'I remember the smell of darkness': a Deleuzean exploration of learning from secondary school negative lived experience among present day academics.

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I, Janet de Vigne declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, written without the aid of AI. It has not been submitted elsewhere for any other higher degree.

Janet de Vigne

Signature ....

Abstract

Janet de Vigne

'I remember the smell of darkness': a Deleuzean exploration of learning from secondary school negative lived experience and failure among present day academic professionals.

In this thesis, I examine, thinking with Deleuze as 'becoming-cartographer', the lived experience of returners to academe (RtAs). These participants self-report perceived negative experiences at secondary school, but now teach at higher education institutions in Africa and the UK.

Eight HE professionals on two continents relate their non-traditional learning journeys through primary to secondary to university education. Their stories powerfully reveal human relationship in the face of the desiring machines of capitalism backgrounding education systems, in the lived experience of distributive, recognitional and associational (in)justices.

Examining the (in)justices they live through using narrative inquiry, I distil their narratives into I-poems and use these to form the basis of a series of cartographs (more than maps – in the manner of Sir Grayson Perry) extending the narrative dimensionality of the poems to develop a multi-sensory affective charge for the purpose of communicating to teachers.

The complexity of the participants' experience is diffracted through the Deleuzean concepts of the rhizome, the desiring machine, affect and the cartographic imperative. The findings reveal further contributions to

knowledge: I develop two concepts: a justice of luck, and a justice of affect to be taken into professional learning conversations through visual representations of the participants' experience.

My aim is to challenge the teaching profession and myself by expressing the discussion around these narratives through an arts medium in order to communicate the affective charge of this lived experience.

Keywords: education, affect, desiring machine, rhizome, cartography, professional development, edusemiotics, relational justices.

268 words

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Introduction and Background

1.2 Introducing myself as becoming cartographer

The impetus for this investigation is my and my family's story, and is largely attributable to my mother. Of late, my life has been revolving around her, as she's now 91 and just this year has been admitted to full time nursing care. My mother was the youngest of 5 siblings, born in Dublin in 1931. As members of the minority tradition (Church of Ireland) the family had to be careful, but the children were not in poverty. My grandfather had a good job at a celebrated whisky distillery, but this led to inevitable problems with alcohol, and my mother told me that she used to wonder who the big man was who used to come into the house shouting. One of the tasks that aged her mother, she said, was keeping him in of an evening (i.e. stopping him going to the pub. If he did, she'd then have to deal with the aftermath. He was never physically abusive, it seems, but abuse takes different forms and the noise had a negative effect on my mother and the other children in the house).

At this time, the Irish authorities required children to leave school with a certificate at the age of 13. Education past this age was the preserve of the males. My uncle, my mother's eldest brother, was sent away to school because 'he was wild'. He joined the RAF at the end of the war – although under age and they must have known this – and was put in as a tail gunner. My cousins have his diaries from the time. This uncle was able to go to university because of an RAF scholarship. Despite having none of today's required qualifications in science, he read medicine at Trinity and became a psychiatrist. If he had not, a job in a practical trade is more likely to have been his lot. My mother left her small, private and abusive school (she was regularly beaten on the hands by the master) without her leaving certificate. Her mother (a

dressmaker) paid for her to take shorthand and typing courses at the local secretarial college. My mother did well – she left the country and became a secretary, and then a medical secretary. In one job, recalls writing everything down phonetically and then looking up words she was unsure of at home – her bosses (male) thought she had learned Latin. My mother was regarded as successful and sharp, but she carried a narrative of failure throughout her life, most visibly in a complete lack of self-confidence in interactions with others.

My father's educational story, at least the little I know of it, seems to have been no better. He was educated in what was then Rhodesia and said he went to the same school as Ian Smith, the then leader. In 1965, Smith made the Unilateral Declaration of Independence when talks with the UK PM Harold Wilson failed to bring about universal suffrage. Having left the country in 1962, my father was then made persona non grata. As he needed a passport quickly, he went to the South African consulate in London and was granted one immediately. It then took him 30 years to rid himself of this almost unusable document. Dad's stories of school were neither serious nor positive – he said he was fluent in chicabunga (a name I cannot find among African languages, although as the area where my dad lived is close to Binga it's possible that there was some kind of dialect there). He joked that when he was 6 the teachers had sent him home from school saying that they couldn't teach him. He had started life as a left hander and we think he may have been dyslexic at some point, but he managed a career in accountancy well and was very good at chess. I think he must have suffered from Seasonal Affective Disorder, having swapped the sun light of Africa for living in the east London commuter belt.

Their story is my story now – it will never be over, because I carry it wherever I go. However, because I want to understand the map of this story so present in me, its affective intensity enables me to take on the developing role of cartographer, particularly as this research includes both European and African participants. I now go on to introduce myself and articulate the influence that my parents' experience of educational injustice had on me, as well as exploring the 'foreignness' around them in our life in a London suburb.

1.3 The context of my educational trajectory

I was intending to describe my personal experience as not that negative, but I recognize now the discriminatory elements working against my educational trajectory. I was bullied at primary and secondary school, bad things were said about my mother. This was never challenged by the authorities. I was the victim of racism – having an Irish mother in Essex in the 70s was tough at times, but I didn't share any of this at home. My mother was aware of it however – one day someone called and mummy had put down newspaper in the hall as she was polishing the floor with red polish. The following day my sisters and I came home from school crying because we'd been told we had fleas and we were dirty. This wasn't the case.

I was able to go to university for a first degree (as the first in my immediate family to do so) because of the grants then available – it didn't occur to me not to apply, as my school friends were doing so. It did come as a surprise to my parents. My mother told me later than my father was opposed to me going, but by that time he had passed and I was never able to substantiate this. I continued (after obtaining a 2:1 in French with German at Exeter) to music school in London to study singing on a

scholarship. This was difficult as relations between my parents had deteriorated and living at home became impossible. I managed on very little money with no support from my mother as she was angry that I'd moved out. To succeed in the type of music I was engaged in – classical and opera – is very rare for a person with no backing. This was a real struggle.

Today, I still engage in professional creative practice as both musician and actor. I have UK and Scottish premieres under my belt in opera, alongside many of the major Mozart, Verdi and Wagner roles on stage and in concert. As an actor, I've had a role in an multi-Oscar winning film, I won the Leon Sinden award at Pitlochry in 2003 and I've had nominations for awards in fields as diverse as musicals and experimental theatre. I can do nothing but bring my lived experience to bear on this research, in the becoming-ness of my life as it is.

Now, I'm a university teacher of some years, gifted with an open-ended job just three years ago after over a decade working at my institution. I have feet in two places – the one being the green and verdant land of my teaching (I'm a course organiser on a Master's programme), the other the merciless and arid desert of being the only teacher in a particular institute without a PhD – something my colleagues do not let me forget. There is bullying, there is a focus on quantity rather than quality, and very little evidence of real thinking. The workload is heavy as there are so many international students – marking is rigidly defined in terms of time, and there is so much of it – 50-100 4,000 word assignments at any one time, usually before a holiday. There is also inequity in the workload on the various courses and very little transdisciplinary collaboration. I find myself thinking about being an academic and how my role explores knowledge, and therefore truth. I find that my context

corresponds to Williams' definition of a Deleuzean notion of truth (posited in Difference and Repetition) – that the exercise of thinking generates truth (Williams, 2013, p. 6). Where is my thinking time? What is my responsibility concerning truth?

There is therefore both sadness and elation in my approach to this thesis. I teach research methods; I am a successful and popular tutor trying to bring more innovation into my and my students' praxis.

I've been thinking about education for years, especially now that so many of my colleagues are unhappy, and economic and other systems seem to be failing the young people in our charge. I know there is hope, because of relationship – but I also know that relationship is challenging and complex, existing in a dynamic symbiosis with its context. Exploring the affective dimensionality of human development drives me forward.

I find myself drawn to the paradoxes present in human experience, particularly of education. Holding the paradoxes is to my mind a profoundly Deleuzean thing to do – I state that it is possible to experience justice and injustice in the same situation at the same time, and to experience the benefits and negatives of capitalism at the same time in the same place. This is an approach that therefore positions me in the gap – critiquing specific injustices alongside justices and a focus on macro and micro perspectives on capitalist reasoning behind moves in education. Potentialities are offered to the participants in this study by their negative experience. I align myself with Williams by asking 'how can I reveal, transform and intensify the abstract processes sitting as a potential in this given situation?' (Williams, 2013, p. 242) I aim

to actualize the participants who relate their lived experience in this study, creating artefacts with which to provoke teacher thinking.

1.4 Poetic inspiration underlying this research

I have been reflecting on the foundational narratives of my mother, my uncle, the other members of their generation, and myself. These stories bring into view pieces of the whole that is experienced in the present, rather like a jigsaw puzzle, although some are occluded. Narrative inquiry, for me, provides a context for setting the puzzle of life out on display for the purpose of stimulating thinking. Words and/ or images here become keys to understanding. Because I see context and fundamental to being, in that there is a mutual dynamic shaping of the person in relation to experience and situation, I am drawn to the philosophy of Deleuze as a processual, regarding reality as total in the sense of Alfred Jarry (Ubu Roi) and Eugene Ionesco (Rhinoceros), and absurd in the sense of the surreality of experience.

Freeman refers to one view of this type of narrative inquiry as a 'poetic science' that might lie 'at the intersection of art and science' (Freeman, 2007, p. 130) where inquiry into the participant narratives might not only be addressed epistemologically in order to increase understanding, but also ethically - by increasing 'sympathy and compassion', in other words, empathy. I wonder how much human intelligence has been lost over the years by not considering the learning potential of my family members, and how many new inventions, solutions to problems, and thinking we are missing by creating barriers to learning – financial, social, and emotional. My experience makes me ask how people understand and enact their foundational

narratives, whether they are consciously aware of them or not, what might it take to remould or overcome these in terms of current understandings of identity, learning and beliefs and ways in which this might be communicated to the wider community motivate this research.

I do not seek to solve problems, as the contextual issues and challenges in these narratives are too complex. This pushes me towards the Deleuzean embrace in terms of my thinking and truth-seeking:

'for him, truth is a matter of irresolvable problems. The greatest truths are those expressing those problems in all their aspects and applications, avoiding the dangerous illusions of false, simple solutions' (Williams, 2013, p. 6).

In Williams' words, as a teacher, I am sensing that something must be done and seeking the best way to do it – thereby divining 'into the future through our feel for the past and our attunement to signs of actual stress and opportunity' (Williams, 2013, p. 242) . This concept foregrounds my interest in narrative inquiry – lived experience is not a past, terminated thing – it is living and dynamic, the present giving birth to the future.

According to Freeman, it is my responsibility as a social scientist to 'enter into' the scientific 'endeavour' that is narrative inquiry, and 'to do so as imaginatively and artfully as possible' (Freeman, 2007, p. 130). Therefore, I seek to sit with the narratives of lived experience as phenomena represented by the participants. I then transform these representations into new forms focusing on processual links to social justice as categorized by Sharon Gewirtz but diffracted through a Deleuzean lens. This is because quantifying or further categorizing the themes emerging from

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the process does not give full expression to the dimensionality or dynamicity of the rhizome - that is, the complex trajectory of lives lived within through and around the societal structures of education and human development. This lens permits me to introduce the concept of the map – a representation of relationships with peoples and things that resonates.   Throughout the study, therefore, I see myself as a becoming-cartographer as I attempt to navigate away from a desire to stay with tradition and define themes as the narratives of the participants unfold. I want instead to move towards a sense of the present resonance in the cartographs of their lived experience. I experience this as the same tension between the Western cartographer and the Rastaman in Kei Miller's 'The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion' (Miller, 2014) and I draw on this poem in order to reflect on my journey:

Give him time and he will learn the strange

ways and names of this island: […]

as well, the cartographer will know places named

after places – how this island spreads out as a palimpsest of maps: […]

they say – all of here is Babylon.

(Miller, 2014, p. 25)

In Miller's poem, the cartographer – the Western scientist possessed of an understanding of the elements of topography, permanence and impermanence, and the Rastaman - with local, spiritual and emotional understanding, view maps from very different perspectives. Their individual perception of the land and the concept of

map-making are in conflict. The Rastaman understands the socio-cultural context of the land; the Cartographer's understanding is at a much-reduced level of dimensionality. Miller contrasts the narrow perspective of the Western driven Cartographer with the situated understanding of the Rastaman in an explicit invitation to the reader to conceptualise 'mapping' for themselves.

Miller's perspective extrapolates each to a binary position, however, I position my thinking in this thesis as Deleuzean. Deleuze viewed a map as a work of art, an exploration of new territory – a bridge between binary positions – here, those of the Cartographer and the Rastaman - into something more dimensional that intertwines the serendipitous and spontaneous. A map is an event. Conley refers to a 'common and even pervasive cartographic imperative' in contemporary theoretical approaches (Conley, 2024). My imperative is to examine the narratives as a field of complex interactions and represent this.

Mapping from a Deleuzean perspective is at once 'the act of charting out a pathway and the opening of that pathway to the event of the chance encounter' (Kaufman, 1998, p. 6). A pathway is not linear, but rhizomatic – lines of flight take its trajectory in other, unexpected, directions. Deleuzean mapping, the rewriting of the inherited, investing form with movement (Conley, 1998), must therefore include the idea of the chance encounter – the 'haecceity, a 'pure' event that 'consists entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules and particles, capacities to affect and be affected' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 261). I observe the flow of affect here in the intensities expressed in personal stories that produce (and have produced) identities – this is 'haecceity'. Boundas defines it thus as 'a degree of intensity that brings about individuals' (Boundas, 2012). For Deleuze & Guattari this is not the 'non-

qualitative properties for individuation' (Zhang, 2022, p. 275) – the 'thisness' of things, but the articulation of a more fluid self (Kuby, et al., 2015). Mapping is about articulating this fluidity through tracing the connections of a particular trajectory to other trajectories; the ways in which this path opens up to other paths, here, the individual develops as a process of encounter with things: 'We are tentative factors in series of passive and active interactions and transformations extending forward and back in time' (Williams, 2013, p. ix).

Deleuze and Guattari describe mapping stories or narratives as generative, transformational in seeking out possibilities and potential for the emergence of innovation and creation; it is diagrammatic and machinic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 146), it charts a rhizome, rather than describing a pattern of hierarchical elements. In other words, Deleuze and Guattari posit a different way of mapping that aligns with reality, rather than reducing it:

> 'Such an alternative system of mapping would not simplify, reduce and
> explain, but rather complicate, expand and question'. (Kaufman,
> 1998, p. 3)

Returning to Miller's poem, from the perspective of the Rastaman, it is impossible to see a geographical feature without its social, historic and affective context. A tree is not just a tree – it's a narrative sequence of events wired into the fabric of existence – not just of itself, but everything else - anything that has a relationship with it. This is rhizomatic; the connections are multiple and diverse, non-hierarchical paths, open again to Kaufman's 'chance encounter' (Kaufman, 1998, p. 3). Charteris et al

suggest that 'we are not applying haecceity, we are living it' (Charteris, Crinall, Etheredge, Honan, & Koro- Ljungberg, 2020, p. 572),

The participants' stories at the core of this work are rich and complex. I would argue, as becoming cartographer, that they align more with the Rastaman's literacy of his land, rather than with the merely topographical, and therefore reduced, focus of the Western cartographer. Throughout this thesis, I use Miller's poem to open possibilities for discussion and challenge my own perspective as a not-yet cartographer; exploring ownership of the participants' stories and entry into their lived experience.

Entering the participant narratives with the complexities of my own lived experience, I form and re-form the map at the intersections I perceive. I seek' not to copy, but to become, in negotiating the inherent contradictions of the tension between Cartographer and Rastaman that I perceive in my capacity to map, as I carry the Western tradition within me. This poem embodies the battle between the signifier, the signified and the interpreter of signs. In this way, my study becomes a processual semiotics of experience, seeking to explore the process of becoming sign: the act of creating a sign on the cartograph and the issue of that sign's relation to time, more specifically the notion that past and future converge on the node that is the present.

Reflecting deeply on my own and my family's story and the way in which I hold these now has led me to identify foundational ideas that have significantly informed my approach to the study. These will be discussed and expanded in chapter 2, the literature review. I state my position in Deleuzean terms in the poem below.

I am in the fold between exteriority and interiority

I am in the interstices of the truth game and lived experience

I must be the conduit for individual voices that have not been heard before

Their truth must be channelled through my truth

I am the instrument through which their song is sounded

JdeV, 2023

Chapter 2: The terrain: literature review

'On how we mistook the map for the territory, and re-imprisoned

ourselves in an unbearable wrongness of being…'

'Sylvia Winter's most cryptic essay' as quoted in (Miller, 2014, p. 34)

2.1 Introduction

This literature review provides a context for the pertinent themes of this study

through a range of theoretical writing and philosophical positioning. Throughout, I lay

out the territory that I later map. The first section explores a framework for thinking

with the narratives; including the Deleuzean lens through which the social (in)justices

experienced in the narratives are examined. The second section develops this

framework further through a discussion of the socio-economic context in which

education is situated, foregrounding concepts of social (in)justice endemic to such

capitalist systems – desiring machines that code human interaction therein, including

aspects of relational pedagogy and the flow of affect. The third, in order to address

the emergent research questions, discusses the edusemiotic approach underpinning

the creation of the cartographs and graphic scores that constitute the analysis and

presentation of the findings.

2.2 Section 1: an outline of Deleuzean concepts informing this project

In this section, as becoming-cartographer I set the scene by exploring the societal

topography of education and identify the field of research into school and learning

failure through a Deleuzean lens. Arguing that there is a paucity of qualitative

research in this area, I maintain that we ignore the complexities of the nuances

embodied in narratives of failure and success at our peril. I begin by exploring

Deleuzean terminology as used in this thesis, explaining terms and their relevance to

this work.

Deleuzean constructs are woven into the sense-making of my becoming-

cartographer, each thread contributes to my broad understanding of the complexities

of the study. When woven together, these guide the development of my own thinking

and form the basis of this research. I draw these constructs into two initial groupings,

expanded into the four assemblages developed in chapter 5 (the discussion). I

articulate and in so doing rationalise for myself the following fundamental ideas as

foundational to my thesis, illustrated in the following vignettes. I expand on this in

chapter 3 with explorations of Sir Grayson Perry's conceptualisations of self-

mapping.

2.2.1.1 Assemblages, desiring machines and the capitalist impulse behind education as we know it

The concept of the assemblage, central to Deleuzean thought, is that nothing exists

as a non contextualised element. 'An assemblage is a becoming that brings

elements together.' (Macgregor Wise, 2011, p. 91) Deleuze uses the word

'becoming' rather than 'being' to indicate that an assemblage is dynamic – it

assembles and re-assembles itself according to context. These contexts are multi-

dimensional – the key concept is the relationship that brings the elements together.

An assemblage therefore takes on an identity that is more than the sum of its parts,

as its constituent elements exist in a dynamic flux.

Assemblages (or 'agencements' in French) seem to me to have something of the phenomenological about them, in that they are everywhere, and everything is an assemblage. For Deleuze, they are sometimes specified as 'social machines' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 1): these are dynamic groupings that provide a flexible framework for understanding the fluidity, connectivity and potential for transformation within societies. These machines are 'real' in that they are products of the psyche – unconscious forces that interact physically with one another (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 1) driving and being driven. Digging deeper, they imply that these machines are involved in the production of social phenomena, norms and practices and incorporate flows of desire into the organisation and regulation of societies at the macro level.

Desire is therefore an immanent dynamic force that flows with a constant increase in intensity: as 'desire produces reality' (Holland, 2011, p. 56), it then becomes a force that shapes collective behaviours. From this perspective, flows of desire become coded by the prevailing social order in order to carry specific intentions. These flows decode, because the effect they have is to reduce humans into organisms functioning in specific ways. Because desire is not absolutely located in the psyche, but is a force harnessed by governing ideologies, Deleuze and Guattari devise the term 'desiring machine' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, Holland, 2011, p. 64, Holland, 1999, p. 3).

The capitalist desiring machine becomes a mechanism that contributes to and helps to maintain and reproduce the consumption model, itself a complex sociopsychological apparatus that captures and redirects desire. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that there is a difference between the capitalist-embedded machine

and other social machines, since as Holland points out, capitalism provides 'no stable codes capable of governing the whole social field' (Holland, 1999, p. 69). Instead, they critique what they see as de- territorialising existing structures, leading to a breakdown in traditional forms of identity and subjectivity, causing a type of schizophrenia in individuals whose desires and subjectivities are fragmented under its influence. This politically- oriented philosophical positionality suggests that where the balance of tension in education tilts towards the capitalist, it becomes very difficult to create spaces for freedom or relational development that are not defined by monetary values (Holland, 1999, p. 113) and restricts the process of development. I shall develop this further in the second section.

2.2.1.2 Relevance of the assemblage and desiring machine in this study

My study re-presents the desiring machines in the lived experience of education of the participants. Here the participants, move across the terrain of schooling, learning, teaching. They are multiplicities, each one a complex and changing re-formulation of identity, in themselves following escape routes from the fixed and limiting power structures that oppress them. The desiring machine, as a force that I claim codes and recodes social justice in education, is at the heart of this oppression. The power structures of the State may be abstract (perceptual/ relational) or concrete (resources/ lack).

2.2.1.3 Rhizome, becoming and desire

Deleuze and Guattari developed the concept of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 242) as a philosophical model and metaphor that challenges more traditional ways of thinking about knowledge, society and culture (existence, in other

words). They describe previous models of knowledge as hierarchical and creating hierarchy, tree-like structures that start from a single point and branch out into ever higher disciplines or categories. By contrast, the rhizome spreads horizontally and has the capacity to sprout new shoots at any time and any point, in multiple directions and dimensions. The rhizome is more than this however. It is a thought experiment that enables everything to connect (Stivale, 1984), as, as well as its horizontal expression, nothing remains static:

> 'Each rhizomatic root may take off in its own singular direction and make its own connections with other roots, with worms, insects, rocks, or whatever, forming a dynamic composition…'(Sotirin, 2011, p. 118)

A rhizome can break, but will start growing from any other point – there is no single origin point, and there is no originating authority – it is not linear in nature. If I want to trace the rhizomatic experience of the participants, I re- present it in creating a written text – in making marks on paper, I produce a map. The rhizome is fundamental to writing, because 'writing isn't to do with signifying, but with surveying, mapping – even of worlds yet to come' (Stivale, 1984, p. 22). The concept of map making here exists as a necessity – it is 'an underlying principle of the rhizomatic system…' (Stivale, 1984, p. 22).

This idea has many advantages – at any point, a rhizome can connect to anything - the process of growth and connection is unceasing. This is the idea of multiplicity and is fundamental to the concept of 'becoming'.

May (2003) suggests that Deleuze's positive ontology of 'becoming' opens up new pathways down which thinking and living can travel, as with it we should 'be able to see and to live in a fresh way' (May, 2003, p. 142), moving us away from the logical and moralistic terms of describing 'being', and pursuing a 'radical affirmation of possibility' (Sotirin, 2011, p. 117). The rhizome provides a way of conceptualising such moves that not only values flexibility, diversity and multiplicity, but makes them traceable through a person's narrative; not a top- down imposition, but a fluid, grassroots, decentralised and non-hierarchical pattern – arguably reproducible and fundamental to creating a cartography of lived experience:

> 'Becoming moves beyond our need to know […], beyond our desire to
> control […] and beyond our desire to consume/ control […]'
> (Sotirin, 2011, p. 116)

The line of flight is a fundamental part of the rhizome. Lines of flight emphasise the ongoing process of change – wherever there is a rhizome there will be a shoot that breaks away, non-linear in nature and unpredictable. Lines of flight break free from any predefined or restricting framework – they reinforce the concept that reality is multiple and that different ways of understanding can co- exist. A line of flight allows the emergence of something new; it does not need to occur speedily but can meander and give rise to further lines of flight:

> 'I would say for my part that a society, a social field, […] first of all flees
> in every direction; it is lines of flight that are primary (even if
> primary is not chronological). Far from lying outside the social field

or emerging with it, lines of flight constitute its rhizome of cartography'.(Deleuze, 2016 p. 226)

Accepting that lines of flight constitute the assemblages of ordinary life (Stewart, 2005, p. 1028) and using this concept to examine the identities of the participants within the social fields that their narratives portray, provides impetus for movement for me, as 'becoming cartographer' to find and analyse the breakaway places of the narratives: 'The line of flight creates the new. It draws maps.' (Adkins, 2015, p. 126) and the layering and laying down of lived experience as they form the intensities of the terrain of identity:

> It follows leads, sidesteps, and delays, and it piles things up, creating layers on layers, in an effort to drag things into view, to follow trajec- tories in motion, and to scope out the shape and shadows and traces of assemblage…' (Stewart, 2005, p. 1028)

I take identity, therefore, to be both rhizome and assemblage. Some consider identity to be the answer to the question 'who are you?' (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011, p. 3) and is taken to comprise a negotiated set of meanings defining an individual's role in and membership of a society, and at the same time an individual with particular unique traits (Stets & Serpe, 2013, p. 31).

Watson moves towards a more fluid definition: identity is 'an ongoing and performative process in which individuals drawn on diverse resources to construct selves' (Watson, 2006, p. 509) . I take identity therefore to mean a concept of the self in flux according to contextual influence – a 'becoming' and a fundamental stratum of the cartograph.

This line of thinking aligns with Deleuze' explanation of his own positionality:

> 'We weren't looking for origins, even lost or deleted ones, but setting
>
> out to catch things where they were at work, in the middle.'
>
> (Deleuze., 1995, p. 86)

In other words, I conceptualise Identity as assemblage, constituting and constituted by the terrain from which it is inseparable. My study does not attempt to examine the sources of the elements of assemblages, or separate out the discrete parts, but instead uncovers, for the purpose of understanding, what they achieve together:

> 'What matters is whether it works, and how it works, and who it works
>
> for' (Deleuze., 1995, p. 22)

I therefore seek to uncover not only how things - institutions, organisations, bodies and practices have 'worked' in the lived experience of the participants in this study, but also the ways in which their interactions and connections with these have 'made and unmade each other' (Macgregor Wise, 2011, p. 100).

Signs and signifiers appear in the participant narratives, as objects or happenings – these may have been temporally bound, but their resonances are felt throughout the present and reach into the future. This phenomenon is in accordance with Deleuze's notion of 'event' – a chair, a garden, a collision with a bus – all these may appear in one sense as chronologically limited (the collision), or chronologically the same over a period of time. If, however, items such as these are considered as 'events' rather than fixed objects, they may each be seen as a multiple process: 'a chair, anything

whatsoever, is an event as the harmony of multiple processes of becoming' (Williams, 2011, p. 83).

These ideas enable me to actively explore the situatedness of the narratives collected, and the meaning made from the connectedness of the narrator with the dimensionality - social, institutional and geographical – of their environments and the impetus behind their choices and reactions. I discuss these in relation to edusemiotics and the cartograph in section 2.

I argue therefore, that the motivation of the participants in this study as told in their narratives may be considered as a function of desire, an event, rather than a discrete element. In the uncovering of the learning rhizome that this study proposes, some might argue that the element of motivation might be parsed from the assemblage of the self in order to better understand negative lived experience in a person's learning trajectory. However, if the self may be considered as rhizomatic, a dynamic assemblage constantly shaped by encounters, experiences and interactions moving between interiority and exteriority in an unceasing process of becoming, it becomes almost impossible to consider motivation as reified, reducible and measurable. From a Deleuzean perspective, motivation is not only a personal, internal phenomenon but is also shaped by external social, cultural, and political factors. As society and culture are composed of various flows (of desire, power, knowledge, etc.) and structures that attempt to channel these flows, changes in the terrain occur when these flows break out of the structured channels.

Motivation, in this context, can be seen as a strand in the force of desire, a rhizome within a rhizome (as no rhizome stands alone). It either complies with these

structures or breaks away from them, seeking new paths or forms of expression in lines of flight. Rather than striving for a fixed goal or state, then, motivation might be seen as a continual process of becoming, evolving, and transforming, entwined in the flow of desire. This perspective suggests a complex view of motivation that encompasses both individual desires and their interaction with the external world.

2.2.1.4 Affect, the flow and the fold

The plane of affect is the terrain from which the cartographies emerge, and yet it too is dynamic – it has more in keeping with a river than the more solid state of the ground. As such, it may also be described as a rhizome. Thinking with Deleuze, affect may be described as the intensity of an event (Edbauer, 2004) – a place where the person registers sensation, or where, using the analogy of water, the rhizome pools for an instant before moving on.

Affect is sensation but it occurs in the fold – that is, there is an exteriority and an interiority at play, because it is relational Deleuze and Guattari explain:

> 'affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic, it is the
>
> effectuation of the power of the pack that throws the self into
>
> upheaval and makes it reel.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 240).

A body exists in transition, reacting to other bodies with which it comes into contact in greater or lesser degrees of intensity. This happens in various dimensions of being – Edbauer refers to the heart-mind, the cognitive and the skin's potential for experiencing the disruption of the affective: 'while we cognitively prefer linearity and

indexicality of the event, the skin is intensified and potentialized by disruption. The body is struck by the event's suspension of linearity'. (Edbauer, 2004, p. 22)

Affective encounter breaks down the boundaries of exteriority and interiority to reach a point of pre-differentiation – we become 'permeable' and involved, both inside and out. Massumi refers to a visceral sensibility that is 'a rupture in the stimulus response paths – the perception of suspense' something that happens before the cognitive process. This is a form of thinking. (Massumi, 2021, p. 60).

I use this example to show how affect is conceptualised as more than feeling. It is the mechanism by which we encounter the physical and the abstract. It causes disruption and as such is an enabling force that provides the impetus for the propulsion of a line of flight and consequently the development of the rhizome. Affect is foundational to becoming because in its flow we are never static, we are in a state of 'becoming'.

The affective is therefore the movement across, and the moulding of the terrain. This is rhizomatic as its dynamic force does not render the individuals distinct from their context. Affect has no beginning or end, it is simply present. In the lived experience of the participants, affect is both the shape of their narratives and the shaping. My aim in this study is to make visible this shaping through tracing their development; as 'becoming-cartographer'. In the exercise of charting, I uncover and re-present their stories. I draw comparisons between assemblages – the joining together of two or more events, experiences or intentions where the nature of the assemblage is dynamic and subject to change; where lines of flight might occur as something sparks movement, but in a nonlinear, rhizomatic trajectory. As the 'becoming-

cartographer', I enter an assemblage, I become part of its enactment, and it enacts me. I focus on this enactment as I examine the issue of ownership and making of signs through the movement from narrative data to transcript to I-poem to cartograph. Rhizomatic progression occurs where it is not necessary for the signs contained in each iteration to be examined in any particular order.

This process is the Deleuzean 'becoming: for Deleuze, both ontologically and epistemologically, everything is constantly moving and changing. Reality is interconnected and dynamic: everything connects, moves, and reconnects. He describes this movement as 'flux' or 'flow'. Within the flow, there exists the 'fold'. This is a way to think through the relationship between the external world and individual subjectivity. Existence is intricate and constantly evolving – everything fold, unfolds and refolds. The fold encompasses the complexity of existence, allowing it to unfold – but at the same time allowing for folds within folds both masking and uncovering greater depths and potentialities. Like the Mobius strip, the fold has an interior and exterior surface (at least) – 'a topology is created by which inner and outer spaces are in contact with each other' (Conley, 2011, p. 196).

2.3 Section 2

2.3.1 Today's educational context

I now explore the background to the educational context in which the participants' lived experience has taken place, and view this through the Deleuzean lens as outlined above.

Biesta (2009) in his discussion of the quality standards imposed on education argues that the inflexibility inherent in the structures of current educational systems inhibits their desired function, and that systems put in place to achieve more, finish up by stagnating the process they set out to stimulate. Such a perspective aligns with Deleuzean thinking on the capitalist desiring machine and its effects. I discuss the concept of desiring machines in relation to capitalism and education here as a lens to examine how human desires are shaped, manipulated, and utilized within these systems, highlighting the deep interconnections between psychological processes, social structures, and educational practices.

Examining how educational systems are influenced by, and contribute to, the capitalist desiring machine, provides background to the narrated lived experience of the participants in this study. I examine how they have struggled, through the rhizomatic progression of their learning journeys, constantly redefining and reinventing themselves, resisting centralisation and conformity – until the point at which they enter the power structure of academe.

I show how the participants aim to embrace diversity and change, but from within the 'fold'. This is not as contradictory as it may seem, nor is it hypocritical. Acknowledging that Deleuze explains this as a relationship between desire and investment - a 'revolutionary investment of interest', may explain why, in the struggle to make education accessible to all, a particular group with such an investment of interest are now 'reform oriented' on the level of desire. I bring the interiority of their stories into an exteriority where they can be experienced by the teaching profession, through the medium of the cartograph.

2.3.2 The Western, systemic nature of formal education models

Following Western approaches to curricula, young people enter a formal education, referred to by many researchers as a 'factory' system (Callahan, 1962, Schlechty & Joslin, 1984, Beare, 2001, p. 31, Biesta, 2019). Developing this concept, due to marketisation in contemporary times, Bottery also describes education as a commodity, where success is measurable by only certain criteria (Beare, 2001, p. 35, Bottery, 2006). The imbalance in power of these approaches is described as injustice in the way it positions the individual as consumer, rather than fostering positive engagement with the diversity present in her. Deleuze, in conversation with Foucault, acknowledges this:

> 'Children are submitted to an infantilisation that is alien to them. On this basis, it is undeniable that schools resemble prisons and that factories are its closest approximation'. (Foucault, 1977, p. 210).

These criticisms, the 'linearity' and 'inflexibility' of the system highlight the conflict between the desire of the child with the desire of the State, forcing creativity-limiting, rigid structures on individual development. As a consequence of this rigidity, learning is reduced to static elements defeating its stated purpose:

> 'Learning, therefore, is rooted in the Newtonian scientific paradigm of analysis through dissection, so that the parts can be isolated and understood. […] It is an individualistic process that proceeds in a linear way through analysis and the construction of generalizations based on empirical evidence. It inhibits the development of the very creativity, imaginative thinking and entrepreneurship that is often

required to sustain economic development.'

(Bell, 2020, p. 33)

Bell's discussion demonstrates the utilitarian impetuses driving educational processes at the present time and aligns with Biesta's perspective (Biesta, 2019) on the imbalance present in what is expected of education and how education is achieved. Both recognise intense competition in the 21st century, a time of economic globalisation, for societies to ensure competitive advantage through investment in their human resources. The role of education here is key, not just in terms of the subject disciplines to be learned, but in the more abstract behavioural attitudes to learning and earning, for example, students' acceptance of authority, that may influence successful economic growth (Bell, 2020). However, educational policy, driven by these imperatives and itself the product of a 'messy' generative process (Bottery, 2006), results in linear, top- down imposition on schooling. In organisational development, where the 'messiness' or rhizomatic nature of human nature is recognised, such linearity 'kills' (Burrell, 1997, p. 8).

According to Biesta, macro perspectives from societal structures create tension 'at the very heart of the modern school' (Biesta, 2019), between what society expects education to achieve in a performative sense, and the freedom from such demands necessary for individuals to develop. This tension, he suggests, has always existed, but is out of kilter now (Biesta, 2019) with far less emphasis on the freedom of space and time that children need in order to flourish. He posits that too much of a focus is now placed on what is achieved, where the value of education equates to an inflexible and narrow definition of quality, and that this quality is measurable only by rigid outcomes (Biesta, 2009).

The idea that society values what is being measured, rather than measuring what is valued illustrates a macro political move from the rhizomatic to the arboreal, in my view. It develops linear and hierarchical top-down models of schooling driven by the ideology of consumption – the desiring machine - that will continue to fail those individuals who cannot, for very good reasons, engage in ways prescribed. My study comprises a sample of such individuals.

Encouragingly, to my mind, it seems that all student perceptions and expectations of learning may not resonate with such consumption-driven approaches. Bunce et al (2017) found that higher education students who regarded their education solely as a commodity (i.e. took a consumer-led approach to their studies) experienced a lower level of academic success than those who had a more holistic view of their individual development and the life-long value of learning. Interestingly, expectations do seem to matter, not just from the students, but the teachers – there is some evidence to show that attainment can be influenced by higher teacher expectations (Good, 2018). This may be a further indication of the tension (Biesta, 2019) between the regulated space of the impetus towards measurement, and the less regulated, freer space of relationship – perhaps a deeper reflection on relationship might provide the needed counter-balance.

Within this context, I see the presence of the Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts of the desiring machine of capitalism. This machine has coded state expectations of education and thereby focused attention on too narraow a definition of national economic benefit, rather than individual socio-economic benefit.

Returning to my own study, I focus on eight people from two continents who had had a negative experience of secondary education. I deliberately left the choice and definition of these experiences to them, because my aim was to allow their (previously unheard) voices to speak and their deeply personal stories to be brought into the open. Some of the definitions surprised me. I take this as a challenge to myself (and hopefully the teaching profession), in that the ways in which assumptions take form in me were confronted and made explicit. Unhelpful assumptions made by the teachers with whom the participants came into contact reveal a 'focus pull' element, where seeing something close up – a child's perspective - and seeing something from a more distant position – an adult's appraisal of a particular situation or context - were identified. Although this research involves participants from European and African contexts, their educational experience was based on systems designed on Western principles.

Recognised globally as Western in design, education as a thing is (Nordtveidt, 2010, Ong, 2016) in Deleuzean terms a desiring machine within that of capitalism to maintain the dominant ideologies within which we live. In its interiority however, it's possible to uncover possibility and capacity for enabling a 'good life' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 75), but these still exist within the restrictions of capitalism – we find ourselves (again) in the fold. This illustrates the Deleuzean capacity to live with the paradox of the desiring machine of capitalism closing down a system, yet permitting those on the inside to live a good life provided certain conditions are met. The desiring machine impacts the social – it prejudices and excludes certain groups who may not align with the values of the dominant ideology; affect accompanies this impact.

Many researchers study socio-economic circumstance in education, e.g.: Armstrong, 2010, Welsh, 2010; marginalisation because of race, gender or religion (Jacoby-Senghor, 2016, Iruka, 2022); and the lack of capacity resulting from these as reasons for educational failure. Prejudice, exclusion and resources and their lack, whether deliberate or not, zoom from macro to micro in processes of intersectionality (Hill Collins, 2023). These are difficult to disentangle and perhaps should not be – each instance is, at the individual level, an assemblage created as a knot of complex circumstances in the lived experience of one person. I look at social justice and educational failure and success as assemblages, considering as fundamental to the context of the participants their definitions of these terms.

The relationship of lived negative experience in education to learning failure is a multiplicity whose strands I aim to tease out. 'Learning failure' itself is just as complex an assemblage – here of mechanisms of disengagement with formal measurement during education, usually with dramatic consequences for the adolescent-in-question's immediate future role in society. Much research examines the reasons for this and its consequences (Cannon & Compton, 1980, Reiff, 1998, Bersani & Chappie, 2007). I explore and illustrate how negative experience might present as a complex assemblage in the participants' narratives and its relationship with alleged failure through the cartographic medium.

This study also examines possible reasons why, in the face of the intersectionality, i.e. a multiplicity or assemblage of complex interactions between forms of justice and injustice encountered in the lived experience of the participants, academic success was achieved. Academic success is a contested term (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006, York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015). Here I use it not to examine the

precise results obtained by the participants, but as a means of articulating their acceptance into the academic community as professionals in education. The definition is necessarily narrow as I explore their entrance into and employment in the sector as well as the factors pulling them in.

2.3.3 The rhizomatic progression of the enactment and development of identity in the classroom -

'The true test of intelligence is not how much we know how to do, but

how we behave when we don't know what to do'

(Holt, 1982, p. 271)

Holt states that no-body 'starts off stupid' (Holt, 1982, p. 272) tacitly agreeing with Deleuze' concept of children's resistance to their 'infantilisation' (ibid, above) by the educational system. Something therefore happens during a person's learning trajectory, alongside the demands of the desiring machine and the inflexibility of the system. Answers may lie in examining the complex assemblage that is a person's identity. Some theorists suggest that academic success may lie in character traits rather than intelligence (Lounsbury, Sundstrom, & Loveland, 2003, Hazrati-Viari, Tayarani Rad, & Torabi, 2012, Sorić, Penezić, & Burić, 2017), and that providing a safe and encouraging developmental environment may be fundamental to the implicit acquisition of these traits, namely perseverance, curiosity, self-control and 'grit' (Tough, 2016). However, despite recognition that many of the influences on identity development in young people occur outside the classroom (Spencer, 1999, Kiang, Malin, & Sandoz, 2020), the fluidity and 'becomingness' of identity are still approached with a focus on the precise specification of elements, rather than the

dynamism of assemblages. This is perhaps because the processes through which personality, the enactment of identity, change and develop over time (Hoff, 2021) are not as yet well understood (Costa, 2019).

Viewing identity traits as complex, situated *assemblages* within individuals rather than discrete, externally measurable, elements might provide a clearer overview of how the processes leading to success and access to academe are entwined. The presence or absence of the Big Five personality traits (Mammadov, 2022): openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism as 'relatively stable patterns of cognitions, beliefs and behaviours' (Mammadov, 2022) - do appear to influence achievement in any number of areas from child to adulthood, including academic and vocational education (Niessen, 2020).

My initial idea was to investigate these traits, but I realized that tracking, extracting and reducing these to traceable patterns would not reflect the complexity of the lived experience narrated to me. In this study,therefore, I attempt to portray them through a Deleuzean lens focused on social justice. They become lines of flight from the haecceities of negative experience and are re-presented through the cartographic imperative as rhizomes:

> 'The line of flight marks: […] the possibility and necessity of flattening
> all of the multiplicities on a single plane of consistency or
> exteriority, regardless of their number of dimensions.'
> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, pp. 9-10)

Avoiding a linear image, then, of the learning identity as a list of elements, I take identity traits as assemblages, opening them up to view them as processes rather

than monads. I therefore explore each as a multiplicity, a group of connections that come together at a specific time and specific place and produce a particular effect. These 'agencements' (Macgregor Wise, 2011, p. 91), translated as assemblages, are dynamic series of lines, woven as part of the living fabric of someone's lived experience. I examine them in situ while recognising their dynamicity. Macgregor Wise states that the assemblage does not exist as a counter-measure to modernist conceptions of structure, so this is not an attempt to polarise form and process. Instead the assemblage of identity is intimately related to the event, the haecceity, in which it is present (Macgregor Wise, 2011, p. 101).

Success and failure, then, may be re-presented as assemblages responsive to the competing flows of desire represented in the further assemblages of intersectionality experienced by an individual. They are external values - imposed by an exteriority that melt into the interiority of the identity of the individual. The question is not so much why some individuals failed initially to engage professionally in a flawed system, but the way in which these concepts play out in their lives and the traceable residue traceable in their lives.

Meaning-making from lived experience of success and failure within specific contexts is discussed later.

As becoming cartographer, I view the learning identity as striated, contested space in the interiorities of the participants in this study. I take their narratives and unveil their identities, bringing the interior into the exterior.

2.4 Section 3: Social justice in this research

I now move on to discuss social justice as foundational to this study, exploring Deleuzean concepts around power, the individual and the capitalist desiring machine. I then move into a discussion of edusemiotics and the portrayal of the lived experience as cartographs.

Social justice – its absence, presence and the co-existence of seemingly contradictory issues – are foregrounded in this study. The participants in this study overcame their negative experience and have entered academe as professionals. Their trajectories present in many widely differing ways; I attempt to map their pathways through the challenges they faced by identifying and re- presenting their lived experience through the Deleuzean lenses of power, affect and desire. I look for the tensions, manifesting themselves in physical, cognitive and affective issues of access to learning and progress through learning, in the participants' specific socio-economic and spatial contexts.

Although Deleuze does not directly address the issue of capitalism in education, the idea of capitalism as a system (desiring machine) that channels and manipulates desires is entwined in the way education under capitalism often shapes desires towards consumerism, competition, and conformity. A Deleuzean perspective encourages critiques of the impact of educational institutions that perpetuate capitalist values through traditional education norms. The Deleuzean rhizomatic approach suggests a form of learning that is non- hierarchical, interconnected, and open-ended, in contrast to the rigid, top-down structures often found in traditional educational settings. This approach could support alternative inclusive, collaborative,

and diverse educational practices that align with social justice principles by challenging the conventional power dynamics and content structures in education that restrict, rather than liberate, the individual. Viewing individual learning paths as 'assemblages' (diverse, fluid and constantly changing ensembles) aligns with social justice by recognising and valuing diverse learner experiences and backgrounds, challenging the 'one size fits all' educational models, that despite their rhetoric to the contrary, are perpetuated by the capitalist desiring machine. A lateral approach rather than a direct confrontation is perhaps more likely to communicate the intensities of these challenges, but is fraught with complexity:

> 'We must set up lateral affiliations and an entire system of networks and popular bases; and this is especially difficult.'
>
> Deleuze, in conversation with Foucault (Foucault, 1977, p. 208)

Deleuze expresses a need here for a more rhizomatic and less arboreal move against the unity of forms of repression and the totality of power. He explains elsewhere that the dominant power structures channel desire in such a way that they allow only one flow of it to rise to collective awareness – this expression of desire becomes the only legitimate one (Coles, 2018). In my understanding of this, education has become subject to the same conditions. In my study, I aim to use concepts of social justice to map the meaning-making of the participants of their educational trajectories, demonstrating their lived experience of justices.

Social justice in education is a difficult concept to define precisely (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006, North, 2006, Pijanowski & Brady). Niewenhuis suggests that as much of the discourse around social justice in education has ignored

contextual factors, its importance has been diminished (Niewenhuis, 2010). It is further problematised by confusion among policy makers driven by imprecise definitions and a lack of clear vision of what is to be achieved (Francis, Mills, & Lupton, 2017). This study, diffracting social justice in education through a Deleuzean lens, regards social justice issues as a series of tensions present in education, rather than discrete stand-alone elements. Rather than looking at policies in different countries or institutions, I am interested in the impact of different manifestations of justice in situ on the ground, in the lives of the participants. Although so many scholars and governments are working towards changing the world for the better, and the United Nations represent one example of an international, if not global, focus on improving educational prospects for all (Sustainable Development Goals, 2017), sometimes the lived experience of ordinary people can be lost in grander narratives of the Utopian ideal (Niewenhuis, 2010).

Some researchers are beginning to consider that the affective, in terms of the empathic, is the best way forward to effect social change (Inckle, 2020, Landolfi, 2019). In this they are arguably looking beyond society's capacity to make judgements about what is and what is not socially just, and to hold a space open for innovation and creativity in law making:

> 'Creative, not internalised affectivity promotes social interactions and
> combinations that open spaces of productive satisfaction.'
> (Landolfi, 2019, pp. 547-8)

Here again is the conflict between exteriority and interiority. The affective exists in both. In Deleuzean thinking, learners wishing to move beyond into a space of

'productive satisfaction' are designated as 'nomads', wanderers with no fixed abode, and the State as a 'war machine' – fixed, impenetrable and focussed on linear imposition: 'We're rational, you're emotional – so shut up and do what we say' (Protevi, 2009, p. 3). I argue that the affective is not recognised within the system as an interiority, but is practised as an exteriority. The harshness of the pure plane of the institutional learning environment, the possession and absence of power, mitigate against a purely immanent understanding of the learnscape; people are forced into a pre-designated pathway and tension ensues These are the Deleuzean planes of consistency (immanence – self organising and emergent, open and evolving) and planes of organisation (the transcendent – the fixed and measurable trajectory) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 37) set against each other, where the plane of consistency re-presents the space of productive satisfaction in the here and now:

> '…learning is not a rationally deduced abstraction but a sensed, felt,
> perceived experiential reality of the here and now quality of a
> student's own 'creation' in the mode of her own choice…'
> (Semetsky, 2006, p. 100)

Learning, if immanent, i.e. taking place in and of the present, is:

> 'an emergent property of transactions between teachers, students and
> the subject matter, even in the absence of direct instruction and
> teaching as traditionally defined'
> (Semetsky, 2006, p. 99).

According to Semetsky, then, learning is founded on relationship and the affect within which it flows produces sensation. The flow of affect is present: experienced

in varying degrees of intensity by the body. The point of this type of learning is the space for human development, and the way in which this builds an individual's understanding of self, alongside subject learning:

> 'the immanent production of meanings includes not only the sense and
> worth of chemistry […] but first and foremost, the sense and worth
> of self'' (Semetsky, 2006, p. 100).

Semetsky suggests that 'failure' from this perspective would become impossible. This is not to say that different understandings could not converge on a 'correct' one that could be tested – e.g. the boiling point of water remains at 100 degrees centigrade, but there would be different conceptualisation of how we arrived at this understanding. The 'sense and worth of self', fundamental to learning, is that which is under attack in socially unjust practices.

Although an immanent perspective on education may seem an idealistic aspiration, in my view it is not necessary to be trapped by transcendentally-led thinking. The likelihood exists that this type of teaching happens alongside other more restrictive methods – and as far as the sense and worth of self is concerned, it seems that teachers make decisions, in the enactment of 'justice as mutuality' (Laing, 2019), to balance or trade off some types of social justice against others (Laing, 2019). This may occur because they wish to create a 'fair' environment for all within their school or may mean that they choose to disregard issues exterior to the school, brought in by the students. A just environment cannot exist as a singularity – the experience of injustice brought in from outside must affect the enactment of justice within the school. Teachers may have no control over factors outside the school and burn out

(Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), or because of their own belief systems, assume that they are capable of solving some of the ensuing issues by creating a 'just space' (Hornstra, Mansfield, Van Der Veen, Peetsma, & & Volman, 2015). It might be argued that this is the creation of a plane of organisation. Life 'works' with planes of immanence [consistency] and organisation that exist in dynamic complementarity (Aracagok, 2008).

Thinking with Deleuze, power is a network that operates socially rather than individually – so any designation of terms to do with social justice that I wish to use should ensure that these are relational rather than singularities. If I use the term 'social justice' then, in the previous-to-Deleuze Western way of thinking, then through a Deleuzean lens I have defined a boundary wherein everything is unjust. This is what happens in many critiques of social justice. I have no desire to be so judgemental. There is social injustice certainly, but if I look at this as a 'tension', an 'abstract machine', then I consider it contextually at a micro level, examining its relations and effects in the affective networks in which my participants operate. The effects of this are rhizomatic in their presentation – lines of flight that will lead across borders, geographical and personal. The image of weaving is strong in my mind – social justice is a multiplicity:

> A multiplicity is defined not by its elements, nor by a centre of
> unification or comprehension. It is defined by the number of
> dimensions it has; it is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a
> dimension without changing its nature.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987,
> p. 249)

In the lived experience of the participants in this study, I examine the assemblages that appear in their rhizomatic trajectories – the 'nodes' or 'tangles' (my words) in the weave of their stories. I examine these as immanent multiplicities, identifying the irruptions, lines of flight. For example, in a context of distributional injustice, there may be instances of justice; in a context of recognitional injustice, there may be an oasis of recognitional justice. The rhizomatic concept:

> 'affirm(s) what is excluded from western thought and re-introduce reality
>
> as dynamic, heterogeneous and non-dichotomous – they
>
> propagate, displace, join, circle back, fold.' (O'Riley, 2003, p. 27)

I examine the participants' meaning making, tracing the rhizomes of justice and identity as they are spoken, interpret these in signs, and transfer these onto cartographs in an attempt to communicate via a multisensory medium.

2.4.1 The relevance of Returners to Academe (RtAs)

Identity in terms of adult returners to education is discussed at length in the literature, whether it is focusing on the way adults learn (Anderson, Johnston, & McDonald, 2014), the achievement of academic success (Rozvadská, 2020) or the struggle to access Higher Education (HE) (Harrington, 2017) and balancing changing identities (Anderson & Johnston, 2017). For example, in the USA, the profile of a typical HE student has shifted from an 18-22 year-old student to a much more diverse population (Osam, Bergman, & Cumberland, 2017).

Although there is some evidence to suggest that these students have higher drop-out rates than the traditional model (Markle, 2015), the number of adult returners is

still increasing. In the UK there is considerable help and competition among institutions for adult returners. Questions of social justice are at the heart of some of this research (Waller, Bovill, & Pitt, 2011, Callender, 2011) as socio-economic status, various forms of capital and expectations of life as well as perceptions of learning are examined (Osam, Bergman, & Cumberland, 2017). In their examination of the attitudes to school of mature age male students in HE, Laming et al (2019) identify low teacher expectations and the performance of class-and-community-defined masculine identities as fundamental to the lack of value attributed to education by this group (Laming, Morris, & Martin-Lynch, 2019). Although these findings acknowledge the complexity of the issues relating to educational engagement, they are not presented in such way as to provoke the teaching profession in a non text based way, nor do the authors intend this.

My research takes this further step - probing the narratives of adult returners who continue into academe after negative experiences of education. These do not necessarily mean dropping out of the education system. I show that negative experiences are affective propellants fundamental to the rhizomatic identities as narrated of the participants. Examining these in this way may, it is hoped, expand understanding around access to HE and the diversification of staff profiles in the profession of academe.

I show the situatedness of lived experience as at the core of meaning- making. The narratives of the participants exist as an expression of their learning identities, formed in part by their experiences of forms of social justice and injustice. I divide the first iteration of the literature here into three sections: social (in)justice in lived experience; spatiality in learnscapes- the lived experience of where education takes

place; and the relevance of memory and temporality in the narration of lived experience.

2.4.1.1 Definition of social (in)justice

2.4.1.2 Social justice as defined by Gewirtz diffracted through a Deleuzean lens

As previously stated, it is widely recognised that 'social justice is an 'elusive and contested term' (Cuervo, 2012) (Fraser, 2009) (Young, 2004) (Francis, Mills, & Lupton, 2017), partly because of research foci on differing manifestations of injustice, such as race, gender etc. In her research, Gewirtz recognises the contextual elements of social justice, exploring it as a multiplicity in which certain dimensions of justice may work against, rather than for, other elements (Gewirtz, 2006). I take these dimensions and examine them as multiplicities in the lived experience of the participants, uncovering the layers of complexity in order to find meaning: 'The individual is a series of processes that connect actual things, thoughts and sensations to the pure intensities and ideas implied by them.' (Williams, 2013, p. 6) In my becomingness as cartographer, I exercise 'agential cuts' to these series that do not separate but reconfigure, re threading the new with the old (Barad, 2014, p. 168).

2.4.1.3 Diffracting Gewirtz through a Deleuzean lens

Gewirtz (Gewirtz, 2006) presents an analysis of the different manifestations of social justice appearing in the lived experience of a single mother. This experience and its contexts are entwined; the dynamicity and complexity of the factors affecting the enactment of social justice in practice may be considered from a Deleuzean

perspective a an infinite multiplicity. In my study, the lived experience of the participants is regarded as 'a thicker moment' (Barad, 2014) where, rather than focusing on one specific instance or example, confrontation or interaction with all forms of (in)justice threads its way through the narrative .

In her 2006 paper. Gewirtz posits three dimensions in which issues of social justice challenge her participant, Mrs Miles. These are a) distributive, b) representational and c) associational, but Gewirtz is aware that these exist I a dynamic multiplicity and are in many instances inseparable. In my research I recognise these areas in the lived experience of the participants, considering each as a tension, forming assemblages rather than existing independently of each other (Gewirtz, 2006, p. 74). I see them as nodes around which lived experience flows, knots and pauses in the rhizomatic trajectories of the participants, sparking lines of flight or directional impetus I define these concepts for myself below:

Distributive justice relates to the ways in which society treats all its members; what rights are apportioned, what opportunities are on offer, and what is expected in return. This is both material and rights-related; the participants in my study do not have equal access to the good of society we call education. I uncover the meaning they make from their experience of this 'good' as well as the reasons for its inaccessibility. I consider this form of justice as coded by the desiring machine to provoke or induce particular responses from differing contexts.

Recognitional justice refers to the experience of invisibility, of not having one'svoice heard, within a prevailing societal identity that projects itself only. Recognitional injustice is a lack of respect shown to a particular group, making it clear that it is

positioned as inferior within the dominant identity. The lived experience of the participants in my study reveals how they were challenged by this form of injustice. I uncover the effects of this on their trajectories and how they overcame. In Deleuzean terms the rhizome of the trajectory and the haecceities, the individualizing differences that flow from these challenges are RE-presented and re-PRESENTed in the cartographs.

Associational injustice occurs where active participation in life context related decisions is withheld from certain people, both individuals and groups. Decision making is taken out of their hands by the prevailing majority – this again is a function of the desiring machine that codes and re-codes society. The coding results again in invisibility – people are disregarded and their voices remain unheard, their potential agency is removed. The lived experience of the participants illustrates this, and demonstrates that socio-economic circumstances, similar across two continents, act as drivers. The desiring machine of capitalism is present as the stratum underpinning educational opportunity (or its lack) – it creates a plan of consistency where the injustices outlined behlnd into each other, boundaried only by the limis set by the machine.

My research takes an experience centred narrative approach, positioning the participants as 'privileged knowers' (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 152) rather than the researcher. This allows for the expression of individual internal representations of phenomena (Chandler, 2022, p. 272) as I wanted to gain insights into the nature and content of the rhizomatic trajectories of their educational experience.

Some research discusses the futility of working with individual experience - voices stating the state position claim that it aims for a uniformity of opportunity. Clark quotes the positionality of the New Zealand government to illustrate his point:

> 'The Government's objective, broadly expressed is that every person.,
> whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor,
> whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a
> free education of the kind for which he is best fitted, and to the
> fullest extent of his powers.'
> (Beeby 1992 in Clark, 2006 p124).

The problem here is the phrases: 'for which he is best fitted' and 'the fullest extent of his powers'. At this time, Clark does not define the criteria for these; a critique of power and voice determined by socio-economic privilege is absent. Policy for Clark must be devised and imposed, because it has to be. It is not possible for the people at grass roots level to have agency. This is understandable – policy-making is messy and its intentions usually aim to benefit rather than disadvantage, but arguing against the voice of the individual in such matters causes hierarchical patterns to reproduce. As discussed above, policy can frustrate the aims it sets out to achieve and this may be why. The elephant in the room remains the voices of those experiencing it at grass roots– however well intentioned in its attempts to take into consideration as many stake holders as possible, where too often, the multi-dimensionality of the individual is disregarded and their voice is not heard.

As I considered this, I sketched the 'weave' of a complex matrix or tartan, with the people embedded and boundaried by power lines that hold them within specific

spaces. To colour code these lines was too simplistic, but there is a sense in which individuals get lost in the weave – the nylon threads are harsh and unyielding. The rhizomes of the syuzhet (the way my participants organise the telling of their stories) and the fabula (the raw content of their narratives) glisten through these patterns.

I develop and articulate an affective understanding of the challenges my participants have needed to overcome at a personal level of the distributional, the associational and the recognitional dimensions (Gewirtz, 2006). I suggest that justices, coded by the desiring machine of society, are closely intertwined. I aim to show the complexity of this through images. If this approach achieves my aim of creating empathy via an artwork (here, my cartography), then I hope to influence praxis and even policy through multidimensional understanding.

In an earlier paper, Gewirtz describes relational justice as the 'practices and procedures which govern the organisation of political systems, economic and social institutions families and one to one social relationships' (Gewirtz, 1998, p. 475). I see recognitional and associational justices becoming reflexive under the relational umbrella: that is, it is not just the capacity for those in power to associate particular groups of people with particular qualities, usually inferior to themselves, but also the capacity of the people designated to reproduce these associations among themselves. This goes beyond the Bourdieuan sense of reproducing inequalities. These associations become forms (or strata) that 'solidify' through haecceity into identity; they create the structure that exists (the plane of organisation), even if they yearn for the pure plane of movement that allows for different interpretations: this is the tension between the plane of organisation and the plane of consistency. This is

the tension of subjectivity, the fold hovering between the interiority and exteriority of identity.

With Gewirtz, I conceptualise recognitional and associational justice as manifesting different tensions at the individual level of enactment (Gewirtz, 2006). Recognitional justice comes with as many possible challenges as benefits in the literature, where labelling, for example, may produce negative as well as positive effects - from 'othering' the person labelled or failing to implement inclusive practice (e.g. (Slee, 2012, Webster, 2014)), or, on the other hand, improved perceptions of teacher self-efficacy where needs are clearly articulated by such labels (Porta & Todd, 2023). Receiving a diagnosis, being 'statemented', having one's individual needs recognised, all these bring challenges in terms of distributional (the availability or not of required resources) and associational (being seen as a member of a particular group, disregarded by the dominant) justices. Deleuze was very aware of this:

> '… when people begin to speak and act on their own behalf, they do
> not oppose their representation (even its reversal) to another; they
> do not oppose a new representativity to the false representativity
> of power. I remember your saying that there is no popular justice
> against justice; the reckoning takes place on another level.'
> Deleuze in conversation with Foucault (Foucault, 1977, p. 208)

I return to the example of this ability to function only within the existing structures as presented in Gewirtz' paper: a single mother fighting for her child against the system, can only conceive of the system within which she exists. Mrs Miles states that if her circumstances were different, the system would treat her differently. Because of the

power structures present where she is, she cannot think outside them (Gewirtz, 2006, pp. 70-72). In this way, the children of a certain group (e.g. unemployed parents) may associate themselves with no need for education (as it has failed their parents), no hope (their parents have none) and no possibility for forward movement. In using 'forward movement', I mean engaging in an immanent process that will lead to betterment in the present. This is the critical element of the processual ontology in which I engage – a desire for change.

The hopeless boundary themselves and unsurprisingly lose trust in any state system to help them, because their experience shows them that it does not help those with whom they identify. It becomes very difficult to break through this boundary as although there is more to gain, there is also much to lose. Boundaries of identity entangled in value perceptions form planes of consistency present in the lives of my participants.

As a form of social emotional competence, defined as the development of inter and intro-personal skills for successful functioning as an individual and with others (Beauchamp & Andreson, 2010), associational injustice may perhaps present the greatest threat of the three forms discussed here, although each contributes to a complex assemblage. Associational injustice may occur at the classroom level, where teachers may associate particular children with particular lacks and wants – if acted upon negatively, such association may result in negative self-concept development in the child with consequences for a child's engagement with learning (Wentzel, 2016, p. 212).

The relational and relationship elements here are significant. This has been shown in research where teachers present judgmental tendencies to the detriment of the students, (Eberly, Joshi, & Konzal, 2007) and others where some teacher judgements appear to be accurate in terms of predicting their students' achievements (Kaufman, 2020)). However, teacher beliefs (whether they are aware of unconscious bias or fighting it) concerning their students' abilities may also influence these achievements (Rosenthal, 1968, Good, 2018).

Where this aspect of affect is present, so is evidence for a Deleuzean state of immanence.

Distributive or distributional justice may be easier to define in terms of availability of resources, but these are not necessarily purely monetary. It is not only teacher beliefs and consequent behaviour in recognitional and associational injustices that constitute tensions in the lived educational experience of my participants.

I consider the goods that society has to offer in terms of relationship. I examine how and what might a teacher give of themself in the classroom and, if this might be represented as a rhizome moving through all the stories, where it might permeate the stories of my participants. Different types of poverty are at issue – the most obvious, in distributional justice, is the socio-economic, but these are all tied into the recognitional and associational aspects of justice. My study is not about 'who has it the worst'. It's about looking at the tensions in the individual context of each participant. This is a reflection of the processual ontology in which this thesis is written – I 'attribute full reality to relations and becoming' (Renault, 2016, p. 20)

2.4.1.4 Relational pedagogies

School relationships are a major source of tension in the participant narratives, whether this is student to student, parent to child or teacher to student. This is perhaps unsurprising, but given the focus of the system and the desiring machine - it is all too easy to overlook human relationships in favour of a focus on achievement (Hinsdale, 2023). In the narratives here, both punishment for achieving and punishment for not achieving are in play. The basic humanity of the student is ignored when the content of the curriculum is placed at the centre – student accountability is emphasized, teachers have none. This study aims to reveal how such attitudes play out in the lived experience of the participants. .

Relational pedagogical approaches today recognize that 'children's positive development depends […] on whether the contexts in which they develop including schools are reliable sources of positive relationships' (Reeves, 2017, p. 87). This would indicate that not only has the affective domain been recognized in educational praxis, but that a whole school approach is considered appropriate. However, this domain is very much sited in the realm of pedagogy, usually associated with specific goals in student attainment of social and emotional development. Foci on competence implies the direct teaching of skills to help children collaborate in positive interaction in allegedly measurable outcomes (Le Mare, 2011), whereas a focus on relational approaches in this area foregrounds the interpersonal skills of adults. It is now recognized that the resulting positive relationships with students have a beneficial effect on their development – but what is not clear, however, is how this positivity might be encouraged in teachers (Reeves, 2017, p. 86). Reeves and LeMare attempt to qualify the qualities of genuine relationships by mentioning

attunement and listening to the expression of needs, but argue that these are skills

not easily transmitted in teacher education programmes (Reeves, 2017, p. 87) as

they are 'emergent and variable' (Reeves, 2017, p. 87). Thinking with Deleuze on

this issue, its complexity is immediately apparent. I would argue that the desiring

machine coding the education system immediately creates an 'us and them'

scenario. Overburdened and exhausted teachers may lose the capacity to solve

problems in the classroom that demand more of them emotionally than they can

give, but this defence of an 'othering' position is not enough to explain the teacher

behaviour experienced in the lived experiences of the participants in this study. The

problem of teacher behaviour is ill addressed in the literature. Reeves and LeMare

found that teachers needed to be made aware of the results of relational approaches

and supported in enacting them.

As 'becoming cartographer' I am looking at the geographical landscape and how

individuals have negotiated their way across this terrain, not by separating

themselves from it, but by fusing with it in a process of territorialization.. I engage in

'the search for a line of escape from what is deadening and toward a territory that is

enlivening' (Winslade, 2009, p. 344), an aim that Winslade states, is 'emblematic of

Deleuze' (Winslade, 2009, p. 344), lines of flight taken by the participants in

response to the haecceity, the immediacy and 'thisness' of their present moment

and the exigencies of their context.

Throughout my data, I look for instances of justice and its absence, in relationships,

recognitional and associational issues, and distributional. I see these as rhizomes

integral to the weave of the participants' stories, allowing me to map them using

threads, colour and text in a semiotic symphony. 'The relationship between the

relation and the interrelated elements is internalized and conceived of in dynamic terms' (Renault, 2016, p. 21). This ontological position allows me to see the power of the activity to modify its elements and the dynamic reciprocity of the elements also modifying the activity.

In this section, I have outlined the societal framework that includes social (in)justice in my study, exploring recognitional, associational and distributional justice in order to trace experiences of these in the participants' narratives and to be able to represent them using images and text for the purpose of communication to the teaching profession.

I now go on to explore semiosis in narrative as part of this study.

2.5 Section 4: semiosis to edusemiotics

2.5.1 Meaning making: the semiosis of narrative

Here, I explore the meaning that may be made from narratives of lived experience. I use this meaning-making as a bridge where I fuse theory and experience to create a more dimensional, fluid example that for me, demonstrates a deeper understanding of the Deleuzean constructs I use as becoming-cartographer.

2.5.2 Temporality, memory, recall and narrative

In this section, I explore concepts from narrative theory that concern the chronological and temporal nature of accounts of lived experience, as narration is sometimes criticised for a 'lack' of historical precision and can be seen as unscientific, because events stated can rarely be 'measured' or 'verified' (Freeman,

2007, p. 134). As 'becoming-cartographer', I perceive these events as part of a story that reveals a wider truth, that of the effect of the participant's perception on their life story. I contrast a more reductive approach with the principle of diffraction, which supposes that a line of sequential points cannot be sliced to permit closer examination of one particular moment in time (Barad, 2014, p. 169). Therefore the sequence of events is not something I seek to substantiate. I provide a justification of narrative inquiry in chapter 3, but here I mention this as it is relevant to the narrative conceptualisation of time. I borrow the concepts of fabula and syzhet from narrative theory to articulate this.

The fabula represents a narrator's concept of time as their narrative is told. The syzhet represents their choices concerning content – the choices they make about what to relate. This is explained in more detail in the following methodology chapter. Deleuze's concept of time is relevant to the way in which I re-present the stories as told by the participants in this study. Traditionally, time would be the linear roll-out of memory, the only inexorable factor in the telling of a story – we begin at one place, we end in another. Time is the arrow that takes every thought with it to arrive at that specific place in space and time. However, the narratives I collect are complex assemblages. I re-present them as images, not necessarily cinematographic, but more dimensional than a reduction to their elements. I have made choices about their re-presentation. I attempt to 'make the time-relations visible' through the cartographs:

> 'The image itself is a collection (ensemble) of time relations from which
> the present merely flows, whether as the common multiple, or as
> the lowest divisor. Time-relations are never seen in ordinary

perception, but they are seen in the image, once it is creative. It makes the time- relations which are irreducible to the present sensible, visible.' (Deleuze & McMuhan, 1998, p. 53)

As far as the narratives are concerned, those I hear in the present have been actively constructed: they are a 'symbolic replaying of pure difference':

'Your selections in the present concentrate all of the past and all of the future.' (Williams, 2013, p. 238)

As a consequence, I argue that the threads of the highly individual fabula and syuzhet may be re-presented, and that this is a valuable 'tracing' for the creation of a map. I explain this in greater depth in chapter 3.

2.5.2.1 The cartographic imperative: memory and the learning environment

I start by using Miller's poem to introduce my 'job' as set out below, to illustrate the tension between the exploration and mapping of the concepts I have outlined so far, and their relationship with the lived experience of the participants in this study. I cannot simply reproduce the territory – to do so would be to create a map 'far from the informative tool of cartography, since it is an exact replica of the terrain it seeks to represent' (Zdebik, 2019, p. 24).

My job is to imagine the widening

of the unfamiliar and also

the widening ache of it;

to anticipate the ironic

question: how did we find

ourselves here? My job is

to untangle the tangled,

to unworry the concerned,

to guide you out from cul de sacs

into which you may have wrongly turned.

From: The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion, by Kei Miller (Miller, 2014, p. 16)

In this section, I explore the possible relationship between a human being's sense of place and their lived experience, asking how this might be recorded and learnt from. I examine lived experience of articulating the framing of a sense of place (awareness of, ownership of or autonomy within) in schools. I use Kei Miller's poem (above) again to illustrate the differences in emic and etic perceptions of place and space, mindful that I am, as becoming-cartographer, attempting to map trajectory of an individual's lived experience and chart the intensities of affect that these concepts produce. In this I seek to remain within the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of rhizome, as 'the map […] is entirely oriented towards an experimentation in contact with the real' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). According to Boulter, the map I intend to create serves as 'an image of the provisionality of the rhizome, of the subject that emerges from within the rhizome' (Boulter, 2022, p. 8).

Aligning with juxtaposition of experience, paradoxes of social justice are present in the classroom, in the sense such a place appears to be celebrating difference but is in fact ordering it in many subtle ways – the power games of 'fitting in', managing expectations, engaging with required, predetermined tasks, for example. Contexts of

transition, cultural expectations and matching student agency outside school with the self- determination practised inside are, it seems, as important as students' perceptions of the relevance of their studies (Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006, p. 8). The participants in the study articulate this as part of their lived experience.

Using the word 'place, Tuan (Tuan, 1979) exposes the reality of space as mediated, striated, socially constructed enactment of choices. Schools should allow for a rehearsal of adulthood, and provide a safe place for this even amid the desiring machine's flow towards productivity. The tension is present again between the desiring production of the space as determined by the external social reality, and the freedom of a creative, imaginative space where children can rehearse and experiment. This is the Deleuzo-Guattarian desiring machine again as it encodes and recodes the space in which education, in a form also coded by the machine, takes place

My study seeks to identify the processual in the complex assemblages of the life worlds of persons and things (Ingold, 2011), in order to explore the meaning making in the participants' narratives:

> '…any given place is never autonomous in its unity but forever bleeding
> and seeping into other places, both those of the past and those of
> the future…' (Trigg, 2012, p. 17)

I look for these 'seepages' in the lived experience of the participants as this process resonates with the flow of affect and consequent bodily intensity. A thing is changed by its interaction or engagement with another thing, whether intention is present or

not, and is experienced physically. According to Lefevbre: 'the user's space is lived, not represented or conceived'. (Lefevbre, 2014, p. 283).

Conley agrees that control of space – here I suggest coded by the desiring machines of capitalism that dictate state choices around education – is reductive:

Where there is ideological control and development of space, entire populations' lived experience is regimented (Conley, 2012).

Memories of place in this study resonate affective intensity, for example in hoped-for spaces of creative production in schools that are denied. Questioning our encounters with and in space points us to the importance of place because, as humans, we engage in the 'ordering of materials into a spatio-temporal construct' [Stahl, 2016], while at the same time entering the 'vast plane of composition that carries out a deframing… only to open it onto the universe' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 187)

And yet childhood experience of 'ecstatic space' exists: defined by Cobb and Chawla as:

> 'the experience of emerging not only into the light of consciousness but
> into a living sense of a dynamic relationship with the outer world'
> (Chawla, 2014, p. 279)

and enables creativity in later life (Cobb, 1959), (Chawla, 2014) – this has implications for society that we ignore at our peril:

> 'The nature of the outer world that creative thinkers encounter as
> children and the nature of their encounter profoundly affect their

thought as adults. Their thought, in turn, affects the course of our culture.' (Chawla, 2014, p. 279)

The desiring machines of ideology also compete in the design of educational institutions, as codes issue from the Deleuzo-Guattarian 'desiring machines'. Schools are texts from which codes are communicated; children are very aware of the messages the buildings radiate and the messages imparted by their place in that space – their classroom:

> 'They [classrooms] are like the living cells of the school – the beating
>
> heart of the educational system' (Braster, 2011, p. 9)

This study contrasts the possible with the lived experience of the participants.

Croll, Attwood and Fuller's 2010 research on children's lives and futures explores school as a multi-faceted concept – a multiplicity of assemblages, in Deleuzean terms. School functions within the affective, physical-material and temporal domains, but the only time the attributes of the built environment in which these things occur are mentioned is when students discuss the worst things about their school:

> 'The single most common category of worst things about school are
>
> aspects of the physical environment. Children wrote of problems
>
> with the buildings, general shabbiness, litter, graffiti and the toilets.'
>
> (Croll et al, 2010 p95)

The design of learning environments can therefore promote (or deny) factors relating to belonging, calmness, ease and comfort, reducing or increasing the affective filter

– and therefore the learning experience – of all its users (Higgins, Hall, Wall, Woolner, & McCaughey, 2005, Leiringer & Cardellino, 2011).

2.5.2.2 The contextual relevance of the learning environment

The participants' negative lived experience of their secondary education cannot therefore be divorced from their personal context, the places and spaces still present in their memories that inform not just their present but their future. In order to represent the complexity of the assemblages and multiplicities of their narratives I turn not just to their text, but to a visual representation in order to introduce the dimensionality of immediacy in communicating their meaning to the audience. In so doing, I engage in the practice of semiosis – the establishment of a relationship between a sign of my choosing and its meaning. I have interpreted the meaning I have heard – I have chosen a sign to communicate this, and also words from the participant narratives to support my choices. My rationale for this is explained in greater detail in the next chapter. Because my study is sited within the field of education and social justice, and because I bring together theories of education and a study of the signs I use, I site this project within the field of edusemiotics.

2.5.2.3 The role of edusemiotics in this research

> '…the whole of human experience, without exception, is an interpretive
>
> structure mediated and sustained by signs.' (Deely, 1990)

In this project, I seek to bring the meaning-making from the lived experience of the participants into the 'semiotic consciousness' (Deely, n.d., p. 22) of the persons experiencing the cartographs, i.e. those encountering the findings:

'Edusemiotics centers on learning experiences comprising a process of growth and evolution of signs in which both teachers and students can find significance and meaning' (Semetsky, 2017, p. 1).

In signs inspired by the artworks of Sit Grayson Perry, rather than simply text, I seek to depict the complexity of the relationships between social injustice flowing from the desiring machines of capitalism and ideologies coding school experience, (space, relationships and pedagogies), its effects on the learning identity, space, place, perceptions of time and affect.

I therefore address the dimensionality of the rhizomatic trajectories of the participants by attending to the choice and shape of materials intended for a visual image. I create cartographs comprising symbols, colours and shapes that develop from the loosely ordered narratives to a more fluid, less structured approach that communicates the Deleuzean dynamicity of this study. This involves an art-based approach that is discussed in the next chapter.

2.6 The research questions

This thinking, leads me to articulate the research questions for this study:

1. What is the nature and impact of perceived negative experiences of schooling in the narratives of RtAs?

2. What lessons can be learned from these stories that can be offered to the teaching profession in terms of the enactment of social justice across diverse learning contexts and how might these be communicated?

I now move on to explain, justify and evaluate, as becoming cartographer, my choice of narrative inquiry for this project; the concepts I have borrowed from both social cartography and I-poems to create my analytical framework, the recruitment of participants and ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

Chapter 3: Process: the emerging methodologies of the becoming cartographer

3.1 Introduction

> The cartographer says
>
> no –
>
> What I do is science, I show
>
> the earth as it is, without bias.
>
> I never fall in love. I never get involved
>
> with the muddy affairs of land.
>
> Too much passion unsteadies the hand.
>
> I aim to show the full
>
> of a place in just a glance.
>
> *From: The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion, Kei Miller,*
>
> *2014* (Miller, 2014, p. 18).

I use the poem above as a guide to the tensions I experience as I position myself as becoming-cartographer.This chapter begins with an outline of the research as it unfolded and a comment on the emergent nature of the design. I then move to a reflection on my own positionality. Lastly I go on to explain each step of the research in more detail. This section includes the reasons for my choices in data gathering, analysis and presentation of findings, and an exploration of the arts-based approaches that resulted in the cartographs.

This research was emergent in design – as such I did not plan each step beforehand. I describe the steps as they evolved from each stage as blooming or

unfolding from the rhizomatic progression of the study – it was not a linear process, and there was no hierarchy of steps.

To summarise, and I unpack these steps later in this chapter, I first ran a pilot with three participants to explore the idea of narrative inquiry in the negative lived experience of secondary schooling. I found that the pilot presented a number of issues that I had not expected. I used my experience in the next step, the main study, where, through help from a more senior colleague, I was able to recruit eight participants who self-identified as having had negative experience at secondary school. I interviewed them in order to gather their narratives in a variety of settings, in person and online, using either voice recorders or software to record and transcribe the narratives. I stayed with the data of the raw transcripts, listening to the interviews and amending them in order to make sense of them. Each interview lasted from 40 to 90 minutes, depending on the desire of the person to tell their story and the length of time they wanted to use to share this. I did not place any restrictions of time or place on the participants. I wanted them to be as free as possible and consciously tried to create a supportive, trustful but professional space for them to speak freely.

At this point, I discovered the Listening Guide method as developed by Gilligan (Gilligan, 2021). As I listened to each interview at least three times I paid attention to the tone of voice, pauses and repetitions, the use of my name, short and long utterances. As a professional actor, I attempted to attune myself to the iceberg principle – that I was hearing and witnessing just one third or less of what had actually been experienced. I describe these processes in more detail (as well as my reactions and perceived dilemmas resulting from my and their time in this space)

later in the chapter, but my aim was to stay as close as possible to the participants' voices and allow them to speak, rather than attempting to categorise or overlay their words with other research in an attempt to identify patterns.

I then sent the transcripts back to the participants for member-checking. Having received the returned transcripts, I then edited them to form I-poems, again a feature of the Listening Guide method. I pulled out of the transcripts all the first person statements, including structures using I, you (when meaning I), me, and us. Here I wanted to establish and witness the participant's sense of self, the subjectivities inherent in the different voices arising. I pulled these statements out verbatim and placed them in another document in the order in which they were spoken. I then sent these back to the participants and awaited their responses.

All but one participant liked the I-poems – one was so taken with their version that they asked if they could use it with their students. The one who did not like theirs appears to have felt that there were not enough context to support some of their statements, as this had been stripped away and only their voice remained. Despite this, I ws still given permission to carry on using the I-poems in this raw state.

According to the Listening Guide method, I should then have attempted to identify the different voices in the I-poem and reduced them to shorter versions. I found I could not do this. Thinking with Deleuze, to attempt to extrapolate voices from the multiplicity here seemed wrong and reductive, rather than processual and dynamic. I felt I was making the poems static and reducing their complexity by attempting this. I therefore decided not to do it.

As I had already considered mapping lived experience as a cartographic endeavour and begun to read Kai Miller's poem in the light of my research, I decided then to create maps with the I-poem and images to communicate far more than one voice simultaneously. I felt that this was more in keeping with a Deleuzean approach to the research, displaying rhizome as assemblage and the layered nature of experience that can be 'good' and 'bad' at the same time – an image can convey the paradoxical nature of experience better than simple text. I did no abandon the text, however – having spent time with Sir Grayson Perry's work at a recent, magnificent retrospective here, I began to explore notions of immanence and transcendence in artistic representation. I began to create cartographs – maps of the participants' lived experience, using their words as well as images of my choice to re-present and re-PRESENT their narratives. Lastly, I began to consider the possibility of these cartographs not just as pictures but as graphic scores – vehicles for performance. This idea continues to interest me after the intitial submission of this research.

In the following pages, I explore the process outlined above, the reasoning behind my choices, and my reflections on my struggle with the processual ontological iteration I undertook to produce the cartographs. In the following chapter, the findings, I explain the cartographs themselves and the claims to contributions to knowledge made by this research.

3.1.1 Roadmap of this chapter…

First, I explore the relevance of narrative inquiry to this kind of research, the methods used to gather the participants' narratives, and the ethical considerations

that foreground the methodological approaches taken, through an ontological and epistemological lens informed by Deleuzean thinking.

Second, I address the pilot study as preparation for the main study, my learning from it and how through deep reflection this informed the later data collection.

Finally, I present the main study, its design, and analytical framing. As a framework for analysis, I distil I-poems from the participants' narratives, maintaining the themes discussed in the literature review. I explain the concepts I have taken from social cartography as guidelines for creating cartographs of the participants' lived experience, inspired by and with examples from the work of Sir Grayson Perry. I intend these cartographs to enable me to move towards the creation of a graphic score for performance as a method of communicating my findings.

3.2 Philosophical positioning: narrative Inquiry through a Deleuzean lens

In this section, I present an overview of my thinking with Deleuze on the question of positioning. In this study I do not differentiate between Deleuze and his collaborators, referring for example to 'Deleuze' when discussing concepts written by both him and Felix Guattari. The reason for this is primarily because this study is not a philosophical treatise where teasing out what belongs to whom is an issue. The thinking with which I engage is Deleuzean in the sense of that word as a becoming in itself, a descriptor rather than a possessive determiner. The sense derives from Gilles Deleuze and his writings; the meaning-making derives from my enacted descriptive understanding of these ideas.

I now explain briefly my understanding of a Deleuzean processual ontology as pertaining to this study and largely indivisible from it, as my thinking self, the thesis and the concepts form a complex assemblage.

3.2.1 Summary of the research

My study uses narrative inquiry as its overarching framework, collecting narratives of lived experience; I maintain the visibility of the stories and the humans to whom they belong throughout (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 7). I then use the listening guide method to develop affective attunement with and thematic understanding of the data. Next, I create a series of I-poems by distilling the words of the participants, not altering them. Lastly, I take these words and present them as 'images of thought', the cartographs, fusing words with artistic representation to communicate at a deeper affective level (empathy) than might be possible through the text alone. I am aiming to take this one step further by creating a graphic score that takes the cartographs and the affective intensities in the I-poems to add the dimensionality of sound and interpretative performance to an already visual presentation

3.2.1.1 Thinking with Deleuze

A Deleuzean approach to research is empiricist by definition, as it is not possible to separate the rhizome of life out into different, observable elements in an objective sense. This ontology has been criticised as it is a case of 'everything everywhere all at once', a multiplicity that without reduction, would render research impossible. However, I would argue that instead it is a recognition that everything we do and that happens occurs within the paradox of life. For Deleuze, 'ontology is philosophy' (Boundas, 2005, p. 190). This means that 'being' exists as a state of 'becoming'

between the virtual and the actual, as the virtual is actualised. The question that is usually posed here is 'when?' but for Deleuze, this is irrelevant as it is not possible to separate them. Existence therefore is a becoming, the real is a process, and we exist in the fold – right in the middle of the process of actualisation. As I understand this, the 'present' is the actual, the 'about to become the present' is the virtual. For this study, this is important because of the consequences for thinking about time and memory. Williams states that, thinking with Deleuze:

> 'your selections in the present concentrate all of the past and all of the future. Your present passes away not into an unchanging record but into a shifting sense of values. The present will never return. It is a cut that reassembles the whole of time and sets it into a new series.' (Williams, 2013, p. 236)

Ontologically then, 'becoming' instead of being is tied into this concept of time, relevant to this study because I am researching memory, not in its past incarnation, but in its re-presentation in the tangible realities manifested today in the participants.

Regarding time in this way, the driving force behind my research is the concept of 'affect', the bodily intensities experienced by the participants triggered by time. As I am researching the effect of educational experience, I use affect as the starting place: I aim to:

> 'demonstrate how embodied capacities are increased or decreased by sounds, lights, smells, the atmospheres of places and people'. (Hickey-Moody, 2013, p. 80)

Given the exploration of desire, desiring machines and critique of capitalism in the previous chapter, I could argue for a 'critical realist' approach here, as some argue that Deleuze was a political philosopher and he himself stated that his Anti-Oedipus series was a work of political philosophy (Deleuze, 1994, p. 170) Others, however, dismiss him as a mystic (e.g. (Gilbert, 2010). I do not position myself as a critical realist because, firstly, I am not examining the 'how' of cause and effect by identifying the underlying causal relationships of interaction (Sayer, 2000). Secondly, I am a willing adherent to the fusion of empiricism and ontology that attempts to capture the 'wildness and instability' of the rhizomatic progression that is life. Renold and Mellor state that a Deleuzean approach to empiricism 'involves creating a research environment that enables the mapping of new conditions of possibility' (Renold & Mellor, 2013, p. 28). This process is messy, repetitive and at times surprising, but it takes into account the strangeness of things in relationship to other things, rather than criticising elements, because:

> 'At the centre of the narrative mode are human vicissitudes and drama,
>   the particularities of human existence rather than its general
>   patterns receive the greatest attention'.
>   (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 16)

As I consider the lived experience of the participants as entangled in terms of human and material interaction and position these as equivalent in terms of their ability to 'exert force' on one another, i.e. as an assemblage (Tietjen, 2021, p. 19) I therefore site this study as firmly within a socio-material paradigm.

3.3 Narrative Inquiry

I see events in my participants' lives, therefore, as rhizomes - assemblages that are connected and mappable, i.e. that permit me to uncover and re-present the connections: focusing not only on the individual experience but the situatedness of this experience:

> 'the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individuals'
>
> experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted'
>
> (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42).

All views of what is happening are relevant, including my own. Contradictions and multiplicities are permitted, even celebrated. A standard case study approach is therefore not versatile enough to allow me, as 'becoming- cartographer' to explore complex phenomena within the assemblages in play during my interaction with a particular individual, or to make connections across all my participants' lives. It is I who make these connections and create the rhizomatic patterning; therefore my engagement with the participant narratives gains a certain intensity.

I want to focus 'not only on individuals' experience', (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42) but on the affective intensities produced by their contexts.

Initially, I decided to attempt to interview the participants in the spirit of 'proper' scientific inquiry, caught as I was in the theoretical and technological thought of modern thinking and scholarship (van Manen, 2016, p. 4). As my intention was not to observe and measure, but to come face to face with the mystery of life in wanting to know the world and the way we experience it (van Manen, 2016, p 5), I realised that

I, as becoming cartographer, was not an interviewer, but a witness. It became clear that I was not conducting a semi-structured interview, even though I tried to – I was instead standing alongside as the participants narrated their lived experience. This conflict did not resolve itself easily and I came to this realisation after the pilot had taken place. As discussed in the next sections, I began to consider myself as the 'former-interviewer becoming cartographer'.

Clandinin and Connelly first wrote about narrative inquiry in 1990 [Connelly & Clandinin, 1990] [Clandinin & Connelly, 1990], exploring story as a way of understanding experience in the lives of teachers, and building on Dewey's ideas of teacher knowledge as personal, experientially and situationally constructed (Clandinin D. J., 2023, p. 2). I remain with Clandinin's definition of narrative inquiry as both phenomenon and methodology (Clandinin D. J., 2023, p. 3) and her view of narratives of lived experience as three dimensional, addressing 'temporality, spatiality and sociality' (Clandinin D. J., 2023, p. 4).

Narrative inquiry is not narrative representation. Clandinin and Rosiek argue that the Deweyian position on which their methodology is founded:

> 'implies that […] the regulative ideal for inquiry is to generate a new
>> relation between a human being and her environment […] that
>> eventually creates a new kind of experienced object, not more real
>> […] but more significant, less overwhelming and oppressive'.
>> (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42),

In other words, in my view, asking 'what can a body do' rather than 'why is that body there'.

3.3.1 The subjectivity of the researcher

I recognise my subjective position in this re-presentation: 'I know I am in the parade and part of the landscape' (Clandinin D. J., 2023, p. 2), in other words, as 'becoming cartographer' I am not an impartial and objective observer. I engage in 'the process of looking back over the terrain of the past from the standpoint of the present and either seeing things anew or drawing connections' (Freeman, 2010, p. 4). The 'looking back' occurs in the present. Freeman states that 'living' may be almost indistinguishable from 'telling' in one understanding of narrative inquiry – this aligns with the Deleuzean explanation of time as immanent, the past being pulled into the present (Freeman, 2007, p. 121).

From this perspective, 'stories are lived before they are told' (MacIntyre, 2011 and 1981, p. 197). This then raises the questions about the elicitation of the narrative episodes as data. In a more traditional sense, data are gathered using structured or semi-structured interviews. Yet when narrative inquiry challenges the traditional humanist method of inquiry, as St Pierre states:

> 'there is no hierarchy with human knowers at the top; a passive, static
> reality at the bottom; and language as a transparent medium
> between the two capable of producing meaning' (St Pierre, 2017).

I now delve deeper into narrative inquiry further describing the development of my role from interviewer to becoming cartographer, contributing to the construction of narrative events.

3.3.2 Narrative Inquiry and the Self

Some researchers see narration as a self-monitoring process where the Self is rewritten through reflection; Chappell et al suggest that this is a product of late modernity (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant, & Yates, 2003, p. 29), a soul seeking, reductionist even navel gazing subjectivity, however, developing a focus on immanence and anti-elementalism as demonstrated in concepts such as assemblage and deterritorialization does seem to indicate a different positionality. My study inquires of the narratives 'what did you do, as part of and in the midst of these circumstances' rather than asking 'why'.

Moreover, staying within the paradox of narratives means that I must acknowledge the possibility of my own performativity in my research context (Rozvadska, 2020). In Deleuzean thinking, however, I argue that the opportunity to narrate creates a space for the virtual to meet the actual – the narrative identity emerges as '[their] internalised and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future' (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 167). However, even this definition does not reflect the fold – the interiority being made exterior while it is one and the same thing. My presence as becoming cartographer, might be described as activating a fold: I bring the narratives to birth, in a sense.

Narratives can follow a chronologically linear path, but not necessarily. Riessman states that if the researcher and participant do not share the 'convention of temporal ordering of a plot', there is potential for confusion (Riessman, 2007, p. 41). I discuss this in the relation to the concepts of 'fabula' and 'syuzhet' as mentioned previously,

and conclude that the only way forward in this situation is to stand alongside and bear witness (Riessman, 2007, p. 41).

3.3.3 The emergence of the narrative

This study resists any positivist notions of the 'fact' as a discrete, measurable element in narrative data. Here, the story the inquirer elicits is the best possible representation of the reality of the teller at this point in time. Each has been pieced together according to what this person deems, consciously or unconsciously, to have been important enough to feature, and the order in which this appears. This is the relevance of the fabula and the syuzyet, as discussed in chapter 2. The story, then, is a snapshot of the 'now' of the narrator, because it identifies and establishes them in a particular version of their 'becoming'.

The process through which the narrative appears in the world, and how it can be used as a reflective device (to examine the different elements and the way in which they have come together) creates a rhizome of the participant's learning identity and trajectory. Furthermore, once the story is 'out there', in the words of King, it will have been 'let loose in the world and it cannot be called back' (King, 2003, p. 10). The story becomes an agent in its own right and can only move forward, gathering momentum, or 'escape velocity' in the words of Sir Grayson Perry.

At this point it is possible for the becoming cartographer to take a hold of the narrative, mold and reshape it, and give it back to the teller as their story. The subjective experience of both teller and researcher acts on the birthed thing – it is reified, but also agentic in its effect on me, the becoming-cartographer, and audience-come-midwife, and performs a fold back to re-present to the teller (its

original owner). I choose to do this via the medium of social cartography and the I-poem.

Thinking with Deleuze, I move to the end of the spectrum of the situatedness of things. Things are not only products of their context, but inextricably woven into, through and by that context - there is no 'lifting out' of the finished product, a thing is a 'node' rather than something at the end of an assembly line. The node is also not static, it's held in and subject to the tensions and ripples of the lines and networks around it. This principle applies to anything reified, abstract or concrete, e.g. a book becomes a 'machine' (Baugh, 2000, p. 34) – a node in the interaction of reader and author and thingness of paper, card, glue, processes of binding etc. A book is a becomingness of reader-author- environment-schemata (the thoughts and beliefs each actor brings to the book) –paper etc. – it is a dynamic entity. I take this principle to apply also to the interview Mazzei argues that the qualitative interview, in Deleuzean thought, is, rather than a meaning-making event, a Voice-without-Organs:

> 'voice thought as an assemblage, a complex network of human and nonhuman agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the individual' (Mazzei, 2013, p. 734).

This means that the interview is seen as the recording surface of an assemblage, an entanglement of voices and contexts. Where the interviewee chooses what (and what not) to reveal, when and where to situate her narrative, the interviewer joins her as a force of enactment, 'becoming' part of the assemblage, a dynamic, non-essentialised event of encounter, a flow among the other streams of material and

non-material contributing factors. These are not limited to memories, events that shaped us – they include everything we, the participant and researcher, plus all the ancestors, shadows and events of place, space and people, bring into the interaction. The interview becomes a collision of the forces that constitute the assemblage (Mazzei, 2013, p. 735).. All these contribute to the event, the 'haecceity'. Mazzei also considers the 'the forces of desire that are acting through and with our research participants' (Mazzei, 2013, p. 734). These forces in the present study are affective intensities; they lead to choices, how, where and why.

3.3.4 The narrative as rhizome

There is a sense of 'multiplicity' in viewing the narrative events in this study as assemblages – the sense that one is never looking at something reduced to elemental structure, but a constantly shifting multi-layered phenomenon. For Deleuze, identity is not something that can be pared down – it is a 'becoming', a process, rather than an object or series of objects. Reality is multiple, therefore 'ontological multiplicity is immanent within any concept or any event' (Winslade, 2009). Winslade, discussing narrative practice in psychology, argues that, for Deleuze, identity is built on lines of subjectivation that 'trace what people internalize into their sense of themselves in the course of living in the face of modern knowledge and power' (Winslade, 2009, p. 332). Lives contain nodes where these lines of subjectivation collect; the lines are created by both external factors (culture, power) and internal (decisions on how to respond); lines of power combine with lines of subjectivation. These, quite literally, hold us down. It is at the point of struggle that a line of flight takes place, 'a creative shift' that takes a person on a different trajectory or in a different direction (Winslade, 2009, p. 332).

Interpretation and explanation of recounted experience are highly idiosyncratic. It is possible to interpret experience differently according to personal perspective, largely because the teller as the protagonist may present as hero, villain or victim severally or simultaneously. According to Ritivoi, it is not just the sequence of events that makes a narrative plausible, but the different master plots or ideological networks that they access (Ritivoi, 2009). Disentangling these, or loosening the weave of the folding, re-folding, and rhizomatic iteration in the narrative process may be begun through the use of the narratological terms 'fabula' and 'syuzhet' (subject), as discussed in chapter 2.

3.3.5 Ownership of the narrative

The process of ownership of the narrative is complex – it twists and turns between teller and listener. The syuzhet therefore may be considered as the reader's experience of the sequence of events in the narrative. Just as ownership of the story moves between collaborators, the syuzhet and the fabula may or may not coincide; they may run parallel, they may cross over, entwine and separate at different stages of the progression of the narrative.

These terms may be considered relevant here as they can be represented in a topographical re-presentation – as a cartograph, and more dimensionally, a graphic score. I go on to explain this concept in the future directions chapter. The picture painted in the present is a synthesis, complex, pluri-dimensional and connected to a myriad of independent and dependent factors.

3.4 Narrative to cartograph

Doxiadis suggests that narrative mediates between different worlds – that of action and our mental construction of the infinite possibilities of this action; creating complex, topographical maps based on interaction, relation and objects in 'webs of immense connectivity' (Doxiadis, 2010). Doxiadis also attributes linearity to the path of the narrative that traces its way through these worlds, it provides 'partial, linear views of nonlinear environments' (Doxiadis, 2010). This tension manifests itself in my tracing – I must observe the line in order to map it; I must observe the affective intensities and chart them, as becoming cartographer.

In participating the participants here connect to me rhizomatically. My understanding situated; I possess a concept of a map; I possess an awareness of a particular type of poetry – I am embedded in my culture. Bias is therefore almost irrelevant as the research resides within my own subjectivity and I can make no claim for generalisation.

I draw this part of the philosophical discussion underpinning my decision to adopt narrative inquiry as the framing of this study to a close. I hope to have prepared the reader for the next section which details initial design ideas based on arts-based methods and the pilot study which identified challenges concerning tools, processes and analytical methods for the main study.

3.5 The procedures of the investigation: bare bones

3.5.1 Introduction

I claim that this study investigates a previously unresearched (in terms of qualitative approaches) group of individuals. These are people currently working in academe as educators. They came to their present careers later in life, after an experience of secondary school that they describe as negative. For the purposes of this research, they are known as Returners to Academe (RtAs). The aim of the study, as stated, is to make meaning from these previously uncharted learning journeys, to explore and mark staging posts in participants' negative lived experience, to open up avenues of reflection for both researched and researcher, and thereby to deepen understanding of the development of the learning identity and consider this in relation to access to Higher Education.

To reiterate, the research questions to answer are as follows

1. What is the nature and impact of perceived negative experiences of schooling in the narratives of RtAs?

2. What lessons can be learned from these stories that can be offered to the teaching profession in terms of the enactment of social justice across diverse learning contexts and how might these be communicated?

In the following section, I describe the organisation of the pilot study and my learning from it.

3.5.2 The pilot

I devised an initial list of criteria that the self-selecting participants of the pilot study should meet:

- They should be or have been employed in academe fairly recently

- They may have a doctorate, not necessarily a masters, u/g degree or secondary school qualification or are studying for a PhD (or equivalent) at the time of the interview

- They may have entered university via an access course

- Their experience of secondary education was negative (self-defined)

- Their experience at secondary school and personal circumstances may have mitigated against university study at the time

- They may have gone to university directly from school but there is a chronological gap (self defined) between their u/g degree and the next steps that led them into academe

- They are willing to share their past in the hope that it might benefit others

I discussed my ideas for this study and my mother's experience of education with three friends in three different informal contexts. Each volunteered the story of their personal negative experience of secondary school, so I asked if they would consider taking part in a more formal piece of research. Within these guiding criteria, all the

respondents agreed that they fit the stated description of 'Returners to Academe' (RtAs).

The three pilot participants were known to me as a neighbour, a colleague, and an acquaintance with whom I'd had a chance encounter. One had a story to tell that emerged as something they had already rehearsed and that was 'overripe' – it needed to be told. One meandered through the story with no fixed points of reference other than a vague chronological awareness of progression from primary to secondary to higher education. One allowed their story to emerge with a great deal of detail and symbolism. The differences in the delivery, the openness or not to being questioned further and their individual definitions of 'negative' made me think about the affective intensities felt by them and the rhizomatic complexity of their learning journeys. Nothing was simple, there were rarely any binaries (by which I mean crossroads with just two choices of direction).

Gender of participant	Age	Qualification	Definition of negative experience of Secondary Education (SE)	Job
1. male	60	PhD Ed Psych (no Masters)	Negative – violence, failure	Head teacher & ITE educational consultant
2. female	62	PhD English Lit (no Masters)	Negative – violence, lack of expectation = disinterest at school	university tutor
3. female	Late 60s	PhD TESOL (Masters)	Negative – perceived failure,	university professor

Table 1: Profile of pilot participants

Following BERA guidelines, confidentiality and anonymity as well as the rights over their own data and participation were established for this pilot by email. I arranged to meet the participants severally at different times and in different places. Two narrative events took place in person, and one online, in this instance, for both of us, our first experience with Microsoft Teams. I took handwritten notes. Both these notes and the experience I gained informed my choices for the following larger study, practically in terms of choice of location and equipment, and reflexively, as 'becoming-interviewer'. I explore this learning in greater detail later.

The participants progressed from narrators to story tellers as I became embroiled in the unfolding of their lived experience – the pull-in for me was irresistible:

> 'only narrative form can contain the tensions, the surprises, the
> disappointments and reversals and achievements of actual,
> temporal, experience' (Crites, 1971, p. 292).

As I listened, I became conscious of the stops and starts, the randomness of consequences of choice and opportunity, in other words the flow of affect and the gathering of its intensities, and a number of ideas began to present themselves around analysis and presentation. I knew I needed to recruit further participants and I wondered if the process I had experienced would repeat itself.

Each narrative event in the pilot lasted for over two hours. There was an overwhelming understanding that the concept of an 'active' semi-structured interview (Wengraf, 2001, p. 111), even though explained in the introductory and ethical permission information supplied before the session (and practised in their own research by the participants), did not - and could not – apply during this process.

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Once each participant 'got into their stride', it became difficult, if not problematic, to stop them by asking a question. The story they wanted to tell just poured out – I soon became aware that I could not interrupt without losing the flow; missing vital information; or irritating the narrator (risking losing information and relationship) because they were so focused. Where there was a pause for breath, or where I really wanted to probe a particular statement and I took whatever chance appeared in order to dive in, I became aware that I put the narrative at risk.

Wengraf describes minimalist intervention as standing at the extreme end of the interviewing spectrum. He suggests that learning how to listen and how not to intervene is 'good practice within which to start to become a research interviewer' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 112). I felt as though I were not engaging in 'proper scientific inquiry' at times because of the strength of the flow and my lack of participation in it – in this I was experiencing the difficulties discussed by Riessmann in giving up control of the 'interview process' and actively not intervening (concomitant anxiety and efficiency worries) (Riessman, 2007, p.24) but in the process, encouraging genuine storytelling – I did not want to

> 'suppress the narrative impulse' (Riessman, 2007, p. 25)

In the pilot, particularly for participants 1 and 3, the narrative was delivered fully formed, something that they had been gestating for years. When it was 'birthed', the sense was very much that we could not question it, rather simply observe. Participant 2's experience was rather more hesitant at the start; she responded better to prompts and probes. Her experience had been different from 1 and 3 –

rather than experiencing the injustice of initial failure, she had experienced directly the injustice of low educational expectations.

I found myself, therefore, engaging in the 'one question' narrative inquiry process, defined by Wengraf as the 'biographic-narrative-interpretative method' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 112) and keeping my interventions to a minimum in order to allow the narratives to flow. In part the 'becomingness' of the narrative enabled by this also became part of the study. I had just the one question: 'Please tell me about your negative experience in secondary education'.

It became clear that the meaning-makings from negative experience here were different. I chose to allow participants the freedom to offer personal definitions of 'negative experience'. The range of definitions was surprising. I was struck by three emergent concepts that characterised these experiences: institutional violence, failure and disinterest (in itself a form of violence against the becoming self), serendipity - being in the right place at the right time -and the positionality of the learning journey in relation to these.

I became aware that I needed to comprehend a complex assemblage of socio-material intensities pertaining to injustices, and types of violence while focusing not only on the participants' individual characteristics, but also their whole person capacity to act and react within their contexts. I conceived this as a topographical map, in order to trace the person's rhizomatic emergence through these experiences.

The participants thanked me at the end for the opportunity to have their voices heard here, as these stories had not been heard before. I was surprised that they found it such a profound and valuable experience.

My learning from the pilot became the starting point for the rest of the investigation and the genesis of the 'becoming-cartographer' approach that I took thereafter. I am aware that I could have entertained other ideas about interviewing – I could have attempted a semi structured interview, I could have looked for themes and patterns. My decisions regarding the methodology were driven by my attunement to the data, therefore I consider that I can make a claim for an emergent design. I elaborate this below.

3.6 The processual and emergent nature of this research.

> Thus nature is a structure of evolving processes. The reality is the process. It is nonsense to ask if the colour red is real. The colour red is ingredient in the process of realisation. The realities of nature are the prehensions in nature, that is to say, the events in nature. (Whitehead, 1925 p102)

I claim a processual ontology in the emergence of this research project. I had the narratives in mind when I began, but what I was going to find, I did not know, nor had I determined how to represent them. In one sense, the narratives' potential bloomed in to the I-poems, which then bloomed again into cartographs. IN one sense I was attempting to answer the questions Dombrowski poses in his exploration of the emergent nature of the processual:

What are enduring things, as distinguished from the eternal objects, such as colour and shape? How are they possible? What is their status and meaning in the universe? (Dombrowski, 2024, p. 129)

In terms of a philosophical claim to emergence, my study meets the conditions described as fluidly characteristic of it: (Dombrowski, 2024, p. 441) with the caveat that these may or may not be necessary and may also be strengthened or weakened as the context demands. In the exploration below, I take Dombrowski's initial list of characteristics of emergence not as a reductionist attempt to define it, but instead to hold the concept of the participants' lived experience as the substrate of the study - a Deleuzo-Guattarian body-without-organs - non-statified but brimming with unregulated potential.

1. The emergent is new in a qualitative sense to its base (Dombrowski, 2024, p. 441)

I argue that the narratives themselves, born from the participants' lived experience are new in the sense of the birth of a baby. The narrative has not existed in this form before and is not only the sum of the experience – it is experience presented in an entirely new form. It lives therefore of its own accord and on its own terms, in the betweenness, or liminal space between the narrator and listener/ recorder. It is newly incarnated again under the ownership of the listener/ recorder, as they flow into the becoming cartographer. This study therefore presents the narratives first as themselves with the most basic edit in order to render the transcripts comprehensible. Then the poems are distilled from this substrate as listened to I-statements placing the self at the centre of the experience. To extend the metaphor,

this is the parenthood stage of ownership of the narrative. In communicating the I-poems to the participants, the researcher's role is of midwife and healthcare adviser. As the researcher moves from listener to re-presenter and re-present-er in the process of becoming-cartographer, the narrative develops much as a child would; issues are raised, symbols enter the picture, statements are made. The becoming whole is therefore other than the sum of its parts. The child as adult stands on her own two feet, new, but nevertheless the product of lived experience and many other components.

2. The emergent is unpredictable based on knowledge of the properties (behavior) of the base components. (Dombrowski, 2024, p. 441)

There are any number of ways in which lived experience can be recorded, analysed and presented. To demonstrate the criterion of emergence, to my mind none of these should be quantifiable numerically or temporally, as time cannot be represented as a static entity. The components here were determined in advance but only at the most basic level: that is, that the experience of secondary school narrated should have been negative. To discover how and what definitions of this emerged could not be predicted, nor were they in all but the broadest senses similar or shared. Context and person here were irreducible also – the broadest brushstrokes of socio-economic (in)justice were applied to statements of highly individualised qualitative affective interaction with circumstance.

3. The emergent is irreducible. The emergent cannot be explained ex

   post by reduction to a property of the base. The assumption of

   ontological micro-reduction is thus abandoned. (Dombrowski, 2024,

   p. 441)

I refer to distillation as the process whereby the I-poems emerged from the raw transcriptions. Every stage of the process through which the cartographs emerged looks forward and back in time simultaneously; I argue that they are anchored in the present. Their state is dynamic in that they provoke, based on the complexity of the represented (in both senses) and have been interpreted and will be interpreted according to the experience matrix of the becoming cartographer and the observer. This is territorialisation in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense of the word – again , the whole is other than the sum of its parts.

4. The emergent is dependent on its base in the sense that it only

   arises from a specific substrate and under certain conditions. This

   dependence can be understood in various ways – as a constitution,

   realization or supervenience. Often, such an approach is associated

   with the acceptance of evolutionism and the image of the world as

   built of successive layers or stages of development arranged in a

   specific order. (Dombrowski, 2024, p. 441)

I have already explained the dependence of these narratives on their substrate – the lived experience of the participants. This study realises this lived experience and does so in three interdependent forms: narrative (transcript), I-poem (distilled transcript) and cartograph (semiotic representation – in both senses – of the lived

experience). However, there is no predetermined specific order of evolution here, nor a hierarchic arboreal sense of stages of development. It has to be acknowledged that the progression of time means that the participants are older now and are looking back on their lives. But my point here is that today, now, in the present, they inhabit the ebbs and flows, rises and falls of their experience. The present adult contains it all. Yes, I could argue for a linear progression of time, but to do so would be to ignore the fundamental interconnectedness of the experience and its affective presence.

5. The emergent has a causal effect on its base, so it is not just an epiphenomenon. The whole can affect the properties of the part. The upper layer impacts on the lower one in the process of what is referred to as downward causation.

This, the last of Dombrowski's characteristics of emergence, encapsulates my thinking with Deleuze around this project. The narratives emerge from lived experience. My response to the raw data and its treatment is emergent. Its three forms arise through emergence, as will its future use:

For there is in the world for our cognisance, memory of the past, immediacy of realisation, and indication of things to come. (Whitehead, 1925, p. 104)

3.7 Affect and the design of the methods

I approached gathering the data, attuning myself to it and interpreting it as an artist. I felt an affective charge from the I-poems and I could not reduce them any further without losing something of their multiplicity and socio-material nature. What I could do was elaborate the intensities as I interpreted them and choose images that could represent them as more than text, hoping to induce a similar affective response in any potential audience/ observer.

I argue that, through the Deleuzean lens as described, this research project was devised with grounding concepts that within the subjectivity outlined maintained a robust and ethical research design. I followed the process of reflexivity as described by Pino Gavidia and Adu to strengthen the quality of the research, checking these foci as the process developed:

I decided, after reviewing the richness of the pilot data, that it would be more practical to use both recording equipment and take notes, so in the interviews for the main study I used Otter (on my iPhone) and Teams (my page on my laptop) to audio record, transcribe and store the narratives, as well as taking my own notes. I checked both notes and transcriptions against the recordings and modified them where the computer program wasn't able to identify particular words or phrases, either because of differing accents or the amount of non- verbal vocalisation and sent these back for member checking.

3.7.1.1 Researcher reflexivity

> 'Reflexivity is considered to be authenticity with oneself, research, and
>
> audience' (Pino Gavidia & Adu, 2022, p. 3).

I am aware of the boundaried nature of my embeddedness in my socio cultural and historical context. I am also aware of my participants' social contexts. The accompanying notes I made during the interviews charted the way I see myself and the way in which I was perceived by my participants at specific points during our interaction (Pino Gavidia & Adu, 2022) – this process too leads me to the description of myself as 'becoming-cartographer'.

I hope also to show systematic sensitivity (Ravenek and Laliberte Rudman 2013) in giving my participants the time and space to relate their stories, while investigating the socio-culturally embedded nature of their appraisal of events (Dewart 2020). Some of my participants are socio-economically disadvantaged - rather than focus on this, I aimed, through thick description (Younas 2023) to:

> 'deconstruct stories into questions for knowledge co-creation, and
>
> pluralistic and multiple ways of understanding reality' (Pino Gavidia
>
> & Adu, 2022, p. 1)

In other words, I actively challenged my own assumptions and attempted not to make judgements with regard to their contexts.

3.7.2 Creation of the I-poems – background and theory

After I familiarised myself with the narratives by working through the transcripts and reading and re-reading them, I distilled the narratives into I-poems aiming to condense the participants' realities (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2006).

The I-poem is a feminist analytical approach resulting from the Listening Guide method [Brown Gilligan, 1993], designed initially to uncover and give voice to those whose stories have been silenced. Statements in the narratives containing I, me or you references, as a means to 'hear and understand' participant voices and to 'resist the urge to turn a complex story into a single linear narrative' (Koelsch, 2015) are taken out of a transcript and placed with care on a new page. This placement may be thematic or chronological in the flow of the story.

Thinking with Deleuze, I recognise the complexity and multiplicities in these narratives and that they deserve to be handled carefully. My aim is not traditional in that the content is not weighed, nor are instances of events measured and listed. Instead, the aim of the I-poem is to add emotional depth and understanding to each of the narrative contexts (Koelsch, 2015), viewing this as processual.

3.8 The main study – design and processes

3.8.1 Recruitment of participants

The main part of the study was conducted with eight self-selecting participants – volunteers who responded to a digital advertisement. I clarified participant criteria for the main study to avoid unnecessary complexity and repetitiveness and to make the

purpose of the research clearer without losing the integrity of the project. Participants were still self-selecting, but needed to show that:

1. They had had negative experiences of secondary school – to be defined by them

2. They had returned to academe – teaching in an HE institution later in life

3. They were engaged in teaching at an HE institution at the time of the research

Within these guiding criteria, all the respondents agreed that they fit the description of 'Returners to Academe' (RtAs) as defined in the recruitment letter (appendix A). As in the pilot, there were no age, gender or length of experience limits, as the manifestation of the past in the present was a key interest for me.

The first attempt at recruitment failed. As I teach at a higher education institution, I placed an anonymous advert in the University's weekly online newsletter, requesting interested parties to email a generic address kindly supplied by the communications department:

> *An ███████ based researcher is looking for participants in a narrative enquiry project. If you had a less than ideal experience of secondary school and are now in academe, do get in touch! More information will be available on request. Please reply to: [generic email:* ███████ommunications@██.ac.uk

In a discussion concerning the lack of response, a friend in academe volunteered to email a few people who, she felt, might be interested in participating. Using the text as supplied and the participant letter (appendix A), she emailed a selection of people known to her personally who then spread the word. The recruitment process then became a convenience, snowball (Parker, Scott, & Geddes, 2019) sampling event as certain people recommended others as possible participants. Four people from Africa contacted me volunteering for the study as a result of this. I then approached two colleagues at my institution suggested by the same contact, they expressed an interest to join the project; then through further snowballing two more colleagues (whom I did not know previously) joined as well.

I was not in touch directly with any potential participants until they emailed me. I received eight responses by email and followed up to arrange three meetings in person and five online via Teams. Of the four responses from Africa, two were male and two female, there were two people of colour and two white. Four participants came from the UK, with two identifying as female and two male.

There was a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, with different levels of privilege acknowledged by different participants.

I anonymised identities by asking the participants to choose pseudonyms. This was a completely free choice, although I suggested three possibilities. One chose her own specific name, of symbolic value to her.

Cyrus	State subsidised boarding school – place secured through competitive examination, mixed sex but mono-cultural
Lucie	Urban school, small fee payable – mixed sex but mono-cultural
Nathan	Urban school, mixed, low socio-economic context
Mary	Roman Catholic (relatively low cost) mixed, international fee paying school,

Table 2a: Participants and their perceptions of their educational privilege: Africa

Angie	Local, urban state school, mixed but not diverse, working and middle-class catchment area, socio-economic challenges
Simon	Local, urban state school, mixed but not culturally diverse, socio-economic challenges
Catori	Local, urban state school, mixed but not culturally diverse, in a socio-economically challenged urban area
Martin	Local, urban, state school, mixed but not culturally diverse, middle-class environment

Table 2b: Participants and their perceptions of their educational privilege: UK

Given that my father was born in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) the serendipitous opportunity to recruit participants from southern Africa presented a chance consciously to bring alongside not just my mother, but also my father's educational trajectory, something ever-present in me. As becoming cartographer, I leapt at the chance to map people's experience across the boundaries of so-called developed and less developed countries, looking at differences and similarities. The recruitment process might therefore be defined as a purposive but serendipitous, snowball sampling.

The following table shows the academic profile of the participants and a brief description of their eligibility for the study through a description of their negative experience:

Pseudonym Gender M/F	Age	Qualification	Negative experience of secondary education	Job	Location
Cyrus: M	30s	PhD	Series of challenges and events	Lecturer	Africa
Lucy: F	30s	Studying for PhD	Series of challenges and events	Librarian	Africa
Nathan: M	30s	Studying for PhD	Specific event	Lecturer	Africa
Mary: F	30s	PhD	Specific event	Lecturer	Africa
Simon: M	60s	PhD	Series of challenges and events	Lecturer	UK

Angie: F	30s	PhD	Series of challenges and events	Lecturer	UK
Martin M	60s	PhD	Series of challenges and events	Lecturer	UK
Catori: F	50s	PhD	Series of challenges and events	Lecturer	UK

Table 3: Academic profile of the main study participants

It was interesting to see that those participants in an expected learning trajectory from school to university experienced specific negative events, while others experienced a continuation of obstacles in their path into higher education.

Having established the philosophical paradigms of my project, I define it as an investigation that is more diegesis than thesis. I do not attempt to create a linear tracing of geographical place; I do intend to show something of people's experience of their places of learning.

3.8.2 Ethical considerations and interview procedures

The dynamic nature of this study is reflected in the interview procedure and the emergent nature of he I-poems and cartographs that ensued. My hope is that, in adding images as metaphors for the participants' learning and creating a

performative space through the cartographs and (later) audio to illustrate their

narratives, a greater understanding of the complexity of their experience will emerge.

This emergence is dynamic – I enter unfamiliar territory with the express purpose of

'engaging in a relationship with my surroundings in a process of continual

deterritorialisation' (Fendler, 2013), in other words, continually examining and re-

examining meaning-making, and this changes me:

> [this] 'living enquiry reveals itself as […] an organic, evolving force that
>
> drives the critical and creative tendencies of the
>
> artist/researcher/learner who is actively studying her or his own
>
> surroundings' (Fendler, 2013, p. 788).

Instruments of analysis in this study are therefore constantly in flux. I experience

temporal tension in my choice of tense to describe them. I therefore use the past

tense to describe the Main Study narrative events and to discuss the analytical

processes that developed through the research process.

3.8.2.1 Ethical considerations

Permissions were granted according to BERA Guidelines (appendix 1): participants

initially contacted me and were then sent the participant information sheet outlining

their rights to anonymity, confidentiality and to withdraw their data and consent for

any reason at any time. Signed acknowledgement of these rights and participant

understanding of the procedures, how the data would be used, and then stored and

disposed of were returned to me via email. Data is stored on my University OneDrive

cloud account and is as secure as data can be, as it is password protected and not

stored on an individual computer disk. Participants were also made aware of

possible future use of their data, I offered them the opportunity to discuss this at a relevant, future date.

3.8.2.2 Interviews or narrative events

Interviews (though I would rather describe them as encounters of potentiality) took place at a mutually convenient time in places chosen by the participants. The language used was English – although this was not the first language of two individuals, they had been through a higher education experience in that language. Four interviews took place online and were recorded using Teams, this was a matter of geographical logistics. We were all more comfortable with Teams than other forms of online interaction. I communicated further with the participants by email to discuss and amend the I-poems in a process of member-checking, not just of the information they had given but also the way in which I re-presented it.

The collection of the narratives flowed without the aid of intervention from me, as in the pilot. At times, if I did attempt to interact with a narrative, there was a sense of something interrupted. The flow was important – participants needed a neutral, safe space with no interruption and expressed a feeling of catharsis at the end. If pauses in the flow occurred naturally, an opportunity for intervention presented itself – however, these were difficult to identify as, once into the delivery, the participant would sometimes want to continue to speak and interruption would have been disrespectful. I learned, through trial and error, to negotiate the flow better until I was reasonably confident that my presence and interjections were not disadvantaging the narrative. The presence of Another – the researcher as confessor and witness during this process will be discussed at a later point.

The participant narratives exist as twenty hours of data not only as words, but also through non-verbal elements: intonation, punctuation, and pauses, adding dimensionality to my interpretation. I could not observe bodily position or gesture online, so decided instead to listen carefully to the recorded data. This process unsettled me - as I attuned to the participants' words, I felt I was drawing alongside, empathetically feeling with them the pain they were articulating. Trivelli refers to this as 'affective attunement' (Trivelli, 2015, p. 122) and suggests that turbulent feelings in the researcher, when attended to, have the potential 'to transform bodies, buildings, narratives, research questions and artifacts' (Trivelli, 2015, p. 120). For me, this enabled the rhizomatic mapping of the flow of affective intensities, represented from the I-poems as my interpretation of the power of the participants' words (appendix 2) and on the cartographs by coiled threads (appendix 3). I aim to tell the story of how these representations of the world 'emerged within this [particular individula's] stream of experience' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 41). Not only am I attuning myself to intensities – or rhizomatic patterning - but I attempt to reproduce these in order to communicate them to a wider audience.

3.8.2.3 The rhizomes underpinning the cartographs

Clandinin & Connelly describe experience as a rhizome, although they do not explicitly acknowledge this: 'experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). My cartographs chart these rhizomes using words, but I aim for something more dimensional than text on a page – they are visual, topographical, and, in so far as is possible, provocative. I'm making a visibly textured picture. I can add sound later, for

performance as a graphic score. I explain my arts-based approach in more detail in the next section.

3.9 Arts based approaches and cartography in educational research

'The language of inner experience is art' (Mateus-Barr, 2023, p. 343)

I experienced some tensions as I attempted to 'trust the process' of starting to create the cartographs. As I teach research methods at master's level, the struggle to abandon the compulsion to boundary the ideational with wrappers of definition, or the need to put things neatly in boxes that I perceive in my students, was tangible. It took me by surprise to consider that my creative approach to representing the dimensionality of the multiplicity might be taken seriously. Embedded in the processual in this research, I experienced and reflected on the challenges of becoming researcher/ becoming cartographer, growing in the process. This took courage – developing trust in my own process 'is based on a belief that something valuable will emerge when we step into the unknown' (McNiff, 1998, p. 27). I was intending to create maps of lived experience. For Deleuze, the map and the diagram are closely related – I needed to have a sense of the diagram before creating the maps/ cartographs, because 'the diagram is an abstract process between actualized structures, anticipating and creating potentialities' (Zbedik, 2019, p. 5). BY contrast, the map is 'an actual view of the virtual potential: it does not embody but points to and orients through representation' (Zbedik, 2019, p. 3).

I decided that the cartographs would represent my interpretation of the participants' I-poems, partly as a therapeutic endeavour for me, partly as I was deciding on the intensities awaiting actualization.

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I use the words cartograph rather than map as for Deleuze, it is possible for the map, if attempting to represent the terrain exactly, to be far from an informative cartographic tool (Zbedik, 2019, p. 24). This is the tension between the Western Cartographer and the Rastaman in Miller's poem. I did not want to produce a map defined by its horizontal function, but rather to enter the picture plane where the visual becomes 'a conceptual interaction with operational processes' (Zbedik, 2019, p. 25). To my mind, Sir Grayson Perry's map work achieves this aim in the experimental knowing it presents to its observer/ interactor.

Arts-based approaches require an absence of judgement and a perspective of 'wonder and discovery' (McNiff, 1998, p. 38), wherein contemplation is encouraged in a deeper interaction than with text:

> 'as we contemplate physical forms, we discover a corresponding
> structure and focus in our lives. They help us to see ourselves'
> (McNiff, 1998, p. 100)

This is my aim as becoming cartographer – to hold a mirror up to myself and the observer/ interactor with the works in order to provoke thought. The images I chose are metaphors of lived experience.

I now introduce the further layering of my research as I examine the influence of social cartography in this work and explain my focus on art created by Sir Grayson Perry.

3.9.1 Social cartography and inspiration from Sir Grayson Perry

The use of social cartography in this project aims to introduce a new learning imaginary that might be conceptualised and enacted by teachers (de Oliveira Andreotti, 2016). It highlights my role as interpreter and creator of the map, the bias and positionality I hold within my cultural framework, my awareness of myself in it and my intention to engage in reflection on the process. I'm aware that both my own and other future interpretations of this work will be complex; the effects I hope for may not be the effects I achieve.

De Oliveira Andreotti et al note the power of social cartography in their higher education context to challenge and shift 'boundaries of reason and possibilities for action' (de Oliveira Andreotti, 2016). This is encouraging, as I also aim to 'trouble' and challenge the unquestioned beliefs that seep into praxis. I discuss this in the findings section, mindful that teachers are feeling increasingly under siege.

To return to the cartographs, in depicting these learning imaginaries I am aware that I use two major cultural reference points that, for me illustrate the Deleuzean concept of immanence in contrast to the Kantian concept of transcendence. In the next section, I describe my understanding of the struggle between transcendence and immanence looking at the differences between 17th century maps made of John Bunyan's the Pilgrim's Progress and Sir Grayson Perry's tapestries and maps on display at the Royal Scottish Academy in 2023.

3.9.1.1 Immanence and transcendence

I question whether the cartographs present an individual sense of possibility occurring within the boundary of their experience, or, in contrast, whether they show possibility as beyond the limits of their experience. Smith suggests that transcendence and immanence are relative terms and not opposites (Smith, 2012, p. 271) as they cannot exist as pure theory without application. Here, I want to examine where and to what extent there are traces of the moral imperative 'what must I do' (transcendence) and the Deleuzean 'what can I (or a body) do?' These questions lie at the heart of the cartography and the answers to them are shaped by considerations of power: it may be possible to state, that in its simplest presentation, the transcendent position states 'the call to justice can never be fulfilled or satisfied, it is the experience of something that is fundamentally impossible' (Smith, 2012, p. 284); whereas the immanent position says that this power lies within humanity's gift - at the heart of our being.

Bunyan's novel 'The Pilgrim's Progress' (published in 1678) has often been portrayed as a map. The 1821 version, below, is stored digitally at Cornell University's department of 'Persuasive Cartography'. Variations of these maps are topographical, in that they attempt to show dimensionality in areas of differing heights and depths, are circular or linear in organisation, and they depict the journey of the Christian towards an understanding of God – the Other, the experience that lies outside of self.
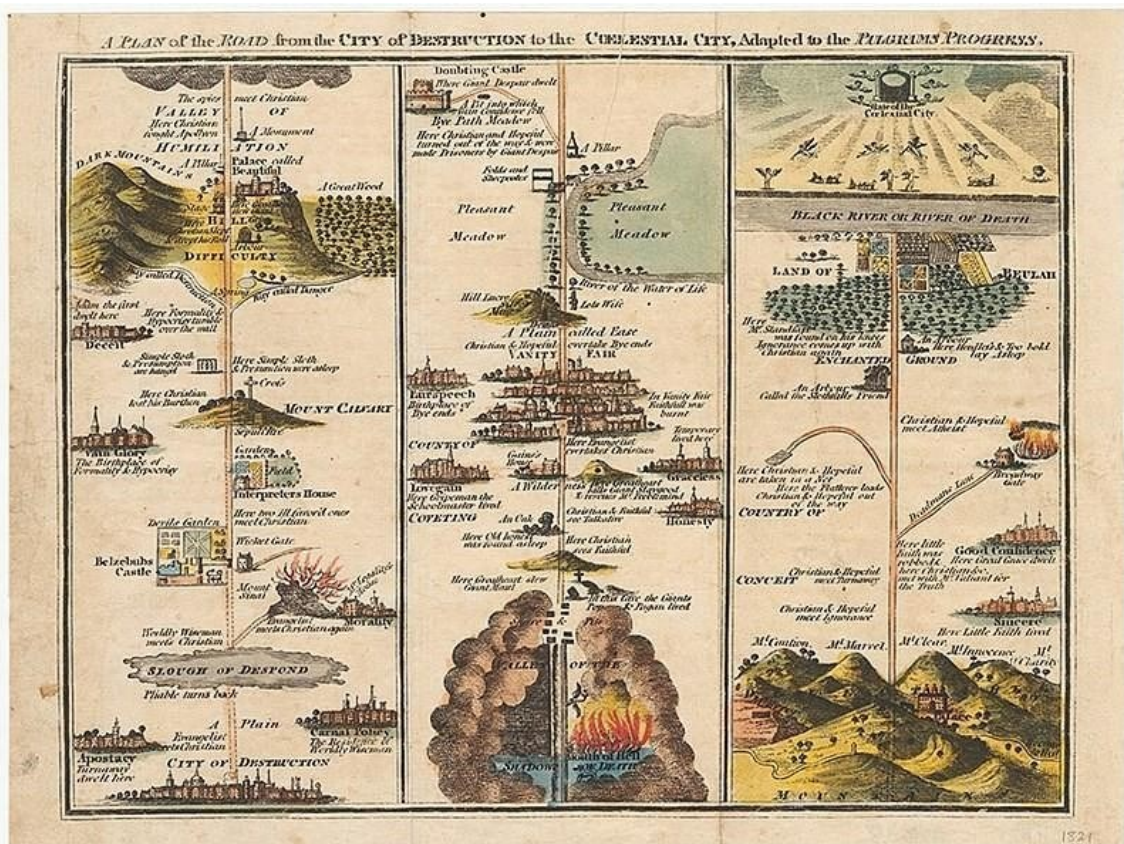
Figure 1: Map 1: The Road From the City of Destruction to the Celestial City,

(Bunyan, 1821)

Here, Bunyan's map, in common, arguably with any map, functions with intent as a

persuasive device with a religious, moral, social and political goal. The concept of a

persuasive cartography intrigues me – the purpose of my graphic cartography is

indeed persuasive in that I want people who experience it to be challenged and

moved in this presentation of lived experience. Bunyan's map is the visual version of

his story – the ascent of man, so's to speak, in going through the series of trials (life)

in order to attain both safety and reward in the heavenly city. I relate it to the

cartographer's map-making process as represented in Kei Miller's poem (referenced

throughout - (Miller, 2014)) in its linear approach to the journey. This is a map, a

vertical representation of a journey. It is a spatial arrangement on a surface, it has

not yet been hierarchically or spatially coded – it is a 'non-standardised, non-hierarchised plane of information' (Zbedik, 2019, p. 26). It is perhaps slightly unfair to regard the Bunyan map in this way, as, as an example of persuasive cartography it has a hierarchical aim, but a comparison with Sir Grayson Perry's maps, the distinction is clear.

In this version of Bunyan's map, life is a series of challenges to be overcome. Humans should aspire to heavenly status on a linear, developmental measurable pathway In the cartographs of this study, however, I'm more interested in both understanding how my participants perceive their eventual goal (a university education) and exploring the differences between their concept of 'what I must do' and 'what I can do'.. At first glance, it would seem that the Returners to Academe, the participants here, have a similar attitude to their educational trajectory. Perhaps they desire education as an escape mechanism from a life with no hope of mobility. Education has been presented to them as the Holy Grail, the Utopian ideal that will make everything better.

By contrast, Sir Grayson Perry's representations of maps are personal, not aspirational. They are assemblages of affect, expressions of contextualised attitude and experience. His maps illustrate his identity, his ways of being, and what he wants to say about the world. They're partly planned and partly spontaneous, in this, as the artist states, they are like his life. I would argue that these assemblages uncover and question what his body can do, rather than what it should do:

In presenting himself as a map, the artist invites us in to wander around aspects of his self-belief, his identity and the way in which he fortifies himself from external

influences. Perry states that A Map of Days says a lot about him and that, because much of his work contains autobiographical elements, '...it all contributes to a self portrait of sorts'. He considers map-making as 'symptomatic of our desire to make sense of the unpredictable and irrational in our lives' (Perry, 2013). In this, he creates works that 'understood self-reflexively are looking not at figurative objects, but at non-figurative images that point to a conceptual process of conveying information…' (Zbedik, 2019, p. 25).

Perry's A Map of Days is based on a map of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, but its effect and intention are entirely different. For me, it represents immanence – the artist simply is, amid his milieu. The areas illustrated depict the 'becoming-artist':
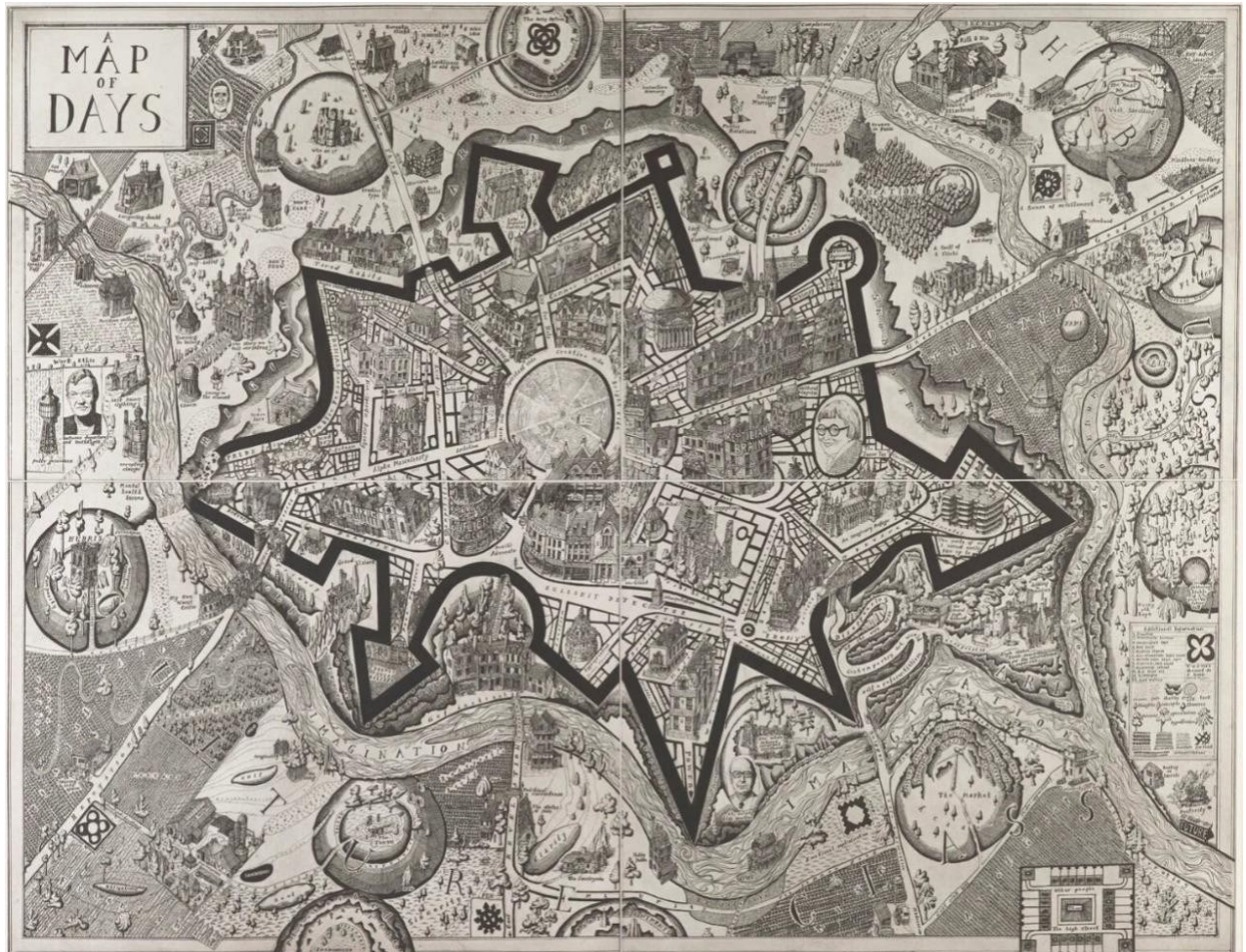
Fig. 2: A Map of Days, Sir Grayson Perry, 2013 (including his introduction to the picture). [Photos taken by Janet de Vigne with permission at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, October 2023].

A Map of Days (special edition in artist's frame), 2013

Etching
Edition of 6 plus 2 artist's proofs

This map is a kind of self-portrait as a walled town. It is a commonly held idea that there is a core self – a pearl around which our identity grows. I think this is an illusion and at our centre there is just an abstract feeling of consciousness around which our experiences accrue, forming our identity. In the centre of this walled town is an empty square. A lone figure walks across it kicking a can. A drawing like this takes a long time. It reflects what mood I was in and what was happening in my life then. Like my life, it was partly planned and partly spontaneous.

Courtesy the artist, Paragon | Contemporary Editions Ltd and Victoria Miro

Imagination is shown here as a river flowing as a medium of power through the map. It swirls around the fortified walls, almost cradling the city. At the very centre, the field of the 'abstract feeling of consciousness' where a man kicks an empty can around makes me consider what irruption may occur to take him on a line of flight elsewhere. Loosely based on one of Bunyan's maps, as stated, Perry's doesn't lead anywhere – it doesn't need to.

In the creation of my cartographs, I take intensities as I perceive them from the participants' narratives and use them on the work. These are topographical, rather than topological, as this is a primarily geographical-sensory rather than mathematical-linear approach to meaning-making. I attempt to present the points as physical features. Deleuze states that a map is

> 'entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real…
> The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is
> detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can
> be … drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art… The map
> has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves
> an alleged 'competence'.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, pp. 12-13)

My consideration of social cartography aligns with this thinking. There are multiple entry points, as these cartographs are not linear devices, they are open to interpretation and they are performable.

Perry refers to his mother in his series the Rakewell Tapestries as having a degree, but not having achieved the 'escape velocity' required to significantly change her class, due to her circumstances. I like the idea of 'escape velocity' as a line of flight

present in the rhizomatic progression of my participants' trajectories, as the issue of class is a major theme for them.

The cartographs that follow are nodes where space and time merge. The traits of the learning identity and the spaces in which instances of their fusion with justice/injustice are named as encounters – the affective is present. The cartography cannot be static, so it moves in the wind. In so doing, I try to 'bring the protagonist from the past to the present in such a way that the protagonist and the narrator eventually fuse and become one person with a shared consciousness' (Bruner, 2001, p. 27).

3.9.1.2 The evolution of the cartographs

Here, I explain my choices concerning the images represented.
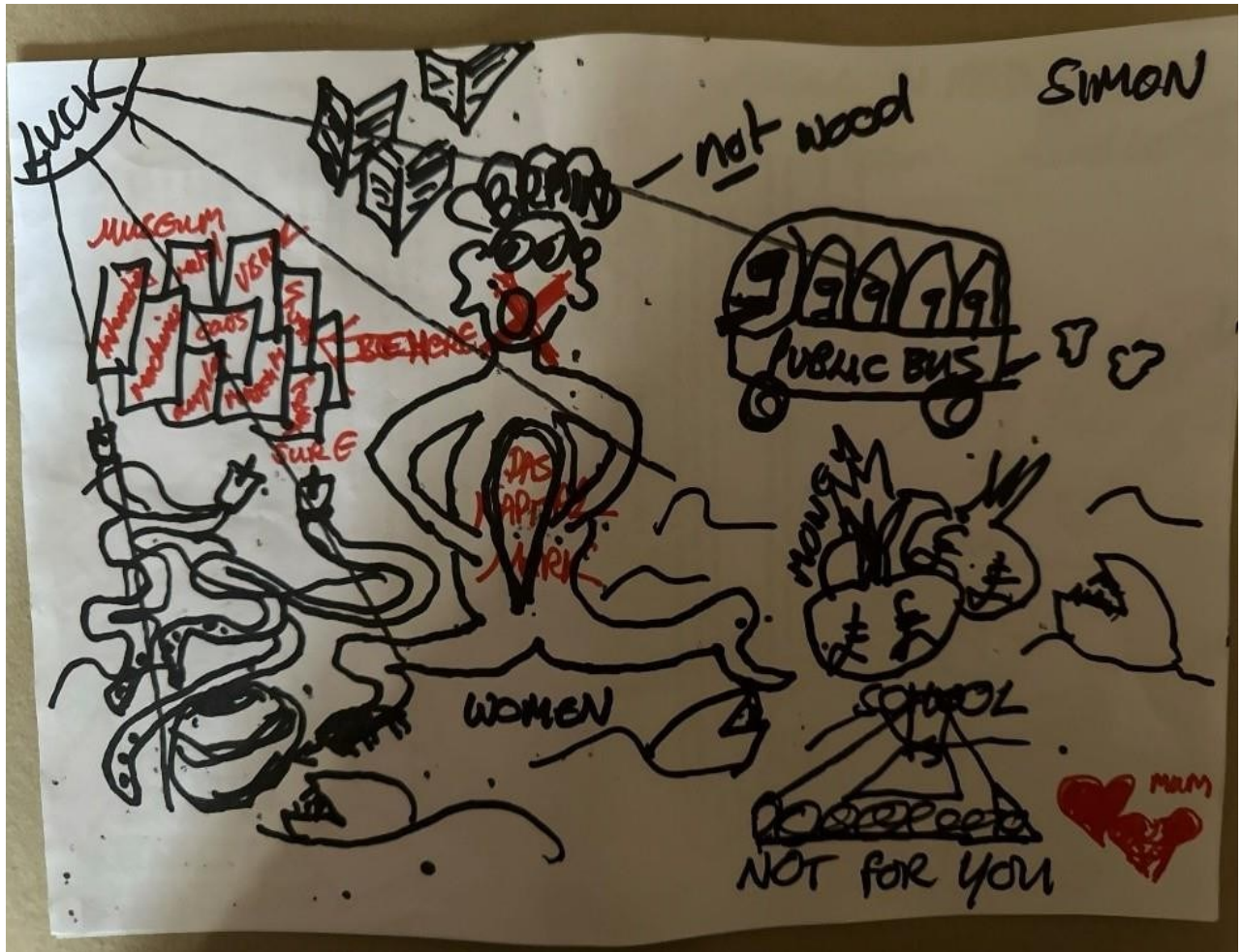
Figure 3 – first iteration of Simon's cartograph

Here, I chose to represent Simon as the central figure with a brain external to his

perception of himself. He is considered as a 'wooden top' at school. His voice is

silenced, his eyes are looking to the museum where he spends most of his time

when truanting. Belts are represented as snakes above the football towards which

his foot edges. The sharks of the desiring machine of capitalism defining his

educational trajectory lurk in the rhizomatic flow, circling his school experience. His

heart is broken because of his mother's sickness, but there is no comfort for him because school is not for him and his kind.

These images arose as I held Simon's I-poem and represent my response to his story. This process fed into the creation of all the works that I go on to explain in the findings chapter. I didn't want the images to be 'nice' – as I sit with these now, I think of Picasso's Guernica. I am not seeking however only to represent the harshness of the participants' lived experience, but also the potentialities that existed for them in their situations – hence here the role of luck as a sun warming the actualization of Simon's later experience, and the fountain of financial resources that became available when needed.

I struggle with considering myself as a visual artist and I wasn't entirely trustful of my capacity to draw my meaning. Because of this perceived lack, I decided to create collages rather than drawings. I found this to be an easier approach for several reasons: I could maintain a similarity of images throughout all the cartographs – e.g. the sharks of the desiring machine and the shape of the humans, directly inspired by Perry. As cardboard cutouts, there was a certain extra dimensionality present rather than working with purely flat surfaces. Cut-outs also enabled me to 'play' with the representations – I could move things around until the intensities I perceived settled in particular places on the paper. I also tried to re-use as much as possible, mindful of the resources I was using. I was lucky to be able to avail myself of my workplace's art rooms and the large tables necessary to lay out works like this, as well as the variety of papers.

In this way, I want to share the lived experiences of the participants with readers and listeners in provocative ways which I believe fundamentally respond to the research questions. After considering the methodological components and process of this study and explaining my choices, I now move on to present the findings by explaining the construction of the cartographs and the (in)justices they helped to uncover.

Chapter 4: Findings: the participants, their I-poems and the becoming cartographer's reflection

4.1 Introduction

> What are enduring things, as distinguished from the eternal objects,
>
> such as colour and shape? How are they possible? What is their
>
> status and meaning in the universe? (Dombrowski, 2024, p. 129)

In this chapter, I outline the participants' profiles, exploring the temporality of the narratives and noting their affective intensities. I find myself struggling again to decide which tenses to use – as their use of the present manifests the immediacy of affect in these narratives.

The cartograph solves this problem. The images assembled here may be interpreted in whatever order the observer chooses. It is easier to take in an image at once in the present than it is to process text. The cartographs here are rhizomes – they are multiplicities to be interrogated. The rhizomes become assemblages through momentum and 'drag' – the co-efficient of drag in fluid dynamics quantifies the resistance of an object in fluid. Here I move this principle of physics into the flow of affect, the rhizome as it is dynamic moves in directions driven by engagement with experiences and collects aspects of these. These cartographs are of course my representations of lived experience – they are rhizomes of rhizomes.

'Seeing code 'as folded into the rhizome and unfolded into art' (Zbedik, 2019, p. 11) I explore the desiring machine, affect and the rhizome in the following pages, explaining the presentation of these in the cartographs. I uncover issues of social injustice alongside and inseparable from direct instances of justice in the

participants' lived experience as narrated to me. I identify two particular forms of justice – a justice of affect and a justice of luck as contributions to knowledge, as well as centring my findings around the cartographs depicting the narratives. Lastly, I look at the future development of the cartogprahs into graphic scores for performance in a further attempt to increase their sensory dimensionaility.

I re-presEnt (move them into exteriority by the depiction of lived experience), and re-prEsent (bring them into the present - considering the enduring presence of these narratives) as becoming cartographer, firstly in a vignette offering an holistic glimpse of the participants, followed by a selection of lines from their individual I-poems (available in Appendix 2 in their entirety). I then add observations on the I-poems as word-based interpretations by me, as becoming-cartographer of their lived experience. I identify in words the following assemblages as themes: traits of individual learning identities and serendipitous events, instances of social (in)justice and their aftermath, and relationships between teacher and student. To re cap, I aim to emphasise the becoming-ness of the I-poems and the emergent nature of lived experience by increasing the dimensionality of the text: 'texts fix events, while by nature process is emergent and cannot be fixed' (Gatt, 2015, p. 349) in a process of 'entextualisation' (Baumann & Briggs, 1990). By this, I mean that in engaging in the process of poeisis by creating the I-poems, I 'stress the way poetic patterning extracts discourse from particular speech events and explore its relationship to a diversity of social settings', aiming 'toward illuminating the larger systemic structures in which performances play a constitutive role; and toward linking performances with other modes of language use' (Baumann & Briggs, 1990, p. 67). My aim is to show the complexity of the immanence of experience in an assemblage. I want to move

educators – teachers and teacher trainers – as I have been moved, to cause them to reflect and 'therefore consciously decide that they will interact with the world in a different manner' (Flynn & Tinius, 2015, p. 3). Through the cartographs then, I hope to 'wear away the fixed narrative of self and other, identity and difference, and open the spaces in between where new insights may be generated' (Nicholson, 2014, p. 77)

I now introduce the eight participants, their I-poems and the cartographs, with a reflection after each identifying themes discussed in chapter 2.

4.2 The participants, their I-poems and the cartographs

I now present the participants in vignette form with a selection from their I-poem, a reflection and the evolving cartographs. For me, images are distilled from the affective charges I feel as I walk alongside these texts. . I am able to move easily between image and text – in a way, this si a form of synesthesia, but it is also a fusion of text as symbol with image as symbol – an exercise in semiotic synthesis, allowing me to play with the temporal and the spatial representation (in both its senses).

4.2.1 Catori's story – contained learning

Catori grew up in the UK in a small, beautiful rural setting, as the 'late' baby of the family. At the age of nine, her mother passed away, leaving her in the care of her father. Her older siblings moved away and lost contact. Her father, fearing the possible negative effect on her of his absence, abandoned the idea of school as a way of gaining a useful education, and push her into extra- curricular learning. Catori

was taught to dance and play an instrument, becoming a national champion in both her disciplines. This meant that as a young teenager she was out every night until 22:00 at competitions and exhausted during the day, when (as a protective measure) her father would lock her in. She was not permitted to read, study or do homework either in the house or with friends. Her schoolwork inevitably suffered – having had very high marks at primary school, she failed all her secondary exams. One day, discovering by chance that the house was unlocked, she managed to get out to join the local library. There, she discovered a love of reading and access to all the classics, a love that she hid from her father along with the books themselves.

Catori credits her conversion to Christianity as having given her the courage to face her father and ask that he not lock her in. She was then able to apply to do a two-year course at Bible college, which was enough to enable her to go on to study for a teaching qualification. This then led to an opportunity to do a master's, and from there, to a PhD. Catori is now a senior lecturer in language education with a desire to improve teaching and classroom understanding in an ITE setting.

4.2.1.1 Selections from Catori's I-poem

I was quite excited going to secondary because primary school was

very successful

…when I moved up to the bigger high school, Oh my God, I absolutely

hated it. I guess the landscape around the school affected that too.

Other teachers were like the environment.

I blamed myself. I'm the failure and I don't have the intellect and my

dad's favourite name for me was stupid.

I couldn't satisfy the damage that school did to me. I couldn't.

That's still a scar that you carry.

4.2.1.2 Researcher reflection

A self-confessed introvert, Catori exhibits several traits of the enabling learning

identity here: determination, the ability to focus (discipline) and the flexibility to grasp

opportunities as they arise. She was not trained in positive visualisation, but states

that she practised this to a startling degree. Her determination is rhizomatic – it is

frustrated by her father's negative beliefs about education, her awareness of the

impact of the environment on her learning, and her physical exhaustion. Where

relationships are concerned, she experiences cruelty and kindness at the hands of

different teachers. An awareness of her considerable ability is not carried across

disciplines, presumably because of a lack of communication between subject

teachers, and a lack of knowledge and/ or understanding of her activities outside

school. In the maths class particularly she deliberately provokes the teacher by

asking silly questions. Able to escape her restrictive home environment, it is the local

library that becomes a safe and revelatory place, where knowledge of the outside

world enables her to evaluate her own. Through the serendipitous events of coming

to faith, interacting with 'people who see beyond' and taking risks (asking for typing

classes, applying for Bible college) she is able to set herself an educational trajectory

leading to a PhD and a passion for learners unable to engage with the system. She

wanted the red gown, not at the beginning, but later as a symbol of the ultimate educational achievement.

4.2.1.3 Cartograph 1: Catori

Catori's cartograph shows her emergent identity (the 'becoming Catori' as buried under the processes here. Her words reveal her sense of a lack of worth and the scar of her schooling. The frame of her meaning making is hollow (yellow), the social justice aspects she has experienced in red constrain her movement (around her legs). The negative, harsh voices of the desiring machines surround her – her I-poem lines emerge from these. In later iterations of the cartographs, I give these desiring machines teeth. The string of affect connects her rhizomatically to the researcher (a consistent pink presence). The mobius strip of interiority and exteriority cuts across her neck – this begs questions about the rhizomatic iteration

of her lived experience and its movement between the virtual and the actual. The 'becoming Catori' is however in the frame, her desire for the red robe breaks the lines of affect and meaning-making. Her experiences of justice are represented here – she is not recognized as a person with a voice, her environment is a stark reminder of distributional injustice, she is associated with the ones who will not succeed.

4.2.2 Mary's story: the subjectivity of detachment and a teacher vendetta

Mary grew up in a relatively privileged home in Africa and was educated in a (comparatively) low cost, mixed socio-economic, racial and cultural private school run by a Christian denomination. As the youngest child of a large family, she was largely left to her own devices and developed ideas around leadership based on her observation of her father, a leading figure in the judiciary – he was 'emotionally separate'. Mary had a serious traffic accident in her last year at primary school and this affected her in ways she wasn't fully aware of – she says she became more socially isolated as a consequence. She developed conscious strategies for learning. Mary did very well at school, partly because of people's concern about her accident and the change in her marks. With the extra attention, she worked hard and advanced from 5th or 6th to being 2nd in the class. When one of her close friends died unexpectedly, she became head girl. The impact of her friend's death was not fully understood by Mary or the people around her; this event needed more than one assembly to enable the school to cope with it.

Mary decided on chemistry because her aunt, who died, had been a teacher of this subject. She initially worked hard to honour her memory, but then spent time away

from chemistry. As a fifteen year old, Mary clashed with the deputy head - their concepts of what leadership might entail conflicted, and Mary corrected her twice in front of the class. Mary became the first head girl ever not to receive the prize for service to the school at the end of the year as a direct consequence of this and her self-confessed insular approach to the role. Her mother, a teacher at the school, told her the staff did not agree with this decision, made solely by the deputy head with whom she had clashed. This knocked Mary's confidence very badly. The intensity of this is tangible in her I- poem.

Mary took some time out from academe after her first degree, considering taking up ministry. After some years she felt her subject calling to her – her love for chemistry drew her back into studying and ultimately into academe.

4.2.2.1 Selections from Mary's I-poem

> Yeah, I'm quite hard working and you know very happy to be
>> reasonably successful. And then we moved city in the in my last
>> year of primary school.

> I guess it had a bit of an impact on me.

> I think I just became slightly more socially isolated, not radically but just
>> a little bit.

> I kind of misunderstood boundaries… I had to somehow isolate myself
>> from the people who are now prefects, who are, who are my
>> friends, because I had to leave them.

I knew the rules. I knew how to navigate it. I knew how to be relatively

   successful in that space.

Until I wasn't.

(full text in Appendix 2, Mary.)

4.2.2.2 Researcher reflection

A self-confessed introvert, Mary is able to focus and apply herself to her work,
initially because of the aunt whose memory she wants to honour. This is an example
of affective motivation that she can't rationalise: 'kids are weird'. Mary experiences
two events that further isolate her, and unconsciously copies her father's detached
style of leadership. She is traumatised by the car accident and the death of her
friend as her reactions seem to suggest. No teacher seems to see beyond the
classroom, so she is punished by the Deputy Head. There is a lack of holistic
recognition of the developing human here, and active cruelty. The wound caused by
the injustice of this lack of recognition is present. There is no comfort in the space – it
is merely 'functional'. Serendipitous events for Mary are self-instigated – she
generates the impetus for her moves, but these are lines of flight as she doesn't
know where they will take her.
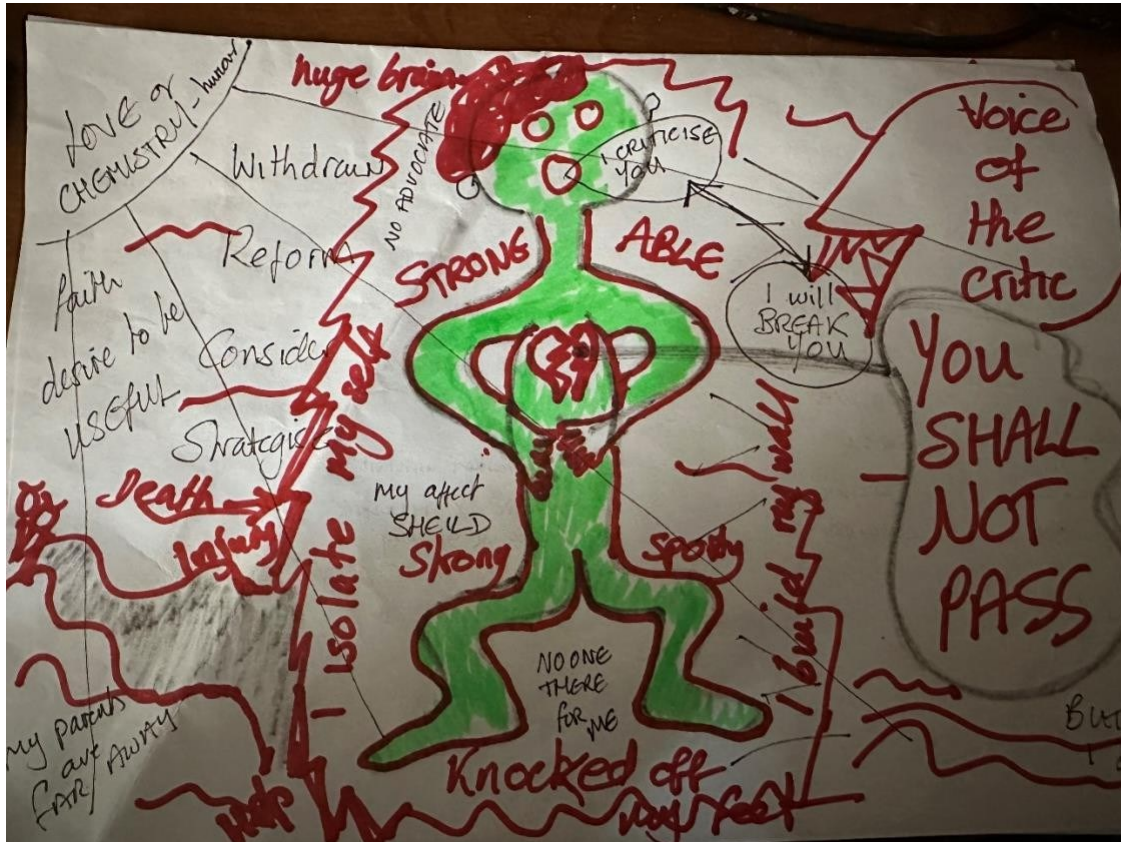
4.2.2.3 Cartograph 2: Mary

This iteration of Mary's cartograph shows her building a shield around herself, misspelled. It can't protect here however from the voice of the critical teacher who aims to take her down a peg or two, and perhaps unwittingly, breaks her. Mary's heart is broken – despite the hugely positive characteristics she shows, her identity is not appreciated. Death appears as a small notice, when it contributes to her broken heartedness. No-one sees her needs as a developing human. Her parents are at the end of a long path in the distance, despite being physically present. There's no sense in which they contribute to healing mechanisms or comfort. Mary continues to withdraw. Despite her sporting and intellectual strengths, she is abandoned, presumably as a child who is 'doing OK' and yet her needs drive her to

build a wall – this coping strategy is not understood – and through relationship again she is very badly damaged.

4.2.3 Simon's story: from 'wooden top' to activist to doctor of education

Simon grew up in a working-class family in the UK and spent more than half of his school life playing truant. His family went into trade and he was expected to do the same, eventually being accepted as an apprentice mechanic. His mother was mentally ill and he is aware of non-academic opportunities offered to him – but these were never discussed with him. He was captain of the school football team. No-one seems to have noticed or done anything about his absences until his last year at school. He remembers some kind of ability streaming in his third year of secondary education and being referred to, together with the whole class, as the 'wooden tops'. He became aware that the classes had been streamed according to ability, but also class – the middle-class children disappeared.

He remembers two kind teachers. He got an A for his metalwork exam and left school with just that one qualification. He remembers senseless violence from many teachers at school, no one listening or giving a child space to articulate their thoughts. The atmosphere was one of fear.

After leaving school, Simon passed the interview and exam to become an apprentice mechanic. From here, as he now had family responsibilities and needed to earn more money, he went on to work on the buses as a mechanic and then a driver. At this point he read everything he could during breaks. By chance, having joined a political party, he was told about an adult educational institution where they would prepare working-class students for university. He was awarded a funded place at

this - 'like a public school for working-class people' - and with other amounts of money from various sources, he went on from his first degree to study for a master's in community education. He discovered he was dyslexic fairly recently.

Simon is very aware of the class struggle in education and is now on the board of the college that gave him access to university. When he started to write about community education as a new graduate, he was shown an advert for a teaching fellowship at a university. This position funded his PhD. A sense of responsibility, awareness of the (in)justices of class and a drive for change drive the rhizome of this life.

4.2.3.1 Selection from Simon's I-poem

> Yeah, I got the belt. I've got a memory of at least two or three times a
> > week - on the hand.
>
> I would have said I would have probably missed half my schooling. And
> > it started in primary school.
>
> I just I think in some ways my development was arrested and I ended
> > up isolating myself I suppose.
>
> I remember one teacher in particular who, you know, took the time to
> > kind of be loving and kind
>
> …in my experience, those teachers were few and far between.

There was something about a teacher talking about all these guys who

were the wooden tops in class - I remember thinking what does he

mean by wooden? … he was talking about the 'thick' ones...

I didn't feel like the school had a great expectation of me.

It was a torture.

(full text in Appendix 2, Simon)

4.2.3.2 Researcher reflection

Serendipitous events play the largest role in Simon's rhizome. If he hadn't accepted

that invitation to the football and met up with the people that night, if he hadn't taken

a job on the buses… If he hadn't filled in the form… It was his responsibility to

recognise and act on these. There is no recognition of him as a developing individual

at his school – he is written off as a 'wooden top'. This lack remains with him – he

blames himself for his lack of engagement. He endures sadism, however the positive

relationships he has with teachers cause him to take responsibility for himself. He

experiences explicit recognitional and associational injustice that is class-based in

part, and is also influenced by environmental factors – his mother's illness and the

learnscape. He remarks on the beauty of the college and the ways in which it

enables learning – and the ways in which more advantaged students feared him and

his fellows at university.
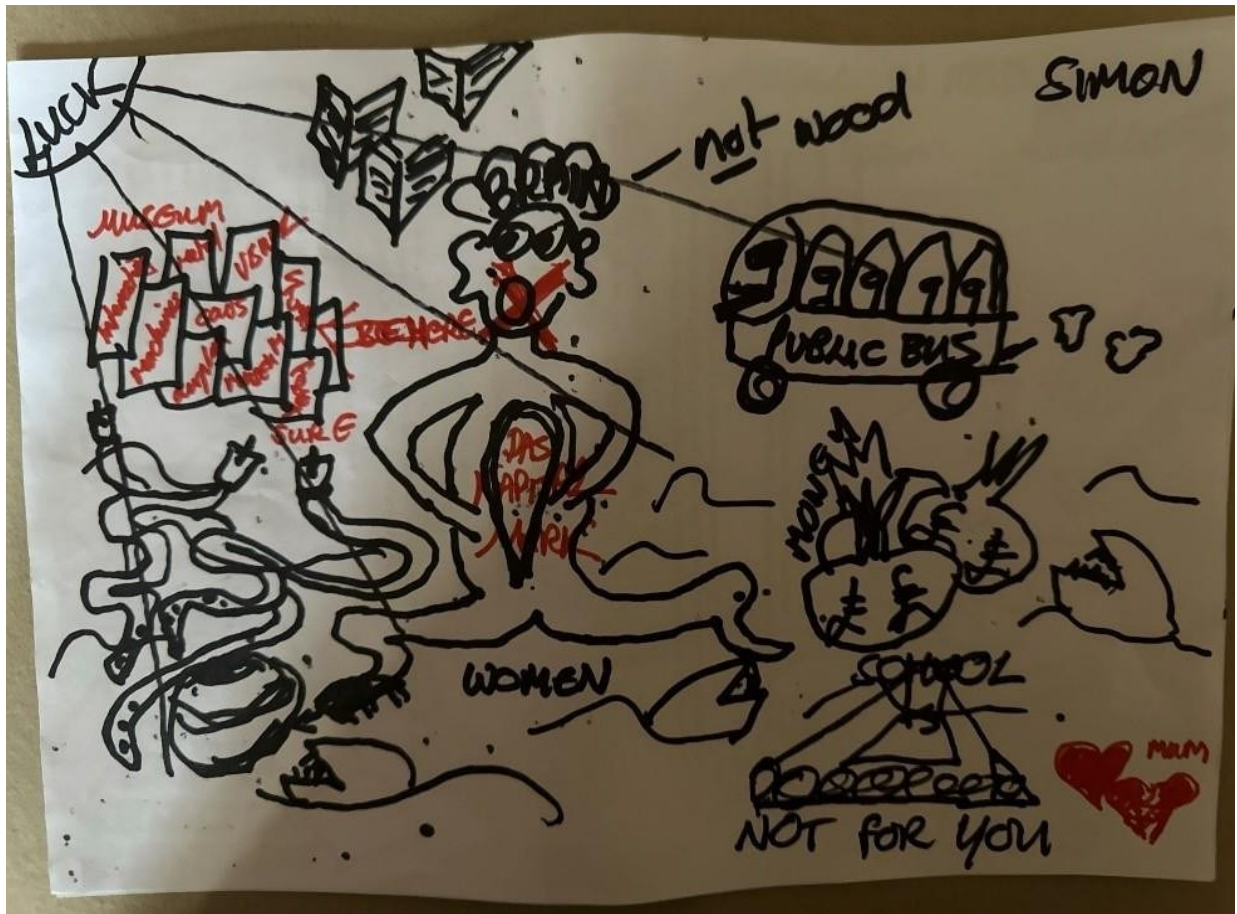
4.2.3.3 Cartograph 3: Simon

I repeat this cartograph from the previous chapter. Here, I am experimenting with

shapes and colour, confining myself to black and red as powerfully symbolic of the

power of the institution and the person. Simon looks to the museum, but his books

fly away from him due to his dyslexia and lack of engagement at school. The belts

used to threaten punishment at his school become snakes, surrounding his foot

connection to the ball. He is told that school is not for him while the sharks – the

desiring machines – code his agentic capacity. The public bus is a vehicle

presenting him with the idea that his head is not made of wood, but his brain

remains outside his head as he is warmed in the rays of serendipity.

4.2.4 Lucie – the 'hustler girl' and the red-robe

Lucie loved learning from the beginning. Born into urban poverty in Africa, she had a grandmother who was determined that all her children should get an education, regularly saying 'those who sleep won't reap'. As a young child, Lucie saw a lady, also a person of colour, on television in the red robe of a PhD. This red robe became an image that pushed her on, into PhD study, although by no means by a straight path.

Lucie did well - at her primary school two or three children on an iron chair and desk designed for one was considered normal - but as the eldest had to feed and dress all her younger siblings before she could travel across town to her secondary school. Her country was going through a revolution and she regularly dodged bullets to get to classes. She was among six or so students who made it to school regularly during this time. Her teacher said to them 'if you are here, I will teach you'. Falling pregnant in her last year, this was successfully hidden by her family, as she would have lost her chance for schooling otherwise. She returned to repeat the year. Here she didn't get high marks but scored enough to be given a teaching job in an unpopular place. During her time teaching, she learned about an access programme to university and succeeded in gaining a place. Here she experienced white, male teachers with English as the medium of instruction – a language she barely understood yet was expected to write; and typing assignments on the computer – she'd never seen one before. Through tears and gritted teeth, having secured full funding and a job in the university library, she made it through a Master's.

Some of her family members were also teachers, but college rather than university educated. Inspired by her example, they went back to university. Others followed.

Lucie now works in a university library, helping students like herself access academic literacy. She is studying for a PhD – her desire for the red robe is strong as ever - and views her life as a symbol of hope for the young people living in her area. Lucie sees education as the thing that 'they can't take away from you'. She maintains her large family.

4.2.4.1 Selection from Lucie's I-poem

> …these seats and desks were joined together by metal – you couldn't
>> move it and I hated this…

> I started school very late in years – at 8, not 6 - because at the time no
>> one was working at home and my grandmother was working as a
>> maid in the Indian community family.

> I heard my grandmother's voice: those who sleep don't reap…

> …being at school was not safe…

> I know it was just a big dream that maybe I could also become a
>> teacher…

> My motivation came when I was watching TV one day and saw a young
>> woman on the news wearing a red gown.

I was motivated to be like her… my desire was so strong because I was

thinking about what comes with it and that it is a lifetime

achievement.

I was always obsessed with a better life for myself.

4.2.4.2 Researcher reflection

Lucie has a lighthouse of desire burning inside her that illuminates everything she

does. She is determined to get an education: 'they can't take than away from you'

and strongly influenced by her grandmother's voice: 'those who sleep, don't reap…'.

Lucie overcomes distributional injustices that manifest themselves as existential

threats (the bullets and the job in the school where no other teachers will go). Her

lack of experience with a computer and with English as medium of instruction might

also fall into this category, but the recognitional and associational aspects of these

are ignored by the university in a 'sink or swim' strategy. Lucie's determination wins

the day. Unlike the other participants, her goal was always the PhD red gown. She

rises above an overwhelming lack of resources, the birth of two children, negotiating

relationships and the death of her husband and keeps going. She stands like a

lighthouse now in community, encouraging everyone to engage with education.
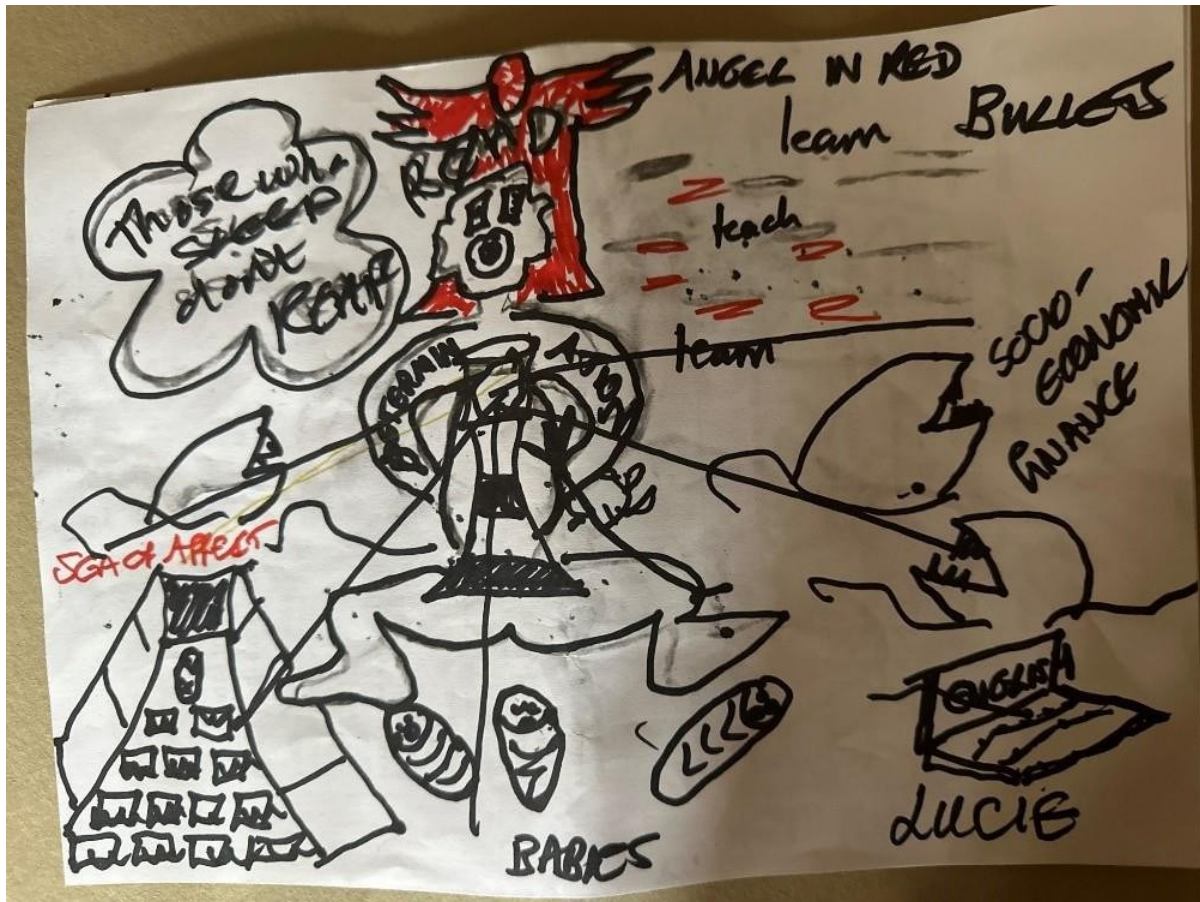
4.2.4.3 Cartograph 4: Lucie

Again in the Basquiat style of Simon's pre-cartograph, this pre-cartograph illustrates the pooling of intensities in me, the researcher. I felt the outside impact of Lucie's grandmother's words constantly there in her foreground, I felt the present of the desiring machine of capitalism coding her experience of university – this time, the shark has teeth and sits above the computer where she is expected to write in English as well as develop technological literacy in minutes. Behind her mind stands the red-gowned angel telling her to read. The bullets whipping past her on the way to school are symbols of the exposure to danger she endures in order to learn – not just on the way to school, but in the demands that the system puts upon her. The sea of affect holds the small confined rectangle of her schooling and her love for her

babies, brought up by family and therefore not preventing her rise… but at what cost to them? The other sharks – the desiring machines of capitalism – roam the rhizome, waiting to bite, but the light from her internal lighthouse overcomes and lifts her out of the water.

4.2.5 Martin's story: adult versus children's perspectives

Martin was born into a middle-class, affluent family in the UK, but he still feels he was never allowed to do what he really wanted to do with his life – although, in his eyes, his sister was. He has just retired. Martin wanted to be a climber and feels he could have made it a career. His father was a university lecturer, but was remote. Martin had to move primary schools – he loved his school, but his father felt it was not academic enough. He didn't get into the school his father wanted and was conscious that he hadn't performed at the interview in the way his father would have liked. Martin felt that the second school was deliberately designed to penalise children for being children – although the windows were huge, the walls were too high for a child to see out of them. His anger even now is tangible.

There was no chance of movement in the classrooms, the desks and chairs were not merely attached, but one structure, with the desks nailed to the floor in rows. His secondary school was hard and cold and grey.

Martin was not a strategic learner. He went for languages as they interested him, but he had no idea how to study and develop his learning, particularly at exam time. He had a friend whose father was more engaged - this friend taught Martin to study systematically. Martin was able to join in on this and did well, going on to university

to read law. Although he passed his undergraduate degree, he went on to travel and therefore took a qualification in teaching English to speakers of other languages.

He states he wasn't good enough at rugby to be noticed, but not bad enough to attract attention. In his last years at secondary school, Martin joined a military cadets' club, where he was able to do things outside. There was a week away camping where certain older boys were bullying the younger ones. Having heard about the so-called initiation rites, a few of the boys ran away for the Saturday night. Two nights later they returned – the camp was in uproar. The teachers couldn't grasp their perspective - Martin recalls how one of them looked at the principal bully, back to him and said 'you were afraid of that?

Martin drifted into teaching and became an expert in language education. He is a Marxist and believes that language is a tool equally of oppression and freedom.

4.2.5.1 Selection from Martin's I-poem

I remember the smell of darkness.

Generally I felt a bit of a failure at school. I didn't really know what was
    going on

… we got told off. We didn't have time to think.

I didn't know what the fuck we were doing from the start.

I do remember, we had this one teacher in primary seven – he'd been
    a pilot, a bomber in an air raid during the, during the war. And he'd
    just tell us stories.…it was great

(Full text in Appendix 2, Martin)

4.2.5.2 Researcher reflection

Martin stumbles through – he is able, but not strategic. His most significant serendipitous event is the encounter with the friend who models how to study. There is no recognition of who he is or his needs at home or at school. His relationship with his father is not helpful, and he negotiates the path of least resistance through school. His anger at the injustices he experienced with the teaching methodologies of the art teacher and the history teacher is present and tangible and arise from his invisibility as a person with a voice. He notes with some passion the lack of awareness of a child's perspective on the bullying in which the teachers were complicit. There is a sense here that he really 'didn't know what was going on' – purposes and aims and relevance of learning left unexplained – the desiring machines of the system rolling on relentless, not taking account in any sense of him. Positive experience comes from more active ways of engaging: performing Shakespeare in English class (Romeo and Juliet with his girlfriend) and listening to stories. There's a lack of recognition a sense of a learnscape that still angers him: 'I remember the smell of darkness', set in opposition to the positive experience at his first primary school.
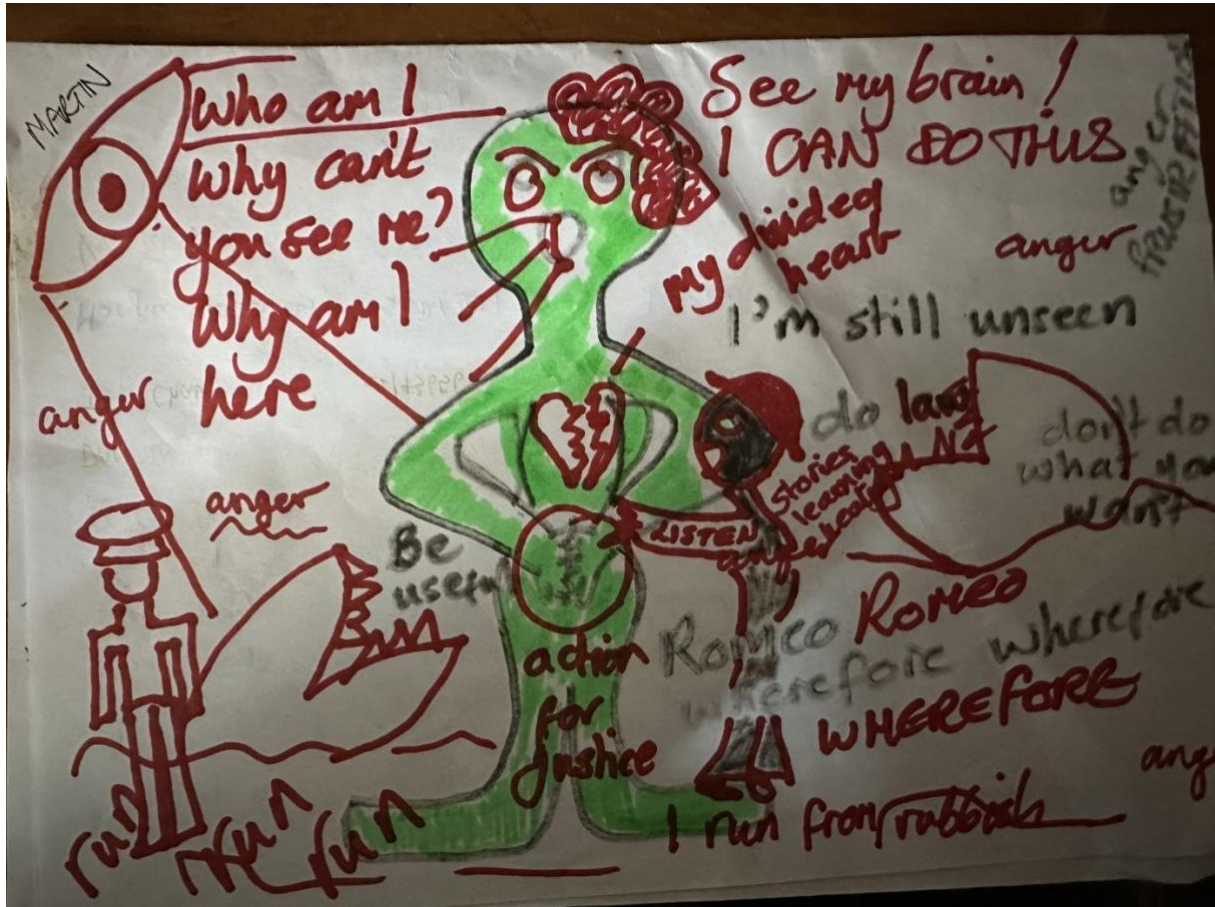
4.2.5.3 Cartograph 5: Martin

This iteration of Martin's cartograph shows him angry, because he is not seen for who he is. His skills are ignored, his identity dismissed – he doesn't stand out, he's in the middle. The things that communicate to him are the human interactions – acting out Romeo and Juliet, listening to stories told by a kind teacher. The desiring machines require him to be useful, to study – the rinse and repeat model, rather than the deep learning that would develop him as an individual. He experiences this at home and at school. His uncomprehending frustration is palpable. He runs from the bullying in the camp, removing himself from the fear. Adults are outside this picture, not answering his questions. He may as well be invisible.

4.2.6 Angie's story: school as escape route, the classroom as a learning oasis, an absence of care and the serendipity of music

Angie was brought up by her mother on a council estate in a town in the UK where drinking, drugs and under age pregnancy were normal. Her parents split up when she was very young and this remained a point of contention between her and her mother. Angie's school had an atmosphere of violence – 'there was always something going on', so the classroom became a refuge for her – an oasis of learning. She experienced individual teacher hatred at both primary and secondary school and her view of school is that it is toxic..

Angie was very aware of injustice - classism and sexism in particular. By the second year, classes were streamed – she describes herself as being accepted by the middle-class children because they could copy her homework; and losing contact with the working-class kids, diverted by the prevalent rave culture. She says there was no care – students were abusive towards staff, who got into their cars and closed the doors at 5pm. One of her primary school cohort had a miscarriage at the age of 11.

Angie made friends with a middle-class girl - E. This relationship resulted in two things: firstly, E took Angie to the library and showed her how to apply for university. Angie would never have done this alone – she had no idea how, nor even that it needed to be done. Secondly, E caused conflict over the exam results. Angie had done very well, E less so. Her mother wrote to the school to complain – how was it that this working-class child with a cleaner for a mother had done better than her

child? She claimed bias. E accused Angie of having copied her work and only one teacher believed that she hadn't – the chemistry teacher.

Angie listened to music and followed up the leads she heard in the songs, developing a voracious reading habit. There were no books at home so she went to the local cheap bookstore and read everything from Camus to the Marquis de Sade. She decided to study physics for her university entry exams but had to have extra classes as she hadn't studied it before. The teachers supported her in this. To study chemistry at higher level, she and a few of the other children had to be taken to another school by taxi.

Angie had good marks and was accepted but she chose to go to a university that might be a little kinder to people of her background. Her father was supporting her, but at a crucial moment he withdrew. She took him to court, winning the case, but the stress of this affected her marks. She went on to a master's in research methods and this prepared her for her PhD. She feels her life has been full of serendipity. Working in community education all over the world, she can't see the point of school, although it offered her a way out.

4.2.6.1 Selection from Angie's I-poem

> I went to a terrible school
>
> They never wanted to teach you or anything like that
>
> …actually class was a rescue – you can just concentrate on what it is
>> you're

wanting to do

…so I became the dux medallist and there was a complaint – how can

a girl with a cleaner for a mother, from a single parent household

be the dux medallist? There must be some sort of bias or

something.

When I look back on school, I think I see it as absolutely toxic. I see it

as really really toxic. I think the teachers should all go back to

university and be retrained.

(Full text in Appendix 2, Angie)

4.2.6.2 Researcher reflection

Angie experiences recognitional and associational injustices, but hand in hand with

positive instances of justice. These arise from relationships – class- prejudice among

teachers who refused to 'see' her in conflict with teachers who recognised her

potential. Although she describes her school as 'toxic', it did provide her with the

opportunity to study physics and chemistry. Angie is able to focus in class and

engage in learning – it's as though she creates another world where she goes to

learn. Her desire to learn is fuel for her learning. Her serendipitous events are firstly

a chance conversation with a teacher, who recognises the ways she uses music this

to educate herself – to buy and read all the books mentioned in the songs. Reading

so voraciously 'outside the box' enables her to overcome class-based injustice in the

classroom. The encounter with her friend who shows her how to apply for university

is another serendipitous event. Angie burns with a desire to learn for learning's sake, but despite her achievements, she describes school as toxic.
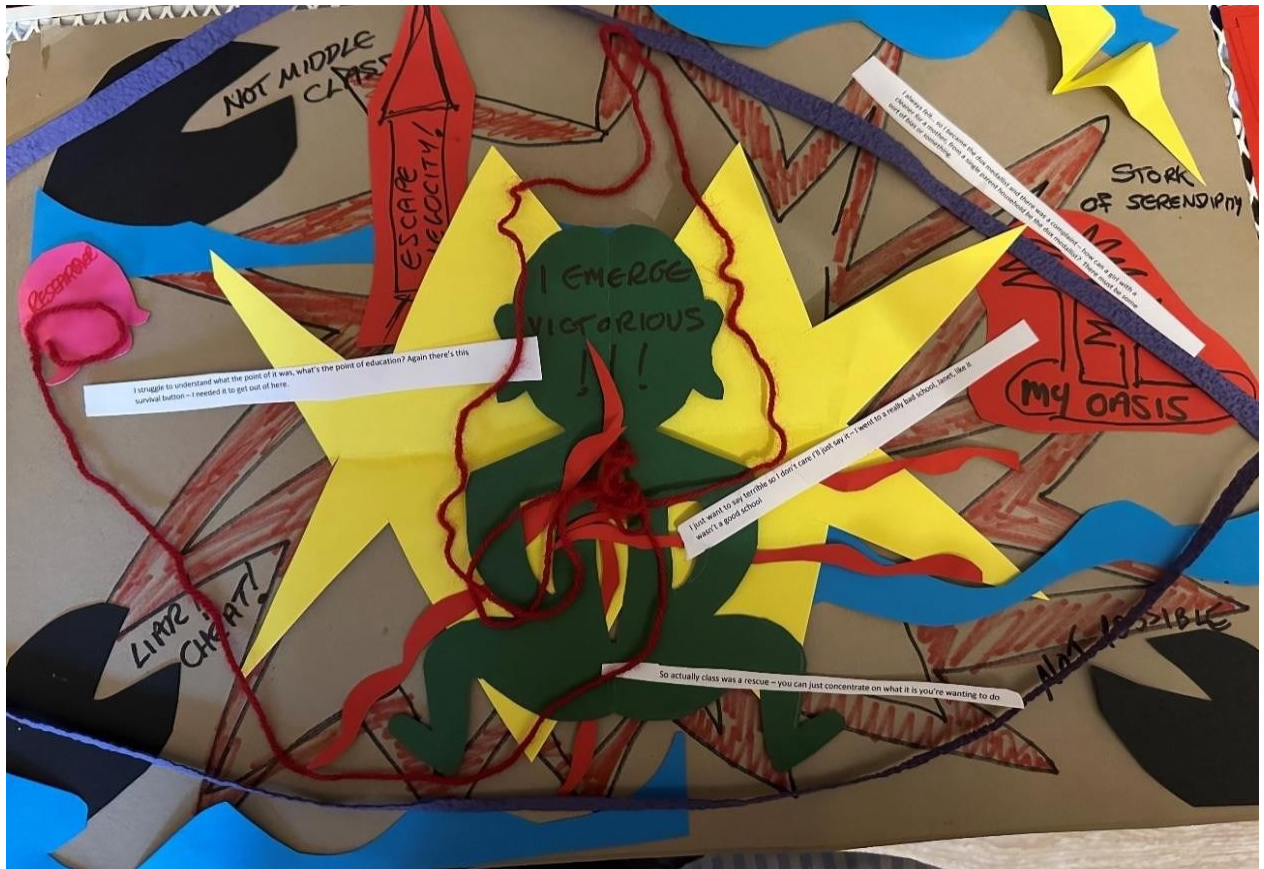
4.2.6.3 Cartograph 6: Angie

Angie's cartograph shows her exploding out of her meaning making (yellow) and lived experience of social (in)justices as rhizomes lead into her emerging identity (green) – the 'becoming Angie'. Around her the negative voices scream, but she has a learning oasis and the 'stork of serendipity' to rely on. She achieves escape velocity (as her I-poem articulates) by 'getting out of there'. The way she is coded by the design machine mean that she too is unseen, associated with poverty, not recognized and punished for moving out of her categorization.

The mobius strip material cuts across her learning oasis in the interiority and exteriority of her learning experiences; the red string of affect in the meaning- making of her experience connects to the mouth of the researcher.

4.2.7 Nathan's story: languages, accidents, invisibility and ritual humiliation

Nathan was born into a white, lower middle/ working-class family in Africa who were technically rather than academically oriented. At primary school he was very conscious of his teachers – these relationships seem to have been key features of his education. He says there was one nice teacher. He was conscious of his size – he was a big boy and sitting on the floor was an issue because he took up more space than the other children. Nathan was diagnosed with ADD just last year and can focus now for the first time in his life. He needs to have something else happening while he's studying – the radio or TV. He was labelled as not wanting to learn partly because he was a boy. He describes himself as an introvert, dreamy – physically present but otherwise not there – for him, school was only about memorising stuff.

High school was difficult for Nathan – in some classes he did not feel welcome, not because he couldn't do the subject, but because the teaching and the teacher did not reach him. He played truant often. Humiliation in the classroom is a major feature of his narrative. He knew he could work hard and get good marks – he went from being a 60 student to a 70-80 at one point, because 'if they say I can't, I'll show them…' With extra curricular support particularly from the biology teacher (out of hours – he describes her as excellent) he went on to do very well.

There was a lot of violence in this mixed secondary school. Everyone was working-class, some were the 'poorest of the poor'. Nathan describes it as an exercise in managing chaos. Corporal punishment was enacted with enthusiasm by the staff, in the form of 'jacks' – beatings. When corporal punishment was outlawed, punishment continued in the form of work in the classroom – mostly moving, sanding and polishing the heavy desks. Nathan was always doodling, so he was punished for this. He also suffered ritual humiliation as punishment for giving wrong answers or not being able to do what he was asked – this involved standing on the desk and reciting 'I am a monkey'. Humiliation in the classroom is a major feature of his narrative.

Nathan got a sports scholarship to enter university to study theology (his intention was to become a minister), but when he had an accident, this stopped. He went into retail but became so bored that he became depressed. Officially diagnosed with depression, his doctor suggested he start to read and this really helped. Finally entering university, 10 years later, he experienced failure, and then with support, success. He met a teacher of sociology, and this time, the learning 'took' – he went on to do his master's and now trains teachers. He consciously applies everything he learned from the good teachers in his experience.

Nathan is borderline dyslexic. For him, school felt like a prison.

4.2.7.1 Selections from Nathan's I-poem

School felt like a prison definitely I think.

[my first languages teacher] was probably the worst of them all... Ohh

man, he was a monster....

you'd have to stand on your desk and say out loud to the class that you

write

like a pig.

They just try to manage the chaos.

I played sick because I hated it that much.

I'll never forget that woman.

Yes, I'm a university teacher now. I consciously applied the stuff I

learned from the good teachers. All of them, all of them. All of

them.

4.2.7.2 Researcher reflection

Nathan remembers the teachers who put themselves out for him with great affection,

but the others, who shamed, punished and bullied him, with tangible pain. He

remembers his size as a child and feeling uncomfortable on the floor or at his desk.

Nathan needed relationship in order to succeed – he made friends with his sociology

lecturer in his second experience at university and this relationship, along with his

wife's support, personal and professional, enabled his learning. He experienced a

lack of resources in his first attempt to attend university when the accident stopped

his funding and active prejudice in his first school. Nathan's educational rhizome

encounters a series of bumps – he is not focussed in the same way as other

participants in this study. When he voices a desire for something different, his relationships enable this.
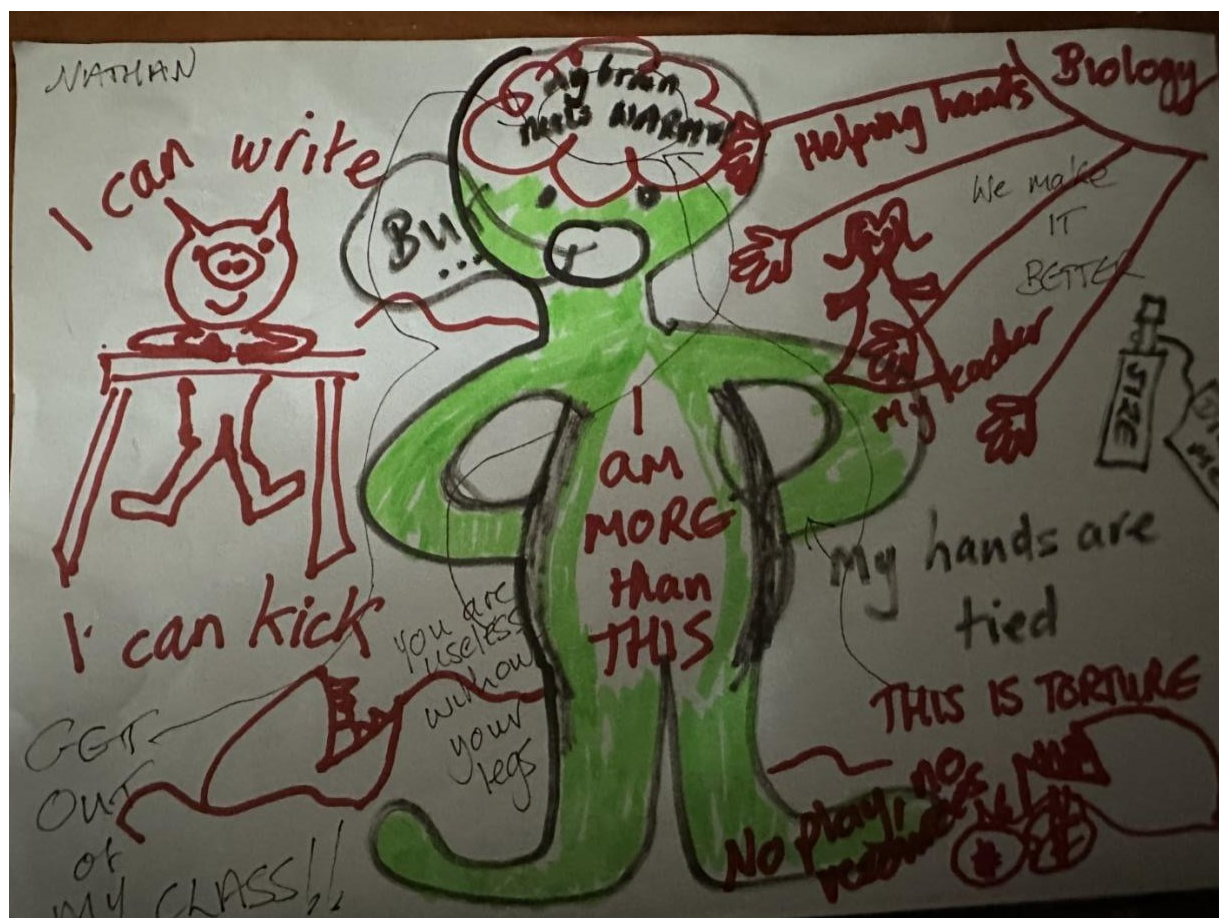
4.2.7.3 Cartograph 7: Nathan

Nathan's pre-cartograph shows him place centrally and dominating the picture – he has a bottle to the side, like Alice in Wonderland, that offers him the chance to change his size if he drinks this. He is surrounded by negative voices in the sea of affect in which he is placed – his agency is removed by teacher negativity but restored by teacher positivity. His resources disappear when he experiences injury – what does this say about this worth? He's of value only if he can fulfil the requirements of the socio-economic force of sport…his attempts to have his voice heard are disregarded. And yet the helping hands reach him. He experiences

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justices in a tangle – recognized as a sportsman he receives funding – but then…
He is recognized as someone who can learn and is encouraged tod o so. His
rhizome is marked so heavily by relationship. In Catori's words, here, it is people
who help him succeed – here, not in the face of impossible odds, rather, severe
setbacks.

**4.2.8 Cyrus' story: fear of failure, love of people and learning, confinement
thinking**

Cyrus was born into a poor rural setting in Africa where his family members had
dropped out of primary school but were convinced it was life changing. At an early
age, Cyrus realised that he would need help with things like homework as there was
no-one to whom he could refer at home. He walked at least 3km to and from school
every day. They would return to school to play soccer even during the holidays.
Students were responsible for cleaning (sweeping) the classrooms with their own
brooms before they started school – he says they had to take responsibility for the
place in which they were learning. There were no windows, no desks and no chairs,
they sat on the floor. His parents paid for this education – he had to have a school
uniform, worn Monday to Friday. He would wash it then for the Monday.

Cyrus thinks the community was perhaps expecting that his education would bring
change for the better. He was selected to go to secondary school from among all the
children at his primary school from the results of the leaving certificate examinations,
at the age of 15. This was a big decision – it meant leaving the community, losing
the opportunity to become a man there. He had to travel a long way to the boarding

school – his mother and he walked 10 km to find the road where he would get a lift to the school, 150 km away. He cried when she left him there

Arriving at the boarding school, he was assigned a mentor – an older student whose father had been from Cyrus' village – this connection, however slight, was very important. He looked up to this person, and when he was selected to go to the government university to study computer science, he wrote Cyrus a letter. The letter had the university logo and letterhead – and this symbol was enough to inspire Cyrus through his secondary school experience. He started to imagine university and what it might be like. He looked forward to the day when he could send his mother a letter like that, but he knew that as a grade 2 drop out from primary school, it wouldn't make sense to her.

At the boarding school, teaching ended at 3pm and students went to their dormitories at 8. They would get up at 2am in order to work through their homework, get advice and help from other students, and in turn help others. This made for an amazing learning community. Teachers were not approachable and would not help – so the students did it themselves. Mostly the learning was about memorisation, not understanding.

The teachers there would tell them about the experience of university and the students trusted them implicitly – they were as gods, Cyrus says. He is also aware that they were fooling (or worse, lying to) the students. The power balance was all in their hands. Corporal punishment was rife – beatings were so bad students might miss class for 2-3 days. There were also different punishments – students cleaned the school here too, on Wednesday afternoons, but sometimes had to clean as a

punishment and miss valuable days of learning. There was a culture of fear and violence, but as the students knew there would be no sympathy at home for their misbehaviour, they put up with it. This reduced their capacity for interaction with the teachers – fewer questions were asked. Students left and went home – and the classes continued with fewer people in them, but no-one explained where the others had gone. It was a harsh system where you passed everything in order to survive. Fear of failure reigned.

Cyrus found university much more sympathetic – teachers could become friends, extensions were possible, questions were answered. One lecturer asked him and his friends to go and collect data for him – this became a window into PhD study. He saw how valued learning was at the university. After his undergraduate degree he went to work at a bank for three years and saved the money to return to do a master's, and here developed the passion for being a teacher. As his goal was to go back and teach at university, he had to complete his PhD.

Today, Cyrus helps students to see that anything is possible. He views determination as key to success – something you can build for yourself, and the rest (funding, resources of space and place) will follow. Fear of failure, love of learning together and love of his friends kept him going, as well as the artefacts – the letter from his mentor – that he received and treasured.

4.2.8.1 Selection from Cyrus' I-poem

That's the pain I still feel now. It was bad that we lost some of the best along the way.

I passed on the first sitting. But now the thing that I hated was that I didn't know where I was going.

And I don't know how life is going to be… if I go to school and come back, I don't see that people will value me and respect me.

I used to see the teacher like a god, you know, like a knower… you wouldn't know that he doesn't know the answer – he wouldn't show you that.

When I went to investigate, I realized that some of the things these guys were saying, they have made it up… they were just fooling us.

…you are whipped in front of the class. You miss like two or three classes for two days, three days, yeah. It was bad.

Confinement thinking - that this is the only way to survive.

I want to be in a situation where I just have to be confined, you know, like continuously being monitored like waking up with the morning, having just a few hours to sleep, working a few hours, sleep, work.

…when I'm working with students and they don't do a lot, in the way I think, I feel it depresses me as a person.

4.2.8.2 Researcher reflection

Cyrus' rhizome is marked by crossroads and binary choices. He can leave his home and community, with all the consequences, or go on to secondary school. I hesitate to describe this point as serendipitous, but it is. It's also binary crossroads in his life.

Distributional injustice marks his narrative. At the school, he experiences the injustices of extreme physical violence and teacher dislike, also the injustice of teaching methodologies that do not fulfil their promise – 'teachers were like gods, but they were lying to us'. He is captivated by the boundary between the haves and have nots of knowledge. Teachers seemed to fear losing face with the students, although this happened anyway. His desire is to go where his mentor, the author of the letter – symbol not just of success, but of hope – has gone, and to fulfil his mother's dream of 'buying a car' – because this represents the horizon of her concept of achievement. He lives now with the severe working patterns he developed through that time, 'confinement thinking'; alongside an awareness of intense competition.
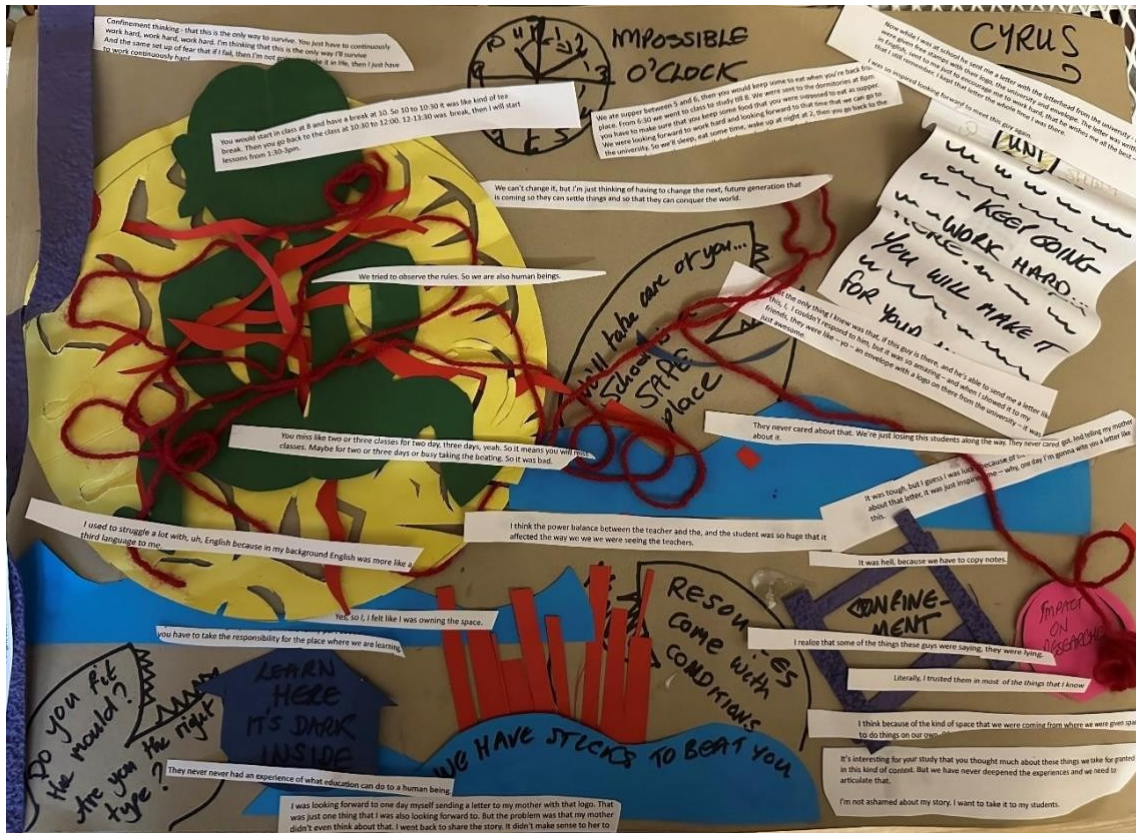
4.2.8.3 Cartograph 8: Cyrus

Cyrus' emerging identity (the becoming Cyrus) sits amid a complex lattice of meaning-making. The voices that surround him in the sea of affect are all about failure – the letter becomes a powerful symbol keeping him moving on. The red string of affect connecting him to the researcher pools at her throat, where she experiences its intensity. Justices are interwoven in his 'becomingness', a sense of the confinement of his place of learning (framed by the mobius strip material), the impossibility of the time demands made of him and the injustice of the violences he experienced are mingled in his and the researcher's words. He is confined within a circle, and yet there are flashes of openness, like flying birds, the potentialities of becoming a knower, there in the cut outs.

4.2.9 Meaning making – narratives to cartographs via I-poems

The cartographs are visual representations of the intensities I felt from my experience of sitting with the narratives. The I-poems condensed these intensities, focusing as they did on the centrality of the person within their lived experience. They are:

> …a hymn then
>
> not to birds but to words
>
> which themselves feel
>
> like feather and wing and light, as if it were
>
> on the delicacy of
>
> such sweet syllables that flocks take flight.
>
> (Miller, 2014, p. 48)

I take Baumeister's definition of meaning as 'a mental representation of possible representations among things, events and relationships. Thus, meaning connects things' (Baumeister, 1991, p. 15) to demonstrate that meaning is the glue that holds apparent contradictions in place in the paradoxical multiplicity that is the assemblage. A cartograph through the use of image and word synthesizes this into a more instantaneous communication by visually provoking the viewer. For example, from this positionality, it is possible to explore Angie's meaning-making around justice as negative within an assemblage of just and unjust practices. Although she

describes school as 'toxic', her experience demonstrates both the unfairness of prejudice but also a recognition of her cognitive prowess – one teacher dismisses her because of class issues, but another puts her into a taxi to acquire the learning she needs. Angie does not see the justice she has experienced here as mitigating the toxicity of her school life.

I draw this section to a close and move now into a discussion of the intensities of justice that I have witnessed in the narratives.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction and reiteration of research questions

> 'The individual is a series of processes that connect actual things,
>
> thoughts and sensations to the pure intensities and ideas implied
>
> by them' (Williams, 2013, p. 6).

In this section, I first introduce my conceptualisation of meaning-making in narrative inquiry, I then examine the becoming-meaning constructed by the participants and by me as cartographs, in an attempt to make these connections more visible.

Meaning as a construct is widely debated by theorists, particularly in the psychological community (Klinger, 1998, King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006, Heine, 2006). Park (2010) suggests that of the various types of meaning- making, some reflect distress caused by experience, and others reflect ways in which individuals adapt and adjust their sense of being for betterment (Park, 2010, p. 257). These studies attempt to show where, when and what meaning- making takes place, for example, but do not seem to address the inconsistencies and contradictions in a particular situation. I suggest that this iteration of meaning is a rhizome concomitant with interaction or experience. I argue that these inconsistencies imply a fixed position that is shifted unwillingly or by an intervention of some kind, that provides the impetus for restoration, rather than conceiving of meaning as a process continually formed and reformed. In other words, they address the 'what are meaning systems' question, rather than the Deleuzean 'how can we make meaning' when situated in a particular context. Pursuant to this, Scherer-Rath describes

contingency as a building block of life (Lebensbaustein) (Scherer-Rath, 2016, p. 170), (albeit from a theological perspective).

Key to this question is the idea of how the participants in this study made meaning through their narratives, and how I made meaning through the creation of the cartographs.

Hartog et al. (2020) suggest that meaning making from contingent events – dealing with the randomness of life – may impact a person's identity. This is a difficult statement, as a person's identity at any given moment is not only in flux, but subject to the haecceity – the thisness or influence of events.

> 'Félix and I, and many others like us, don't feel we're persons exactly. Our individuality is rather that of events, which isn't making any grand claim, given that haecceities can be modest and microscopic.' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 141)

Through the lived experience, the current cartographs, today's residue of events as articulated by the participants, is presented:

> 'For the 'lines' of which our lives are composed are always more complicated and more free than the more or less rigid segmentations into which a society tries to sort them, and so they may be used to draw or 'diagram' other spaces, other times of living'. (Rajchman, 2000, p. 83).

Because these lines are complex, I have divided the intensities arising from the findings into assemblages. My contributions to knowledge, aside from methodological innovation, therefore comprise:

- 1. A justice of luck -

- 2. A justice of affect

These explorations answer the research questions posed by this study – to reiterate:

1. What is the nature and impact of perceived negative experiences of schooling in the narratives of RtAs?

2. What lessons can be learned from these stories that can be offered to the teaching profession in terms of the enactment of social justice across diverse learning contexts and how might these be communicated?

5.2 Contributions to knowledge: a justice of luck

5.3 A justice of luck – being in the right place at the right time

In the following section, I examine 'luck' as articulated by the participants, taking into account their individual socio-cultural and economic positionality and experience with the (in)justices as articulated by Gewirtz (and discussed in chapter 2) . I borrow from psychological, career and organisational development theory to question the concept of 'luck' and the circumstances that come together to create it. Here, 'luck' is not simply a random event, it is an assemblage of which various identity traits are a part.

I discuss luck in terms of both relationships arising from encounters with committed teachers and agentic action on the part of he participants.

According to Kinsiko and Baruch (2019) a chance event 'is an unexpected, accidental or unplanned event that may significantly influence career development and progress, either in a positive or negative way' (Kinsiko & Baruch, 2019, p. 123). Stephan and Levin quote Robert Noyce (the inventor of electronic circuits) as saying: 'much of my good fortune came from being at the right place in the right time, and having the right sort of people…' (Stephan & Levin, 1992, pp. 3-4). Their study of scientific productivity suggests that, for career success, it is indeed a question of being in the Right Place at the Right Time. However, some also suggest that it is possible to learn how to turn potentialities to one's benefit (Krumboltz, 2015) or that it is possible to measure how successful some people are by their skills in this arguably transformative process. The latter point would seem to indicate some strategic skills or attribute present in the emerging adult – being open minded and able to identify and act on spontaneously presenting opportunities (Lee, 2017), for example. It is also suggested that, if life is perceived as unpredictable and largely irrational, such skills can be taught. Luck therefore becomes more about learning how to make the best of any given situation, in other words, to strategically position one's self despite manifestations of distributive, relational and associational (in)justices to take advantage of any opening, any opportunity presenting itself. I think with the participants' narratives here, 'looking behind their words to the complexities that exist in experience' (Hutchinson, 2019, p. 80). This enables deeper analysis of the role of luck in their lives which, as evidence suggests, is interrelated with other skills and states of mind.

5.3.1.1 Participant encounters

A series of chance encounters led to Simon's (I-poem appendix 2) introduction to the college that would change his life. If he hadn't been at a particular football match, if he hadn't gone to pub afterwards, if he hadn't fallen into conversation with a stranger, his future would have gone in a different direction:

> 'By coincidence, I got chatting away [with another activist] and he
>
>> asked me, 'what do you want to do'? I said, 'well I'm. I'd quite like
>>
>> to do some kind of education but I don't know how to do that. I
>>
>> don't know how to get into it'
>>
>> (Simon, Appendix 2)

He was, however, among the 'right' people, fellow activists who put him in touch with someone who was aware of the possibilities for someone like him. He exhibits agency – he could have allowed his low sense of self-worth to prevent him from applying; he could have ignored the form when it arrived in the post:

> 'I just thought it was just talk… and then sure enough an envelope
>
>> came through from the college with a form to fill in'
>>
>> (Simon, Appendix 2)

He wonders at this event… he wonders why a bus driver with no qualifications can earn double the wages of a qualified apprentice. He is positioned in advance to take the best advantage of this opportunity:

> 'The college was the kind of transformation that gave me the
>
>> qualification to go to university'.

Embedded in his context, Simon is his own agent of change. Enabling factors for seizing opportunities are: a) a growing confidence in his own abilities, gainsaying his school experience:

> ' I didn't feel as if school prepared me in any way…' ;'I didn't feel the
>
> school had a great expectation of me' but '[as an apprentice] I
>
> could connect to the reasons why I was being taught these
>
> things… and I passed with flying colours'

b) curiosity ('I wondered…'); c) his love of engaging with learning (later in life, the written word) and d) his desire, through activism, to change things:

> 'they talked about art and culture and all these kind of things and that's
>
> not something that's for other people. That's for us as well.'

There is also a sense of determination fed by possibility – he applies for grants and succeeds.

Here, Simon moves from a position of associational injustice at his school to a place of openness – his colleagues do not consider him as a 'wooden-top'. He uncovers the chance for funding – and yet on arrival at university, he's aware that other students fear him. This is the coding and recoding of the desiring machine in action – resources are distributable, but he moves to another position of association – political intensity.

Nathan (appendix 2) is surrounded by helpful adults at the point where it counts, yet the teachers whom he encountered arrived purely as happenstance. This is 'luck' in

the sense being developed here – when he is finishing his secondary education, and later when he finds he needs help at university.

> 'there was another teacher, a lawyer…'

This teacher understood Nathan's learning needs (he was not at that point diagnosed with ADHD) and show the serendipity of relationship:

> so I think that's how I got through matric'.

With the biology teacher:

> 'She made us understand how it works' … and 'in my final results for
> biology, I did the best'.

With luck in relationship with committed teachers, Nathan's discipline and interest grows to the extent that he can succeed.

The rugby accident that lost him his first place at university places him in a situation where his desire for learning awakens – and cures him of depression:

> 'I started reading a book and it made me feel better'.

He repeats this pattern the second time around at university – he begins to read, applies for a place and then fails – but the serendipitous intervention of the academic advisor provides him with the support he needs to succeed. Explicit understanding is not present:

> 'I think it took me about until my third year before I really understood
> what we're supposed to be doing at university'.

At school earlier it is clear that Nathan is holding back, possibly because of his negative experiences with his first teachers:

> 'I did OK – I didn't apply myself because I didn't see the value of it'

> 'I was a good sportsman, I could get away with a lot. (Nathan).

As in Simon's example, Nathan too cannot connect school with his future. Interestingly, because the adolescent brain is immature, studies suggest that

> 'when behavioural inhibition is required for good outcomes,
> adolescents are likely to reason more poorly than adults do'
> (Reyna & Farley, 2006).

Nevertheless, Nathan's decision making is strategic – he applies himself when it becomes clear that he needs to.

There is an association in both people's minds here that education could serve them well, however, the chance encounter and subsequent relationship is a fundamental part of this ability to take advantage of opportunities presented.

Nathan's wife is a constant for his later move to university; with her support, he is able to understand his needs and succeed. Nathan's chance encounters are with people who help him – he bumps into the school principal, who knows all the students by name, he encounters biology and business teachers who understand exactly what he needs. He is able to act - arguably because there is a network behind him, even if at other key times he has encountered less than helpful teaching that scarred him.

Lucie has a network of people behind her (whose voices are present in her narrative) and a desire to learn that illuminates and drives her learning life. She too is positioned to act when opportunity presents itself. This does not arise out of nothing, but a sequence of taking chances. Lucie's family hide her pregnancy and enable her to go back to school. She takes a job through the agency of her diploma-qualified uncle. Her boyfriend, later husband, enables her to go further by introducing her to the university access programme. Lucie's desire is tangible – she describes herself as 'the hustler girl' - this means that she is awake to possibility and eager to seek out or take opportunities when they present themselves.

Angie actively creates opportunities for herself by asking to take physics at higher level. Through a series of chance encounters she has been able to manifest her cognitive capacity to an influential witness – her physics teacher - who advocates for her. Angie creates her own agency through being interested in contemporary bands, listening to their lyrics and researching their references.

Catori, Martin and Cyrus also exhibit agency when they take the opportunities offered to them by place and time. Cyrus is presented with binary choices that cost him dearly as a young child, he needs to develop coping strategies for leaving his previous life behind and the attendant grief. Catori snatches the chance to get to the library when her father forgets to lock the door. Catori states that determination, for her is the key factor in her success:

> 'It's an inbuilt kind of mechanism within you.
>
> It's not just an innate capacity that we might have as human beings.

And some people never activate it or find it within themselves'. (Catori's

I-poem, appendix 2)

Martin's key, chance observation is of his friend's study strategies - he realises that if he doesn't do the same, this relationship might be lost to him. This fear provokes a powerful affective drive. He also realises the benefits of his friend's method, but his primary driver is the affect associated with perceived loss

Mary's experience of a serendipitous event is negative – in a break with traditional expectations, she is not awarded the school prize. The shock of this rocks her self-belief and the meaning she has made of her life thus far – she states that she could no longer trust herself to learn; the strategies that she deployed were no longer safe:

‘And so it… it rocked me in two ways. One I presumed that I had no

leadership skills. And two I lost confidence in my own ability to

judge my own - how well I was doing.' (Mary's I-poem, appendix 2)

Her belief in herself as a leader, modelled as it was on her father, is shattered. Again, there is a complex network of events, interactions and relationships that inform her actions and feelings. As I listened to her, I felt the shock she had experienced.

5.3.1.2 Luck as potentiality

From these statements it seems that there needs to be an impetus to awaken the trait of determination which conceptualises luck as potentiality. For example in Catori's story possibilities open with people who ‘see beyond'. This is also the case for Simon and Nathan. This links into the assemblage of relationship.

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All the participants seem to demonstrate not just agency, but the capacity to engage in strategy that may or may not work for them: Martin's decision to adopt his friend's study methods; Mary's decision to remain under the radar by staying in the middle or being efficient; Catori's capacity for visualisation; Cyrus's realisation that he has to be strategic in finding people to help him; Lucie's awareness of where the bullets will be flying in order to get to school means she constantly takes risks that result in an offer of help from someone. These living examples of agency enable them not just to seize opportunity, but to act on it, even in the midst of injustice. All the participants have to fight for recognition of who they are, and not simply this but also of their intellectual capacity.

In 1999, Mitchell, Levin and Krumbolz proposed five skills that would help an individual to actively use chance or random events to benefit their career (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumbotz, 1999). It must be emphasised that this was intended for young adults emerging into the employment market, rather than secondary school students. However, it may be seen that these five skills: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk taking (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumbotz, 1999)

Concrete guidance for educators might therefore include developing with their students strategic thinking of a particular kind – reconceptualising ways of dealing with negative experiences and uncertainties so often interpreted as unfair barriers within the machinic systems in which we find ourselves. The system discards those whose value it does not recognize – this manifests itself through the injustices present in society. Moreover, thinking with Deleuze in terms of multiplicities, if it is indeed possible to make one's own luck, then the participants' agency in the behavioural elements of the traits above, particularly persistence, resilience, actively

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seeking help may be considered manifestations of their own desire. They do not experience a love of learning, they experience the desire to learn – in Lucie, Angie and Cyrus' cases, desire for knowledge is a burning fire and they focus on school as the locus for this.

Simon and Catori know that learning takes place at school, but they don't know how to access it. Their learning self-image is damaged by what school does to them: from Catori's I-poem:

> 'I couldn't satisfy the damage that school did to me… that's still a scar
> you carry'.

Cyrus too is damaged – he refers to 'confinement' thinking ('that this is the only way to survive') as he trained himself to work all night to pass his tests. This is focus at the extreme. He also learns the strategy of transaction – if someone helps him, he realises there is a quid pro quo, and that not everyone is trustworthy

Possession of the character traits as listed above suggest a field in which one can learn to make one's own luck. In the lived experiences here, an immanent field of learning capacity is present that, for reasons of injustice, was not recognised at school. As the claim that we do indeed make our own luck is established in the literature (Merton Barber, 2004, Yaqub, 2018, Busch, 2022), this is perhaps a notion that deserves more attention in the field of teacher education.

5.4 A justice of affect: assemblages of violence and relationship

As becoming-cartographer, I experience a dilemma of sorts - I could isolate typologies of violence identified by theory and list these, mapping the narrative

content onto it. However, thinking with Deleuze, I want to listen to how it works and for whom it works; by focusing on the participants' encounters with pain.

5.4.1.1 Pain and violence

I examine how their pain presents itself in the interstitial space between the objective and the subjective. This space for me constitutes the tension holding an assemblage together, as atoms in a molecule are held by electrical charges. I cannot present these experiences neutrally; the process of affective attunement impacts my feelings. This concurs with Williams' observations concerning the Deleuzean approach to time:

> 'Affect neutral theories of time and of space find it hard to explain the
>
> singular focus of feeling and attention, let alone rise to the duty to
>
> show a way through it' (Williams, 2011, p. 135)

My definition of violence therefore focuses on both behaviours in relationships and contextual factors, spoken or unspoken, human or not, that have manifested as psychological and physical pain in the narratives of the participants. These are the assemblages of violence.

> 'You cannot cheat with the law of the conservation of violence: all
>
> violence is paid for, and […] matched, sooner or later'
>
> (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 40)

From contemporary evidence (Munn, Johnstone, Sharp, & Brown, 2007, Wodon, Fevre, Male, Nayihouba, & Nguyen, 2021) violence in schools appears to be

increasing and that this makes an examination of the participants' stories more relevant to praxis, given that theirs are narratives of past experience.

Here, Pinheiro's definition speaks to the physical, emotional/psychological and symbolic manifestation of violences in the lives of the participants:

> 'Violence against children is a global problem. It includes physical violence, psychological violence such as insults and humiliation, discrimination, neglect and maltreatment. It has short and long-term repercussions that are often grave and damaging for children' (Pinheiro, 2006, p. 7).

Similarly, Bourdieu and Passeron describe violence as a medium of control manifesting as two types: the overt, physical or economic; and symbolic – censored, euphemised and unrecognized – 'arbitrary power' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 6). However, there is no explicit focus on the consequences. In this study, violence presents as a consequence of associational and recognitional injustice for the most part, the lived experience of effects of violence on affect – the emotions, feelings, trauma of the individuals involved. Instead, by using a discourse that policy makers can accept, devoid of emotion and using the metaphor of 'capital', human beings become carriers or containers of capital and not persons in their multiplicity. The voice of the human condition, diverse, dynamic and pluridimensional, is silenced through this desiring machine of capitalism as previously discussed, the institution itself is coded:

> 'the conditions which make linguistic misunderstanding possible and
> tolerable are inscribed in the very institution'
> (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 108).

I argue here from the grass roots perspective of those upon whom violence, symbolic and not, is performed, so rather than examine the theorisation of violence, which effectively removes affect from the issue, I want instead to look at its virtual and actual presence (in Deleuzean terms) and the effects – pain (again actual and virtual) that secondary education has produced in the participants in this study:

5.4.1.2 School based violence and its effects

> Bullying, gender-based violence, accidental violence, discrimination
> and violence, sexual assault or harassment, physical violence and
> psychological violence, describe some of the most prevalent forms
> of school-based violence.
> South African Human Rights Commission 2006 in (Thompson,
> 2016, p. 4)

I argue that these forms are in themselves codes produced by the desiring machines creating an arboreal architecture of injustice. A vicious rhizomatic pattern ensues – bullying blooms from a perceived association with a lack of resources, and recognition that one possesses (but by dint of said association) should not agentic intellectual capacity is challenged.

The definition above as do many definitions of school based violence (Wodon, Fevre, Male, Nayihouba, & Nguyen, 2021), (Filiz, 2014), (Eisenbraun, 2007) agrees

that it is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. It is clear that factors outside – community, family - and within schools play a part. Too often, however, such descriptions name but do not challenge some of the specific critical issues at play, such as beliefs concerning power in the classroom, an understanding of the power of the teacher, and the effects of teacher actions on students:

> 'But many other students never found a replacement for a school and teacher who didn't recognize their genius, who responded with a shrug or a look of incomprehension as they offered their equally eager home truths. They too soon learned that in school all they could show off was their ignorance. Better to be bad, or uninterested, or to just silently withdraw'. (Meier, 2002, p. 15)

This encapsulates precisely the lived experience of some of the participants here. Looking forward to secondary school immensely, as learning was a joy at primary school, Angie, Catori, Cyrus and Simon were soon disabused. The size of the school, its heterotopic nature and the lack of recognition they experienced switched them off.

Returning to Deleuze on aspects of virtuality and actuality, the problem of violence can be seen to function multi-dimensionally, with tendrils permeating time. If I consider existence as a rhizome that is a continually developing, interconnected structure of reality, then it is possible that the 'becoming' potential of violence may inform and dominate a child's becoming and continue into the adult's becoming. In the participant narratives, the power of recalled violence creates a tension in the present, a holding place for this flow. In Angie's words 'you learn how to read a

room' and can therefore predict where, when and how burgeoning violence of some kind might burst through into the actual. Martin's stark juxtaposition of the teacher's view of the army training bullying and his view, as a child, highlights the teacher lack of understanding the child's fear. Martin's anger here is still tangible.

5.4.1.3 Thinking with Deleuze: violence virtual and actual

Thinking with Deleuze alongside these narratives, this process is bi-directional. I situate education in the meaning-making of the respondents as the desiring machine central to the virtual and the actual, to indicate their interaction through the processual spiking of actualisation into the virtual. Power and affect move pluri-dimensionally in memory, imagination and expectation. The virtual – the realm of possibility – is infused by affect (the product of power and desire) and is carried by and activates its own power to flow into the actual. Lived experience then, increasing in power, carries affect at the moment of experience that then flows in and through memory, imagination and expectation – the potentiality of the virtual.

Defining violence in education presents a problem. It is possible to define an act of violence, but not, it seems, in its affective dimension – by this I mean the extent to which the violence has led to pain in the person experiencing it. This manifests as a subjective movement - experience of violence determines its essence and degree. (Violence remains a heavy presence in the virtual before its actualisation, although it is a dynamic relationship and the use of temporal definition - 'before' - is largely irrelevant).

Therefore, the 'actual' of violence has a virtual dimension, the 'virtual ' of violence has an actual dimension – they exist in a 'becoming' that inserts itself between the

direct experience and the potential of experience. In other words, it is not possible for a student to experience just the one dimension of violence.

This argumentation in all its complexity allows me, as becoming cartographer to look for emergent meanings in the respondent narratives which embrace the complexities of lived-through-violence in schools as described above.

All the participants with the exception of Lucie still seem to feel the violence they experienced as events moving from the exterior (things done to them) to the interior (what they now feel). Lucie's sense of violence however is more dynamically present in her narrative – she states with considerable force that education is 'something that can never be taken away from you' – her sense of justice is focused on the interior moving out… This lived experience reflects the Deleuzean fold.

Only one respondent, Simon, thinks that he deserves the various physical violences meted out to him – 'the red welt on the hand', but he is angry in the memory he carries of the teacher who is able to turn him to jelly, even as a 'man' who has left school:

> 'I remember afterwards being really angry at myself and wondering…'
> (Simon, appendix 2)

He is not able to partition time as child and man. Considering memory through the virtual/ actual Deleuzean sense, it is not possible for him to do this – he lives in the fold.

In this study, affective threat persists in the memory of the participants and informs in part their determination to enter education and establish justice in praxis for their

students. I note again how their narratives move from the past to the present tense in articulating their experience – this has the effect of producing immediacy, in other words 're-prEsenting' their stories. I find myself doing the same.

> 'We are therefore being given an image of time where an event is only
>
> the present, with the past and future as dimensions…' and vice
>
> versa (Williams, 2011, p. 140).

I move on now to consider the injustice of violence in the teacher-student relationship as assemblage.

5.4.2 Assemblages of violence in teacher-student relationships: the lived experience of (in)justices

As already noted the problem of violence, both direct (physical) and indirect (psychological, emotional and symbolic) in schools is present and increasing, (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016, Bondu, 2014, Brown, 2010). Yet classroom studies tend to describe students performing violent behaviours upon other students, or student to teacher misconduct, both physical and psychological, but the area of teacher to student violence still seems to be under-researched in contemporary society. It is prevalent in this study. Harber suggests that the problem of teacher-student violence grows alongside the establishment of the school as an institution, and is largely created by the system (Harber, 2004, p. 40). He also states that confrontation is necessary in order to promote discussion of these issues (Harber, 2004, p. 2); an up-front challenge to teacher awareness of classroom behaviours and developing deeper understandings of power are also aims of this study. Cremin and Guilherme outline types of indirect and direct violence in schools defined according to Galtung

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and Fanon's theories of peace and violence (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016). However, the linear list they present does not, for example, show the links between so-called direct or physical violence and the reproduction of inequality through education (structural violence), nor why and how the ideology behind this dictates an impoverished curriculum, nor does it consider in depth the dimensionality of teacher to student violence (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016, p. 1127). To my mind, the impoverishment may be considered an issue of distributive justice coded by the desiring machine, leading to conceptions of association and recognition that themselves bloom like poisonous algae in the sea of affect.

Corporal punishment is still being linked with poverty and therefore issues of distributive justice world-wide (Cuartas, 2019, Breen, 2015, Morrow, 2014) and the consequent reproduction of inequality. Poorer children are more likely to be beaten; a child experiencing this is less likely to be able to function at their best in a classroom; more likely to develop mental and other health problems; and to repeat their own experience in later life. This reinforces the structural inequality circle that led to this physical violence in the first place (Rimal, 2013).

Cultural violence, 'built into cultures with profound and psychological effects' (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016) feeds into the physical, not just where students suffer from a reductive curriculum, but in the beliefs inherent in the power structures that permit this to happen. This is structural violence also – it is 'the way things are done'. In both Africa and the West, the old belief that the Christian Bible's statement 'spare the rod and spoil the child' (Proverbs 13:24) is arguably at the heart of some of this. Dickson and Chiabuotu's 2021 paper discusses possible different interpretations of

the phrase in an attempt to reduce corporal punishment in sub-Saharan Africa (Dickson & Chiabuotu, 2021).

Harber states that training programmes at the time were not equipping teachers with knowledge around the 'affective dimension of learning' (Harber, 2004, p. 47). Reflecting this positioning, I found that the violences most often articulated as problematic in this study occurred from teacher to student, and were the most powerful and intense in all eight participants' voices. The effect on me of this was tangible – the affective intensity of it knotted my stomach.

A Deleuzean understanding here suggests that the perpetration of violence always brings forth further trauma, heightened senses of injustice, frustration, even hatred – new, thicker lenses through which a student perceives a world where they have no agency, preventing rather than enabling learning. This is the 'dark side' of the creative potential of repetition and difference in the rhizome.

Actual violence however is more than physical, it invades the psyche of all the respondents. For Lucie, violence is a part of her wider context. The fear she experiences as she travels to school means that although she finds the classroom an oasis, the school is not safe. For Catori, fear is in the socio- economic disadvantage demonstrable in the surrounding area, making her feel unsafe, building on her lack of security at home with a volatile father. Angie is aware of the unsafety in her environment – 'there was always something going on' at school; so she views the classroom (as does Lucie) as a haven where all this can be shut out for a while. More than a haven, this kernel of space becomes a rich source of nourishment and contentment – an oasis in the middle of the school desert. For

Mary, the violent episodes that straddle her in and out of school life cause withdrawal; and the vengeance of the deputy head causes tangible pain. These aspects, I argue, begin a process of virtual threat - Even if not actualised, the possibility has been created that it might. Learning how to regulate emotions in traumatic situations is made almost impossible because of the anxiety these instances of violence induce , and this has negative repercussions for a child's educational trajectory (Jones, 2015, Nail, 2015, Van Ameringen, 2003).

Going deeper into the notion of the constant state of 'becoming-violence', I suggest that memories existing as potentialities form part of the virtual dimension that inform the present. The value of memories lies not in the historically accurate articulation of chronological events, but in the considerable emotional power that they hold and the way in which this manifests in the present. The point made in the previous assemblage is reinforced again in this focus on teacher-student relationships i.e. that violence exists in both virtual and actual dimensionality, permeating space and place – cognitive, intellectual, emotional and geographical. Affect and power are entwined in the flow through which violence appears.

All the participants reported experiences of direct and unpleasant encounters with many of their teachers.

Catori's class teacher is casually cruel about her mother's death, as she tries to prevent Catori hanging out of the classroom window

> 'I hated her for that'.

Hatred is a violent emotion.

Cyrus experiences physical beatings that disable him 'You miss like two

or three classes for two day, three days, yeah. It was bad'.

Simon experiences the 'red welt' on the hand every day, and the unreason of having

no defence from teachers such as the terrifying deputy head.

Angie experiences both physical violence from her poorly maintained environment,

teachers and peers:

'At one time I pretty much fell down the stairs in the old building…

There was the stairs – everybody used to fall down'

This is a violence of distributive justice in that resources were not made available to

this disadvantaged area.

Martin is hit by the inexperienced art teacher, whose fear drives her inability to give

him instruction when he finishes his work early:

'She said – 'I want you to do some abstract painting'. What does

abstract mean? I go right, well, I'm done. Finished. She came up to

me to the front of the class and I got the belt for taking the piss.

The violence of words and the deliberate misuse of the inequity of power in teacher

behaviour impact Nathan and Mary:

Nathan: 'If you scored less than 40%, you'd have to get on your desk

and say you think like a monkey. That man is what I think shaped

me for like 3 years.'

Mary: 'You know, for a, I don't know, 50 something year old woman to

get riled by a 16/17 year old is just a little ridiculous.'

Cyrus articulates this from his experience also:

'I think the power balance between the teacher and the, and the student

was so huge that it affected the way we were seeing the teachers.'

Lucie experiences the violence of inequity of power of relationship when she finds

herself at a lecture in a language she doesn't understand, and in the baptism of fire

of learning to type and use a computer to submit assignments:

'I couldn't speak English. It was my first time seeing or having to use a

computer. It was so difficult. '

'When I was at school the teacher would speak in my vernacular to

clarify where I didn't understand but not so at the university…. The

person standing in front of me only speaks English because he/

she is white. Most time the day will go by without me understanding

anything.

Participants articulate inferences made by teachers regarding knowledge – it is

withheld or assumed or access is permitted to it on the basis of assumptions related

to class, gender or simply the lack of power and therefore agency that a child has in

the classroom – associational and recognitional instances of injustice. This is directly

observable in Angie, Cyrus and Nathan's I-poems. Cyrus states:

'I used to see the teacher like a god, you know, like a knower… you

wouldn't know that he doesn't know the answer – he wouldn't show

you that.'

These show the effects of the misuse of this power specifically on the participants'

self-understandings:

'… schools and teachers are often unaware of the many different ways

in which they may significantly impact adolescents' identity

development' (Verhoeven, Poorthuis, & Volman, 2018).

This is more than teacher-student relationship – it is a multiplicity that expands into

the place (physicality of the learnscape) and space (psycho-socio- dimensional) of

the school. This leads me into an exploration of the complexity of people functioning

within time and space, and the effects of their context on them, for good or ill.

Injustices and impacts: codes of the desiring machine

When I look back on school, I think I see it as absolutely toxic. I see it

as really really toxic. (Angie)

School felt like a prison definitely I think. (Nathan) It was a torture.

(Simon)

I remember the smell of darkness. (Martin)

Teachers were like the environment – it was almost like it shaped

them, being functional and you're here to do a job. Get it done, and

if you don't keep to what we think you should be doing, then we'll

tell you off for it. (Catori)

I just say functional (Mary)

I had so much trust in these teachers that we knew. When I went to

investigate, I realized that some of the things these guys were

saying, they have made it up… they were just fooling us. … there

was no such thing as support for you. (Cyrus)

I was scared to be shot. You weren't safe even in the school. But it was

my school and I loved it. (Lucie)

With the exception of Lucie, whose experience was primarily of concrete distributive

injustice, the participants articulate negative interpretations of their school that

directly challenge the ostensible intention of the institution. This leads me to consider

a violence of environment, where distributive injustice causes and is caused by

recognitional and associational injustices at macro and micro levels.

- Actual – damaged buildings, lack of care for surroundings –
  atmosphere of threat, anxiety, fear (Simon, Martin, Catori, Nathan,

Lucie)

- Virtual – dimension of possibility – potential threat, unsafety, unhappiness (Catori, Simon, Martin, Nathan, Cyrus, Mary)

The institution's systems issue constant challenges whereby students are forced to reconstitute themselves, intellectually, cognitively and emotionally. This process, taking place within the entwined flows of affect and power, may be negative, but the students' physical surroundings also contribute something:

> Martin: 'I remember the smell of darkness' –
>> there's a sense of danger here

> Mary: 'the classrooms – ohhh they had that like phenolic smell, right? It
>> totally was an institution. The corridors were wide.

Simon and Nathan view school as torture and as prison. It is not possible for them to leave the classroom – once there, they have to stay. There's a sense in which the room becomes smaller, and they become bigger – this is the Alice in Wonderland effect, perhaps – but being big is not an advantage – it means that they will be singled out for punishment.

Considering the interiority and exteriority of space and place through a Deleuzean lens, there are implications for the development of student identity here – we are 'constructed' both in our interiority and exteriority:

> I use identity to refer to the meeting point, the point of suture [...]
>> Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject

positions which discursive practices construct for us'. (Hall, 1996,

p. 5)

As becoming cartographer, I consider identity in the participants' narratives as outworkings of their concept of self. In the literature, the self has been conceived as a map - William James psychology treatise of 1890 described the self as a landscape, a topography (James, 1950) in (Hart, 1988, pp. 71-2). His map distinguishes two lines of investigation in self-concept research: self- evaluation, which is the constant comparison of self with other in order to define one's self for one's self – the 'what can I do' underpinning identity. I argue that this is a Deleuzean approach to the self and I attempt to re-present this in the cartographs, but have examined it here in terms of the effects on the participants. This relates to the concept of relational pedagogy discussed earlier. I hope to have shown the effect of injustices on a child's socio-emotional development through this exploration. I expand on the effects of injustice on this in the next section.

Self-understanding, James' second line of investigation, is the conscious recognition of 'who am I?', the cognitive basis for self-conception (Damon & Hart, 1982) and the 'conception of self upon which self-evaluation is based' (Hart, 1988, p. 72). Hart suggests that, at the time of writing (1988), the relationship between self-evaluation (SE) and self-understanding (SU) was not clearly understood. I suggest that Deleuzean thinking is helpful here as these concepts may be clarified through the 'fold'.

I view SE and SU as exterior and interior manifestations of self-concept: if SE is one's internal measure, not necessarily conscious, of how well one may be meeting

specific goals, expectations or standards, professional, personal or academic, this is exteriority, a looking outwards-inwards. If SU may be defined as gaining insight, again, conscious or unconscious, into the complexities of one's interior world, it will involve a level of self-reflection and awareness that pulls in the exteriority of SE, a looking inwards. The two are linked in a dynamic symbiosis that presents as self-concept. Bruising these processes, through negative behaviours, is also a form of violence.

In their discussion, Brubaker and Cooper pose the question: 'If identity is fluid, how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal and crystallize?' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In the context of school conscious and unconscious self-understanding may be influenced by affective intensity.

Thinking with Deleuze, I consider self-evaluation to be a process of pulling the exterior into the interior, as

> 'individualistic confidence in one's self, one's sense of personal value,
>> is drawn not from within, not from the depths of one's personality,
>> but from the outside world' (Volosinov, 1973, p. 89)

For Angie in particular, SE and SU were a battleground between what she knew she was capable of and teachers' negative attitudes towards her, driven, she thinks by assumptions concerning her working-class, and disadvantaged background. These gave rise to a host of associational injustices perpetrated against her; her developmental space is boundaried by them:

> There was one teacher, Mrs Brown, who did not like me, Janet. She did

not like me. She made it perfectly clear that she didn't like me.

She blocked me from doing stuff. She was like you can't be on that and

be on that. She was just of kind like really really like nasty with me.

The teachers they had expectations but more of the kind of like middle-

class students but not of the working-class students…

…so I became the dux medallist and there was a complaint – how can

a girl with a cleaner for a mother, from a single parent household

be the dux medallist? (Angie, appendix 2)

There is a difference here between the learnscape, the exteriority of the classroom, and the classroom itself, an interiority of place mirrored in an internal, cognitive space where she could focus on learning. Angie articulates a discomfort between her awareness, not at the time fully critical, of the boundaries placed on her by teacher assumptions, and the teleological challenge presented by a heterotopia. Her self-concept is disrupted – she is more than capable of learning, but limited by negative teacher behaviours in a context that promised much but delivered little.

However, the interiority of the classroom as place is a source of discomfort for Nathan – he can't leave, as school is a 'prison'. His SE and SU are influenced by his perception of his body as too big within the allocated space, indicating an affective intensity of developing dysmorphia. The place cannot accommodate him.

As well as these discomforts, a sense of threat in the school environment occurs in the participants' narratives to a surprising degree. For Angie, the classroom is a haven within the learnscape:

'There was always something going on. I always used to go in with

trepidation. So actually class was a rescue – you could just go in

and concentrate on what it is you're wanting to do.'

Classes are an oasis, as previously stated – but here I reiterate this in terms of a space that enables Angie's SE and SU – her 'becoming-learner' – she switches off the managing threat mechanisms and activates her learning. Learning becomes a wall that excludes everything else – she's able to focus, absorb and apply. finds another space like this – lunchtime in the physics classroom, where she can sit with the books and teach herself the foundational knowledge she needs. That space is provided by the teacher, but as helper rather than 'actively' teaching.

For Catori, entering and exiting the school was threatening:

'I used to absolutely hate it going out that way [to the bus] because

those gates took you right into the community - the 1960s square

kind of grey boxes you put deprived families into. You never felt

separated from whatever was going on out there, or part of a

different community'.

'When I'm in an environment that's quite built up, I'm actually really

anxious and I keep wondering how that affective domain influences

what happens in the classroom and how learning takes place.'

The place is not safe. Catori's safe space is an assemblage of her head space and her bed. It's here that she rehearses her dance steps in her head. This is positive visualisation in the sense of mentally rehearsing her movements – a road map to

success according to sports scientists Predoiu et al (Predoiu, et al., 2020) . Catori was not taught how to do this – it's something she developed herself. She creates a safe space for herself in the privacy of the moments before sleep.

For Nathan, threat is continually present in two forms – fear of physical punishment and fear of humiliation in the classroom. Both impact on his SC and SU. Occupation of the classroom is entwined with punishment. After beatings were banned, he sands and polishes the desks that are sometimes too small for him to sit at.

Cyrus also experiences continual threat – punishment is unjust, violence is meted out at the whim of the prefects. He is not safe during the day, physically or cognitively – his safe learning space manifests at night. He needs to negotiate a path through the consequences of a highly competitive atmosphere.

Martin's anger at not being able to see out of the windows is tangible. He is also angry about the immovable nature of the desks attached to the chairs and nailed to the floor. He was able to design a 'marble drop' that ran all the way down the channels present in this ensemble, appreciated by the children but not the staff. Of his school he says he 'could smell the darkness'. This contributes to his sense of helplessness and not knowing 'what it was all about'. His SC is confused and his SU is negatively impacted by this.

In all the extracts above, there is a sense of violence of place. The learnscape is not neutral – it moulds teachers and students in a variety of ways, here, to their detriment.

Although Simon experienced associational injustice again to do with teacher attitude and a lack of recognition of his skills there is a sense in which the authorities were trying to meet his affective needs. He learned the most at the museum while he played truant. There is a lack of recognition here too as adults did not seem to see him there or miss his presence at the school.

Nathan too experienced setbacks in the withdrawal of his funding, but knew that he was capable of reaping the rewards of hard work, as evidenced by his time at secondary school. He experienced good relationships with staff who went the extra mile to help him and understood, for example, that he was the type of learner who needed to listen to music in order to be able to concentrate. His was a journey of understanding himself through the brutalisation of corporal punishment to the whispered encouragement of his teacher who recognised his learning needs.

Mary was not allowed to be a child at her school – the space shrinks around her. The negative experience she had as a teenager in conflict with an older, more experienced teacher left her unable to fully engage in her university work. Affect is immensely powerful here. The short-sighted way in which she was treated is something that reveals a lack of self-awareness by the teacher, and a lack of awareness of the becoming child/ becoming adult process as well as development of self concept and self understanding. Martin also experienced the lack of recognition that he was a child in a child's space, through the teacher who could not see the bullying of the older children from the point of view of the younger ones.

The injustices here affect the participants' perception of themselves in damaging ways. A school may present as a positive, even aspirational place, but as the lived

experience of the participants shows, this re-presentation is false – it is not safe (in any dimension) and its effects on the students are a complex tangle of positive and negative.

Macedonia et al bemoan the current lack of understanding in education that learning is embodied (Macedonia, 2019, p. 2098), citing the age-old Cartesian separation of body and mind. If affective intensities manifest physically, then the experience of fear will diminish learning capacity. Van der Kolk states that the brain's regulatory systems can be overwhelmed in the face of even the perception of threat (Van der Kolk, 2014, p. 94), and that the memory of this has the same effect

> 'reliving a strong negative emotion causes significant changes in the
>
> brain areas that receive nerve signals from the muscles, gut and
>
> skin' (Van der Kolk, 2014, p. 95)

Something of fundamental importance is being missed in education. Rodel argues that where Western models have considered negative feelings as valuable for 'pushing learning', they in fact force cognition and emotion into a temporal order that fails 'to cover life-world emotional experience in learning in its complexity' (Rodel, 2021, p. 73).

5.5 The affective charge of the cartograph

My intention is for the cartographs to represent this complexity while absenting to some degree the temporal order. I hope that they demonstrate the rhizomatic nature of lived experience and the paradoxes within which students function at school. Where there is injustice and violence, there is also justice and kindness, where there

is contested space for learning, there are havens that become oases. Space and place are cognitive, physical and emotional. Threat in any dimension will throw an obstacle into the learning trajectory. A teacher can block or generate a positive field for development even amid the most unpromising contexts. Students bring the richness of themselves into the classroom.

Injustices of affect and space produce pain and anger. The relationships and the behaviours teachers manifest are fundamental to the development of students. As educators, we need to be mindful of the consequences of actions that will remain in students' hearts and minds for a lifetime.

I reiterate research question 2 here:

- What lessons can be learned from these stories that can be
  offered to the teaching profession in terms of the enactment of
  social justice across diverse learning contexts?

Through the creation of the cartographs I hope to present disruptive reflexive spaces in which to engage in discussion. Considering meaning- making in Deleuzean terms means less of an analysis and more of an understanding of the 'process of the becoming of things' and 'attending to the conditions of this' (Colman, 2011, p. 175), as previously stated. Attending to the cartographs as provocations moves me forward here.

I now address two specific problems of social justice pertaining to student wellbeing (skills, identity, attitudes and behaviour). These are:

- teacher understanding of their positionality in terms of affect, both

interior and exterior;

- the potential effects of the outworking of this on their students.

5.6 The multiplicities of luck and affect

I propose therefore that the justice of luck sited within a justice of affect as concepts through which these issues may be considered. I consider the narratives and the cartographs in order to share the challenges these justices present with the teaching profession.

> 'Affection, if it is to fulfil its true function in education, must be rooted in
>
> purity of mind. […] Neither beauty of youthful appearance, nor
>
> even beauty of soul, should be the thing that draws forth the
>
> passion to educate. Both are gifts of fortune.'
>
> (Spranger, 1958, p. 229)

This quotation from five decades ago provides a summary of certain aspects of a justice of affect. The desire to educate must view each student as a tabula rasa, while at the same time acknowledging the challenges of injustice that they experience and working against these. If, as Colman suggests, 'affective power can be utilised to enable ability, authority, control and creativity' (Colman, 2005, p. 12) then in examining affect as a form of justice, recognised and applied with care (as suggested by Spranger, (Spranger, 1958, p. 229) above), a change in teacher perceptions is required.

Hardt defines affects as multiplicities involving reason and passion and both body and mind (Hardt, 2007, p. x). The mind and the body experience and generate

passion and reason again from exteriority into interiority and back in a continuum

(the Deleuzean fold) – 'an affect indicates at once the current state of the mind and

body' (Hardt, 2007, p. x). Affect may therefore be described (not defined) as the

product of desire – in education, engagement. Feelings, emotions – the passion of a

body are products of affect, defining the dimensionality of engagement with learning.

Colman suggests that, as affect is situated within a social field, it enables critique of

capital (Colman, 2005, p. 12). Affect operates therefore as

> 'a dynamic of desire within an assemblage to manipulate meaning and
>
> relations, inform and fabricate desire, and generate intensity'
>
> (Colman, 2005, p. 12).

As an integral dynamic, Colman suggests that it 'describes the forces behind all

forms of social production in the contemporary world' (ibid). Affect is therefore

intricately entwined with the desiring machines of capital and human action, as

addressed in the literature review. The aim of a justice of affect would be to engage

teacher understanding of the dimensionality of affect, aiming to move away from the

production of pain.

The strong themes arising from the assemblages that I categorise as connecting with

affect include:

    (i)   teacher relationship,

    (ii) agency in, through and for serendipity

    (iii) teacher assumptions (including associational justice),

(iv) emotional safety,

(v) casual (perhaps unwitting) cruelty,

(vi) being seen and valued (recognitional justice) and

(vii) physical and emotional punishment.

Research, including relational pedagogy, has established that teacher-student relationship relates closely to learning engagement (Koca, 2016, Barile, et al., 2012, Thijssen, Rege, & Solheim, 2022), and yet the literature does not seem to challenge teachers directly about their behaviour. Thijssen et al (2022) present teacher relationship skills quantitively as measurable relevant to successful results. If this is the case, teacher relationship will mitigate against the unsafety of the learnscape (this research took place in the relative socio-economic advantage of Norway).

If however the learning environment remains emotionally unsafe, and, bearing in mind that for some children, the space outside school is not safe either, then education is compromised. I hope, therefore, to address Harber's (Harber, 2004, p. 2) claim for a lack of teacher education in this area by considering a 'justice of affect', encouraging teachers to examine their behaviour. As drivers of affect in their learnscape, teacher behaviour as narrated in this study lies at the heart of such a concept of justice.

Linnenbrink argues for a circumplex model of affect, categorising emotions, but the onus here is on the student, rather than the affective state of the educator (Linnenbrink, 2007). Similarly, many regard students' emotions as worthy of respect and even compassionate development, claiming holistic (Pianta, Stuhlman, & &

Hamre, 2002) and even relationship focused perspectives (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & & Oort, 2011), but again, the negative side of teacher behaviour in the classroom is not explored at professional development levels (Reeves & Le Mare, 2017, Wubbels, Brok, den Tartwijk, & Levy, 2012).

Perhaps this reluctance to engage in an exploration of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours has its roots in a determination to ignore the affective. Boler argues that the reductive approach of the Western Enlightenment left emotion in the preserve of the female, as a weaker intellectual and physical entity, dominated by patriarchal culture on the 'bad side of the fence' (Boler 1999, p. xii) . Even today, there is a suggestion that Deleuze' writings on affect possess a romantic component (Colman, 2005, p. 12), although debate regarding the importance of affect now recognises higher education as a formerly 'emotion free zone' (Leathwood, 2009) and the call for recognition of emotion as a trap, where emotion (as a female trait) was seen as the enemy of reason (Boler, 1999, p. xiii).As stated earlier, this Cartesian dualism seems to persist in teacher education. Although efforts at improving reflection with the aim of uncovering assumptions and deeply held beliefs are standard, these are sometimes practised at superficial levels with the aim again of improving test scores (Zeichner & Liu, 2009).

In representing the voices of the participants and their pain, I align this narrative inquiry with:

> 'a primordial existential form of bearing witness to human being and
>   human suffering – an effort to claim or reclaim one's humanity'.
>   (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 203).

I find therefore that the form of the cartograph also bears witness, possibly in a more immediate way that simple reading of the text of a story. Perhaps arguably, contemporary foci on transformative pedagogies, although fostering critical thinking, self-reflection and social awareness (Biren, Gurin, & Lopez, 2003), (hooks, 1994), even engendering empathy, mostly address teacher improvement for better results (Taylor, 2015, Goroshit & Hen, 2016, Meyers, Rowell, Wells, & Smith, 2019), rather than showing pain - indeed Iaquinta suggests that contemporary pedagogy does not address this - pain is:

> 'A topic that […] has not yet gained the attention and speculative
>
> commitment of pedagogy' (Iaquinta, 2019, p. 101).

In conceptualizing this pain through the cartographs, I hope to communicate something of this to teachers as an essential component of relational pedagogy, if not their humanity. Iaquinta suggests that today, such a focus might be appropriate, as:

> 'pain and suffering, therefore, although they are present in the
>
> ordinariness of life, seem to have disappeared, just as the images
>
> of apparent happiness posted on social networks, Instagram
>
> among all, would have us believe' (Iaquinta, 2019, p. 102)

My thinking aligns with Yacek et al:

> 'If education is about something more than providing the epistemic
>
> goods necessary for a productive career and the social and
>
> cultural appurtenances of middle-class life, then perhaps it is this:

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to transform us, to jumpstart processes of profound and

existentially meaningful change that make us into the people we —

or at least our educators — know we can be'

(Yacek, Rodel, & Karcher, 2020, p. 530)

Here, Yacek et al voice my intention – to use the cartographs as an affective charge to jumpstart change.

There is a place for narratives of the ordinary, as 'the mundane stories are also among the most important means by which people articulate and clarify their sense of the world' (Crites, 1971, p. 295). Crites argues that experience has a narrative quality, be it ordinary or exceptional, and suggests that 'not only our self-identity but the empirical and moral cosmos in which we are conscious of living is implicit in our multidimensional story' (Crites, 1971, pp. 295-7). Opening up these narratives as cartographs and considering them as matters for a justice of affect will, I hope impact the intended audience.

The critique offered here of an absence of understanding of the impact of (in)justice of affect is levelled at professional learning opportunities and awareness raising rather than at individual teachers in an already besieged profession. I note that while well-being at school is a focus for the literature (Langford, et al., 2014) (Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip, & Watson, 2006) and government policy (e.g. Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) – the Scottish Government's National Practice Model for well-being (The Scottish Government, 2022), teachers' own well-being has been reported as poor consistently over the past two decades in studies taking place from 1996 (Burke & Greenglass, 1996) to 2016, with the profession manifesting high levels of

depressive symptoms (Kidger, et al., 2016). Therefore, the idea of presenting

cartographs as documents of lived experience makes fewer superficial demands but

also may engender deeper thinking about injustice:

> '…looking at all the great problems of poverty, economic insecurity and
>
> violence, don't think you have to be a big dog and make a big
>
> difference. Just commit yourself to being a flea. Enough fleas,
>
> biting strategically, can make big dogs very uncomfortable.'
>
> (Edelman, 1993)

For any of us in the teaching profession, this statement is relevant. We recognize

that we inhabit the fold – there is no outside, even if we are looking for one.

(Philippopoulos- Mihalopoulos, 2015, p. 2): humans exist in an internal continuum of

affect produced by the outside, the desiring machine that codes the inside – if we let

it. There is relevance here to the creation of the cartographs – this coding produces

'dissimulation', an ontological rupture in the education machine, an atmosphere

conducive to metaphor that I take one step further than text – this atmosphere is an

'enclosure of affects that spread through affective imitation between bodies… [that]

produce the atmosphere… and find themselves situated, trapped or liberated in it'

(Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015, p. 5). 'We are always inside an object' (Morton,

2013, p. 17) – here, inside the desiring machine of education.

5.6.1 The cartographic representation

I do not conceptualise the cartographs as an alternative figured world. Although

some suggest this might demonstrate positive results in learning (e.g. (Rainio,

2008)), there is the risk that it might simply produce a parallel in which other

injustices are present. I do not seek to show causal representations in the cartographs either, as I consider these 'epistemological concessions that offer the illusion of knowing' (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015, p. 7). The cartographs are an attempt to make the complexity of the assemblages – the rhizome – visible.

Padilla Petry et al (2021) use cartographies to map space and time in teacher learning; here, as becoming cartographer I use them as an epistemological tool to enable new ways of reflecting on the strong themes arising from the lived experiences in this study:

> 'As a rhizomatic strategy it [cartography] would allow for and emphasize connections that do not follow hierarchies and are never finished or contained'. (Padilla-Petry, Hernandez-Hernandez, & Sanchez-Valero, 2021, p. 3)

I present these cartographs as spaces manifesting entanglement (Padilla-Petry, Hernandez-Hernandez, & Sanchez-Valero, 2021), as they are: 'models of worlds crafted through and for specific practices of intervening and particular ways of life' (Haraway & Goodeve, 2018, p. 135).

In some of the works, I have cut out words from the I-poems and images that reflect the intensities of my affective attunement to the narrative they represent. I suspend them in time in order to achieve a sense of their dimensionality and their becomingness. Sometimes I write on the cartographs my interpretation of the most salient themes that have emerged from listening to the lived experience distilled into I-poems. The spaces articulated between the text and the images are abstract – as such they convey something of the interstitial no-man's land between the virtual and

the actual, the birthing place where these meet. Borrowing from Zdebik, I have attempted to create 'an oscillating, vibratory map of the in-between' (Zdebik, 2019, p. 196).

These cartographs need to be read, as do Perry's maps of himself. They are assemblages, in that they function as a pivot point 'between nature and culture' (Zdebik, 2019, p. 195) and here, between affect and desiring machine within the wider construct of education. Soyini-Madison suggests that 'oral histories tease the borders between empirical truth, imaginative truth and partial memory' (Soyini-Madison, 2018, p. 127) – these re-presentations of lived experience have been created with care in order to communicate and, I hope, they resonate with becoming-ness as testimonies: 'As observers, we can empathise… through *witnessing*' (Soyini-Madison, 2018, p. 142).

I am aware that I have brought my cultural background to the creation of these cartographs. I have improvised them using the deep listening of the Listening Guide approach through the I-poems. My active listening was 'a dynamic and complex layering of a multi-sensory engagement' (Soyini-Madison, 2018, p. 32) with the narratives. Although these must obey the dictates of the materials used, I hope to overcome their boundaried appearance by suggesting rhizomes and lines of flight exiting the paper.

hymn then a song in praise of maps, …

without which we would walk nomadic distances,

give up the language of men and learn the gekkering

of foxes; we would negotiate with them

each evening a soft space in their dens.

(Miller, 2014, p. 63)

To reiterate my purpose: in submitting to 'the cartographic imperative' in this research, my aim was not to agitate for a Utopian school ideal using the narratives as evidence of systemic educational failures. Instead, I wanted to uncover the 'present' nature of lived experience, that is, that we 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway's phrase but not her intent), that humans live in a paradoxical entanglement with the world and the systems we impose upon and within it. This is 'the territory that has yet to be discovered' (Boulter, 2022). Using the concept of the rhizome, I reiterate that our human and educational trajectories are in constant movement. In the maps I have created I introduce the concept of 'drag', that is, the capacity of a rhizome to function as a multiplicity as it attracts items that become attachments, initiate lines of flight through and with entanglements, and thereby forming pools of intensities. The structures in my maps, aided by the I-poems, focus the observer's attention on these intensities: the words and the images fuse to increase their semiotic significance and communicative capacity.

I have discussed the difficulty of distilling the words of the participants and the irreducible (in my view) nature of their words into I-poems. Unable to practise a 'less is more' approach, as I found all their words so powerful, I found myself able not to make choices as such about what to represent, but to feel the settling of intensities in me as I read and re-read these I-poems. Practising this form of affective attunement was an exercise that I found to be intensely personal - my individual

response to the narratives I witnessed. This is the reason why I did not invite the participants to take part in the creation of the cartographs. It was a form of catharsis for me, in that the cartographs were created for a purpose so that I could both explain the effect of the poems on me, and hope to provoke A.N Other through their display.

I had not considered that I might need catharsis after bearing witness to these stories, but I experienced deep shock and sadness at what I heard. Casual and institutional cruelty, staggering levels of a lack of empathy and the level of power wielded by adults over the children in their care left their residue. I felt I was experiencing secondary trauma, and I had not planned for this. I had a therapist ready to speak with my participants, but I hadn't considered that I myself might need help.

It may be possible to claim that the narrative inquiry approach is to a degree psychotherapeutic in nature, through the empathic response of the interviewer just by being present and bearing witness – the process of 'coming alongside'. This is a dangerous position to hold for a researcher without the necessary training. As I have stated, however, I did not attempt in any way to offer advice or comment on the narratives, and had something serious arisen, I did have a specialist available to offer appropriate professional help. This is an issue to which I would like to call more attention, as 'any form of conscious experience has a core affective dimension, even the simplest perceptual experience' (Szanto & Landweer, 2020, p. 8) (Irarrázaval & Kalawski, 2022, p. 2). This not only emphasises in my view the importance of affect as the plane of consistency through which the rhizome of human intensity travels,

but the idea that the rhizome draws me and other observers into it through the principles of attraction and drag.

The concept of empathy bears some discussion here, as it forms the bedrock of the process through which I created the cartographs. I make a claim for empathic alignment in rhizomatic form with the trajectories of the – my – participants, by which I mean my process of affective attunement in its becoming state as I bear witness to the narratives. As the narratives and then I-poems form a succession of assemblages, so do the cartographs – each series constitutes a rhizome. These rhizomes are the same, as they are based on the same narratives, but also different in that each uncovers more – each instance, narrative to I-poem to cartograph, experiences a systemic change (Patton, 1994, p. 158) as they increase in dimensionality. This charts the development in my empathic response. Although they approach empathy and the affective through the lens of phenomenology, Szanto and Landweer acknowledge the historical philosophical perspective of 'our very being in the world' as a property of the affective: 'always and already a way of being affectively attuned to oneself, others and the world' (Szanto & Landweer, 2020, p. 9). To approach the concept of empathy more directly, Irarrazaval and Kalawski define it as the process allowing 'access to the subjective experience of other people (including emotions) with the awareness of the other as 'an-other' (Irarrázaval & Kalawski, 2022, p. 2). Some theorists argue that Deleuzean and phenomenological approaches are diametrically opposed, however, it is also possible to argue for 'a co-existence of planes' (Reynolds & Roffe, 2006, p. 228). I take this view, on the grounds that a) it very much depends which phenomenological view is in the game, and b) the view that meaning is not static – it is limitless.

According to Sammel in an explanation of Gadamer's position on this: 'it [meaning] is not stable, it shimmers' (Sammel, 2003, p. 158), reflecting the dynamicity of the rhizome I trace in this research.

My empathic responses to my participants' narratives explain the process of creation of each of the cartographs. I have argued for edusemiotics in the previous chapter; I explain the role of this emerging discipline in my work. To reiterate, 'edusemiotics sees living in terms of engaging with, responding to and interpreting signs so as to create meanings for lived experience' (Semetsky, 2017, p. 2). Here, I have responded to narratives by taking text and creating images around it into to distil and thereby point to intensities of lived experience.

My conceptualisation of the signs I have created is that they are intentionally pluri-dimensional. A certain amount of text is necessary in order to explain my process, but it is hoped that the provocations inherent in the symbols I have chosen will lead to deeper, relevant interpretation in the observer: their context, lived experience, culture and beliefs about education will 'spark' more and different connections. This is the beauty of images and text working together, although I have deliberately eschewed an appealing aesthetic in these works. This is because the visually attractive can sometimes lull the observer into a false sense of security, where instead my intent is to provoke thought. Being mindful, but not attempting to predict reactions, I also tread the fine balance between shock and provocation. In my view, shocking an observer is not appropriate; I do not seek to transfer trauma as this closes down thinking. Perhaps I have succeeded in finding a 'third' way, through the use of signs, of achieving this.

I offer the following short texts in the manner of those that support works of art at exhibition. I address the central images here, rather than all of them, but include in the cartographs themselves the themes arising from the assemblages as discussed. I decided that the most powerful way to do this was to remain with each individual, rather than remove and gather similar issues together, in keeping with the principle of narrative inquiry. I therefore list the short texts here as accompaniments to the images.

The primary image on Lucie's cartograph for me was a lighthouse. Her passion and desire for education illuminate everything she does and everyone she comes across. Her determination is reflected in the slow, ceaseless and insistent movement of the light of which she is guardian. Her grandmother's voice is also present, impacting her determination.

The image central to Catori's cartograph for me is that of her damaged heart. The loss of her mother at the age of nine, her father's grief and his harshness as he attempts to create a future for his daughter inform her learning trajectory, compounded by the casual cruelty of her teachers expressed in words and a lack of attention.

- I considered the sensory element of smell when addressing Martin's cartograph – the problem was to represent this visually. I adopted a dark grey cloud around his head through which he experiences the world of learning and his words give rise to the title of this thesis :'I remember the smell of darkness'.

- Simon's most powerful visual image was that of the coin, a two-

pence piece, dented by the belt buckle of his teacher. As physical violence characterised his secondary school learning journey, this image is central to his cartograph.

- Nathan's experience was violent and humiliating. It would have been too facile to choose the image of the rugby ball for him, but the image of a school desk, on which he was forced to stand in several instances, or which he was forced to sand down and polish, are the images that feed the rest of his cartograph.

- For Angie, the image of the oasis-space that she finds in the centre of the place that is the classroom, stood out most powerfully. I therefore use this image at the heart of her cartograph.

- Again, for me, Mary's story stood out as one of gradual isolation, culminating in the withholding of the prize. This was the action that knocked her so powerfully. I use the image of a person at the end of a tunnel here, vanishing into the distance with others looking on – not offering to engage with her or bring her back.

- For Cyrus, the central image is the letter, that powerful metaphor for success not understood by his mother. The enclosed space that he experienced in his learning journey function as the containment in which he still lives, as he continues to manifest the patterns he engaged in order to survive his learning journey

5.7 Summary

In this study I have uncovered and exposed the lived experience of a group of people not researched before in these ways. Using affective attunement to approach their narratives, I distilled these into I-poems as inspiration and as a Deleuzean thinker and an artist, I approach their educational trajectories as rhizomes that I chart using the written word and create visual images of them (the cartographs). All three outcomes – the I-poems, cartographs and future graphic score work together to communicate the contributions to knowledge – a justice of luck and a justice of affect – in a way that I hope challenges professional understandings of social (in)justice in education.

I have presented and discussed my contributions to knowledge as a justice of luck and a justice of affect (the two are intertwined, as they share the common ground of relationship). I contend that within these, justices of distribution, association and recognition are entangled. They present as assemblages through which the rhizomatic iteration of human development, here focusing specifically on the educational journeys of the participants, take place. The desiring machines of socio-economic circumstance backgrounding these concepts code human designed systems and behaviour through the channels of these justices.

I have presented the cartographs as a further distillation of the concentrated narratives present in the I-poems. Rather than focus the I-poems as they stand down into fewer words, I have chosen to distil them into the more multisensory and dimensional form of the pictures, using images and texts to symbolize and synthesise the affective charge they present. I chose to do this partly as a

therapeutic act for myself, and partly because my choice of symbols means an act of interpretation that is mine. I did not involve the participants at this stage partly because of the therapeutic aspect and partly because I was acutely aware of the cultural lenses I bring to the endeavour. As this research is an act of interpretation, it seemed appropriate to own this in its entirety. There was also a sense in which the participants were content to move on after the cathartic act of telling their story. They had given birth and witnessed two iterations of their creation (the narrative transcripts and the I-poems) and were now content to let the thing take on a life of its own. In future research, I might remove one step in my process in order to involve participants more closely in the design of the cartographs, this reducing the participation burden on them to two steps - the I-poems and the cartographs.

I now move on to explore possible future directions in this research, as I have more ideas for the further development of the cartographs.

Chapter 6: future directions

As a future presentation of the findings as an extension of the cartographs into an innovative performance form, I now introduce the concept of the graphic score. This is an example:
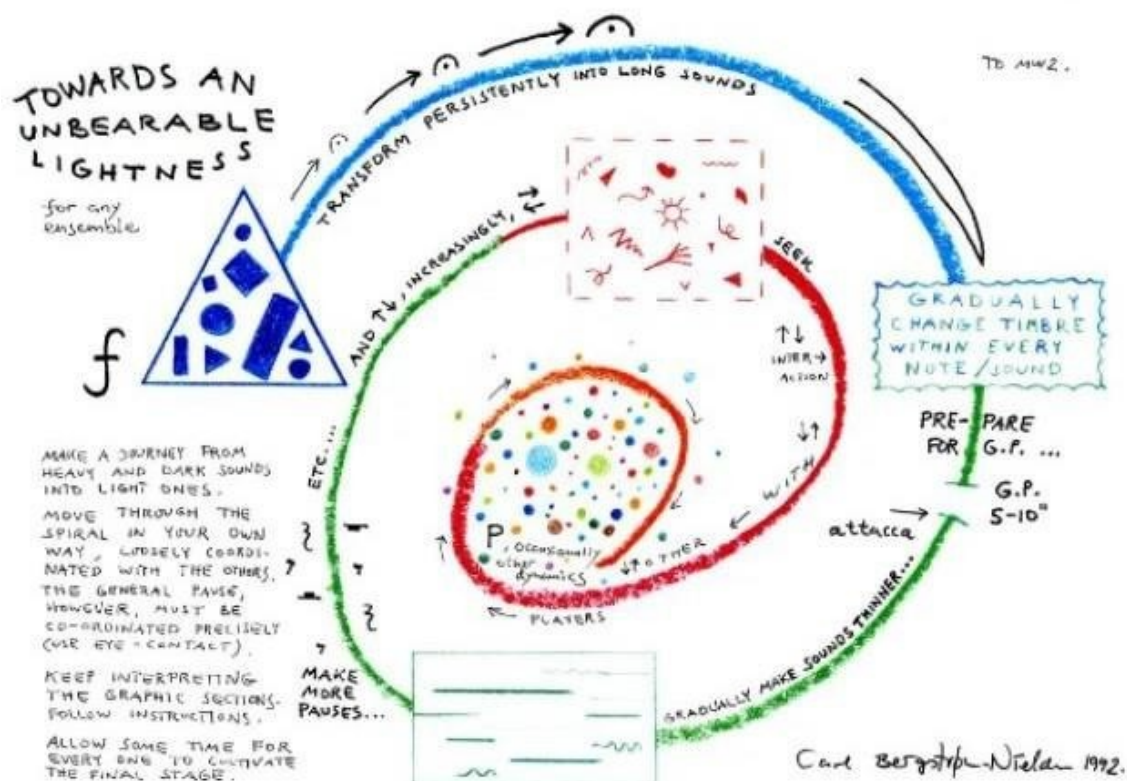
*Figure 4: Bergstrom-Nielsen – Towards an Unbearable Lightness (Bergstrom-Nielsen, 1992)*

Here, the composer directs the performance through written words and visual images, but provide guidance on keys, pitches, or volume. These rely on the decisions of the performer. The score may be performed by any ensemble with any instrumentation – it is therefore an exercise in interpretation more fluid than traditional musical notation.

Sonifying visual images is not a new idea (Adhitya & Kuuskankare, 2012, p. 1) and is based on concepts of mapping, for example, colour attributes such as intensity, shade, shape etc may be re-presented it as audio events comprising pitch, volume, articulation and timbre. The concept is used in computer gaming but, according to Adhitya and Kuusankare, is not simply the process of writing a programme to interpret a picture. It is possible for composers to develop individual notation and styles – in other words, the computer sonifying process is not reductive.

The graphic score I propose could be interpreted through a computer, but is really intended for performance by people. Neeman states that structured rehearsal and group leadership form the basis from which such a score can take the music in new directions (Neeman, 2015, p. 102) provided that this includes active, rather than passive, engagement with the score.

Neeman suggests that the graphic score itself is a stimulus for free improvisation, a tool that can stimulate innovation and

> 'explore the interactive possibilities of group creativity in many musical
> and interdisciplinary applications' (Neeman, 2015, p. 1)

The problem in re-presenting the graphic score in performance resides in its truthfulness to the narratives and the communicative power inherent in this. John Cage, the American composer, articulated the tension between the creative control of the composer and the performer, arguing that a piece should be performed with no interference from either (Cage, 1974). However, if the cartographs in this study on which the score is based are true to both the affective intensities of the narratives

and my attunement to these in my representation of them, then something of their power will I hope communicate in a deeper form to the intended audience.

As composer, I am constructing my own notion of space (Fendler, 2013) – the shape of the score therefore makes my presence explicit by anchoring my choices in the affective charge of both the I-poems and the cartographs. This is the space that performers will enter, 'stabilised out of [the] turbulent processes… made by diverse and dynamic ongoing interactions' (Murdoch, 2006, p. 4) – the cartographs and future graphic score need to re-present such multiplicities rather than reduce them. I want to make visible the invisible learning that takes place in the eventful space of the iteration of the learner, more than that learning that happens in the fixed place of the school. Laurier describes the emergence of time and space as the result of the interaction and relationships between many different elements (Laurier, 2011, p. 273) rather than a pre-existing condition of these relations.

To return to the cartographs, in depicting these learning imaginaries I am aware that I use two major cultural reference points that, for me illustrate the Deleuzean concept of immanence in contrast to the Kantian concept of transcendence. I discussed these earlier in relation to maps made to illustrate the transcendent (Bunyan – the Pilgirm's Progress) and the immanent (Sir Grayson Perry).

Adding sound to these cartographs, developing a sequence for performance and perhaps a mutually agreed understanding of the symbols used will be an exercise in semiosis. It will involve other performers possibly in improvisation. These performers could be teachers at a conference, or artists presenting the scores in performance

possibily as part of a festival of learning presentation. The opportunities are almost infinite.

I hope to disseminate my findings by framing the graphic scores within the twin justices of luck and affect, and discussing their performance after it has taken place.

I find therefore that I cannot conclude this study. The images I have now internalised from the participants' narratives are powerful and I cannot claim that they are definitively finished. Instead, through taking the cartographic images and the graphic score further into performance, they live still - rather than appearing in lecture or article for becoming-teachers. I am aware that this is still a 'transmission method' of training, but I hope that the multi-sensory nature of such a performance might mitigate this to a degree.

I end this thesis with a further quotation from Kei Miller, whose poetry has inspired every chapter. I am not pessimistic regarding the future of education, as Deleuze is not negative about the future. His position is one of openness, rather than a strict judgment of its positivity or negativity. While Deleuzean critiques of power structures, capitalism and mechanisms of control paint a challenging picture of contemporary society, they also suggest avenues for resistance, creativity, and transformation. So, rather than a simplistic negative outlook, Deleuze's philosophy invites reflection on the complexities and potentialities of the future, as do the final words of Miller's poem, quoted below: (Miller, 2014, p. 69)

> …   You find your feet at last
> straying off the marl roads, the bauxite roads […]
> and you would be

turning now onto the singing roads and the sweeting

roads that lift you up to such a place

as cannot be held on maps or charts, a place that does not keep

still at the end of paths. Know this,

that lions who trod don't worry bout reaching Zion. In time

is Zion that reach to the lions

(Miller, 2014, p. 69)

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Chapter 7: APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear participant

Thank you for your interest in my PhD research project. I'm being supervised by Professor Jo Warin at Lancaster in the field of Social Justice in Education.

If we've got to this stage, it's because you are a member of a special group of people who have not been qualitatively researched before. You're someone who came late to academe having had a negative experience of secondary education. How you define this is up to you. We're going to chart your journey and explore how your experience has shaped you into the person you are today.

If at any stage you don't wish to continue, no problem. Everything we do will be up for discussion and explanation – and of course you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason. Your data will be removed with no questions asked and securely disposed of.

Any information you share will be held securely on the University cloud drive; I will be the only person with access to it. Your identity will be protected at all times in accordance with the British Ethical Research Association guidelines to which all universities in the UK subscribe. I will anonymise your story so that you cannot be identified from it by offering you a choice of pseudonyms. The name of your choice will be the name used in the reporting and discussion of the findings.

I will come back to you to ask you to check the information we have shared and I will send you a copy of the completed thesis when it is finished.

The aim of my project is to understand how people overcome negative experience in education in order to succeed in the same field (i.e. education) in later life. I'm hoping that this exploration will develop our understanding of learning space and place in the learning identity, and thereby enable a better understanding of learning processes and therefore access to academe.

I anticipate a time-burden for you of at most 4 hours, in a two-hour interview initially, followed by communication via email. This will be arranged with you at your convenience and in a place of your choice.

I am very much looking forward to working with you.

I would be grateful if you would sign below as an indication of your permission for us to proceed. Do remember that this is in no way binding.

Very best wishes

Janet de Vigne (PhD student, Lancaster University, UK)

In signing this letter, I agree to take part in Janet de Vigne's PhD research. I understand that I may withdraw at any time for any reason, that my identity will be anonymised and that any information I choose to give (to be used as data by the researcher) will be treated as confidential.

Your signature:

Please scan and return to me at…

APPENDIX 2: I-POEMS

7.1 ANGIE

I went to a terrible school My school was terrible

I was very musical when I was younger.

They never wanted to teach you or anything like that – I never got anybody. I
would ask.

There was great kit but no-one to teach me to use it…

I used to go into music, sometimes play the drums.

I used to ask for books because my mum didn't use to read and there were no
books in the house.

I just asked for books:

'there's not much point you reading books because you're going to be
pregnant
by the time you're sixteen…'

I always remember that. Always remember. Yeah.

At one time I pretty much fell down the stairs in the old building. There was
the stairs – everybody used to fall down.

We had two buildings – one for science, one for humanities.

I chose economics – they were piloting that this year. It was really challenging.

I had to choose my subjects so I did two sciences and I wanted to do art and music but they said I'd only be able to do one.

My mum got called to the school and they were like: your daughter's going to disadvantage herself.

I thought I was going to do forensic sciences because I was quite good at maths, so they let me do a crash higher in physics and I was lucky I got an A.

I hadn't studied physics before so I had to learn the standard grade whilst I was doing the higher

But it wasn't hard – I didn't think, it was just formulas.

There was some sexism in the class. When I went into it in the fifth year there were three girls including me and we all sat together, the rest were all boys.

There was a lot of sexism at our school

Our physics teacher – he was one of those guys that are trying to be funny but he used to come out with some corkers.

I remember one afternoon a week I had to go through standard grade stuff so that I didn't get lost.

So I used to go to the physics room.

One lunchtime, we were listening to a song on the radio, and he's like, that's my favourite band, and I was like oh, I liked the band they were before they became that band…

I had the lead singer's book – Ian Curtis 'Touching from a Distance' so our relationship completely changed after that.

I was getting preferential treatment in the classroom after that because I like the same band that he does.

And the guys were like the usual thing: 'are you having an affair with the physics teacher'?

But it was a funny, funny place.

I liked school – I have to say that I really liked secondary school

I always used to go in with trepidation – because there were always like funny

relationships going on at school.

You know, like you've been friends with a person, you'd fall out with this

person,

you'd have to avoid this person… You didn't want to see this person…

So actually class was a rescue – you can just concentrate on what it is you're

wanting to do.

There was one teacher, and this was the same at primary school, when I was

seven – there was one teacher, Mrs Brown, who did not like me, Janet. She

did not like me. She made it perfectly clear that she didn't like me.

It was things like – the year before, I was one of these kids that's an over-

achiever. And then I got to her class and she like blocked me from doing stuff.

She was just of kind like really, really like nasty with me.

And then when I got to high school – it was a woman, it was a woman teacher.

I just want to say terrible so I don't care I'll just say it – I went to a really bad

school, Janet, like it wasn't a good school

The vast majority of people left after fourth year. And I would say about 20 people in sixth year – it wasn't an academic institution

At the end of the day the teachers were straight in their cars.

And you think about us and as educators sometimes we don't leave the office. We really actually don't, I mean, it's funny reflecting back on it, but I'm beginning to see now…

The vast majority of students did not want to learn. It was behaviour management. If you were passive, you were doing well. There was no push to kind of excel.

When I was in primary school, there were a lot of students who were sexually active.

One of my school peers had a miscarriage at the end of primary seven. She went to a party and got really, really drunk. She didn't remember what happened. There was a lot of drinking there.

There was a lot of pressure from the older boys on the girls to be sexually active. I remember when I was in my second year, a girl in my year, her little sister was at a party (and thank goodness these were the days before mobile phones) and had got up to stuff with an older boy and she was like hiding in toilets and stuff.

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I honestly don't know if the teachers knew.

Yeah, a real lack of care. And there were drugs, lots of drugs, ecstasy, acid, all that kind of stuff.

It was like rave culture. So yeah – that's what people did.

I never went to anything like that. I don't know why.

I'm an extrovert/ introvert – do you know what I mean? And it's like I need to go into a cave to kind of like replenish. I just found that took too much energy out of me.

The teachers very much differentiated… my town, an old mining town, was becoming a commuter town between two big cities.

So you'd have a middle class community. And they would very much differentiate from working class parents.

So my mum was a single parent, right? She was a cleaner, with no qualifications, lived in a council house.

The teachers they had expectations but more of the kind of like middle class students but not of the working-class students…

I became the dux medallist and there was a complaint – how can a girl with a cleaner for a mother, from a single parent household be the dux medallist?

There must be some sort of bias or something.

And then the girl who actually started that rumour, supposedly my best friend – she was copying my homework all the time – she had told the teachers that I was copying off her and the teachers believed her over me…

Eventually, when the chemistry teacher started talking about it she burst out crying – she said what she'd done.

I was 16. In maths class, French, chemistry – the only one where she didn't [copy from me] was physics because the physics teacher didn't believe her.

She did really badly in the exams and she blamed me for it. She failed two and passed two. And then she blamed my mum for spreading rumours around the town that my mum had said she would fail all her exams.

We were never friends after that. I went to ███████, she went to ███████.

She had to go to college first. This is history repeating itself – she blames her best mate. Because he got a first or a 2:1 – she blamed her best mate at the time.

School was always just really, really busy – I just remember lots and lots of bodies.

We had like vending machines next to the assembly hall and then you have the toilets next to the stairs and next to the reception. And then when you went outside it was full of people.

I mean, it was like, the school was too small to be honest with you. There were six years and 150 in my year, you know.

I found a refuge. There was a lot going on in my home life, in my personal life. My mum and dad had a really really, bitter, bitter divorce and I'd stopped seeing my dad. A lot of that was due to my mum, so I was very angry at my mum and me and my mum were fighting all the time. So it was a bit of a refuge.

In first and second year I was pretty much established as an A student, and then in 3rd year I wasn't like getting top of the class. And one of my teachers said to me 'is there something going on?' and that is the only time that I remember a teacher asking me anything like that.

There was one teacher who blocked me – she was very much on the side of the girl I talked to you about – I think they're still friends. I think she's like assistant head or head teacher now.

When I look back on school, I think I see it as absolutely toxic. I see it as really, really toxic. I think the teachers should all go back to university and be retrained.

I don't know, it's like there really was a strong, strong sense of classism there, like social class and gender, let's not even think about ethnicity. We had no minority ethnic teachers at all, except for one substitute teacher for computer studies.

My cousin nearly got suspended – he didn't get suspended but he was dragged
into the head teachers for being racially abusive to that substitute teacher.

There were real issues at my school – real disrespect coming from the children to the teachers. I'm not surprised some of the teachers developed this hardness towards working class students. You know what I'm saying?

I had three male cousins so we were all consecutive – I'm very different from my cousins.

The parents were against the teachers.

One mother came in and hit a teacher for being cheeky to her son. So this is what I mean – there was that kind of mindset throughout when I was growing up.

Some of the working-class students were the brightest – but you had to get through those layers.

Quite a few middle-class parents took their kids out of the school.

Our head teacher was a doctor. I can't remember his last name. He was a non- entity. A complete non-entity.

I remember I wanted to do sixth year studies in chemistry and the only place we could do this was at another school. So they were taxi-ing us to the other school.

I remember when the head tried to instil the uniform but then just gave up because kids were not going to school in school uniform.

So we're getting ready to be picked up and I was just dressed as normal.

But that teacher, the one that didn't like me, started screaming at me that you were going to represent our school to another school and I pointed out that school uniforms weren't compulsory and I was representing a school that didn't have school uniforms… She made me go home and change.

There was no identity at the school. It was just a hodge-podge of people.

That girl that I had that toxic relationship with – if it wasn't for her I wouldn't have went to university? Because she made me sit down and fill out a form.

My mum had no clue and the teachers hadn't a clue at the library. And I went. This was before she didn't do so well in her highers.

If it hadn't been for her I would never have applied.

I had always wanted to go to university but I hadn't a clue what I was talking about. I had no idea where that came from, Janet. I think deep down you absorb these kinds of stories about people that get out of my town. And it's usually around that they got out of ▮▮▮▮▮ because they went to university.

The teachers would brag about some students that went on to university but applying to university wasn't common, I think it was coming from the home. The parents that were pushing it.

If it hadn't been for my middle-class friends, I would never have applied for university.

Out of 150 of us, 8 of us ended up at university. 3 of us became doctors.

When I got to university, I started to piece things together about how unequal things had been at school.

And also when I went that's another thing – I went to the librarian about my application and I said what's the best universities? And she went ███████.

So I applied and got into all three.

I had no clue what I was doing. There was no way I could have lived in ███

No way! I had no money. It was too far away. I had no clue. My mum didn't know this.

And then I remember my head teacher said to me – 'very very good well done…' no, it was the assistant head teacher. 'If I was you I'd go to ██████, not ████████. You'd find that hard.'

███████ was receptive but there's a lot of privilege there. I studied philosophy in my first year. I never felt so stupid in my life. They would speak to each other in Latin - I was like – what I have I done.

I went to university to do forensics and psychology.

I had a life changing summer holidays before I went to university. It was because I had all the grades I needed to get into university.

I became a fool. I had a full blow out. And I was working at the time as well. I got a job between fifth and sixth year working in a psychiatric hospital.

My trajectory completely and utterly turned. I was 16 or 17 and it had a really negative effect on me.

But I ended up when I went to uni, I remember I sat down and said I want to change my subjects. I want to do psychology or sociology or politics.

Well – you're in the wrong faculty. I was like – how do I change? But I could change because I had the grades.

Psychology was the killer. That one was always oversubscribed, but because I was still on that one it was fine. I ended up doing philosophy and anthropology as well.

I have no idea where it came from. I think it was just the stuff I was reading at the time. I was reading a lot of… like Albert Camus, I hadn't read Sartre yet, I was reading dystopian type fiction. I was a goth – I was reading Bram Stoker's Dracula, all the Anne Rice books, references that were in pop culture, like Jack Kerouac. I went down that kind of like, reading a lot of like Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, all that kind of stuff.

I was reading them because of a song by the Manic Street Preachers – 'I am stronger than Mensa, Mailer and Miller… I spat out … and Pinter'.

From Joy Division, interested in JG Ballard, all that kind of stuff… Then I got into science fiction. I got into necromancy, obviously I read Dune. I ended up taking English Literature as an option.

When I was younger, I always wanted to read, but there was no books in the house. So I used to go to the library.

I would read every 'point' horror book – they were like the teenage version of horror books, and they were short and you could read them in like an hour.

I started to read them all but I'd never read classical fiction and it wasn't until I was about 16 – there was one of those bargain bookshops. So with my pocket money I would get five classic books for 3 pounds. So I would read like Tess

of the D'Urbervilles, Dracula, Crime and Punishment, Jane Eyre, Pride and

Prejudice so by the time I got to about 15 or 16 I was heavily, heavily reading.

But I think that's what started to separate me from my peers as well. That's

why I got on better with the middle-class ones so when I started to get it, it

wasn't that hard…

I lived in a scheme – a council estate. All my friends, by the time they were 11

or 12, I wasn't friends with them anymore because they were all going out,

they were doing drugs, they were doing all this stuff – I wasn't interested in

that.

So there was a gap in my life where I was writing books and I was playing

video games – and I was right in a very creative kind of space.

I didn't start to come out of that until I would say when I was doing my

standard

grades, and some of the middle-class kids were like, oh she's great, we need

to

copy her homework. And I think that is why I got accepted. And I started going

about with them, rather than the other kids.

I had some cultural capital.

I bought those books with my own money. And to this day, Janet, I can't tell you why. I was so into music when I was younger. And there's such parallels.

I ended up with the Marquis de Sade and everything. I went down that whole route. I read Anais Nin as well.

See, working in a psychiatric hospital when you're like 16 years old, it does something to your brain.

I think I was traumatised.

I think my bounds of normality shifted. I think I was never really comfortable in my own boundaries of normal, which was kind of growing up in a working-class scheme. Kind of like the school environment which I liked for the learning but I never felt part of…

These subcultures are ways of understanding yourself and maybe trying to find yourself.

But yeah, I mean if it hadn't been for that psychiatry, I don't think I would ever have wanted to do psychology.

I did three years of psychology then dropped out because it's a pseudo-science and it's just like really, really boring.

I love Freud and all that but actually the nuts and bolts of it are like randomised controlled trials… They were trying to establish psychology as a

hard science. I was interested in social personality, langauge and memory as well…

I very much preferred sociology and psychology. Because I felt that although they were all dead white men, I felt that white men actually could help me understand the screwed-up world I was living in better than what was done in psychology. I felt it was giving you tools to better understand the world.

I honestly I can't explain how I ended up. There's some things like, Janet, there's some things I've done in my life and honestly it's as if I have absorbed some of them… and then it works out, like serendipitous. I'll give you an example of that…

So when I finished my undergraduate I was like, I'm going to do an MSc in social research at Strathclyde university.

So I was doing sociology, sexualities, crime and deviance, classical social theory, contemporary social theory. Methods of social research were compulsory and there was like a masters in research methods. No idea why I chose this. And then I went on to do a PhD – in social science.

Yeah, I didn't know that I'd need the social research for that at the time. It's like my life is full of serendipity. It's like I absorbed something that's going on and unconsciously I must do a selection process that I'm not aware of and then I go, yeah, I'm going to do that – and I can't tell you why!

I never wanted do a PhD Janet – because I didn't want to be overqualified. I wanted to work and I wanted to earn my money.

But I wasn't materialist. I took stupid jobs. Like no one is interested in youth work for the money.

I wanted to help these young people see that education was letting them down. I'm against school. I wanted to be a different kind of adult role model for them. I did youth work for years and years and years – residential and outreach. And then I got the travel bug so I started travelling.

I've always had this 'protect the underdog' so I know it comes from my upbringing.

I honestly think I've been very, very lucky. I think it's my attitude.

I don't regret any of it. I know other colleagues had a different path.

At my primary school, my head teacher (she was very, very good) called my mum to the school and said whatever you do, don't send your daughter to ███ school. She'll get lost – it will swallow her up.

But it didn't.

They said we'll meet you half way and get her to a grammar school.

My mum said she couldn't afford the bus fare to get there every day.

My mum told me about this later on. She did ask me. I wanted to go where my friends were going.

I felt that I was good at it – the classroom was my refuge. At the time it was escapism.

I don't blame the teachers at my school for putting up those hard defences and hard walls and being quite selective about who they let in. Because it must have been quite hurtful.

But at the same time I don't think some of them were the right teachers for that environment.

I think what it was as well there was a lack of integrated services. That girl I told you about who had the miscarriage at 12 – she developed anorexia by 14/15.

She collapsed in class and one of the teachers gave her a KitKat.

I think it was like labelling theory – if you pretended that everything was all right, it was OK.

My school was quite a cruel place, actually. For the boys as well as the girls.

Yes, I enjoyed the learning, but I didn't like school. I didn't understand what its purpose was.

There were opportunities I took advantage of and it actually gave me a place to shine, and some great equal boosts. But actually, I got a lot of resentment from teachers as well as students.

It's like a very, very difficult thing to talk about because I think, for me, I enjoyed the learning but the culture of school I found very, very toxic. And because I don't think it has a culture, I think it would just become like this cesspit of different cultures kind of competing with each other because it didn't really have its own kind of identity.

I struggle to understand what the point of it was, what's the point of education?

Again, there's this survival button – I need this to get out of here.

7.2 CATORI

I was good at maths, good at spelling and loved all the subjects.

…when I went into secondary, I was quite excited to carry over that learning.

I really did well in the smaller school. So halfway through our S2 we were moved into the bigger school and I was doing well there…

…if you didn't learn it was your fault.

I spent a lot of my time getting told off for being disruptive.

I ended up annoying friends and people…

And it was all because I was getting no individual attention, I guess at home, apart from the things my dad wanted me to do, which was dancing and music.

I settled in that, but it wasn't anything that I loved.

My mum passed away when I was in primary school and I was nine.

I don't like big parties and lots of people – this is part of me, that's an introvert.

I love old buildings and history.

So when I moved up to the bigger high school, Oh my God, I absolutely hated it.

…it never ever used to feel like my space or my comfort zone. It was aggressive.

…when I'm in an environment that's quite built up, I'm actually really anxious.

I keep wondering how that affective domain influences what happens in the classroom and how learning takes place.

I got absolutely berated by the teacher - she was my house teacher.

…she was in charge of my well-being and she told me to get back in the window because the rule of the school was you don't hang out the windows.

She said 'Do you want me to call your father to come and find your dead body and that'll be your mother and you that's died?'

So I hated her after that.

There was one teacher who cared about my wellbeing. Other teachers were like the environment… functional.

The environment that shaped him [my dad] was at that school that I was in.

'…you won't get much done. You won't make it to be a vet if you continue to do what you're doing in maths, which is talk because your grades are starting to reflect that. You'll never achieve that.'

Don't know.

Didn't know.

I blamed myself.

I think that's what you do as a kid.

I'm the failure and I don't have the intellect and my dad's favourite name for me was stupid.

I do think he brought a lot to my life and I had security because I had him.

None of my teachers knew anything that was going on. Only that I was successful in music and dance.

And none of them ever took me aside to speak to me. Ever.

I don't ever remember anything being concerned about my well-being except for not hanging out that window and nobody ever came close to me.

You were always told off. That was the environment.

So when I looked at it [my results], I said to him [my dad] I need to be able to study because my friends are all doing better than me.

And so after that he let me.

I went back to school for my 5th year. And I was doing really well.

My dad also had me dancing four nights, five nights a week till 10:00 o'clock at night.

In class I was exhausted.

So they - the teachers - were impressed. Suddenly I was knuckling down to work. They talked about it.

Yeah, you were just a troubled kid.

I had that determination in my dad, he didn't beat it into me.

He was like that himself, determined to make a better life for his family, and he passed that on.

That reading environment that I created for myself taught me what family was like.

And I realized then my family wasn't like that.

Safety and comfort were the two things missing from my home I think.

I've always felt in my learning that other people are way ahead of me even now.

…school tells you if you don't succeed here, you're doomed.

And that is a metaphor that we need to break in education, because that's not true.

It's people that help you succeed and what you've got going on inside of you. It was just something - determination is what my dad used to call it.

It's an inbuilt kind of mechanism within you.

I think a lot of it's down to people.

It's like I because yeah, I think it's, it's not just an innate capacity that we might have as human beings.

And some people never activate it or find it within themselves.

So visualization came into it, I would imagine. So I did that automatically.

I practiced it in my mind and in my body and in my feelings as I lay in bed.

Yeah, I need to earn my gown. That's what I thought.

The red, the beautiful red that was so shiny at the occasion, I thought.

I couldn't satisfy the damage that school did to me. I couldn't.

I couldn't ever find a a way to satisfy that shame, and although I've now put it into a place where it doesn't frame me and doesn't shape me.

That's still a scar that you carry.

…you can succeed because you've got a faith based in that that that, that force for good wants you to succeed.

7.3 CYRUS

I was born in a rural community. They put the huge responsibility on you to walk 3 to 5km to go to school.

The family was poor and you are maybe the first one that has managed to go to school. Most of your family drop out of primary school. My parents encouraged us to study.

If you were given homework you don't go back home and ask someone else how to work on this because there's no-one you can refer to. But we students could help each other.

…we never thought much about what that education will do to a human being.

I'm learning something that offers me an opportunity to see the world differently than people back home.

So in my time, there were about 150 boarding secondary schools in the country. So it means you have to be selected by the government in terms of your grades at primary school. If you don't make it, you give up, then you're just gonna be in the community.

I still remember seeing some bright students. Yeah. That's what the pain I still feel now. It was bad that we lost some of the best along the way.

I passed on the first sitting. But now the thing that I hated was that I didn't know where I was going.

I'm going to a certain place that I've never been before. And I don't know how life is going to be… if I go to school and come back, I don't see that people will value me and respect me.

I remember crying, wanting to go back with my mother.

I realized that ohh I've a relative here. There was a connection. …one thing about this guy was he was such a hard worker.

He was selected to go to the government university, but at that time there no phone communications – nothing like that. While I was at school he sent me a letter with the letterhead from the university - written in English, sent to me just to encourage me to work hard, that he wishes me all the best – all that I still remember. I kept that letter the whole time I was there.

I knew that the only way to meet him I must go to the university. But the university is even further away, like 600 km.

I showed it to my friends, they were like – yo – an envelope with a logo on there from the university – it was just awesome.

I was looking forward to one day myself sending a letter to my mother with that logo. It didn't make sense to her – she's this grade two drop-out. But for me to be in the secondary school, she felt like I've made it.

I used to struggle a lot with, uh, English because in my background English was more like a third language to me, and geography.

…all of us would wake up maybe around 3am. Because we knew the best students, smart students in the other classes, we'd go and approach them for a session with us. The teachers never provided us with this. …caring for each other in that space, it was awesome. All these people from different places.

But some will even hide certain information knowing that I must know this to make it to the university…

I used to see the teacher like a god, you know, like a knower… you wouldn't know that he doesn't know the answer – he wouldn't show you that.

I had so much trust in these teachers that we knew.

When I went to investigate, I realized that some of the things these guys were saying, they have made it up… they were just fooling us.

So there was an issue memorizing the content - make sure it's in you, and knowing which part of the page of the text it is and knowing which past exam asked this question.

This led us funnily to developing this independent learning unknowingly, unconsciously but owning it.

So we were deeply immersed. Although we couldn't reflect on this knowledge.

I think the power balance between the teacher and the, and the student was so huge that it affected the way we were seeing the teachers.

If the class reps say you were making a noise during evening studies, you are whipped in front of the class. They sometimes do the hand, sometimes they do it in the yeah, in the legs. You miss like two or three classes for two, three days, yeah. It was bad.

The teacher can decide what kind of punishment I must have.

I can make noise and be whipped three times.

I can make noise and be whipped five times - there was nothing like a code of conduct.

I couldn't even ask certain things that I wanted to know more about life, about university – like 'did you find university so hard for you?'

…these are the questions that were troubling us, just wanting to know certain things that we should expect in the future.

But there was no such thing as support for you. Unless you are completely directly related to someone.

…we lost students. I saw it, losing friends, losing students - but you asked yourself where, where did the others go? It might have been too much for them.

To have someone take up with them in front of the girls in the class – that was too much.

They [the teachers] never cared about that. They were also valuing people in the wrong way in the process.

It was tough, but I guess I was lucky because of the letter that I got. And telling my mother about that letter, it was just inspiring me – why, one day I'm gonna write you a letter like this. … she said, 'my son, one day he's gonna buy a car'.

She didn't mean that I'm gonna buy and drive the car. I hope that makes sense, but the only thing she could have depicted in that metaphor as an analogy, would be the car.

That's the bad thing that I hated about it, that I had someone back home who would take my text and say, why did you get 10 out of 15 [and not 15/15]?

I didn't even know what I'm going to study there at university, but this guy said, come on, do computers.

But now we had never seen any computer. I'm thinking – what is this? He motivated me. I ended up making that vote.

At university we could ask for extensions (never at school), and we could have a chat with lecturers to ask them questions that we wouldn't ask at the secondary school.

Confinement thinking - that was the only way to survive.

You just have to continuously work hard, work hard, work hard. I'm thinking that this is the only way I'll survive

And the same set up of fear that if I fail, then I'm not going to make it in life, then I just have to work continuously hard.

That's one thing where I struggle a lot - when I'm working with students and they don't do a lot, in the way I think, I feel it depresses me as a person.

I think it's because of the way I was brought up.

I've not done enough.

I want to be in a situation where I just have to be confined, you know, like continuously being monitored like waking up with the morning, having just a few hours to sleep, working a few hours, sleep, work.

That's what I've experienced.

I also go out there like more like an inspiration to them. So everything that I have, they know my background.

It's the determination that a person has, so I will build that determination for them to say, see yourself determined even without funding, even without anything.

Your goal should be to say I want to achieve this. So the rest will come and follow itself. So that's what's been my inspiration all along.

7.4 LUCIE

My primary and secondary education experiences were not so pleasant. It was at the time when people were held ransom by money or resources.

To some families like mine, R50 rand school fee payment was a lot of money because some parents like my grandmother couldn't afford it.

I say grandmother because she was my parent. I brought me up as hers, my mother had me out of wedlock and left me to be my grandmother's child.

I never knew who my dad was until when I was about to get married and at the time, I had even completed my higher education post-graduate degree and was mother to not one but three children and was 34 years old.

The school fee money we used to pay was used to pay additional teachers or what we called SGB posts - because of the number of children in each school, principals used to hire additional teachers to subsidize.

People at the time were held to ransom by money – just 50 rand for a year's education at secondary school but parents sometimes could not afford this. This money probably went on stationery, rather than teacher salaries.

The slate was the cheapest form of writing because one could wipe and rewrite it and reuse it for all lessons in the foundation phase grade.

I used to break my slates so much as a learner which resulted in my granny buying me a cupboard slate, which uses wax pencil type, but sometimes I didn't afford the actual pencil and once it was finished or lost I would use candle wax for writing.

The schools were full with 72-78 children in each classroom.

The teacher will have access only to the children at the front row and hardly at the back because the space between the desks was not enough for him/her to move between.

You were often sitting with two or sometimes three children to a seat designed for one – these seats and desks were joined together by metal – you couldn't move it, you hated this…

Like the majority of teen children, I also became a victim of teenage pregnancy at the age of 17. At the time I was in grade 10. I started school very late in years because at the time no one was working at home and my grandmother was working as a maid in an Indian family.

However, my aunt (my mother's younger sister) had just started working in a firm. She was the only one uneducated because she had to leave school and look after me and my brother. Instead of going to school when I was 6 years old, I started school when I was 8 years old.

I then got pregnant in grade 10, but luckily no one at school teachers, or students saw that I was pregnant. When I was about to start grade 11, I decided with my family to take a gap year because the baby was going to be delivered in March.

Our school at the time was not accepting pregnant learners, so I can say I was lucky to be not known.

In those years, my uncle (my mother's brother) and his wife, as well as my aunt (my mother's youngest sister) were not university qualified but worked as teachers. Therefore I had members of my family who valued and understood education.

After I had given birth and stayed a year, they encouraged me to go back to school, and luckily they covered for me and said I was away from school because of sickness.

One of my aunts helped look after my baby when I went back to school till I finished grade 12.

Being a teenage mother and studying at the same time was not so easy, but I passed my grade 12 with not-so-good results.

I thought that my life was over and I saw my dreams crumble in front of me, but I refused to give in.

I enrolled myself in a night school with the intention of getting a good matric rewrite. I took it upon myself to look for part-time employment.

I used to go to the education district office to look for temp teaching employment. I know it was just a big dream that maybe I could also become a teacher like the rest of my family members.

By virtue of luck and being known because of my uncle who was at the time a teacher, one of the principals who knew him as a friend saw me at the district office and he knew I was looking for the job.

He offered me a job in the outskirts of town, where no qualified teacher would prefer to go. At the time I was employable as a teaching assistant because of my grade 12 highest qualification.

My place of work was a dead end with no transport from where town transport dropped you to the location of the school itself.

We used to rely on hiking or using our feet to walk a very long distance. The road cut into the forest on the lonely road. Thinking about it now, we were surviving by the grace of God.

I am saying we because other teachers like me were not local teachers.

I worked for three years in different places, all in outskirt locations with no transport and or modern life.

I was trying to make money to go to college because the university was just a dream to me then, especially since I had not-so-good results in grade 12. besides, I had to drop my grade 12 rewrite program since I was now working in the outskirts of town.

The dream never faded - I was determined to improve myself.

While working I managed to buy my grandmother's electricity installation and oversized windows.

We moved out of using candlelight and upgraded to electricity. I bought big windows and renovated my grandmother's house, I managed to buy groceries. Even though it was not a lot of money, I managed to do bigger things at home and for my aunts and grandmother.

In order to survive my new employment as a teacher who was not qualified as a teacher at all, I learned to use my observation skills. I would observe how other teachers teach the children, luckily, I was allocated to work with a professional teacher in a grade 1 class.

Because of the number of children that were making massive classes, we used to divide the class into two groups, with each taking one group and arranging it for children to sit back to back.

I found myself a responsible teacher right at the beginning, not assisting, because of the number of children and demands on teaching children at the time, but I was determined to make it

I believe I was driven by my love of children and helping others in need. Part of my teaching philosophy involves being very loving especially love for kids. I do believe that in return, they feel my love and return it back.

I decided that although I loved teaching and the children, it wasn't enough.

I wanted to go back to college and study further and pursue my dream.

I met my husband, who was a boyfriend at the time and studying at the university in his 2nd year. I shared my story of how much I love to be a graduate someday, but my poor results and money stood in my way.

He introduced me to a now-called extended study but then called a bridging course program so that I could improve my results and qualify for a university entrance. The program was offered by the university I enrolled to study with. He paid for my registration and because I was still working and the program offered part-time, I was assisting with further payments.

I used to attend twice a month and classes were offered over weekends. I wrote exams at the end of the program and with my boyfriend's help in mentoring me. I passed the program.

That is how I landed in a university space to study and I never looked back.

After being offered a study space I therefore applied for government funding, since my grandmother nor I could not afford university fees. I enrolled to do a bachelor's in Social Science, majoring in legal studies and sociology, because I wanted to do law. I wished to be a lawyer by profession.

Just when I was thinking that I got it together in my second university year I got pregnant again.

My family were angry but supportive because they were determined that I finished my degree.

The same aunt who looked after my first child took it upon herself to look after the second child and asked me to go back to varsity because I was nearly done with my studies,

I studied for three years undergraduate, and in my third year I got a temporary library assistant job like many students to support my finances, remember I was a mother as well and not working anymore, so I needed as much money as possible.

I intended to leave after graduation because I was thinking about my two daughters and that my family has needs, but while working in the library, I was inspired by a lot of things, especially reading and serving others, and I thought that maybe I could do one more year or two post-graduate studies in librarianship, which I did.

After doing my postgraduate library diploma I was given a scholarship by my department to continue with my master's and that was an opportunity I cannot refuse

I stayed in the library because I love contact with students. I love the people and love of reading and teaching came together.

My studying that long made me spend a lot of time away from my family, and my babies, and fortunately, my boyfriend was in the same university just on a different campus than mine.

My family was in a faraway town. This distance called for me to visit home in every school holiday. My being away so long and so often made my child to know me less because she got attached to my aunt and my grandmother.

I used to send money home to my aunt because she wasn't working plus she was looking after my girls. My grandmother at that time had long retired.

The money I was sending home was meant to be my food money after the university stopped the dining hall system. They provided kitchens in the student residences.

Also, the father of my second child had already started to work as he graduated before me, so he paid something as well for his child. He didn't discriminate against my first child and was a lovely man.

Taking a second degree made him very angry, he asked me why I needed it and that is when he started showing signs of being a man, we broke up several times.

My family and my children were all I could think about. His rejection made me press on.

When I finished the second degree I enrolled for my master's degree.

When I was in the middle of it he came back with a marriage proposal.

I didn't want to get married, but I also didn't want to be selfish and had to think of the children.

I accepted and we got married and moved in together.

I was always obsessed about making my life better and I was focused and motivated.

My motivation came when I was watching TV one day and saw a young woman on the news wearing a red gown. She must have been graduated with her doctorate degree. I was motivated to be like her regardless of the years that it could take and my current condition at the time, but my desire was so strong because I was thinking about what comes with it and that it is a lifetime achievement.

I was always obsessed with a better life for myself.

I was very selfish about my study I was very focused - self-motivated.

I love to study – no matter how many years it takes and how many obstacles come, not because of getting a lot of money, I never thought about it in that way, but it's 'one of those assets that will never be taken away by anyone'.

I needed a better life for myself.

My mother and my grandmother were not educated, they were not even able to write, but they both were passionate about my schooling and they were very supportive. I remember how proud they were when I graduated with all my degrees. They attended every single one of them.

I happened to be the first in my family to go to the university and make it. I broke the curse.

Most of my family members who had studied highly ended to the diploma level. It was my graduation that motivated most of them to go back to university and study to obtain degrees

My grandmother was a very strong and hardworking woman. She was very supportive of my and my siblings (who are my cousins) education.

Even though she was earning as little as R 29 a week, she was determined that we get educated.

If ever there were problems that were making you stay away from school, she would take you there kicking and screaming and make sure you settle and you at school every day.

My grandmother treated all her grandchildren the same, there was no boy or girl preference. She taught us a lot about life and respecting each other.

She collected all her children's kids even those born outside from different mothers under one roof and provided love and care, so I grew up with all my cousins under one roof and we referred to each other as brothers and sisters and not cousins.

My success did not become mine alone, but I also inspired my younger brothers who also followed me and went to university and obtained their degrees.

It also filtered through to my dusty township and some other children wanted to know what they could do to succeed.

I took the initiative to motivate them that it was possible even without money to chase their dream and to some extent help them with application procedures.

You need to be determined. You need to have a dream. It was doable, you don't need money, you need to be determined. If you have a dream, it's possible.

I wish I'd known her [the woman in the red gown], because I'd tell her she was my inspiration – I was coming from a dusty town that has no hope. Where there was no money. But now after seeing me do it, so many other children were motivated to say, OK, it's doable that going to university became a trend.

I help them in any way that I can. I try my best. My family is everybody – they look up to me a lot. I am hope in them.

My secondary education was not so easy as well, it was during the time when people were fighting. Schools were experiencing a lot of riots.

The teachers could go ahead and teach 5 out of 60 children in class or only those children available to be taught, the rest will be stuck in riots.

I happened to be one of the few dodging bullets to be in the classroom.

Our townships on those days were flooding with soldiers and hippo cars, and being at school was not safe.

The school was made out of two big concrete rectangular blocks with toilets at the ends and the principal's office. No eating facilities. But it was my school and I loved it.

I got through the riots to get into his class and sometimes there were just 5 of us out of 60 in that class.

I was scared to be shot.

I was in a township and I heard about where the trouble would be, so I would avoid it. I'd see the soldiers' cars.

You were careful, you know – touching the bullets going to school. You weren't

safe even in the school.

I learned to be self-motivated and growing fast up at an early age to look after my younger siblings, because of the situation at home, elders were mostly at work.

I happened to be the oldest available to take care of the other children at home.

I used to wake up as early as 5 a.m. to make sure I bathed, dressed my siblings, and cooked (porridge) for breakfast before I could attend to myself and prepare to go to school.

As a result, I was always late for school.

I used to be late because of my morning responsibilities and teachers never understood my lateness and I was scared to tell.

I will do anything now to help your child go to school. Especially when that child is motivated because there are children who have everything but don't want to do anything about that.

I had to grow up very fast because all these other brothers between following me were like my children. My grandmother was working endlessly.

I had a biology teacher who was very good. He glowed. I loved the biology teacher because even if you don't understand he will find another way.

But the other guy, the maths teacher, will try to explain but using the same method. He's just talking at you. He's not actually letting you explore it yourself.

This teacher was new – the biology teacher was old. The new teacher was still finding his way, but at the same time the students are suffering. I am still not a fan of maths even today because of that teacher.

I am noticing with my grandchildren's education that experienced teachers are very good at teaching young children, they understand the age and educational language to use.

Because of my poor high school background, I experienced problems in my first year at university.

I couldn't speak English. It was my first time seeing or having to use a computer. It was so difficult.

I used to cry a lot because I could see my dream going down.

When I was at school the teacher would speak in my vernacular to clarify where I didn't understand but not so at the university.

I was attending for the first time in an institution that is historically white. I was leaving home for the first time.

The person standing in front of me only speaks English because he/ she is white. Most time the day will go by without me understanding anything.

I had to submit essays and assignments that needed to be typed as a requirement while I had no idea how to type or had never been exposed to using a computer or a typewriter.

But I didn't give up.

I would sit in the computer lab the whole day during my free periods and the whole night, just typing two pages because I was slow.

I used to write my assignments first in a draft form of paper because I needed to translate from my language to the English language before I could sit in front of the computer and do formal typing.

It was so bad. I thought I was going to fail but surprisingly I passed my first exam. It was helpful that we had mentors who were assisting us with some subjects. Some of them had gone through the same experience in their early years.

I worked very hard. Just like anyone, there were moments in my university time when I felt lazy or tired and overslept.

But let me share with you that I used to hear my grandmother's voice in my

head, she would tell me that if I overslept I will not prosper, and would kiss the university degree goodbye.

I will therefore wake up and work. Making myself better was an obsession.

I value education so much that when I see children playing with opportunities it hurts so deeply. My second daughter refused to study and obtain a university education.

I'm very grateful for life, my achievements, and what God has put before me.

My life experience is worth writing a book to inspire others.

I believe that whatever one wishes could be achieved through faith and hard work. I tried not to get depressed easily.

I talk a lot.

It is my wish that people could embrace life.

My message to my children & and grandchildren is that they can be anything they want to be as long as they dream of it.

I never got the opportunity to know the name of the woman in that red gown, at the time I was still a high school scholar.

If I could be given a chance to know her that would be my opportunity to thank

her for being my inspiration and that like her, I may be an inspiration to others.

7.5 MARTIN

I remember the smell of darkness.

The windows were huge, but too high for a kid to look out. That was deliberate.

Generally, I felt a bit of a failure at school. I didn't really know what was going on

I wasn't out, I wasn't in the inner circle at school, I wasn't in the completely not part of things groups.

My friend helped me - I suddenly thought gosh if he's doing that, and I'm not, then we can get separated after these exams.

I basically studied in the most box standard way. Memorising.

I got the belt on the hand. Within an hour I had two blue marks sitting up on my skin over my fingers.

And I hid it from my parents so nobody knew.

I remember at the time thinking that we haven't got time to think. But we got told off. We didn't have time to think.

This young art teacher said: 'I want you to do some abstract painting'. What does abstract mean? I go right, well, I'm done. Finished.

She came up to me to the front of the class and I got the belt for taking the piss.

I didn't know what the fuck we were doing from the start.

She could so easily have said that's interesting – what do you see, why have you chosen that colour, just keep going for another 10 minutes.

I memorised soliloquies and that's how you can regurgitate that study.

I think they were very focused on getting through the exams.

And in the cadets, early on there was tremendous bullying at the summer camp. I chickened out the first year.

The year I was really badly, badly abused, it was some sixth formers who were doing this, fifth and sixth - really really drunk.

…at some point, me and two others said 'fuck this, we're not waiting for this. We know what's coming'.

So we waited until quite late.

…we crept under the wire and escaped into the hills…

Then eventually we came down the following morning… one of the teachers found us.

I thought we were going to get hell but they were shitting themselves…

…he took us over […] to the ringleaders and we found one.

He was lying on the ground in a pool. And the guy said 'well that's the guy who you've been so scared of'.

But there was no investigation, nothing, nobody ever, nothing more was ever said.

…let's just say, well it's the whole thing is that you, you repeat what you know.

I was always trying to be part of the most popular crowd.

I would just be jealous, I think I was envious of people who were who were good at stuff.

We never got a chance to demonstrate our knowledge except in something like math.

You're just there, you're really passive…

I do remember, we had this one teacher in primary seven – he'd been a pilot in WW2…

And he'd just tell us stories. And he was probably telling stories deliberately, you know, and that kind of narrative way of teaching… but it was great.

And I remember once doing a presentation on Pesados' journey across Ecuador…

And he just said 'that was really good'. Yeah. And I do remember thinking, everybody's listening.

7.6 MARY

I can do things academically.

And then we moved city in the in my last year of primary school.

I guess it had a bit of an impact on me.

I'm hugely introverted. Reading also gave me kind of a place to escape coming from a large family.

I was knocked off my bicycle by a car in the last year of my primary school.

…they were quite worried about me.

So no one really considered the fact that I might actually be a little bit traumatised.

But it had quite a big knock-on effect. I started to struggle physically as well.

I think I just became slightly more socially isolated, not radically but just a little bit.

So my A level year was a very, very difficult year. I was made head girl of the school.

I thought that because I was the head girl, I then had to somehow isolate myself.

[the girl who was going to be sports captain] died in the school holidays and we had a memorial service on the second day of term and that was it. Like we moved on.

She wasn't my best friend, but we were part of the same small group.

And I just, I found that really quite socially isolating.

Chemistry ended up being the sort of my love in the sense.

I decided as a way to honour [my aunt's] memory I would work hard at chemistry.

…kids do weird things and actually my brain works like that.

…by the end of the final year, I was fairly sure that I was topping the class for chemistry.

At the end of term, the bright girl ended up getting the award for chemistry, which I was upset about…

I don't even know how it happened, but every year they would give this one particular award to the head girl. And then this year they decided not to award it.

Obviously I was quite upset about it, went home, spoke to my parents. They spoke to the headmistress. My mom is also a teacher at the school.

The deputy head mistress rowed with me. And once or twice I had corrected her.

You know, for a, I don't know, 50 something year old woman to get riled by a 16/17 year old is just a little ridiculous.

I found out subsequently that she, not the staff, was against giving me the award.

I mean that was shattering. I'm not gonna lie. Because I thought I'd been doing a reasonable job.

Now I realize that I threatened her in all sorts of ways.

I'm not gonna change.

I presumed that I had no leadership skills.

I lost confidence in my own ability to judge how well I was doing.

First word that comes to my mind is that it [the school] was cold. […]

physically,

but I think it was also emotionally relatively cold.

I think it felt quite overshadowing.

We had school uniforms. […] , essentially you're a blank slate…

I felt that I knew… I knew the rules. I knew how to navigate it. I knew how to

be

relatively successful in that space.

Until I wasn't.

The classrooms - ohh they had that like phenolic smell, right? It totally was an

institution.

Pretty much you do this on your own. You're not allowed to talk.

There wasn't a sense of anyone being interested in me and my development.

It

was about passing the exams.

I think my concept of teaching is very different from that assistant head

teacher. I go in with curiosity like I've got stuff to tell you. And if I learn stuff

from you, that's gonna be cool.

…it's much more valuable to elicit experience.

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I always think about my relationship with chemistry as being sort of like the relationship that I've never been able to leave. I keep going back to it. I think I finally love it.

I don't think it's reactive. I think I teach that way because it's most effective.

NATHAN

School felt like a prison definitely I think. My mind was always wandering.

[my first languages teacher] was probably the worst of them all… Ohh man, he was a monster.

If he couldn't read what you were writing, you'd have to get punished in class.

… you'd have to stand on your desk and say out loud to the class that you write like a pig.

If you scored less than 40% [in maths], you'd have to get on your desk and say you think like a monkey.

My mom and dad were divorced. […] people don't like that, there must be something wrong with you as well. That's also something he literally said to me.

That man is what I think shaped me for like 3 years.

I would just float away and then I got this lady with the jack.

She used to hit your backside in her class. It was painful and it would happen right in front of class.

…every time she would get to me. I would just like, freeze over. I mean, I used to sweat in that class.

That was a fighting school. You came in with a reputation.

You know how to read the room. … tons of tension.

…that school didn't have a sense of the value of education.

…the first half of my secondary school was pretty much disengaged. At the second school, I had a fantastic teacher.

So she was the first one who said you're sitting here, but you're never here.

I now know I've got ADHD. I think it's the first time in my life I can actually really focus.

In secondary school, you'd just be labelled - you know, you're a boy, so you don't like it.

I think I had one math teacher who was really one of those amazing teachers. I didn't enjoy it up until I was in her class. …she made it real.

I went to a completely different school for the last three years.

But in maths there, that woman just hated everyone.

The first feedback I got from her - she actually set up a time to talk to you, and it was 'you should not be in my class'.

Just like that. That's all. That's the words I'll never forget. You should not be in my class. Not welcome. I just... You should not be in my class. Finished.

We had another English teacher. She was a dragon lady as well.

And I was a very big introvert. I played sick because I hated it that much.

I'll never forget that woman.

I did OK [at this school], I didn't apply myself because I didn't see the need to. I didn't see the value of it.

There was another teacher – a lawyer. And she would put me next to a window. And that worked. And she also told me the trick of studying with music.

She actually, she actually did that. So I think that's how I got through matric.

See now I think I injured myself with the rugby towards the end of grade 11. And then I realized, the first plan is to make rugby a career. You know, that might not work - so life could change like that.

Then somebody inspired me and said, you know, you must go to university.

I really had to push on and that was difficult.

I could not study. There is just no way that that anything would get in except if I put it into more than short term memory. That worked for an exam no problem.

The biology teacher was phenomenal.

She made us understand how it works. So that I think helped, and in my final results for biology, I did the best.

I got the grades I needed, and I actually went to varsity. The year after that.

And then I actually ended up injuring myself and putting myself out [of rugby] forever.

So my life completely changed, I actually dropped out of university.

I got a job in retail, but I hated it. It was so boring. … it's probably the most brain dead work I've ever done in my life, because everything is on a checklist.

So that put me eventually into a pool of depression.

So he [the psychologist] said you know the solution for me is to read and just start studying something.

So I did. I started reading a book and I started feeling better. It inspired me. Yeah.

Then I applied and I got into to the university.

And yeah, took a leap of faith and started studying full time. But in the first year I failed everything.

And I remember walking into the office of the academic advisor. And she was the most probably the nicest person I've ever met. Because I walked into it with the idea that I'm going to deregister.

I couldn't write. I couldn't cite. I couldn't do anything. It was a disaster. It really was a disaster.

…the university had a learning support centre. And they didn't really do classes,

but they gave you DVDs. So I have to learn how to study now. That was painful.

My wife is a remedial teacher. …she used to sit and study with me. She helped me study because there's no way I got it.

I think it took me about until my third year before I really understood what we're supposed to be doing at the university?

Yes, I'm a university teacher now. I consciously apply the stuff I learned from the good teachers. All of them, all of them. All of them.

7.7 SIMON

…I was a really bad truant. So I was hardly ever there.

I spent a lot of my time not listening to the classes, but looking at what was going on in the football ground…

I got the belt. I've got a memory of at least two or three times a week - I would be beaten, if not more, on the hand.

So you had a red cane mark on your palm. But I don't think I did much writing, I think.

In some cases, you were terrified - they were incredibly threatening some of them.

I remember one teacher in particular who, you know, took the time to kind of be loving and kind.

But you know, he listened to what you had to say and engaged with me in a way that was kind of empathetic.

…in my experience, those teachers were few and far between.

I admit I'm guilty.

My mum had suffered from mental illness […] she was just barely functioning.

I just I think in some ways my development was arrested and I ended up isolating myself I suppose.

I must have spent a lot of time when I was truanting in the museum actually.

There was something about a teacher talking about all these guys who were the wooden tops in class - I remember thinking what does he mean by wooden?

I didn't feel like the school had a great expectation of me.

It was a torture.

Truanting was a coping mechanism, maybe, but I didn't feel like I needed to do that as an apprentice.

I could read, but I really struggled writing and hardly wrote anything and it became embarrassing…

I've kind of looked down on myself… I knew that I couldn't do anything else because I didn't have any qualifications.

I kind of got a job in the buses, then got actively involved in the trade union there again, you know, that was encouraging me to learn.

By coincidence, I got chatting away [with another activist] and he asked me 'what do you want to do?'

'You know', he says, 'well, we had this college'. So he started to tell me about it.

I just thought you know it was just talk and then sure enough an envelope came through from the college with a form to fill in.

The college was the kind of transformation that gave me the qualification to go university.

Walking in there, I thought this is just, this is crazy. Yeah, this is just absolutely unbelievable.

…everyone who was there had the feeling of feeling failed by education first time around.

I felt I would be better equipped to do that [make change in the world] and make a contribution if I had many qualifications and had an education that kind of matched up.