what feels like many such documents I produced for CAPP, (the Centre for Applied Positive Psychology) as they struggled, I think, to understand my work and to work out how to turn it into an 'income stream' for CAPP'* (eJournal/3). What led to the shame was a sense that I was attempting to *'turn my work into a product and sell it, at my reluctance to claim my vocation as teacher and attempt to be a coach'* (Plan/Day 13).

c. Somaesthetics

Somaesthetics is a theme that has emerged from my research and my reading. As I explained in Chapter IV it is, itself, a continuous concept that combines awareness of the body and pleasure with the full range of human, bodily emotions and an earthy and distinctly bodily idea of spirituality.

i. Philosophers

My reflections on Shusterman helped me to see that he *'was responsible for either clarifying or articulating an important shift in my own thinking, to an aesthetic model for education rather than a medical/therapeutic model'* (PJ1/38).

Reflection on Weil and Murdoch developed my thinking on contemplation. I note that Weil *'is advocating contemplative education'* (PJ1/31) while Murdoch speaks of a 'contemplative attitude to the good' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 15/PJ1/35). Murdoch also provoked some surprising ideas about my work. She writes 'Prayeris simply an attention to God' (1970, p. 53) and I respond *'my 'strengths spotting exercise', present in my work from its earliest forms and now published, (Fox Eades & Catt, 2012, p. 34) is actually a form of prayer. It is encouraging teachers and pupils to see others as they really are, justly and lovingly'* (eJournal/34). Later I add, *'today it occurred to me that Celebrating Strengths not only encourages prayer, it IS prayer, seeing what is real, enjoying what IS'* (eJournal/43).

It would be easy to suppose that reading philosophy is a cerebral process. My journals indicate otherwise. *'It has been intellectually intense, staying focused, staying present, letting my philosophers challenge me, noticing what I love and where I squirm. And it has felt like hard work, tiring and a bit relentless'* (PJ1/64). This reflection combines the physicality and the full-range of emotion implied in my use of the word somaesthetics.

vi. Strengths circle conversations

This physicality and full range of emotion, together with attention to spirituality, was also evident in the strengths conversations. Colleagues spoke of Celebrating Strengths as a platform from which they functioned, of staff embodying it (Video 6/PJ1/60) and of how the language of character strengths, after years of use, now just tripped off the tongue (Video 5/PJ1/59). Speech is, of course, a physical act. Moreover, I had, when working with schools, always taught teachers and pupils the BSL signs for the strengths words we used. One colleague signed the strengths all through our conversation. Paradoxically, I cannot show this because of my choice to point the camera downwards. However I do comment on it in the video, '*You've been talking about the strengths and using the signs at the same time, you do it automatically*' (Video 6/PJ1/61).

One colleague had asked a year 6 child if they remembered me and the child did, referring to the story box I used to use and what they called the '*little people with no legs*', simple wooden figures I gave the children to tell stories with (Video 5/PJ1/23). It is the physical objects that they recalled and graphically physical language that they used to describe them.

I have argued both for the importance of pleasure and that it is a physical emotion. Different kinds of pleasure were present in my interviews and in my responses to them. In some conversations I noticed laughter '*there is more humour in this than in the other ones*' and, '*there is more laughter here than anywhere else*' (Plan/Day 27). Other pleasures were more muted. I describe video 5 as '*moving*' (PJ1/20) and use words like, '*hopeful*', '*admiration*' and '*affirming*' to describe my response to videos 5, 6 and 7, (Plan/Day 31).

Having made enjoyment a stated aim of my work I nevertheless only twice asked a question about enjoyment, once in the conversation where children were present and in my very final conversation in the UK. I asked my adult colleague if the staff at the school had enjoyed the project and they replied that they thought they had (Video 3/PJ1/56). The children were more enthusiastic. When I asked if they had enjoyed it one replied '*It's been a brilliant experience*' (Video 4/PJ1/59). One adult colleague spoke with pleasure of the story chest and of our very physical methods of storytelling helping the children and being fun as well (Video 7/PJ1/81).

In the course of my contemplative reverie, my journals reveal a wide spectrum of thoughts and feelings on my part that might be called painful, or negative. There is '*discomfort*' itself, then there is '*embarrassment, sadness, shame, inauthenticity, frustration, disquiet, pain, regret, intimidated, scary, challenged, uncomfortable,*

conflict, tension, demanding, guilt, inadequacy, physical discomfort, loss, concern, dislike, worry, tired, fear, anxiety, failure, mocked, anger, ashamed, alone, thankless, poignancy, hard work and nervous' (Plan/Day 1 to 40).

There were references to a spiritual interpretation of Celebrating Strengths. Colleagues said that a spiritual understanding was important to their schools' development and spoke of Celebrating Strengths making prayer and meditation more permissible (Video 1/PJ1/11), of helping to centre them personally and to become more spiritual (Video 6/PJ1/61). Those in a faith school said that Celebrating Strengths helped with leadership in a Christian school context, what one referred to as the 'what would Jesus do?' question (Video 2/PJ1/55). A colleague in a secular school also referenced the Christian element of Celebrating Strengths and spoke of showing the love of Jesus when they told the stories within it that have a Christian bias (Video 6/PJ1/61).

My early documents show awareness of the power of the body '*all these actions change the atmosphere in the classroom*' (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document). I encouraged schools to use the environment to reinforce the work we were doing on language and story and my guidance to teachers took account of the impact that *how we move* has on those we are with, '*make your movements slow and deliberate. This will draw the children's attention and slow the pace of the lesson*' (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document).

These pictures show the embodied nature of our work. The story chest became a physical symbol of the storytelling work and a practical classroom tool. Children chose simple props to use to tell stories and I modelled for them a slow, meditative approach to using props to tell traditional stories. At the end of the session all the equipment was slowly, and even ritually, returned to the chest. The chest literally and physically *contained* the stories and the storytelling work and the powerful emotions they could evoke.



Figure 9 The story chest - embodying story and beauty, containing anxiety (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document)

The festivals and the strengths and associated stories were physically embodied within the environment of the school. The picture below is a display from the entrance hall. Colours were associated with each festival so that the children linked the changing colour with the changing seasons or festivals and their accompanying character strengths and virtues.



Figure 10 An Advent display showing the festival use of colour and virtues (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document)

A photo from one school illustrates that they have embedded the stories as well as the language of strengths into the physical environment.



Figure 11 A picture from one of the stories told in Celebrating Strengths (Fox Eades, 2008a unpublished document)

We also focused on physical beauty. The spiral was part of the Advent festival, the first we created, linked to the strengths of hope and spirituality and the Christmas



story. In designing it, the first head teacher I worked with and I set out, quite deliberately, to create beauty and magic. That we succeeded can be seen in this quoted exchange between two 6 year old boys after our first spiral “*That was nice,*” “*No, that was beautiful*” (Fox Eades, 2006).

Figure 12 The Advent spiral (Fox Eades, 2009 unpublished document)

Enjoyment was a consistent and deliberate goal of Celebrating Strengths. In the same document in which I spoke of mental health, emotional and spiritual needs, I also spoke of enhancing the teachers’ *‘enjoyment of teaching’* (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document). In one of my published articles I write that, *‘a principle aim of the festivals is to increase enjoyment for adults and for children, to put a little more “magic” into schools’* (Fox Eades, 2006, p. 8). At the same time my deliberate inclusion of traditional tales, with themes of death and acts of violence, was prompted by the desire to make space for anxiety and for powerful, difficult emotions in the classroom in a safe and educationally appropriate way. My earliest document refers to *‘dependence, helplessness’* as experiences to pay attention to (Fox Eades, 2003 unpublished document). In my advice on storytelling I refer to the significance of the wolf in many stories making space for children *‘for the angry part of themselves or their capacity to hate and destroy’* (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document). I wanted my stories, and my work as a whole, to contain or make space for such emotions and my early documents illustrate this.

A reference to spiritual well-being is present in my early writing. I describe Celebrating Strengths as creating an environment *‘where emotional and spiritual needs can flourish’* (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document). The first festival we created was the Advent festival which incorporated Godly Play techniques (Stewart & Berryman, 1989) and church traditions like the Advent wreath and Christmas story (Fox Eades, 2004b unpublished document). As I noted above, with morality and P4C, spirituality and ‘magic’ (eJournal/9) fade. While in 2006 I was describing my work as a *‘whole school approach’* to social and emotional well-being, speaking of

reducing *'anxiety'* and of the importance of *'magic'* and *'the spiritual life'* (Fox Eades, 2006) these give way to *'improving behaviour'* *'achievement'* and a *'ground breaking programme'* (Fox Eades, 2008b unpublished document) in my later documents. By 2013, Celebrating Strengths has become once more an *'approach'* and one that is encouraging reflection and celebration (Fox Eades, 2013 unpublished document).

d. Inter-personal relationships

In Chapter IV I drew attention to the foundational place that relationships play in human well-being. Humans owe their existence, their education and certainly their well-being to the existence and quality of their relationships with other humans. Here I will describe comments and reflections that are relevant to this theme. There are also findings that relate to a human's relationship with themselves. I have argued that both relationships are important elements of well-being.

i. Philosophers

The dichotomy between the individual and their environment is one of those that Dewey critiques. I reflected on his statements that *'we change character from worse to better only by changing conditions'* (1922, p. 12) and that *'for human beings, the envioning affairs directly important are those formed by the activities of other human beings'* (Dewey, 1922, p. 36). In response I noted that *'the most important part of a child's environment is the teacher, their thinking, their language, how they see the child is core to that child's growth, development, learning'* (PJ1/91).

I struggled with Murdoch's conviction that *'the direction of the attention should properly be outward'* (1970, p. 58) and wrote simply, *'this challenges me'* (PJ1/89). To balance what I have argued is Murdoch's neglect of an appropriate attention to the self, I reflected on Shusterman's *'vison of an essentially situated, relational and symbiotic self'* which is always conscious *'of more than the body itself'* (2008, p. 8). I wrote that *'I am not convinced that ignoring myself allows me to help others more effectively, or beautifully, or lovingly...there is really no such thing as a clear look at the self that does not include the 'others' that co-constitute that self'* (eJournal/37).

At the same time I was delighted by the overall argument of Weil's paper that the real goal of education is *'love of neighbour'* ((1959, p. 5). I wrote *'I love this hugely different goal of education, to help the other in need, to love our neighbour'* (PJ1/32).

vii. Strengths circle conversations

The theme of relationships occurred explicitly and frequently in my conversations with colleagues. They said that Celebrating Strengths was about relationship (Video

2/PJ1/13), that it helped relationships, helped to mend relationships and to keep the school together (Video 7/PJ1/63). They spoke of it as a way of communicating together and treating one another with respect (Video 2/PJ1/54) and as a stable thread through difficult times (Video 5/PJ1/59). One said that it brought a calmness, a grounding and that this was what community was about (Video 1/eJournal 45). Similarly, I summarised my own early goal in creating Celebrating Strengths in one conversation by saying *'it's helping you keep hold of the goodness and potential...this helps us protect our relationships'* (Video 5/PJ1/59).

Other comments touched on the potential of Celebrating Strengths to foster a positive relationship to the self. Colleagues spoke of being assisted in helping children see the good in themselves, (Video 7/PJ1/80) or in loving themselves (Video 6/PJ1/61). They also commented on being helped to see things in children that they don't see in themselves and that might be missed without a language of character strengths' (Video 7/PJ1/62).

I have already noted that the strengths mentioned most in the videos as a whole were teamwork and love, which could be called strengths or virtues of relationship. None of the children referred to either love or relationships but they did use the word teamwork more than any other. The children also made comments which touched on their personal development, their relationships with themselves, comments like *'we've sort of grown'* (Video 4/PJ1/58). However, after listening to the recording of the children for a second time I noted in my reflections that *'most of what they talk about is 'other' focused'* Plan/Day 17). For example, *'I think it might have helped people's teamwork'* (Video 4/PJ 1/58) and *'I think it's made people think more about what they actually do'* (Video 4/PJ1/57).

viii. Material record

Despite the clarity with which I stated, as I quote above, that of one of my goals in creating Celebrating Strengths was to support teacher/pupil relationships, I did not find this explicitly reflected in the documents I selected for study. The word *relationship* does not occur in the early documents of my material record. I listed the goals of oral storytelling within Celebrating Strengths as *'teacher development'*, *'social and emotional development'*, *'pupil autonomy'*, *'creativity'*, *'pupil engagement'* and *'pupil success and confidence'* (Fox Eades, 2009 unpublished document). The quality of the relationship between teacher and pupil may be implicit in some of these goals but here I failed to articulate it.

It is not until a document written in 2013, during the course of this PhD, that I find a note suggesting that school wide celebrations could be used to foster positive emotions which, I suggest in the document, are '*good for our relationships*' (Fox Eades, 2013 unpublished document). This does not, of course, mean that I did not talk about the importance of relationships when training teachers to use Celebrating Strengths. However, my evidence suggests that I failed to articulate it within my training materials or writings.

My starting point for Celebrating Strengths was storytelling. Harper and Gray point out that 'the process of sharing in the telling of and listening to stories creates opportunities for an intimacy which transcends the capacity of verbal description' (Harper & Gray, 1997, p. 44). It was this nurturing element of storytelling that I wished to reinforce in classroom settings and which was one of my explicit reasons for an emphasis on the oral tradition and traditional stories.

In the final stage of my contemplative reverie the mind map I created for stories/storytelling illustrates this aspect of my thinking. In it I note that the teacher is '*vulnerable*' as a storyteller, with the children as '*equal partners*' and how the '*storyteller and audience merge*'. I write '*nurture*' and note that storytelling '*feeds the teacher and feeds the children and feeds the community*' (PJ2/3). This aspect of 'feeding' the community is also reflected in a slide in Document 6 where I note that '*everyone hears the same story/you're building community*' (Fox Eades, 2007 unpublished document).

e. Anxiety

In Chapter IV, I argued that education is always characterised by anxiety. This is partly because learning is an anxious process for the individual. It is also partly because education is the site where one generation attempts to hand on its civilisation to the next and is therefore an anxious process for the community. I said that well-being in education necessitated the containment of that anxiety (Bion, 1985).

Here I will include findings that indicate that Celebrating Strengths contained anxiety for its practitioners and also that my research, contemplative reflection, contained the anxiety implicit within learning and research. These will both be discussed further in the next chapter.

In an early document I speak of how '*hearing you talk about death and violence relieves children's anxieties*' (Fox Eades, 2004a unpublished document). I saw the role of the teacher, and the story itself, as a container for and reliever of anxiety and

later came to see the story chest as a literal physical container for the stories and the anxieties they might articulate.

The ability of Celebrating Strengths to help to contain high levels of teacher anxiety is, I suggest, implicit in some of my colleagues' words. The comment of one colleague, referred to above, that Celebrating Strengths helped to keep the school together suggests that sometimes it felt as if the school was literally falling apart under the onslaught of the needs of some of the most challenging children they worked with. Similarly one colleague, speaking of a particularly challenging child, said that Celebrating Strengths helped the school to keep them by enabling teachers to continue to see the child beyond everything else (Video 7/PJ1/63).

Other comments suggested that Celebrating Strengths may have helped contain anxiety for the children themselves, too. One colleague spoke of children living in a lot of trauma and of Celebrating Strengths helping the children to keep themselves together or to get out of the pit (Video 7/PJ1/62). Here it is the children, not the teachers, who feel that they might fall apart. Another told the story of an autistic child whose very visual responses to music evoked laughter in other children. The teacher's comments on the child's strength of creativity, however, changed the responses of the other children and the laughter stopped (Video 7/PJ1/62).

Colleagues referred to Celebrating Strengths as a language and a series of stories which provided students with a construct or constant to fall back on or a structure during times of difficulty (Video 2/PJ1/53). I indicated in one of the videos that Celebrating Strengths contained my own anxiety too. I said '*one of the constant themes in my life over the past 10 years has been this*' (Video 5/PJ1/60). In the next chapter I will discuss these findings as evidence for Celebrating Strengths' potential for preventing splitting (Klein, 1975) and promoting integration.

I also suggest that there is evidence that my methodology of contemplative reflection contained anxiety for myself and my colleagues. I make a note of anxiety at points throughout the 40 days of my reverie. From the first day '*I feel a sense of fear, of anxiety, daunted by the task ahead*' (PJ1/1) to the last day '*nervous, have I done enough?*' (Plan/Day 40). Sometimes, as I will discuss in the next chapter, I suggest that I expelled that anxiety through activity, like undertaking a more quantitative analysis of the videos in the first stage of my contemplative reverie rather than practising the quiet waiting that I had committed to. At other points there is evidence that my anxiety was contained '*I tried to show Weil's patient waiting. And it is hard – the things you are not doing scream out at you – you are not filling in*

a spread sheet, you are not collecting data, you are not doing proper research! All those voices, all those accusations are just there. And I sat and waited and listened. And I heard immense humility in my colleague, putting strengths cards in the circle that they did not articulate' (eJournal 38).

Several colleagues used the strengths circle conversations to discuss difficult topics, such as challenges to their moral authority or the burdens of leadership (Video 2/PJ1/55). One spoke of Celebrating Strengths helping them to feel personally more in control, a statement which I felt was physically demonstrated by the change in the pictures they created, from a first picture which I saw as a jumble of cards to a final picture that seemed more ordered and controlled (Video 6/PJ1/61).



Figure 13 A rather jumbled picture (Video 6/eJournal/25)



Figure 14 Order and control (Video 6/eJournal/25)

f. Love

In Chapter IV I discussed the necessity of including love in any understanding of well-being in education, while acknowledging the challenge that this presents. In the next chapter I will discuss love as itself a source of anxiety for professionals. Here I will include findings that indicate that firstly Celebrating Strengths, and then contemplative reflection, created space for love, where love combines critical appreciation, respect, hope and loving attention to the other.

At a very simple level, love was the virtue mentioned most in the conversations. It was also, as with other cards, used more often than it was articulated. An example of this is a picture one colleague made. As I note in my eJournal, *'They don't say them aloud, but they place love persistence and hope at the heart of the circle and surround them with enthusiasm, courage, patience, honesty and leadership, saying that they felt these at the very heart of them'* (eJournal/23).



The cards, I suggest, silently expressed the hope, the critical appreciation and the loving attention that I am characterising as love and put it at the heart of our conversation and of our work together.

Figure 15 Love at the heart of our work (eJournal/23)

The colleague who mentioned love the most, also referred to showing the love of Jesus when telling stories with a Christian bias (Video 6/PJ1/61). They explicitly linked love to the series of stories I created to be told around Easter and Advent. A colleague from a different faith tradition also said that they were just trying to spread love through Celebrating Strengths (Video 3/PJ1/57).

These were all explicit mentions of love or at least uses of the card 'love' within the conversations. I suggest that love, Murdoch's just and loving gaze, is also implicit within other statements my colleagues made, such as those about seeing beauty in things and people and in children and about developing an appreciation of the environment and of the things within people (Video 7/PJ1/30, Video 5/PJ1/21).

One of the themes that emerged in my reflections was a sense that I myself under-articulated love in the conversations. I noted in my paper journal on Day 18 of my reverie that *'Love is the elephant in the educational room and I don't see it more often than I do'* (PJ1/4). I noticed love in others early on in the reverie *'I am struck by the LOVE they both show for the project'* (Plan/Day 4) but only articulated my own love for that work clearly on Day 19 *'I love the spiral, I loved the school, the staff and children, I loved Celebrating Strengths'* (Plan/Day 19). I notice reluctance, what in psychodynamic terms is called resistance, to articulating love in the context of my work *'I have written in my paper journal "love is the most important thing, loving teaching and loving children". Simple but I find it hard to include in this write up'* (eJournal/36).

This contrasts with my readiness to express my love for ideas, for my philosophers, *'I love his (Dewey's) ideas about the "being fully alive" and about the importance of "experiences enjoyable in themselves"'* (Plan/Day 10). I will discuss this contrast in the next chapter and relate it to the anxiety that I suggest exists around love in a teaching context.

I also failed to articulate love in the strengths circle conversations. Towards the end of the conversation with two colleagues who have known me a long time, I created a circle for what motivated me. I put in the cards for *friendship* and *gratitude* but articulated neither. I then added and articulated *hope* and *spirituality*, explaining that my colleagues' continued use of my work was a source of hope and meaning for me.

The last card I added was *persistence*. I said that my colleagues never gave up on the children, no matter what the children did to them, and joked that *'bloody-mindedness ought to be a strength'* (Video 5/PJ1/22).



Figure 16 Bloody minded persistence
(Video 5/PJ1/23)

One of them gently corrected me by saying she thought it was just love (Video 5/PJ1/22) and placed the card *love* over the top of my persistence card.



Figure 17 Just love (Video 5/PJ1/22)

This colleague was never afraid to challenge me. This is an embodied and gentle but definite challenge to my failure to name something important.

3. Conclusions

I have argued that a theory and practice of well-being in education must be characterised as democratic, moral, somaesthetic and interpersonal. In this chapter I have presented findings that indicate the presence of these four elements of well-being within my work in schools, Celebrating Strengths and within my research methodology of contemplative reflection. I have also presented findings that indicate the presence or absence of what I am arguing are key characteristics of educational settings, love and anxiety.

In the next chapter I will discuss these findings. I will address the extent to which these elements were present or absent within my work and within my research and therefore the extent to which my work in schools and my research methodology created a balanced environment which could be said to promote well-being. I will discuss the idea that my work and my research gave *permission* for these elements to co-exist.

I will also discuss in more depth the idea that Shusterman's tri-partite project of analytic, pragmatic and practical somaesthetics might provide a model for promoting well-being in education. I will argue that there is evidence that both my work in schools and my research methodology had this tri-partite structure and that it is that structure that serves to contain love and anxiety.

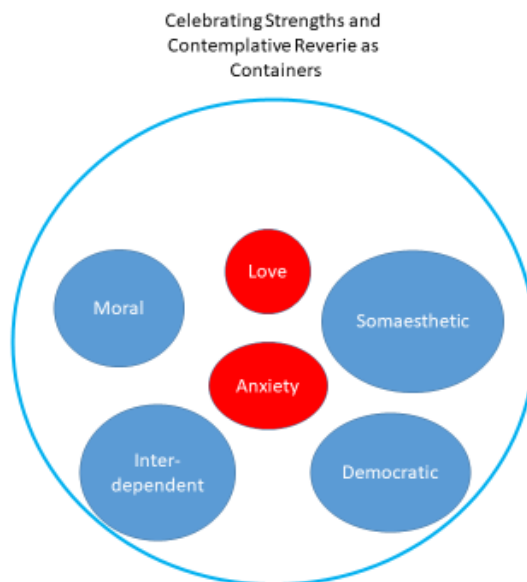
vii. Discussion of empirical findings

1. Introduction

In the last chapter I presented findings that indicated the presence or absence of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of inter-personal relationships

within my work in schools, Celebrating Strengths, and within my research methodology of contemplative reflection. I also presented findings that indicated the containment of love and anxiety within my work and within my research.

In this chapter I will discuss these findings in the light of my emergent theory of well-being. I have argued throughout this thesis that we promote well-being through the creation of a balanced educational environment. Overall, I will suggest that both Celebrating Strengths and contemplative reflection did create such a balanced environment. However, I will also discuss evidence for a periodic deficit within Celebrating Strengths of some of the essential elements that I identify within my theory. This deficit may have undermined the capacity of Celebrating Strengths to promote educational well-being. I will also discuss the ability of both my work in schools and my research methodology to contain love and anxiety.



I will explore the extent to which the tri-partite structure of Shusterman's philosophical project of somaesthetics was reflected within my work and research and further, whether it was this structure that facilitated the containment of love and anxiety. I will then extend the discussion to look at the implications of my theory and practice for the wider educational and well-being context. In particular I will ask whether, if we promote well-being through influencing the environment, we either can or should endeavour to promote well-being more directly.

2. Celebrating Strengths

a. Democratic

I have defined democracy within this thesis as a way of living together and a way of communicating and said that it must include an openness to change, a space for diverse voices and a willingness to listen to the story of who another person is. My findings indicate, I suggest, that these elements were present in Celebrating Strengths but not always consistently so and not always explicitly. This, I argue, may have limited the educational potential of my work at points and therefore it's potential to promote educational well-being.

The capacity of Celebrating Strengths to allow teachers to articulate the story of who they are is shown most clearly, I suggest by the picture in Figure 15 on page 147. This shows a colleague's use of the cards love, hope and persistence to silently articulate what they describe as the virtues at the very heart of them (eJournal/23). It is a philosophy, or story, that runs counter to the predominant educational discourse of standards and targets. This challenge to the dominant narrative is also explicitly articulated in the comments about Celebrating Strengths being a levelling process (Video 1/PJ1.52) and taking away levels and ability (Video 7/PJ1/62). Unwin and Yandell critique the current education system for its impact on what is 'seen', and for 'focusing attention on what is most easily measurable and commodifiable' (2016, p. 135), thus closing down the possibility of seeing that 'other ways of doing school are possible' (2016, p. 133). My colleagues' comments, referred to above, focused attention away from the easily measureable and hence told a very different story about education and ways of doing school. Celebrating Strengths, I suggest, seemed to help them to do this.

Not only did my colleagues express their own story about a different way of doing school, they also showed an ability to listen to the story of who children are in all their complexity, to see what was referred to as other things in the children (Video 7/PJ1/62). For a child to disclose what Arendt calls their 'unique distinctness' (1958, p. 176), to tell 'the story of which he is himself the hero' (1958, p. 186), they must first have an audience who sees and hears that unique distinctness or beauty, even before the child discovers it for him or herself (Reid, 1990). The comments about seeing other things in children or seeing beauty in children suggest that my work was experienced as making space for these democratic stories to be told (Video 7/PJ1/21).

However, I also suggest that my findings reveal a democratic deficit within my work. None of my data streams, neither the philosophical extracts, the strengths circle conversation videos nor my material record provide consistent *explicit* evidence for democracy. There is implicit and embodied evidence for democratic *practices*. For example, I spent time reflecting on Shusterman's observation that hierarchies of power can be 'challenged by alternative somatic practices' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 22). My use of silence, storytelling, sitting on the floor and my use of philosophy for children (Haynes, 2002) are all examples of practices that can challenge and equalize power relationships. Ross notes that 'the work of silence is inherently subversive to institutions' (Ross, 2014, p. 178). In the silence children may think what they wish, interpret the activity or the story as they choose. Likewise, storytelling does not impose meaning. It invites multiple interpretations by the listener. As Harper and Gray observe, 'individuals frequently derive their own meaning from traditional stories' (Harper & Gray, 1997, p. 46). It is a democratic pedagogy that respects the agency of the listener and the co-creation of meaning between teller and audience.

However, I failed to select philosophical passages relating explicitly to democracy for deeper reflection and had to return to my literature after my contemplative reverie was complete in order to theorise that element of my work. This suggests that democracy was neither explicit nor available for discussion within Celebrating Strengths until a late stage of my PhD research. This is also suggested, not only by the paucity of references to democratic themes in my strengths circle conversations but also by my own observation that elements of my work, notably philosophy for children and spirituality, had got '*lost*' (eJournal/9). As I noted '*Philosophy for children is mentioned in Document 2 from 2004 but is not mentioned again in the documents I have selected until 2013. This reflects, I suspect, not its complete absence from my work but certainly a failure to highlight it as significant*' (eJournal/4).

I have argued that teachers and pupils must have the right and the opportunity to take part in the democratic conversation about the good in education. My colleagues will have found it harder to think about and discuss democratic themes within Celebrating Strengths due to my failure to make those themes explicit. It is harder to think about, let alone challenge, ideas that remain implicit. For an idea to be available for thought and to be brought into the conversation about the good, it needs to be stated clearly. My failure to explicitly articulate the importance of philosophy for children and the right of teachers and pupils to discuss and challenge

concepts will have made it harder for my colleagues to engage in that conversation or that challenge.

Moreover, my findings also indicate that I allowed my own '*authentic teaching voice*' (eJournal/9) to be dominated by the voices of positive psychology, business and Ofsted inspections during some periods of my work. During these periods, I suggest, my work was less democratic. Because education and democracy are indivisible I suggest that my work was therefore less educational and less available to support well-being during those periods.

b. Moral

Explicit references to morality are not entirely absent from my early work. I noted a reference to '*right and wrong*' in an early document (Fox Eades, 2003 unpublished document). However I suggest that, like democracy, it was under articulated and the influence of this research is seen in the explicit references to virtue that appear in my work from 2010. The moral life was not articulated by my UK colleagues either and again that may reflect my own earlier reluctance to speak about virtue. However, while my UK colleagues do not talk about morality I suggest that my findings indicate their use of Celebrating Strengths to engage in what Murdoch calls 'the moral life' or 'attention to individuals' and which she describes as 'something that goes on continually' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 36).

This characteristic of continual moral work can be seen in the comment from video 5 referred to on p. 132 about the flow of the year and the underlying work of character strengths going on all the time. This comment echoes Murdoch who says that morality is not about grand decisions but 'is a small piecemeal business which goes on all the time' (1970, p. 36). The characteristic of paying 'attention to individuals' (Murdoch 1970, p. 36) can be seen in the comments discussed on page 145 above about Celebrating Strengths helping to develop an appreciation of the environment and of the things that were in people (Video 5/PJ1/21). It can also be seen in the remark that Celebrating Strengths helped teachers to see in children things that they don't see themselves and that wouldn't be noticed without a language of character strengths and virtues to draw upon (Video 7/PJ1/62). The children's comments on their own growth in patience and their friends' increased ability to understand strengths like teamwork would seem to indicate that pupils as well as teachers have used Celebrating Strengths to engage in Murdoch's continuous moral work.

c. Somaesthetic

I noted in my findings chapter that explicit references to enjoyment are present throughout my work, together with a focus on the importance of physical practices like storytelling and a deliberate focus on beauty. Shusterman argues that 'pleasure's positive emotional surge encouragingly opens us to new experiences and to other people' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 41). Then he asks, 'Shouldn't we more carefully recognize the many different varieties of experience typically grouped under pleasure so as to give each its due appreciation and more fully derive from each its proper value?' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 38). I would argue that there is now too great a focus on health and even on mental health within education and insufficient attention paid to enjoyment, pleasure or beauty. If we gave each pleasurable experience 'its due appreciation' and derived 'from each its proper value' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 38) then it is possible that health and mental health would both improve precisely because we would be creating more balance within the educational environment and more balance between the different ends of education.

Moreover, a full appreciation of pleasure is, I would argue, a moral and not just a somaesthetic aspect of an educational philosophy of well-being. Not to notice and appreciate pleasure is not just bad for our mental health, it is also *not* holding 'the object in fitting regard according to its goodness' (Toner, 2006, p. 612), which is a moral issue as well as an issue about well-being. It therefore both undermines our ability to be well and contributes to an imbalance in what we pay attention to or learn to appreciate.

It is partly the openness to new experience which Shusterman describes that makes pleasure important in education. I used the claims of positive psychology, that pleasure encourages creativity, improves memory and builds the capacity to bounce back from adversity (Frederickson, 2001) to provide permission for teachers to teach in a way that was enjoyable for them and enjoyable for their pupils. However, I would now argue that it is also a moral issue. We should teach in a way that is enjoyable because 'there must be pleasure and joy in the work. The intelligence only grows and bears fruit in joy. The joy of learning is as indispensable in studies as breathing is in running' (Weil, 1959, p. 3). Pleasure, enjoyment and joy are certainly relevant to education but are also simultaneously part of the moral life, part of what it is right to be and to love. They are an essential part of education and part of an environment that promotes being well within education.

Beauty was, as my findings indicate, a deliberate and explicit goal of Celebrating Strengths. Like joy, it is referenced within the strengths circle conversations as well as within the philosophical extracts and my own documents. Part of my reason for arguing for a greater emphasis on beauty and enjoyment is philosophical and based upon the need to challenge the dichotomy between mental health and morality, a need argued for both by Dewey (Dewey, 1916) and Martin (Martin, 2006). Part of my reason, however, is pragmatic. It is hard to know how to create an environment that promotes mental health or how to improve mental health directly. It would be much simpler to increase the priority that is paid to beauty, pleasure and enjoyment in school environments and timetables, to create more balance between the means and the diverse ends of education.

Spirituality, which I couple with pleasure, the body and the full range of emotions as part of the need for a somaesthetic space in education, was evident in my early documents, my philosophical extracts and within the strengths circle conversations. Its prominence within the strengths circle conversations, however, was a surprise to me. There were references to Celebrating Strengths helping a teacher in a Christian school deal with the weight of 'what would Jesus do' and to the way that it made prayer and meditation more permissible. In the secular schools, too, there were comments reflecting my colleagues' spiritual understanding of Celebrating Strengths. These ranged from an explicit reference to showing the love of Jesus (Video 6) to comments about the importance of the spiritual element of Celebrating Strengths (Video 5) and its role in helping one colleague become more spiritual (Video 6). I see my surprise as an indication of how much particular elements of my work had gone into '*eclipse*' (eJournal/46). This research made space for me to become re-acquainted with the spiritual strand of my work, to hear again that particular voice.

d. Inter-personal

Not only would it be simpler to increase the amount of beauty and enjoyment in the educational environment than to attempt to improve young people's mental health directly, it would also be simpler to prioritise relationships and to pay more attention to the impact that unhappy teachers have upon their pupils. The importance of relationships, relationships between staff and relationships with pupils was one that pre-dominated in the strengths circle conversations. The teachers spoke of using Celebrating Strengths to mend relationships (Video 7/PJ1/80) and to keep the school together (Video 7/PJ1/63). In my philosophical extracts Murdoch connects morality 'with attention to individuals' (1970, p. 36) and Weil (1959) sees love of

neighbour as the chief goal of education. However, in the policy literature on well-being that I looked at, where the well-being of teachers and the importance of teacher/pupil relationships was mentioned at all it was only fleetingly. Moreover I have argued that well-being's inclusion in Ofsted inspections risks increasing teacher unhappiness and thereby, paradoxically, adversely affecting pupils.

I argued in my literature chapter that attachment needs are life-long and that we learn and grow only in relationship. I argued that Arendt's category of speech and action required democratic, listening relationships in which people could tell the story of who they are. I also argued that her other categories of labour and work likewise require the presence of other people. Moreover, contemplation, the category she says is neglected in the modern age and which I am prioritising in my research, also exists within relationship, a relationship to a tradition and a relationship to the 'other' to whom we pay deep respectful attention, whether that 'other' is a person, a scripture, or an idea.

The idea that we can focus on the well-being of young people as if they exist in isolation, outside of relationship and divorced from environment, is I suggest, simply wrong. As Morrow and Mayall point out, 'the interconnections and interdependencies of childhood with adulthood have yet to be fully elaborated' (2009, p. 226). The environment around young people must, I suggest, be one that not only makes the time and the space to cultivate relationships but which pays attention to the well-being of all its members, not to the well-being of a selected group.

e. A balanced environment?

I have argued that all four elements of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of relationships were embodied in the practices of Celebrating Strengths. This picture, from a recent visit to one of my colleagues' schools, illustrates this embodiment within the environment of the school as well as within the related practices of Celebrating Strengths. In this display, the Endings festival is referenced, which made time for saying goodbye to valued relationships and there is an explicit focus on the character strengths and virtues of self-control and forgiveness.



Figure 18 Embodied practices of Celebrating Strengths

However, while these elements were embodied within practice, I see my failure to explicitly articulate the democratic elements of Celebrating Strengths, the under articulation of morality, together with the loss of an explicit focus on spirituality, psychodynamic theory or indeed relationships during some periods of my work, as indicating an imbalance within the theory of Celebrating Strengths.

This theoretical imbalance, which I hope that my research addresses, means, I would suggest, that Celebrating Strengths was less democratic and therefore less educational in practice than it might have been. Had all these elements been clearly articulated throughout and therefore available for thought, discussion and challenge by pupils and teachers, then the capacity of Celebrating Strengths to promote educational well-being would, I argue, have been enhanced.

The ability of my theory and my methodology to highlight this imbalance within my own well-being project of Celebrating Strengths suggests that one or both of them might be used to examine other educational environments that seek to promote well-being or to scrutinise other well-being projects.

f. A container for love and anxiety

Despite the imbalance which my theory and methodology highlight, my findings also show that Celebrating Strengths did help to fulfil what I have argued are the educational functions of containing love and containing anxiety (Bion, 1985). In Chapter IV I argued that education is a place of anxiety, both the individual's and the community's, and I argued that this anxiety must be contained (Bion, 1985) for well-being and indeed learning to occur. I also argued that love is essential within education and within the relationship of teacher to pupil. Drawing on theorists like Murdoch (1970), Schwobel (2005) and Reid (Reid, 1990), I defined love as a

mixture of respect, critical appreciation, hope and loving attention and suggested that the psychodynamic term *positive counter-transference* might alleviate the anxiety that some teachers feel in openly discussing love.

I suggest that my findings indicate both the presence and the containment of anxiety and love and that, in particular, Celebrating Strengths helped to contain the teachers' own anxiety and in turn to help them in the educational role of containing anxiety for their pupils.

It is paradoxical that love has become, itself, a source of anxiety within the current education system. This anxiety is understandable, given the current climate of concern about historic child abuse but I suggest that it makes the maintenance of a balanced educational environment, which prioritises relationships, more difficult. It may also contribute to what I have identified as a lack of focus on the diverse means of education, on the importance of doing education beautifully, joyfully, and with a love of learning as well as love for one another. It is perhaps the case that that all feels too uncertain and too risky. So, instead we focus purely on the safe but narrow ends of passing exams and acquiring employment. These narrow ends are important, I have argued, but not enough to constitute either education or educational well-being.

According to the definition of love that I am using, I suggest that most, if not all, of the comments made by my colleagues about Celebrating Strengths, which I have variously included under the headings of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and inter-personal relationships, indicate its use in containing love for them. It helped them to see beauty in children and in themselves, to remain hopeful and to use a language that facilitated the paying of attention to aspects of children that might otherwise go unnoticed, unnamed and therefore unappreciated (Video 7/PJ1/62). Interestingly, my UK colleagues did not, in the context of our conversations at least, hesitate to articulate love and it was mentioned more than any other strength or virtue. It was me that showed a reluctance rather than them.

If it is unacceptable for UK teachers to speak about loving their pupils it is even more unacceptable for them to talk about espousing the love of Jesus so it is interesting that colleagues felt able to do both. I suggest that the stories of Celebrating Strengths which were alluded to and the practice of storytelling which we used contained both anxiety and love and made the articulation of love permissible in a way that is not usual in educational settings. I will further discuss

storytelling as a framework or pragmatic somaesthetic method which contains anxiety in paragraph 4 below.

In my literature chapter, I discussed the contribution that the psychodynamic concepts of integration and the depressive position might bring to a theory of well-being (Klein, 1975). Achieving the depressive position means seeing ourselves, other people and reality clearly as a mixture of good and bad. One contains or integrates these mixed feelings rather than splitting off the bad or unwanted elements and projecting them into someone or something else which is then seen as entirely bad and in need of expulsion. Comments about seeing the beauty even in very challenging children (Video 7/PJ1/63) indicate that Celebrating Strengths helped the teachers not to split in this way and quite literally not to expel the troubling emotions in the person of a troubled child. When a colleague refers to Celebrating Strengths keeping the school together (Video 6/27.15) I suggest that this metaphor indicates that the school collectively displayed a mature integration, a keeping together, of love and anxiety, which they attributed, in part, to Celebrating Strengths.

Celebrating Strengths also appears to have assisted the children themselves to integrate difficult and troubling emotions. References were made to it helping children to get through the day, to know that they could make mistakes or to get out of the pit (Video 7). I suggest that this shows it had a role in helping the children integrate the weaker, less capable aspects of themselves. They did not have to deny, expel or split off the parts of themselves which made mistakes or got things wrong. This was because the language of strengths they heard from their teachers and learned to use for themselves gave them a sense of themselves as people who also had brave parts, loving, kind and creative parts even when they made mistakes.

The story of the class's reaction to an autistic child with an unusually visual response to music also suggests a move to a more integrated position on the part of the children. The children shift from laughing at their autistic peer, to *not* laughing at them. Mockery can illustrate splitting and projection. We split off our own oddness or weakness, project that into somebody who is recognisably different in some way and mock them, thereby achieving temporary relief for our own insecurities. The teacher's use of Celebrating Strengths seems to have helped children move to a more mature, integrated and hopeful position where they could contain the pain of imperfection precisely because they also tell themselves, and hear their teachers

and peers tell, a story about their strengths. In Arendt's terms, they are able to tell the story of *who* they are and to have that story heard.

One colleague began our conversation by glancing through the cards and saying that they were looking for courage, leadership, wisdom (Video 2). On the surface, what this colleague was saying was that were looking for the cards that represented what they hoped their pupils would gain from Celebrating Strengths. However, in the light of comments about Celebrating Strengths helping colleagues to become more spiritual, its giving permission to pray, its role in helping them see beauty in children and the comfort of the underlying work of character strengths going on all the time, I suggest a more literal interpretation of my colleague's words - they were looking for courage, wisdom and leadership for themselves, too. Both this colleague and the others I spoke with, seemed to have used Celebrating Strengths to help to contain their own different anxieties and to have found within it support for their courage, leadership and wisdom.

3. Contemplative Reflection

a. Democratic, moral, somaesthetic, inter-personal?

I have critiqued Celebrating Strengths as containing embodied democratic practices but lacking a robust and explicit theoretical statement of democratic principles. I suggest that, as a result of my PhD studies, my research was more explicitly and consciously democratic than my work in schools, as well as building upon the implicit democratic practices within that work. The use of the circle, working on the floor, a downward gaze and the presence of blank cards to physically encourage alternative views were all deliberate equalizing strategies. As I grew in confidence through the 7 strengths circle conversations I also became more willing to include myself and my opinions thereby opening myself to change and challenge.

The practice was not without flaws. I only included pupils within one of the conversations. I failed to notice and properly acknowledge important points made in the course of the conversations and only saw their significance after repeated re-listening. I persisted in correcting a pupil's use of the word patience and asserting that they meant confidence. However, the presence of the physical cards and the use of the video gave this child the ability to persist in their disagreement and to assert and get their point across. While children are a 'relatively powerless group in society' (Edge Hill University Research and Enterprise Support Office, 2012, p. 4) the physical elements of my research strategy, the circle, cards and use of the floor

embodied democratic principles and equalized the power relationship sufficiently to make challenge and dissent safe, permissible and possible.

The possibility of democratic dissent within contemplative reflection is also evident in the very different pictures made by two colleagues shown on page 127 above. One colleague used the physical process to silently express views that differed significantly from those of their more senior colleague and both then used the subversive nature of silence (Ross, 2014) to silently critique a former head teacher.

Contemplative reflection also made a somaesthetic space for me to experience the full range of emotions, up to and including shame. I made a note of my emotional reactions, which I listed on p. 137 in the findings chapter, not for personal interest but to indicate whether, in accordance with my theory, my research was able to contain the full range of human emotion. I would argue that what is unusual within my research is not the presence of emotions such as hope, despair, love and shame but that I saw them as worthy of attention and as evidence for a well-being that goes beyond the superficial. However, despite my intellectual commitment to the importance of pleasure in all its forms, I observe that it was only in the more light hearted conversations that I felt able to ask about and also to notice in myself something as apparently trivial as enjoyment. I see this as a failure on my part, within my research, to pay sufficient attention to pleasure.

Shame was perhaps the most uncomfortable emotion I experienced within my research and is also indicative of space for morality within contemplative reflection. The shame I felt was a response to my failure to be what I aspire to be. I am critical of the consumerist tendency within education. Smeyers et al. note the modern tendency for knowledge to be 'commodified' (Smeyers, et al., 2007, p. 233) while Biesta writes of how the learner has become the 'consumer' (Biesta, 2009, p. 38). My shame at a period when I tried to sell my work as a product and failed to sufficiently value the role of teachers serves to clarify those values and prompts me to reassert them. In Martin's terms, the emotion is providing a unifying and self-protective function.

The strengths circle conversations took place with colleagues with whom I have long standing relationships and to that extent indicate the importance of relationships to my research. In addition, in the final phase of my contemplative reflection I finally allowed my data streams to fully relate to one another. As I put it in my notes '*I have been mixing the selves of the research voices today and letting*

them speak more directly to one another rather than keeping them segregated (Plan/Day 34).

b. Containing love and anxiety

Not only did Celebrating Strengths appear to allow teachers to express love in a safe and professional way I argue that my research methodology, contemplative reflection, also allowed myself and my colleagues to think about, speak about and notice love. I suggest that it did that by containing our anxieties about love.

I have already discussed my colleagues' willingness to discuss love within our research conversations and the fact that love was the most frequently mentioned character strength or virtue overall. I also noted that I mentioned it less than my colleagues. I noticed my colleagues' love early on in my contemplative reverie. On day 4 I say of two colleagues *'I am struck by the love they both show for the project'* (Plan/Day 4). I also express my love of my philosophers, of ideas. For example I say of Dewey *'I love his ideas about the "being fully alive"'* (Plan/Day 9). However, it is not until exactly half way through my contemplative reverie, on day 20, that I felt able to write *'I love my story chest. I am attached to it, in the psychodynamic sense. I love my stories, the spiral, the assemblies. It is a deep love and I have put that love into Celebrating Strengths. I loved the children and staff at the school. When not working in schools much between 2007 and 2010 I missed it and them deeply'* (eJournal/10). I suggest that it was only after working with contemplative reverie for almost 3 weeks that I felt able to express this more personal and poignant love, even to myself or to feel that I had permission to express the love that motivated my work. It took that long for the contemplative reverie to contain the anxieties I felt about expressing love in academic contexts.

Boler speaks about emotion's 'absent-presence' (Boler, 1999, p. xv) within academia and education and the 'privatization and pathologizing' (1999, p. xiv) of emotions. Writing specifically about love hooks says that most people are largely silent about love, despite the fact that 'Everyone wants to know more' (hooks, 2001, p. xxvii). I suggest that while I resisted the pathologizing of most emotions in my practice and my theory, I failed to resist the pathologization of love and exhibited more anxiety about articulating it than my colleagues or indeed than philosophers such as Murdoch or Weil.

Love was not the only source of anxiety contained by contemplative reflection. My colleagues, as I have already discussed, used the strengths circle conversations to express deeply held values, vulnerability and critique. In addition, contemplative

reflection contained my own ever present anxiety about failure. Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. note the 'fear of inadequacy' (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al., 1983, p. 57) which can accompany learning. This fear of inadequacy and failure was a constant note throughout my reflections, from Day 1 to Day 40. I suggest that, as with love, the more my contemplative reverie progressed, the more able I became to contain (Bion, 1985) my anxiety rather than needing to expel it or act it out. This, I suggest, is most obvious in how I responded to the videoed strengths circle conversations. In phase 1 of my contemplative reverie I listened to the whole of every conversation and collected quantitative data, counting each mention of a strength, even though I realised it did not fit with my overall approach '*And why am I doing this? Am I feeling I need some stats to make this relevant?*' (PJ1/p.51). In phase 3 I still listened to the whole of each conversation but, as is the practice in Infant Observation (Adamo & Rustin, 2001) I took no notes but creatively responded afterwards by making an intuitive strengths circle of my own to indicate the strengths and virtues I heard underneath our words. By the start of phase 4 I still felt anxious '*I feel fear that this research is not 'proper' research, not good enough*' (Plan/Day 32) but I gave myself permission to be both more psychodynamic, in listening mostly to the first and last 5 minutes of each conversation and also more creative '*I really enjoyed today. Mixing the data streams and creating links across them has felt less tiring and more creative than the monoculture approach I have followed before*' (Plan/Day 34).

I learned to research playfully and to trust the process, to trust my method, but it took time and was never unaccompanied by anxiety. The process of the contemplative reverie enabled me, I suggest, to increasingly tolerate the anxiety and the love I felt without expelling either.

c. Difficulties and limitations of contemplative reflection

It may be that a certain degree of anxiety is inevitable in the use of a one off, flexible research design since there are no reliable models to follow but the anxiety that was ever present in my research constitutes a likely barrier to its use by other people. In addition to the anxiety and fear of failure which I discussed above, there were additional challenges to the use and development of contemplative reflection. Perhaps the most obvious and fundamental limitation is that contemplation is, by its nature, a wordless process. In using a wordless practice for academic research I then had to make a transition from wordless experience to written text in order to interpret and communicate my findings. This means that layers of interpretation lie

between my work, my reflections on that work and my subsequent reporting of and discussion of it for the thesis.

In addition, I experienced conflict between the use of a contemplative mode of thinking, which Ross describes as 'a specific disposition of attentive and responsive receptivity' (Ross, 2014, p. 75) and the more narrow, focused attention associated with analysis and in particular with quantitative analysis. Awareness of this tension or conflict is not new. Arendt argues that in ancient Greek thought contemplation was said to stand in 'unequivocal opposition' (1958. p. 301) to action. Speech and writing are, of course, both actions.

It was my experience that there was also particular tension between an open, receptive listening to my material and the goal oriented activities of counting and making lists. At a simple level, during the iteration when I counted the occurrences of each strength in each conversation I also made fewer notes about emotion or the feel of the conversations. As I noted in my journal 'it disrupts the waiting, the sitting back, it draws me in and takes the attention away from the emotional tenor of the film or my emotional reaction in the moment' (PJ1/76).

However, as I also noted, 'I think and write differently off-line so wish to do both for balance' (Plan/Day 18). I agree that there is an opposition between the free-associative, receptive thought that I tried to practice in my reverie, which Schore and Schore (Schore & Schore, 2008) associated with the right hemisphere of the brain, and the more linear, analytic thinking of quantification and rigorous analysis. However, while I found that the two cannot be done simultaneously I would now argue that they can be done consecutively. My overall methodology made space for a mixture of high and low technology and went some way, I suggest, towards providing balance. However, if I had had more understanding of that need for consecutive rather than simultaneous variety in modes of thought at the start of my reverie I might have incorporated other analytic approaches into contemplative reflection without the disruption that I noted above. I could potentially have made greater use of analytic methods without compromising the overall contemplative tenor of the research. I suggest that there is a need for balance between the two modes of thought. For research to count as contemplative, the free-associative, playful and reflective mode must pre-dominate but analytic thought and methods might also be included.

A major limitation of my methodology, certainly in adapting it for others in education to use, is that it is deliberately slow and took time and emotional and intellectual

energy. I certainly found it tiring and I was not working as a busy classroom teacher or academic at the same time. Busyness, tiredness and lack of time seem endemic within the current education system in the UK. My choices for my research methodology deliberately called this busyness and activity into question but, at the same time, they do make that research methodology less obviously transferable to other contexts or other people.

4. Pragmatic somaesthetics

I have argued that both my research and Celebrating Strengths contained love and anxiety. I suggest that there were particular common features of both that enabled this to happen, namely the presence of consistent, structured and repetitive somatic practices. In Celebrating Strengths these were festivals or traditions, oral storytelling and stories and the language of character strengths. We created a deliberately repetitive cycle of festivals or traditions accompanied by the consistent and explicit use of a limited vocabulary of 25 character strengths and virtues. The same one or two strengths and the same colour and rituals always attached to each festival and the same stories were always told at particular times of year and in particular ways. In contemplative reflection the consistent, structured and repetitive somatic practices were the strengths circle conversations, the use of a physical circle and the familiar 25 character strengths on cards that could be moved in and out of that circle, the rhythmic use of a pattern of reflection that alternated philosophers, material record and videoed data and the use of four hour time slots as periods of reflection in phases of reading, playing, waiting, writing.

I suggest that Shusterman's project of somaesthetics provides a way to understand this feature of my work and research and might also provide a template for thinking about well-being projects within education more broadly. Shusterman argues for three branches of his philosophical project of somaesthetics: analytic, pragmatic and practical. Analytic somaesthetics is descriptive and theoretical and this thesis is my own attempt to provide more rigour to the analytical and theoretical basis of my own work and of well-being in educational settings. Practical somaesthetics, Shusterman notes, is 'concerned not with saying but with *doing*, this practical dimension is the most neglected by academic body philosophers, whose commitment to the discursive logos typically ends in textualizing the body' (Shusterman, 2008, p. 29, italics in original). I have certainly been influenced by this account of practical somaesthetics in my argument that well-being is activity centred and must include well-being practices for the teacher as well as the student and must go beyond thinking and ideas to include the body and the physical

environment. As Shusterman argues 'an organism's survival depends on interaction with (and incorporation of) its environment and a crucial part of the human organism's environment is the society of other humans' (2008, p. 182). If survival depends on such interaction, so does surviving well, or well-being.

His third branch, pragmatic somaesthetics is the most pertinent to my argument about the containment of love and anxiety. He describes pragmatic somaesthetics as normative and prescriptive since it proposes 'specific methods of somatic improvement' (2008, p. 24). I suggest that the consistent, structured and repetitive somatic practices I described above were fulfilling this function of pragmatic somaesthetics and effectively bridging the often critiqued gap that can exist between theory and practice. Pragmatic somaesthetics, my consistent, structured methods, gave teachers normative and indeed prescriptive methods which were underpinned by theory but within which they could be creative and adapt their practices to the changing moment by moment reality of the environment. Change is a source of anxiety. We deal with that anxiety by putting in place things that are constant, things that do not change. My firm, grounded and unchanging structure seems to have been able to contain both their love and their anxiety while still allowing them the freedom to have a democratic voice and to adapt their moment by moment practice. It also gave me that freedom and that containment within my contemplative reflective research.

The dismay I felt when I realised the extent to which my early advice to teachers was prescriptive rather than democratic and to which I alluded in my last chapter, was because I had not at that point understood the distinction between practical and pragmatic somaesthetics. The former must be adaptable and fluid and under the teacher's moment by moment professional discretion. The latter is what one colleague referred to as the platform from which we function (Video 6/PJ1/60). Platforms and indeed containers, need to be strong and even rigid to fulfil their purpose of support or containment.

The presence of a firm and repetitive pragmatic framework within my research enabled insights to emerge gradually which surprised and even occasionally alarmed me. I did not notice one pupil's persistent disagreement with me until the third occasion on which I listened to that conversation. My thinking about the spiritual nature of Celebrating Strengths and its spiritual impact on the teachers who used it and my reflections on sin in the education system slowly developed with each iteration of my reverie. The containment of my anxiety allowed my thinking to become clearer and bolder. For example, I moved from seeing one element of my

work, the strengths spotting exercise, as prayer on day 28 of my reverie to seeing the whole of my work as a kind of prayer, reflecting on day 32 that '*Celebrating Strengths not only encourages prayer, as I wrote earlier, but that it actually IS prayer, seeing what is real, enjoying what IS. An educational prayer*' (eJournal/43).

I suggest that the firm pragmatic somatic container of my research also contained the tensions implicit in attempting to combine the contemplative with the analytic which I discussed in the previous section and that contemplative reflection, precisely because it has this pragmatic somatic framework, may be robust enough to allow for both analytic and contemplative methods within it.

5. Wider implications of a theory and practice of well-being

I suggested above that my theory and methodology highlighted deficits within my own well-being project of Celebrating Strengths. I therefore argued that both my theory and my methodology might be used elsewhere in education to highlight where environments or practices support, or potentially undermine, educational well-being. There are also other implications of my research which are pertinent to the theory and practice of well-being in educational settings.

a. Intelligent habit and evidence-based practice

One of my reasons for including Dewey in my selection of philosophers was his discussion of habit. In the last chapter I noted his concept of a 'bad' habit as a thoughtless 'enslavement to old ruts' (Dewey, 1922, p. 29). Dewey, as I have explored earlier, thought that we don't teach directly, but indirectly. Similarly, he argued that 'we cannot change habit directly' but can do so only 'by modifying conditions, by an intelligent seeking and weighting of the objects which engage attention' (Dewey, 1922, p. 12). In other words, we change habit by changing the environment.

Dewey proposed 'intelligently controlled habit' (1922, p. 15) as the antithesis of bad habit. In Document 7 I described Celebrating Strengths as about '*positive habits of thought, speech and behaviour*' (Fox Eades, 2008a unpublished document). I have argued that Celebrating Strengths and my research contained a structured somatic framework of normative methods within which individual, adaptive practice could occur. This framework might also be called intelligent habit and, in the case of Celebrating Strengths, intelligent community wide habit. It is intelligent habit and not thoughtless habit because it is underpinned by explicit theory and therefore available for scrutiny and change. It is also intelligent habit because the individual

can adapt their moment by moment individual practice in accordance with the needs of an ever changing environment.

If practices within education, whether these are explicit well-being programmes or not, are to promote well-being in education, I argue that they must have these characteristics of intelligent and not unintelligent habit. A difficulty I see with the enthusiasm for 'evidence-based' (Seligman, et al., 2009, p. 297) approaches in well-being within education and within education itself, which are said to tell us 'what works' (Ball, 2003, p. 225), is not only that they potentially compromise the democratic voice of teachers and pupils (Biesta, 2007) but that they also seem to run the risk of promoting Dewey's unintelligent habit. The implication seems to be that the present environment does not make a difference and that teachers can be told what to do by professionals from other disciplines. Having meekly accepted what they have been told, teachers should then on all occasions follow exactly what has been shown to 'work' elsewhere. However, I have argued that theory cannot and should not be imported into education without critique and that if the assumptions behind such practices are not available for such critique then they cannot be said to be 'intelligent' practices or habits. Moreover, neither can they be intelligent practices if teachers cannot adapt them in accord with the needs of an ever changing environment. If they are not intelligent habits, if they are, effectively, 'enslavement to old ruts' (Dewey, 1922, p. 29) then they cannot be said to promote well-being in education.

One teacher commented that, in education, it is not just the product that is important but the process too (Video 2/21.15). It is this focus, this looking at *how* we do things as well as at *what* we do, which Dewey insists makes a habit or custom intelligent. I suggest that without such a focus, without intelligent habit, within education there can be no educational well-being. To do things without thought, enslaved to habit is not to do them well and therefore it cannot lead to being well.

b. Definitions and direct or indirect approaches to well-being

I have defined well-being as a complex and multifaceted concept, as dynamic and activity-centred, as a feature of *how* we engage in other activities, like education and being human. It is, I have argued, about being human, well, not badly. I discussed in my literature chapter the difficulties attendant upon presenting well-being as the domain of experts, particularly the domain of experts beyond education and of characterising well-being as a thing, to be measured and to be judged upon.

Throughout my work in schools and throughout the strengths circle conversations there was a difficulty attached to defining and naming what we were doing together. This reflects, I suggest, the complex and dynamic quality of well-being itself. I noted in my last chapter the shame I felt in my research at re-reading my rather grandiose description of my work as a '*ground-breaking programme*' (Fox Eades, 2008 unpublished). Formerly I had called it '*a whole school approach to social and emotional well-being*' (Fox Eades, 2006) and later it returned to being an *approach* (Fox Eades, 2013 unpublished document). In my strengths circle conversations I sometimes referred to Celebrating Strengths but more often I spoke simply of 'the work' (eJournal/17). My colleagues used a variety of terms to describe this 'work'. They variously called it a stable thread (Video 5/PJ1/59) and all this kind of stuff (Video 5/PJ1/59), as well as a platform, (Video 6/PJ1/60) a structure, a constant and a construct (Video 2). I called it a '*constant*' myself (Video 5/PJ1/60). These terms are all very physical, perhaps reflecting the deliberately embodied and very material way in which I worked and suggesting that the somaesthetic element of my theory was one of the most evident within my practice. Continuing this theme, in my eJournal reflections I concluded that it is '*prayer*' (eJournal/43). More often, however, Celebrating Strengths is referred to simply as '*this*' or '*it*'. Neither my colleagues nor myself ever call it a 'well-being' programme or, indeed, refer to well-being at all.

Despite the use of these concrete metaphors, it was the intangibility of Celebrating Strengths which frustrated CAPP, the Centre for Applied Positive Psychology, (CAPP, 2017) when I worked with them. I noted that '*they struggled, I think, to understand my work and to work out how to turn it into an 'income stream' for CAPP*' (eJournal/3). This is understandable if well-being, to which my work is related, is both complex, and activity-centred and relates to *how* we engage in education, how we engage in being human. It cannot be easily defined because it is a characteristic of the complex and multifaceted task of being human. The challenge in defining Celebrating Strengths echoes and is continuous with, I would argue, the challenge in defining well-being itself.

In the literature I have discussed, well-being within education is presented alternately as either instrumental and extrinsic to or internal and intrinsic to education. On the one hand, the document *Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing* says schools must promote well-being 'in order to help their pupils succeed' (Public Health England; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015, p. 5). On the other hand Noddings sees happiness

as the goal of education (Noddings, 2003). I suggest that it is both. It is both the means by which we enjoy and do well at education and it is the goal of education. It assists us in achieving the good life and it is a good, in and of itself.

Dewey defends instrumentalism within art provided that it is not a 'narrow' instrumentalism (Dewey, 1934, p. 145). Going beyond dichotomies once more I would defend instrumentalism within education and within well-being provided that it is not a *narrow* instrumentalism. Education, as I discussed in Chapter III, is about the human activities of labour and work, but not *only* about them. There must be balance. Likewise, well-being can increase enjoyment and even success in learning but it is more than that and it's nature as intrinsic to education must balance any extrinsic role it may have.

Given this complexity, and well-being's status as dynamic and both internal good and external means of education, I question the wisdom of attempting to teach well-being directly, as some suggest we do, through targeted programmes. If we cannot agree on a definition, if diverse voices and disciplines see well-being differently, then I suggest that attempting to create an environment in which well-being can occur is a more modest and achievable goal than attempting to create it directly. As Dewey said, 'we must work on the environment, not merely on the hearts of men' (1922, p. 13).

However, if we do attempt to create well-being directly within an educational context, to 'work on the hearts of men' (Dewey, 1922, p. 13) through a well-being programme, then I suggest that the assumptions behind that programme must be made explicit and available for scrutiny. Moreover the practices of that programme must stand up to the critique of teachers and pupils and to the critique of an educational theory and practice of well-being such as the one I argue for here. Specifically, such a programme must, I would argue, be democratic, moral, somaesthetic and give priority to relationships and it must enable, or at least not hinder, the containment of love and anxiety. The purpose of a theory of well-being must be to critique practices of well-being, as I used my own theory to critique *Celebrating Strengths*. This critique can then strengthen and develop those practices, to use Dewey's word, intelligently. In the case of my own work, my theory identified limitations within my practice which I can now address.

It is possible that, in addition to ensuring that well-being practices contain elements of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of relationships, they should also have the tri-partite structure that Shusterman suggests and which I have

identified as a constant in my own work in schools and in my research methodology. I will raise this as a possible area for further research in my concluding chapter.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that my findings illustrate the presence, in Celebrating Strengths, and in contemplative reflection, of the elements of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of relationships. However, I have critiqued my work in schools as unbalanced at times because these elements, though embodied in practices were not always explicitly articulated and hence available for critique. A balanced environment for well-being, I am arguing, is democratic and the lack of a clear account of the theory that underpins practice undermines the environment's democratic potential.

Despite this imbalance, I have argued that my findings indicate that Celebrating Strengths and contemplative reflection both performed the educational task of containing love and containing anxiety. I suggested that it was the presence of structured, repetitive somatic practices, of pragmatic somaesthetics, that enabled them to do that.

I discussed the wider implications of my theory and practice. I expressed scepticism about the possibility or desirability of attempting to promote such a complex, diverse and activity centred concept as well-being directly. If we are going to attempt to do this, however, then I have argued that for educational practices to promote well-being they must be democratic, moral, somaesthetic and inter-personal, they must contain love and anxiety and they must be intelligent habits, available for both scrutiny and adaptation. I have used my theory to critique my own work and suggested that it might be used to critique other initiatives in the area of well-being or other environments that seek to promote well-being.

In my final chapter I will summarise my key themes and arguments and raise areas that seem to me important for further thinking and research.

VIII. Conclusions

1. Introduction

In this thesis, I engaged in a philosophical and empirical enquiry into the theory and practice of well-being in education. I argued that well-being is both a means and an end of education not something that is external to it or exclusively the domain of experts outside education. I argued that the context of education, at the point where generations meet, is a unique context and that well-being in education must take

that unique context into account. I consulted different disciplines that have traditionally influenced education and concluded that a theory and practice of well-being in education must be characterised by democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of inter-personal relationships and that it must, like education itself, contain love and anxiety.

An overarching theme of my work has been the importance of balance and the importance of the environment in promoting well-being. I argued that, since well-being is complex, dynamic and activity-centred it would be both more appropriate and more achievable to attempt to promote it indirectly, through influencing and creating balance within the educational environment, rather than directly through teaching wellbeing programmes.

I used my theory of educational well-being to construct a methodology, contemplative reflection, with which to study and critique my own well-being work in schools, *Celebrating Strengths*. I concluded that *Celebrating Strengths* embodied the themes of my emergent theory in classroom practices but did not always create the balanced educational environment for well-being that I am arguing for. This was due to an early failure on my part either to fully grasp or to articulate the democratic and moral potential of my work or the democratic and moral nature of well-being itself. Contemplative reflection, which deliberately prioritised Dewey's passive phase of learning, undergoing (Dewey, 1916), did appear to provide a democratic and balanced learning environment. I suggested that both my theory and my methodology might therefore be used to critique other environments for their contribution to well-being or, indeed, other well-being projects.

I suggested that both my work in schools and my research methodology were characterised by consistent, structured, repetitive somatic practices which Shusterman (Shusterman, 2008) calls pragmatic somaesthetics and that it may be this element of my work that enabled it to contain love and anxiety as I have sought to demonstrate.

I argued that the elements of my theory are continuous, not discrete or hierarchical. I have not claimed that they are exhaustive or that my theory is complete. What I have argued is that teachers and pupils must have a voice in the ongoing, democratic conversation about what well-being means in education, in theory and in practice, and that this thesis is a contribution to that conversation.

2. The chapters

a. Chapter I: Introduction: a contribution to a theory and practice of well-being in education

My introduction outlined my intention to contribute to what I describe as the ongoing conversation about the meaning, theory and practice of well-being in educational settings. It provided a brief introduction to my own work in schools in the area of well-being, Celebrating Strengths and located that work within the broader historical context of debates about well-being and within the current rather muddled discussions of well-being in different disciplines.

It introduced the argument that well-being is a complex, dynamic and activity centred concept which requires a distinctively educational theory and practice which, like education and like well-being itself, should draw upon a variety of disciplines but be dominated by none. The introduction also introduced the idea that a theory and practice of well-being in education should take account of the unique context of education as a site of intergenerational love and anxiety and be characterised by democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of relationships and should serve to contain both love and anxiety.

It then introduced and defended a cross-disciplinary approach to the topic of well-being in education and the creation of a cross-disciplinary reflective research methodology, contemplative reflection, with which I chose to study my own practice within schools.

b. Chapter II: Literature review

In this chapter I undertook a cross-disciplinary study of literature on well-being, flourishing and happiness. I described the theoretical picture as confused and muddy, with different disciplines defining well-being differently. I critiqued the hierarchical and dichotomous nature of that picture. I also critiqued the presentation of well-being to teachers as the domain of experts from beyond education, as a crisis or problem to be solved and as something extrinsic to education on which teachers both required help and advice but on which their livelihoods might depend. I argued that each one of the literatures I studied, positive psychology, psychodynamic theory and philosophy, has important contributions to make to the theory and practice of well-being but none of them by themselves provide a sufficiently balanced picture for well-being in education.

I suggested that the theoretical muddle around well-being presented practical difficulties. One was that the positioning of well-being as the domain of experts

beyond education served to silence the voices and the creative contribution of teachers and pupils to the discussion and practice of well-being. Another was that well-being was presented as amoral, medical, individual and disembodied. The final difficulty I highlighted was a failure to address teacher well-being as intimately connected to pupil well-being and a corresponding failure to examine the possible causes of a lack of well-being in teachers.

I argued that positive psychology, notwithstanding my criticisms, has a contribution to make to a theory and practice of educational well-being due to its focus on virtues such as love and beauty. I argued, likewise, that psychodynamic theory contributes an important perspective on anxiety and the ability to bear difficult and conflicting emotions. I argued that philosophy and theology also have essential contributions to make to the conversation about what constitutes the good for humans within education.

I concluded my literature chapter by justifying my use of philosophy within my thesis partly as a tool for analysis, to construct a theory of educational well-being and partly as a tool for contemplation, with which to reflect more deeply upon my own practice in my empirical study, contemplative reflection.

c. Chapter III: Philosophical Discussion A: the nature of well-being

In Chapter III I argued for the use of the word well-being in preference to either happiness or flourishing. I said that this word can avoid hierarchical and dichotomous thinking and that being well, for society and for individuals, is the core aim of education. I also argued that well-being is a modest and achievable word, reminiscent of the important phrase 'good enough' (Winnicott, 1971, p. 10) from parenting, and that it avoids the imposition of another superlative upon teachers.

I gave a brief account of Hannah Arendt's phenomenology of the human condition, describing the ancient hierarchy of contemplation, action, fabrication or work and labour. I noted that Arendt's category of speech and action was the only one, according to Arendt, associated with politics and with the ability of a person to tell the story of *who* rather than what they are. I argued that well-being, like the human condition itself, is diverse, complex and multifaceted and is better thought of as an adverb, as being well, rather than as a noun or thing which might be easily controlled or measured. I argued that, in education, well-being is a characteristic of how teachers and pupils *are*, and of *how* they teach and how they learn. I argued that a balance between all of these different elements of the human condition is

essential for being well or for well-being and that Dewey's idea of continuity (1916) provides a better way of thinking about them than Arendt's hierarchy.

I argued that for well-being to occur there must be a balance between Arendt's different ways of being human, both in the environment in general and in education in particular. I also argued that there must be a balance between education as preparation for the future and as a rich engagement with the present. I critiqued the current educational environment as lacking that balance. Firstly, I argued that contemplation was no longer possible within education, despite its necessary role in learning and I drew a parallel between contemplation and Dewey's passive, undergoing stage of learning. Secondly I suggested that the rise in measurement and the collection of data in education were a sign that Arendt's category of work was overly represented within education, at the expense of democratic speech and action, and of contemplation.

Finally I argued that means and ends were inseparable and that if the well-being of the individual and of society is, as many suggest, the goal or end of education, then the present well-being of pupils and of teachers must characterise the means or daily practice of education too.

d. Chapter IV: Philosophical discussion B: a theory and practice of educational well-being

Chapter IV continued my philosophical argument for an educational theory and practice of well-being. I argued that well-being is not and cannot be context free and that education constitutes a unique context as a site of intergenerational encounter. I used MacIntyre's concept of a practice to explore the need for care and instruction whenever one generation passes on a practice or tradition to the next, arguing that a new generation of learners might encompass humans of any age and that my arguments in this thesis are therefore relevant to any educational setting, regardless of whether it is formal or informal or the age of the learners.

However, I also argued that there is something unique about school and that this is the intensity of the need for care in the young. This brings about an accompanying intensity in the emotions of love and anxiety which characterise educational settings where there are a lot of young human beings present.

I expanded my account of the elements of well-being that I had identified in my study of the literature, democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of inter-personal relationships, while acknowledging that they were continuous concepts rather than discrete categories. I discussed my social use of the word democracy

within this thesis as a way of living together and communicating that is characterised by mutual learning and respect. I also argued that democracy necessitated resistance to the hegemony of particular voices in the ongoing conversation about well-being in education. I used Arendt to argue that democracy in education should enable teachers and pupils to tell the unique story of who, not just what, they are and that this required the presence of people willing and able to listen to that story and to pay attention to it.

I argued for a definition of morality in educational well-being that is continuous with this idea of democracy. I defined morality as what it is right to be and to love and as looking at another person lovingly and justly. This, I argued, is clearly continuous with the concept of the importance of inter-personal relationships. I then argued that it makes no sense to consider the well-being of isolated selves, as if well-being were the private possession of an individual. Human beings only exist or indeed learn in relationship with other human beings and therefore well-being must extend beyond the individual to encompass the environment of which that individual is an integral part. I argued that the quality of the web of relationships of which an individual is part is crucial to any notion of being well. Finally I discussed somaesthetics, a term I have derived from the work of Richard Shusterman (2008), to encompass beauty, pleasure, the full range of bodily emotions and spirituality. I argued that somaesthetics is continuous with morality, democracy and inter-personal relationships and that there is a somaesthetic aspect to all of Arendt's diverse ways of being human and therefore to all ways of being human, well. I put forward a physical and embodied view of spirituality as being willing to stop and look and see wonder in the ordinary and in each other.

I proposed a moral, democratic, interdependent and somaesthetic working definition of well-being in education as *enjoyment of the excellent, seeing and relating to the goodness in things and people* and argued that, in this definition, the well-being of self and other were internally linked. My own well-being involves seeing the goodness, the uniqueness, the beauty in the other. The well-being of the other includes them being perceived in all their beauty and uniqueness, by me.

I argued that education is a place of anxiety, the natural anxiety of the learner and the anxiety of the society that needs education to succeed for its own survival. I used Bion's idea of containment as managing the strong emotions of others (Bion, 1985) to argue that teachers need to contain the anxieties of both children and society for education and educational well-being to take place. An additional source of anxiety for teachers and society is, paradoxically, the subject of love, which I

argued is essential to education and to educational well-being. I suggested that a combination of attachment theory, psychodynamic theory, positive psychology, moral philosophy and theology provides a starting point for thinking about love as a positive counter-transference, a hopeful, appreciative, attentive, clear-sighted but respectful sense of the current state and the potential of the pupil by the teacher.

e. Chapter V: Empirical methodology – contemplative reflection

In my methodology chapter I described a flexible research design and process which I have termed contemplative reflection which I created and used to study empirically my work in schools, *Celebrating Strengths*. I created contemplative reflection in an attempt to ensure the continuity of means and ends, theory and practice, by deliberately constructing and using a research methodology that was continuous both with my emergent theory of well-being and with my work in schools itself. It was also an attempt to prioritise the contemplative aspect of human life that I had identified as under-represented within schools and therefore to provide balance. Like my work in schools, contemplative reflection was influenced by psychodynamic theory, theology, positive psychology and philosophy.

I argued in this chapter for an epistemology which assumes the connectedness of researcher and researched and for a scientific approach to research that goes beyond the narrow medical model. I put forward an ontology based on an assumption of the wholeness and sacredness of the object and its intimate connection with the subject. I argued that this was a metaphysical view point that is continuous with my theory and practice.

I located my research methodology broadly within Whitehead and McNiff's living action research perspective (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). In addition, it drew on the psychodynamic tradition of infant observation (Adamo & Rustin, 2001) and the Christian monastic practice of *Lectio Divina* (Paintner, 2012). I described the two specific methods of the strengths circle conversation and the time limited cycle of repeated reflection I called contemplative reverie. I discussed the ethical implications of researching a project I helped to create and of researching within existing professional relationships of trust and friendship. I also discussed the ethical implications, and what I argued was the democratic and ethical necessity, of including children and children's voices within my research.

I described the practice of contemplative reflection, including the three data streams I used in my contemplative reverie: my material record or files of work, the videoed strengths circle conversations and extracts from particular moral philosophers. I

described my mixed selection criteria for narrowing down the data I studied within each of those data streams and the time limited process of reflection that I engaged in over a 40 day period. I gave an account of the mixed records that I produced during my contemplative reverie and the process of constant comparison (Robson, 2011) I applied to these mixed records in order to analyse my findings.

f. Chapter VI: Empirical findings

My findings chapter examined four kinds of data in the light of my theory of educational well-being. The data consisted of quotes from the philosophical extracts I used during my contemplative reverie, comments and pictures from the strengths circle conversations, extracts from my documents or material record and quotes from the journals and plan of daily notes that I kept during my contemplative reverie to record my own changing thought and insights. I included in my findings comments and extracts which showed the presence or absence of democracy, somaesthetics, morality and the importance of inter-personal relationships in both Celebrating Strengths and in my methodology of contemplative reflection. I also included findings that indicated the presence or absence of love and anxiety. I used these aspects of my theory to structure the chapter.

My journals, plan of daily notes and the videos themselves are available for scrutiny.

g. Chapter VII: Discussion of empirical findings in the light of a theory of educational well-being

My discussion chapter examined my findings in the light of my theory of educational well-being. It argued that my practical work in schools, Celebrating Strengths, embodied all elements of my theory, democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the primacy of relationship but concluded that a failure to articulate these elements at times undermined the balance of the environment that it created. This may therefore have undermined the potential of Celebrating Strengths to promote well-being and, I would argue, its educational potential. The chapter also concluded, however, that my research methodology, contemplative reflection, did create such a balanced educational environment. I argued that both Celebrating Strengths and contemplative reflection contained love and anxiety and discussed whether it was the presence of a pragmatic somaesthetic framework which facilitated this containment.

I drew on my philosophical enquiry and empirical findings to raise questions about the current trend to promote 'evidence-based' (Biesta, 2007, p. 1) approaches in well-being. I expressed concern that, not only did this trend potentially run counter

to the need for teachers to have a democratic voice in their practice, it also ran the risk of encouraging what Dewey characterised as bad habits, the thoughtless and uncritical continuation of practices which were no longer responsive to the present environment. Also, given the complexity and disagreements that exist around well-being I queried the wisdom of attempting to promote it directly, rather than indirectly through the creation of a balanced educational environment.

3. Recommendations and areas for further research

I have argued throughout this thesis that the presence of democracy, morality, somaesthetics and the priority of inter-personal relationships are vital to creating an environment in which well-being can occur. I have also argued that love and anxiety are key emotions within educational settings and that their containment is crucial to the possibility of well-being. My arguments and my thesis are largely philosophical, with a smaller empirical component based upon my own practice in schools.

My first and most fundamental recommendation may seem very negative. It is that we first *stop* doing the things which create imbalance within the educational environment which may impede us in promoting well-being. I suggest that we stop treating well-being as an extrinsic target for teachers to be measured on. We stop seeing it as the sole domain of experts beyond education and allow teachers the time and space and confidence to think about the traditional caring aspect of their role. We stop ignoring the importance of educational aims that go beyond work and labour. And then, in accord with Dewey's idea of intelligent habit and his approach to scientific method, we observe what happens and reflect upon the guidelines we have created, before we 'revise, adapt, expand and alter them' (Dewey, 1922, p. 94).

Though this may seem like a negative recommendation, I suggest that stopping and pausing, observing and reflecting is a vital first step in creating any meaningful change. The Alexander Technique is a contemplative somatic discipline which influenced Dewey and which he practiced for many years (Shusterman, 2008). It has as one of its key principles that if we 'stop doing the "wrong thing", the "right" thing will tend to happen' (Wragg, 2017, p. 21). I would argue that before we introduce positive changes or programmes to intentionally promote well-being within education we must first *stop* doing the things that create imbalance within the educational environment.

I would like to see further educational research into well-being that blends philosophical and empirical enquiry and which resists a narrow and medical view of

what constitutes either rigour or scientific enquiry. The balance between philosophical and empirical study might vary with the subject matter and indeed the researcher but I argue, like Suissa (2008), and Flanagan, (2007) for the importance of combining both approaches in the study of well-being in education and for the necessity of critiquing taken for granted terms, like well-being, within educational research. I also argue for the importance of crossing disciplines in educational well-being research, since education is relevant to and influenced by multiple disciplines.

It is not clear from the literature I have studied whether there is, indeed, a decline in well-being in young people at present. There are certainly arguments that suggest a decline in the well-being of teachers. If there is such a decline, in any of the groups within education, then I argue that we cannot expect simple or individualist solutions to what is a complex, environmental issue. However, if, as I have argued, well-being is complex, dynamic and activity-centred, then, once we have stopped doing the wrong thing, there are relatively small, positive things we can do. These small things may not, to use the language of health, cure, or solve the problem but they may promote and influence educational well-being.

I have argued that, given the dynamic and complex nature of well-being, it makes more sense to attempt to promote it indirectly, through influencing the environment, rather than attempt to teach well-being directly. Therefore I suggest making relatively small changes in the educational environment that relate to the elements I have identified as essential to well-being, namely democracy, morality, somaesthetics and relationships and the importance of acknowledging love and anxiety as contributions to well-being. Not all elements of the environment are under the control of teachers or pupils, or indeed of politicians. However, some elements are. These might include the beauty or otherwise of the physical environment, the attention we pay to character strengths and virtues in the curriculum, the priority given to enjoyment, how democratic the structures of the school are and whether or not they create space for ethical dialogue. A study might make small pragmatic and possible changes to one or more of these elements and then enquire, with teachers and pupils, about the impact such changes have on their perceptions, their theory and their practice of being well.

I have suggested that pragmatic somaesthetics, a structured, consistent framework of somatic practices that creates a bridge between theory and practice was a constant of my work in schools and my research methodology. I suggested that it played a part in containing love and anxiety. The presence or absence of a similar framework in other disciplines or areas of school life would bear further

investigation. It would also be interesting to attempt, with teachers and pupils, to create such a framework where it does not exist and then to follow the perceived impact of that framework over time and explore how it develops.

Below I will conclude that my work appears to have given teachers and pupils permission to see differently and to act differently. This begs the question of why they felt they needed that permission in the first place. Where do teacher and pupil perceptions of what is permissible in educational settings arise, how do these perceptions affect well-being and how might they be influenced?

In addition, I have argued that contemplation is an under-represented element of human life in education and, not surprisingly therefore, I suggest that silence is an under researched and undervalued element of school life. Silence has both positive and negative uses. Enquiring into the multiple meanings and purposes of silence and their contribution to teacher and pupil perceptions of well-being would draw attention to the value and importance of this neglected element of educational life. The ways that teachers and pupils are silenced in the current education system is a democratic issue but so is the paucity of silence in which to speak and to be heard. Silence can be physical and it can be metaphorical, it can be perceived positively or negatively and all of these questions are relevant to being well in education.

I have identified a theory and a working definition of well-being but I do not claim that either is complete or definitive. Both should be open to challenge and further enquiry by teachers and pupils. In particular, I am aware that there will be other elements, besides democracy, morality, somaesthetics and inter-dependence that contribute to being well within education. Our relationship to the natural world may well be one but there will be others which will require other voices and other points of view to identify.

Finally I argue for the absolute necessity of including the voices of teachers and pupils within research into well-being. Teachers and pupils have a right to be involved in the definition, theory and practice of well-being and in its research and to take part in the ongoing conversation about what constitutes the good within education. Teachers and pupils have insights and relevant knowledge and experience to engage seriously in critiquing, refining and developing our ideas of what it means to be well within educational settings. Resisting the hegemony of any particular discipline within research, and resisting the silencing of pupils and teachers is, as I have argued throughout, a democratic and an educational necessity.

4. Final Conclusions

A word that recurs in my findings and in my own reflections upon those findings is *permission*. A colleague spoke of Celebrating Strengths making prayer and meditation more permissible. I asked in my notes whether my work gave one colleague permission to be good and the children permission to be serious minded, and reflective. I discussed my use of positive psychology to give permission to teachers to value enjoyment and pleasure in the classroom.

As I noted in the previous chapter, Unwin and Yandell critique the current education system for closing down the possibility of seeing that 'other ways of doing school are possible' (2016, p. 133). If contemplation is, as Ross argues, about perception, about seeing the extraordinary in the 'ordinary' (2014, p. 83) then it would seem reasonable to characterise Celebrating Strengths as contemplative education, as something which helped create an environment in which teachers and pupils were given permission to see differently and, indeed, to do school a little differently, too.

Not only would I now characterise my work in schools as a contemplative approach to education, I would also characterise it as counter-cultural. At a basic level it was competing, on a tiny and localised scale, with the promotion by the government of the SEAL programme (Department for Education and Skills , 2005). At a more theoretical level, at first unconsciously, and now consciously, I would argue that I was attempting to foster well-being by combating the dominance of the values of work which Arendt identifies, which involve the prioritising of data, measurement and productivity. Instead I focused, with teachers and pupils, on silence and stillness, beauty and stories and virtues, the building blocks of contemplation. In effect, I was attempting to create balance within the educational environment.

One colleague spoke of Celebrating Strengths as a way of capturing all that was affirming and good in their students (Video 2/PJ1/54). I suggest that seeing the good in people and perhaps particularly in children, rather than seeing children either as data or as a 'problem', as Morrow and Mayall (2009, p. 225) argue is the case in the UK, is an ontological position. It does not imply, as positive psychology can seem to do, that sin is not possible or real and it does not limit the range of emotions that can be seen as permissible within educational environments. It does not deny that measurement or tests are sometimes appropriate. It does insist on seeing and paying attention to love and goodness and taking them seriously as means and ends of education.

My own suggested definition of well-being from Chapter IV is *enjoyment of the excellent, seeing and relating to the goodness in things and people*. I would argue that there is evidence that my colleagues have experienced Celebrating Strengths as helping them to see and enjoy excellence and goodness in things and people and that my research, contemplative reflection, helped me to see and enjoy the good in my own work and in my colleagues. In this sense, it seems reasonable to assert that Celebrating Strengths and this research were supporting well-being as I have defined it.

I conclude by arguing for the importance of a robust theory and practice of well-being in education which positions well-being as internal to education and the natural domain of educators. This theory and practice, like education and well-being itself, must cross disciplines and resist the hegemony of any single disciplinary voice. It must help create an environment in which well-being can occur, for all the occupants of that environment. It must give teachers and pupils permission to go beyond a narrow instrumentalism within education and indeed within well-being itself. Finally it must give teachers and pupils permission to take part in the ongoing conversation about what well-being means, looks like and feels like in educational settings.

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Unpublished documents used in the empirical study

Document 1: Workshop on using stories to teach PSHE 2003

Document 2: Using the story box 2004a

Document 3: Festival time – Celebrating Advent 2004b

Document 4: The aims of Celebrating Strengths 2007a
 Document 5: Summary of Celebrating Strengths 2007b
 Document 6: Powerpoint presentation of the Advent Festival 2007c
 Document 7: Powerpoint presentation on Celebrating Strengths 2008a
 Document 8: Powerpoint presentation Summary of Celebrating Strengths 2009
 Document 9: Summary of Celebrating Strengths 2008b

<p>Example: Document 1: Workshop on using stories to teach PSHE 2003</p> <p>Workshop on using stories in PSHE with year one</p> <p>Themes: right and wrong, the school as a community – emphasis on ‘my place in this community’</p> <p>Work towards a collection of stories spanning the children’s experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being babies, dependence, helplessness - being toddlers, becoming active, going to nursery - starting school, getting bigger, becoming more independent, leaving home - year 1, growing skills, not babies anymore, but not the eldest either; <p>This will lead to a book about themselves on the pattern ‘When I was.....I.....’ and entitled ‘The Story of’.</p> <p>Parents will need to be involved in this project and to be asked for anecdotes about each child’s early years and, if possible, photos to illustrate the book. This might serve as an opportunity for some closer home/school working.</p> <p>Week 1 : Theme – babies and beginnings</p> <p>Stories: Creation (Lion Storyteller Bible); Moses in the basket (Storyteller Bible); Mummy’s Baby, an Inuit Myth, Foul Weather? Just So Stories?</p> <p>Activities : Individual - Begin book, ‘When I was tiny, I.....’</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Group – In groups of four, make a story, ‘Being a baby is good because.....being a baby is bad because....we think babies are....’ – with faces and actions to go with the words.</p> <p>Close : The Three Little Pigs</p> <p>Week 2 : Toddlers and nursery, leaving home</p> <p>Stories : The Three Little Pigs, The Fall (Storyteller Bible), Lazy Jack, Granny’s Big Bed</p> <p>Activities : Individual – Add to book, ‘Before I went to school I.....’</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Group – Make a story, ‘Little children CAN.....Little children CAN’T.....’</p> <p>Close : The Three Billy Goat’s Gruff</p> <p>Week 3 : Starting school, leaving babyhood behind</p> <p>Stories : The Three Billy Goat’s Gruff, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, The Three Feathers, David the Giant Killer (Storyteller)</p>

Activities : Individual – Add to book, ‘When I started school I.....’;

Group – Make a story, ‘Starting school is.....We think starting school is....’

Close : The Queen Bee

Week 4 – Being Year one, possibilities and problems

Stories – The Queen Bee, Hansel and Gretel, Brother Caedmon, Rabbit and Tiger Save the World (Bedtime storybook),

Activities : Individual – Make a book of your favourite Add to book, ‘Now I am six I can.....’

Group – Make a story ‘Six year olds can, six year olds can’t....’