

Prologue to Part Two

**'Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.'**

July, 1996. In 'The Ancient Mariner', the protagonist kills the albatross which has been hailed as a good spirit. This represents his alienation from the purpose of Life: he does not recognise the necessary connectedness of all things and thus his redemption is arduous and long. He is awakened to his responsibility as one human being to all other human beings through an aesthetic experience in which he perceives the water snakes surrounding the ship as divinely beautiful. He recognises in their beauty his own corruption. Through this act of connecting with other beings he begins to lose the crippling guilt, symbolised by the albatross hanging round his neck, and becomes free to take responsibility for his own life at last, and thus to play a meaningful role in his own and other's destinies.

I see Part Two as being implicitly concerned with myself as an educator taking responsibility for my own life and playing a meaningful role in my own and other's destinies. In the Epilogue to Part Two I will explain the extent to which I was able to live out my stated concerns.

In this Part I believe I show a greater understanding about the way in which my own 'I' within the action research cycle plays a part in the development of my understanding, than I did in Part One. However, I have still not made the links explicit enough. Instead of referring to the literature or showing how what I am doing differs from other enquiries, I am not yet doing much more than revealing development, rather than educational development. However, there is still, it seems to me, a greater explicit concern to enable my Masters

degree student, CC Lin, to find her own voice within the action research enquiry she is undertaking. In addition I am beginning to try to describe and explain some of the values as they emerge in practice over time, rather than presenting them without explanation. This is the first time that I begin to show what it means for my own understanding to try to articulate the immanent dialectic at the heart of my practice in an apposite form. (See the section in The Introduction and in the Epilogue to Part Four on the immanent dialectic.) I am also beginning to articulate here the nature of my own developmental standards of judgement within my action enquiry.

The account you are about to read consists of two letters. CC wrote to me in August 1993 towards the end of her own one-year course here at Bath University and challenged some of the conclusions I had come to about my work. I had shown her my own writing in the course of tutoring her for her action enquiry. She was trying to discover a way of authentically representing her struggle to find her own voice in a context which she did not find conducive to her ways of knowing. In the account you are about to read I present her letter and my response. In placing so much emphasis on the beauty of her own writing and my reply, I try to show what it means for me as an educator to bear in mind the connections between the ontology and ethics of my practice within an aesthetic form of communication. I liken this attempt to integrate these elements of my educational concerns to a connection I am making between the artist (the person), the art canvas (the educational process) and the art critic (the teacher-researcher) - in other words combining the individual's sense of worth and purpose (the ontology), with an analysis of the significance of so doing in the name of education (the ethics) in a synthesis which communicates its meanings (the aesthetics).

At the time of writing Part Two, however, I was not as aware as I am now of the knowledge which such a synthesis was creating, nor of the ethical implications of the ownership of that knowledge. It is in the Epilogue to Part Two that I offer you a more detailed analysis of the ethical implications of what it means to speak for yourself in the name of education. At the time I wrote Part Two I was also fond of using the term 'educational epistemology'. I now favour the term 'educational knowledge' as it expresses what I mean, as opposed to a theory of educational knowledge which I understand by the term 'educational epistemology'. The term 'epistemology' still appears in this Part of the thesis, however, and I have not sought to excise it falsely. In the Prologues and Epilogues I rarely use the term, if at all.

Part Two: In Search of Synthesis (written in 1993)

'Don't withdraw your research to one side of the story. An educative relationship and aesthetic morphology are two-way. Tell me what you are now. I see a doctor in the writing and I want to see more than a doctor.' (Letter from CC Lin to Moira Laidlaw, 15.8.93.)

Autumn, 1993. It was not until I received a letter dated 15.8.93. from CC, that I began to understand how I needed to fulfil the promise of this thesis. I had not specifically asked her to write to me at all, but I always hope that the critical openness between us might encourage her to speak about whatever she wants as it becomes appropriate. She is now writing up her M.Ed. dissertation and has recently re-read parts of my thesis and some of my other papers in preparation for answering her own question about how she can enhance her own educational management skills.

After finishing Part One of this thesis I was left with a void of disappointment. Something is missing. In fact quite a lot. I have been aware of a sense of deficiency in an explanation about the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. And within this aspect of judgement resides, in my own educational development, an ontological as well as a confluence of my educational knowledge. I have looked back through the whole text and found unanswered questions whose significance I didn't understand even though many of them I had posed to myself. In the light of CC's letter, I would like to reiterate those questions and introduce a few more from others who have read the text in order to satisfy something within which recognises, and yet at this moment cannot fully articulate, what is necessary for this writing to achieve a synthesis of representation with its purpose. Three of the questions which I am posing myself, which CC and I discussed informally, and which it seems relevant to introduce here are:

- 1) How can I know that I am performing [an appropriate] art of living in ways which follow from the nature of life in general and human existence in particular?
- 2) How might I improve the crafting of my own life in education for the benefit of myself and my students?
- 3) How can I show within this thesis and in my practice the necessity of viewing aesthetics and ethics as aspects of each other?

CC's challenges will, I believe, enable me to give some fuller answers to those questions than my thesis has as yet managed. Please bear these questions in mind as I set out on the most ambitious writing journey I have ever undertaken.

I have set out to judge the quality of my educative relationships through this standard of judgement I am terming an aesthetic morphology. There are potential aspects of educational validity which remain as yet only hints. I know that as an educational text, descriptions cannot stand without explanation. A great work of art, as I have already argued, contains its own symbolic reality fusing form and content at the point of significance. This work, if it is to be representative of an educational living art form, must demonstrate and then explain that point of significance. I haven't done it yet. It took CC's letter to show me what was needed. I reproduce her writing in full because it is, in itself, a delicately framed work of art. I do not wish to disturb its beauty and inner coherence. I will then take points from the letter as they have arisen, and without, I hope, disturbing the uniqueness of her voice, I will attempt to contextualise and justify my own thesis more fully:

There is a question which keeps coming to my mind:

If the theme of the thesis is about an educative relationship in order to develop an individual's educational development, as the titles you gave to different sections of your thesis, papers and transcripts [suggest]: 'the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationship with Sarah'; 'an educative conversation between CC Lin and Moira Laidlaw'; and 'Nigel Brown and Moira Laidlaw working together: the Power of Educative Correspondences,' (Laidlaw, 1993)- and the individuals who have worked with you, have always felt in some way that there is an equality of human rights and the value of individuals' intelligence and wisdom - how have you shown the link between the equality and the educative relationship in the written work?

Maybe I do not understand what you mean by educative relationship and aesthetic morphology - that I thought these terms did not just imply an educative relationship to the individuals whom you have worked with, on what they learned and the transformation into intellectuals (according to Sarah's comments at the last meeting)

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which was held on 29.6.93. in order to sum up what the group felt that they had learned, received and given to the action research process...

- but also to you.

To have pupils' voices in our reports is not enough. We also need our pupils' evaluations on what we have quoted from them and how we have put our quotations into context. Sarah's letter on the evaluation of her work is not enough. Nigel's 'Turning the Tables on Power', (Brown and Laidlaw, 1993) does not serve the function either, and I had never written anything to you relating to what you have written so far until now.

You told me you wanted to learn from me and you told me you learned from your work with others, but what has shown in your writing is that you have learned from your awareness of your actions to others; you have learned from your inner reflection, interactively, but silently, during the process. I might be wrong that I feel there is a lack of validity on 'educative relationship' and 'aesthetic morphology' in the writing. Where are you? In the facilitator's office only? You have more than one office. Is it possible to invite some colleagues somewhere up there from their theorist's offices to have a trip to your other offices? (Maybe not, for some of them may be non-smokers!)

Moira, I can see how much you have tried to bring life into your research and you have shown me the beauty of life so many times when I was stuck with the unbearable meaninglessness of it. You brought me back to earth. You brought a life back to more than one person. You brought a life back to me, to Guy, to the people who love me and who need me to do the same thing for them in the future. Maybe it is too much to ask you: 'Don't withdraw your research to one side of the story. Educative relationship and aesthetic morphology are two-way. Tell me what you are now. I see Dr. Laidlaw in the writing and I want to see more than a Dr..

The Dance is grand and The Music is inviting.

(This alludes to our first taped conversation on 1.12.92. when she was preparing her first assignment for Action Research on the M.Ed. module.)

In reply to your doubt on the metaphor 'Dance', I used in one of our conversations that: 'it connotes performance, skilled, but with little or no interaction with the audience. The steps for a dance are all learnt before they are introduced to the recipients, whereas in teaching I would expect there to be a largely interactive process which may change the teacher's original intentions. The dance is not the result of a

developmental process with the audience. Indeed, the word, 'audience' itself connotes passivity, spectators, looking, not being involved.'

Was it not already there - your dance - before I came to you or before you found me? It is a dance which is inviting, not imposing. The audience may choose to leave in the midst of the dance when he or she finds it is not a dance he or she can enjoy. Yes, 'the steps for a dance are all learnt before they are introduced to the recipients', but are our lives as educators not like that, that either of us have already developed our skills, examined our conditionings, and tentatively formed our concepts? Even though there might not be any physical involvement during the performance, the imaginative and emotional interpretations of the acts are not passive. They are silent interactions. The dancer dances for the audience and the audience views the performance which becomes a part of his or her memory, his/her life.

As to the questions in the same conversation, I wondered, 'you have found your own stage to dance on...But again how many are there who are in your audience?...Isn't that selfish?' It makes sense now that you replied, 'I think it might be realistic. I think it might be in a sense almost natural.'

Usually we choose to go for a certain dancer's performance, but I mistakenly walked into your dance and the music was inviting. We danced a duet, you and I, and I and you; and a trio, you and Jack and I; I, you and my students. Our audiences are not being prohibited from dancing on our stages. Many people have danced with Jack, as you said. I am so honored to have a duet with you. There was only you and me for a while. Our dance is beautiful. Sometimes you are the dancer, I am the admirer, and sometimes you are my only audience, I the dancer. When the time comes, I will have to leave and to dance on my own stage. I will always be your faithful admirer and sincere critic as long as you reserve a ticket for me.

Taking notes.

(This refers to another aspect of the same conversation cited above, in which in reply to my question to her about how I could help her in her action enquiry, she said: 'Note taking!')

I realized how much has not been explicitly articulated while we were having those conversations. My mind and sentiments have always been going so quickly that I could not express them with the aid of words. It is more than taking notes of what I have said and not to allow them 'to filter away before she can focus on them'. I remember vividly how I felt when you asked, 'How can I help you in your action research? What can I do?' and I said, 'Note taking.' When I said that, I felt like crying, because what I was asking was, 'take notes of me, so part of my life will continue to live in yours and it won't disappear into the emptiness of the meanings of human life.' However, without the notes taken by myself, what is taken down is not complete.

(My reply was started on 16.8.93.)

Dear CC,

A few points about your letter. It has been inspirational to me. Thank you so much. It has touched a chord deep within and I know that it has provided me with an inspiration that will unlock my ability to articulate something profound about my practice and my desire to be true to my educational values. It has enabled me to have conversations with you, Jack and myself which have encouraged me to distil from my practice and the writing about this practice, insights into the significance of representing my insights and the insights of others in ways which truly accord form and content an indivisibility. Your letter sets me this challenge straight away:

How have you shown the link between the equality and the educative relationship in the written work?

Throughout the text of this thesis I have attempted to reveal my desire to minimise power-differentials between my students and myself that were predicated upon ego, ambition and purely self-gratification. Power does not have to be a negative force, however. For example there were times when I chose not to communicate my greater understanding of a situation (having had experience of action enquiry processes that exceeded my students') because in my judgement a student was not ready to hear what I might have known. An example of this is in the work with Sarah (in Part One) when at the beginning of our first conversation I did not contradict her although I thought what she was saying was not necessarily factually valid. I weighed up my ethical consideration as an educator with my desire to be open with her. In that case an educative strategy won over straightforward candour. To hold a conversation with someone as if what they are saying has in itself merit when in fact I don't perceive it as such, suggests a manipulation through my greater knowledge and awareness of possible outcomes. Noblit (1993) characterises this as constituting: *'the difference between power and moral authority'* (p.24). If what I do is in the name of education, then I will have this responsibility of discriminate action. He goes on to say:

'in a caring relation, power does not render the other into an object, but rather maintains and promotes the other as subject. Power is used to confirm, not disconfirm the other...It is not about competition...but about connection and construction. Caring is a tough relationship in that the care-giver must be strong and courageous so that he or she can use the good to control 'that which is not good.' (p.35)

As I have written in Part One, it is in discussions about our perceptions of power which will determine how fully I am trying to live out my value of promoting equality in my educative relationships. Let me explain. My own educational experience (under which I understand my educational practice, systematic research, reflection and writing) has shown me that negotiated decisions which impinge upon responsibility for actions to be undertaken are the ones which determine the quality of parity between tutor and student. Kincheloe (1991) expresses it differently, but in a way I believe which supports such a view:

*'the question which grounds our attempt to formulate a system of meaning on which to base our action research asks: **If what we designate as truth is relational and not certain, then what set of assumptions can we use to guide our activities as professionals, to inform our questions as action researchers,**' (p.37, my emphasis)*

It is his notion of 'what **we** designate' as true and meaningful which I find most significant. As I stated in Part One before the account of my work with Sarah:

'I want a form of educational representation which does justice to my understanding that it is within a constant struggle to find with my students where the responsibility for the ethics (collaboration, democratic practices, social justice, goodness, truth, beauty, etc.) resides at any given moment in our discourse, that the aesthetic of such a relationship rests. '

My reasons to attempt to find an aesthetic morphology of an educative relationship are not from a desire predicated upon an understanding that there is 'a gap in the market', so to speak: in other words to get a Ph.D.

because one of the criteria depends on original research. My wish rested initially upon, and has grown from, an intuition that to be able to appraise an organic process in the name of education in a way which combines personal taste in a matter of beauty - an aesthetic - and rigorously applied standards of judgement which were negotiable at every stage - the morphology - would be to develop an understanding of the dialectic between personal responsibility and public processes (in this case, educational processes). Harrington and Garrison (1992), put it this way:

'Ends are states of affairs that we desire. They are aesthetic ideas and sometimes moral ideas also. Choices about means are moral and, sometimes, aesthetic decisions. If these cases are constructed to be value/neutral, then they must fail; and, anyway, value-neutrality is a value-decision, one that resembles relativism.'

(p.716)

It seems to me that my aesthetically-bound evaluation within my educative relationships clearly rests on its potential to combine moral, spiritual, procedural, epistemological and ontological values. To seek an aesthetic morphology within my relationships is itself, it seems to me, a moral endeavour. This presupposes that greater understanding signifies an improvement in practice, that it develops a practical wisdom, a hallmark of individually-orientated action research. Let me once again, step outside this propositional form of words and give you an example.

I asked all the action research PGCE students this year if they would answer questions about my facilitation of their enquiries. We held a meeting to that end, but Sarah volunteered the following to some questions which I had written down to focus the discussion at the meeting:

a) What responsibility do you think I had in your enquiry?

15.6.93. I think the responsibility you undertook in my enquiry was to educate me, to forward my learning - and need I say it? I think you did this. I was going to word the statement above differently and say, 'I think your responsibility was', but I changed my mind. All the other lecturers seem to have seen their responsibility as markers and moderators. You went much further and as a result, my action research enquiry has been the most important, rewarding and worthwhile part of the course for me. You fulfilled the responsibility in a variety of ways. The questions you asked me were 'spot on' and really made me think. Sometimes you made statements which made me think differently or which were enlightening. For example, your comments on differentiation which I quote in my enquiry. You were always there, always willing to help, ever patient and welcoming. You also gave me a lot of confidence and raised my self-esteem. You really cared - you wrote me letters. You pushed me at the right time and you didn't let me get away with doing less than my best - but you did it nicely!

For me the question I asked was vital. I wanted to understand how Sarah viewed her own responsibility as well as mine. As her tutor to ask her directly about her responsibility might have been a potentially threatening approach. I believe that moral choices in education are also aesthetic ones. I made a conscious choice through an understanding of a possible perception of power on her part. What has this to do with your original question, CC:

'How have you shown the link between the equality and the educative relationship in the written work?'

If issues of power, morality and making public are part of aesthetic considerations, (and my thesis is an attempt to reveal an aesthetic within my educative relationships) then to claim a high level of aesthetic within my

educative relationships there will be connections between equality, students speaking for themselves, responsibility for development, and negotiated realities.

In a sense I think you are asking me to show more clearly in my written work what equality can possibly mean within my educative relationships. Can there be equality at all? I am saying that a judgement on my work as having a high quality of aesthetic value will be partly found in the ways in which I show that I live out my espoused values of promoting equality within the educative relationship and that the morphology is represented by the ways in which we achieve that. Here I think the following from Ash (1992) makes sense:

'Aesthetic decisions - and by this I mean participatory actions, not the judgements of observing critics - are made by those who are involved in the action. Since the actor cannot be dissociated from the action, such decisions must concern the whole of whatever is being decided. (It is only by being detached that the observer can fragment a whole into its parts.) An aesthetic decision is concerned with rightness, appropriateness, etc..' (p.70)

And that's the point for me. That what you have forced me to see so vividly, is that I am making a choice about appropriateness. You suggest that I talk and write **about** equality, but where is it? And indeed, what do I and my students understand by it? I hope, CC, that this response to your letter, its inclusion as a pivotal point of my thesis, will demonstrate something about working towards an equality of representation at least. In the end, though, this is my thesis. It is my representation for I am examined on it, not you or anyone else. But the point is well taken.

For example, I take absolutely, your point:

'to have pupils' voices in our reports is not enough. We also need our pupils' evaluations on what we have quoted from them and how we have put our quotations into context. Sarah's letter on the evaluation of her work is not enough. Nigel's 'Turning the Tables on Power', (Brown and Laidlaw, 1993) does not serve the function either, and I had never written anything to you relating to what you have written so far until now.'

Yes, I think you have taken my understanding in action of enabling students to speak with their own voices one step further. In my article submitted to the *Educational Action Research Journal* (Laidlaw, 1994b) I try to define what I think 'students speaking for themselves' or 'in their own voices' means; however I do not refer to a conversation Sarah and I had about the paper I wrote, which now, in the light of what you have written, CC, encourages me to think that its omission was a significant epistemological limitation. Clearly I recognised the necessity of practising what I preached in terms of receiving feedback from Sarah about what I had written on our educative relationship, but I didn't take it the requisite step further and demonstrate in practice the way in which its inclusion might have advanced our educative understanding. Shortly I will include an extract from that conversation as an attempt to redress an imbalance in terms of living out one of my espoused values.

I did on frequent occasions with my PGCE students this year explain the difference as I perceived it, between quoting from pupils/students, and those pupils and/or students truly speaking with their own voices. In my work with Sarah in Part One, in the conversation we had concerning the drafting of

her final report, I do express dissatisfaction with her writing, in that quoting pupils does not mean that they are speaking with their own voices. I would like to show you now, CC, what I do consider to be in a written form a quality which I am claiming I try to exercise in my educative relationships. You ask me what equality in an educative relationship looks like. I ask myself what is the connection between the ethics and the aesthetics of my practice, of which I perceive a degree of equality (which quality will become, I feel certain, clearer in a moment) to be necessarily integral; therefore I think we are asking compatible questions. One example when I am presenting a written expression of this connectedness between equality and educative relationship is in the form of this part of the thesis itself. You present your own unique reactions to work which indeed impinges on you and which you demand now listens to your own insights. I accept that challenge. Is this thesis now approaching a greater aesthetic harmony through the embracing of your voice as separate and equal? Is it showing more of what it means to make a living quality of equality between tutor and student within an account?

I think so far what I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis is my understanding in practice of the educative significance of acting fairly and justly in Peters' (1966) sense, although I take your point that I have sometimes seemed to leave an explicit representation of this fairness and justice rather undetailed and unsubstantiated: I have only hinted both structurally and implicitly at the meaning of fairness and justice within my educative relationships. However, I have not yet, I believe, done justice to what it is I perceive at my best I have achieved in my educative relationships in terms of promoting a quality of fairness and justice. I agree with Peters when he writes that notions of justice and fairness which impinge epistemologically with equality are promoted through:

'the valuation placed...upon the determining role of individuals' points of view. Individuals will only tend to assert their rights as individuals, to take pride in their achievements, to deliberate carefully and choose for themselves what they ought to do, and to develop their own individual style of emotional reaction...if they are encouraged to do so.'

(p.211)

I suppose I have tried to do in my practice is to demonstrate what fairness and justice look like, and I think you're right, that in the written explanation I have not recognised what showing this in action looks like in writing. In the example I have given above about Sarah's evaluation of my facilitation, for example, I still set the parameters. There is still the residue of my role as a facilitator and hers as a student. Speaking with her own voice would necessitate something articulated outside the parameters which I alone have set. I do not mean entirely in her parameters either, for it is an educative **relationship** and that necessitates interaction. With Sarah the closest she and I have come to that, it seems to me, was in a conversation held on 16.6.93. about the article which I had written about our dialogical work together, based on one conversation on 18.3.93.. I was claiming its democratising potential within an action enquiry framework. She had read the text and as a result we had the conversation. It therefore arose from a negotiated platform, from a desire on our part to integrate her perceptions with my own in ways which would embody the value of educational democracy that I was advocating in the article:

ML I'd love to know what you thought about the paper, anything at all.

SD Yeah, well I was really interested that you picked this conversation to write about.

This was the point when I actually felt, yes, I'm really doing this...I was just talking

to CC about it, and saying to her, I came in with this amorphous cloud into that conversation, and went out with a fixed parcel...I wasn't aware that you had an agenda at first...Then you said at one point, 'I want to say this, and I'm going to say it now.' (This was the question: 'In an account of your professional development, what standards of judgement will you be using to test the validity of your account?')We've talked before about setting parameters and leading somebody on and increasing their learning. You have to be quite directive to do that, I think. I went into something yesterday and it was quite undirected and it was a waste of time. That's not learning, that just frustrating...

ML You don't think it's a contradiction to democracy?

SD How you are directive? Interesting... You see the thing is, isn't it a bit like student-centred learning? What you were doing here, you've got an agenda, yeah?

ML Yes.

SD You have parameters, boundaries, just like me with the kids, you won't let them do certain things. There's a structure.

ML What were my boundaries? What was my agenda?

SD But there was what my agenda was, as well. There was the two things coming together there. That's where the democracy comes in, I think. There were the two of us. I definitely had an agenda. And so did you. We negotiated what our agenda was to be. It seems to me that you've got values that as teachers we need to be aware of, no, let me put that another way, that we need to explore for ourselves. You're saying, here it is. There's this door. Go through and have a look.

ML (laughs)

SD I was talking to CC about this as well. If you'd said to me, you've got to explore these values, you've got to find these values, when you're addressing that question, that would not have been democratic. What you actually said was, let's find the question, and how are you going to answer it? I could have come up with all sorts of values, though, couldn't I?

ML Could you, though? You see I wonder whether I have been involved with a self-fulfilling prophecy. That I have this idea that democratic values are good in the education process, therefore I get my students to see the democratic processes are good within the enquiry. So when I ask about what was valuable, people come up with what I wanted them to say in the first place. So how is that different from a system whereby you're told what to think?

SD I can see what you mean. We had discussions about pupil-centred learning...but we're all reasonably intelligent human beings who are not only working with you. We're working with our own experiences and working them out in the classroom and...I knew that they were working. I knew that there was something educational about democratisation, because I was living it in the classroom.

Does this go further to answering your qualms, which I feel are valid, about my work?

To have pupils' voices in our reports is not enough. We also need our pupils' evaluations on what we have quoted from them and how we have put our quotations into context. Sarah's letter on the evaluation of her work is not enough.

I would suggest that it achieves some authenticity in the sense that Sarah is articulating her own ideas, formed from her own experience, that she is showing an ability to draw conclusions which do not have to rest upon my validation.

Are you not also saying something else very important? My knowledge is not sufficient on its own; as an educator who seeks to live out principles of equality, I must seek to form my knowledge with theirs, in this case yours, Sarah's, Nigel's, Zac's and Justine's. At least my knowledge and propositions about that knowledge are at best incomplete. I have always asked my

students for evaluations of the work which I have written about them. I think this is to do with courtesy. I think it is to do with respect. Most of all I see it as something inevitable for me, for it's an ontological stance I have on life. We are all human beings playing, I believe, different roles. I have chosen 'educator' as my specific role. But in the end, strip that away and I, like you, am a human being. You say this at the beginning of your dissertation (Lin, 1993):

'I am an individual person between the sky and the earth. I am no different from anyone else. I have feelings, happy, sad, depressed, pain, love and fears. I was born by a woman and will die one day.' (p.1)

Yes. I identify with that, and perceive a further dimension in answer to your question. A point at which the particular way in which I tried to live out the value of equality in my educative relationships should have become more clear. Do you remember that conversation we had on 1.12.92.? It was a key one for me because it came before the work I did with my PGCE students and therefore enabled me to begin thinking about the ramifications of promoting equality within my educative relationships. Remember?

CC *Yes, we can tell the students what they need and why do I think they need it. But it has to be, one has to be very careful about the power. And where I argue with Jack is when you say so, do you say that, do you not think I am not able to judge? But to me I know I like to argue and I refuse something before I accept it, and not everyone is like me and some people accept everything that is said. This is dangerous.*

ML *And that is something that I think that we also in our educative relationship must be aware of, that I particularly because I am the tutor, and it is something I struggle with because I have a notion that as human beings there is an absolute equality. There must be such equality. It is in the nature of our humanity that we can*

relate to each other as equals. We are equal however, but different, because I am here in an educational capacity and that gives me a certain responsibility. I struggle with that responsibility because what I don't want the responsibility to be is patronising to you. And that is where I ask you to remind me if I overstep the rights that I have. Does that make sense to you?

C.C. Oh yes.

ML I think it's absolutely crucial. Indeed I don't think a relationship can be educational, not truly educational unless that's clearly understood between both of us, because then there is an equality and a difference, perhaps what we do together is act as critical friends. That seems to me to be a very powerful collaboration and I certainly feel that what I am doing here is learning at least as much as you're learning. If I didn't feel I was learning something I would think the relationship was not particularly educational. It's a dynamic process.

In this conversation I am struggling to express what equality means to me in this educative relationship. It is a give and take. It is about respect for you and for myself. It is about creating a space in which our truths can be spoken for the good of ourselves and others. It is about opening up the dialectic between rules and freedom. And describing responsibility. When I said I was learning as much as you, I knew it to be true in the sense that I was aware of the potential which existed in a situation in which so quickly we could talk about the things that really mattered to us, whether the same or not. From my point of view, this anatomising of the dynamics of our educative relationship seemed to me to be of genuinely educational potential for us both.

Later on in the same conversation this transpired. And CC, as I read it back to myself now, I recognise its power to inform my spirit and address to you a grateful heartfelt vote of thanks that you inspired me to revisit this place, to

write about it and thus celebrate its significance with you and others. Thank you.

ML As long, I think, as far as my values are concerned, to be prepared to keep on being challenged. Then I don't feel I will become static. I will keep moving, not stand still, for I believe that education is about movement and development. And I need to be challenged so that I can develop. If I cannot develop, how can I help my students to develop? I think you said that once. So that's my answer. I don't know whether it answers you.

CC So how can I help you? Because we share so much that is the same. You believe, I believe. I believe what you have already believed.

ML But where you help me, CC, is in showing me by the process we are engaged in now, how can I respond in the most educational way to what you and others need? Now, I don't feel that I have necessarily come close to finding the answer there. I still feel that I have a long way to go, so you are helping me. Every time we discuss I am learning about the process, and by learning more about the process with you, perhaps I will be better equipped to deal with other people. I don't know that but I think it's probable.

CC Then you will be much more prepared to meet the students or the individuals who share similar views and they are struggling to find their way out. Their ways out. And that's what I found that it was every time you meet someone. What happens if you meet someone who is completely different from us? Like your teacher said, you should read the critics first. And you can say the teacher was wrong - he or she was educated that way. And I really hate to see people are already set in a trap. Probably they were set up the trap themselves. Is it appropriate for us, is it educative for us to tell them. you are trapped.' They are comfortable in that trap.

ML That is the risk we were talking about before. If we challenge people on a fundamental basis of their understanding of life...

CC ...then we will destroy them.

ML *We will destroy them. Therefore again we have to have for me, you see this is where you are helping me, because you are forcing me to express these things, and I have not had to express them before. I think the most important things as I see it in education is an openness to the other. And that is - if I am self, then everyone else is other. If you are self, then I am other. And that's the starting point. If you don't have that openness, you see, someone says to me, 'you've got to do it this way', is not open to the other. One who is open to the other says, 'what way do you think you need to do it? I have this experience, which is possibly different from yours. Tell me what your experience is. Let's discuss it....And now we've discussed it, what do you think you need to do now?' I think that's the only way of answering it.*

CC *Yes, I agree.*

ML *I also have to say, and this is something I have talked about before, actually at lunchtime, even though you and I appear to have similar values, I am not sure that another human being's values can ever be an exact match. Because you are you and unique and I am me, also unique. Our values are unique. We understand and feel them in different ways. And that process of getting to know the other is educational.*

Can you see now how you have helped me? I had conceptual understanding about development and movement which I say are necessary in education. You have helped me to live that understanding and thus augment its significance for me. So what then is this equality I keep talking about? Well, it's not something for me which is enshrined in an idea or in some book. For me it is evolved, if at all through relationships. I cannot give a definition of equality which is meaningful to me. I think this reluctance is excellently summed up by Belenky et al (1986):

'Connected knowing arises out of the experience of relationships; it requires intimacy and equality between self and object, not distance

and impersonality; its goal is understanding, not proof.'

(p.183)

There is a problem here, though, of definition. I cannot define what this 'equality' is. I can only tell you what it looks like in relationships. Therefore it is going to differ from person to person. My experience of relating to you as an equal is going to be different from my experience with Sarah, for example. Perhaps, though, the one unifying experience for me in all these educative relationships is my awareness of the other as human, as I am. Not as student, tutee, subordinate or novice, but as a human being. Another way of expressing that is as a learner with me on a journey whose precise destination neither of us can really predict. I suppose, although it sounds like blowing my own trumpet, this is what Buber (1947) calls the 'necessary humility of the educator'. With you, CC, I believe that I have been able to represent that equality between us more directly and significantly than I have managed with Sarah and this is due in part to the processes which we evolved together.

And from this point I can no longer simply write about 'equality'. I think a powerful force for me in my educative relationships which until now I have subsumed under a banner labelled 'equality', is in fact mutuality. In conversation with Jack about the previous few pages, he articulated an unease I was beginning to feel. I think the conversations between us which are cited above suggest something of the quality of what Buber (1923) writes about:

'Because this human being exists: therefore he must be really there, really facing the child, not merely there in spirit...In order to be and to remain truly present to the child he must have gathered the child's presence into his own store as one of the bearers of his communion

with the world... There is a reality between them, there is mutuality.'

(p.126)

I think I can claim that in our work together that we have achieved a mutuality. That my desire in my educative relationships is, where appropriate, to aspire towards a mutuality. This of course may not be appropriate, but I feel with you, it was. When you say:

Moira, I can see how much you have tried to bring life into your research and you have shown me the beauty of life so many times when I was stuck with the unbearable meaninglessness of it. You brought me back to earth. You brought a life back to more than one person. You brought a life back to me, to Guy, to the people who love me and who need me to do the same thing for them in the future,

then I am reminded of Buber again in such a poignant way:

'trust, trust in the world because this person exists - that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth.' (p.125)

In my diary on 7.6.93. I wrote a poem in which I was trying to express something of a mutuality through which mutual growth can be encouraged. I recognise the potential technologisation of processes which are merely designed to promote preconceived ends, in which there is no room for negotiation, just as Carr and Kemmis (1986) warn educational researchers against:

When I describe paths

We lose the way.

When I speak of warmth

We become cool.

When I capture moments

they escape.

When I explain our lives

we wither.

When I prescribe relationships

we grow apart.

When we reach out

we grow together

When we perceive

we see together

When we aspire

we become.

I suppose, CC, that my belief is in the implicit meaningfulness of my life directly through the quality of relationships which enable others to craft their own meanings. And because of you, here I am presenting the final Part of a thesis and claiming that the form and content of this section are the most authentic and aesthetically appropriate expressions of my educational values that I think have ever achieved in writing. Without your letter and the values of trust, care and enquiry which underpin it, I do not think I could have understood and explained some of my most deeply felt values. For to be realised they need to be living. This relates, as you've read in Part One, to formative experiences in my life which have been at least partially responsible for my formulation of a connection between truth and care, or to be more honest, truth and love. To relate to you in this educative relationship

in a way which has led to such authentic writing is the result of a search for a living development from meaning to significance. Have you not said something of the same?

We danced a duet, you and I, and I and you; and a trio, you and Jack and I; I, you and my students. Our audiences are not being prohibited from dancing on our stages. Many people have danced with Jack, as you said. I am so honored to have a duet with you. There was only you and me for a while. Our dance is beautiful. Sometimes you are the dancer, I am the admirer, and sometimes you are my only audience, I the dancer. When the time comes, I will have to leave and to dance on my own stage. I will always be your faithful admirer and sincere critic as long as you reserve a ticket for me.

For me, CC, this quality you say that I have not shown sufficiently in the writing about the educative relationships I have with my students is probably because in the first place the word (I used it) 'equality' is not fully indicative of what I am meaning. In education I experience the greatest sense of a living aesthetic within those forms of human expression (the morphology of my educative relationships) in which both care for individuals, (Peter's 'respect for persons') and a sense of moving the world to a better place are combined into a living epistemology of practice. For in such a synergetic combination resides, in my view, my understanding of the implicit and beautiful meaningfulness of my life. And of yours too. Of ours, CC.

'Don't withdraw your research to one side of the story. Educative relationship and aesthetic morphology are two-way. Tell me what you are now. I see Dr. Laidlaw in the writing and I want to see more than a Dr..'

And surely this should also answer your point in the letter. You appeal to my humanity, and quite rightly you have understood that it is not academic status I seek through this writing but a communication which expresses a deeply experienced humanity. A mutual humanity. You see, I believe that for me, I am drawn to an individually-orientated action research of the sort that both of us have been engaged in, because within it I can experience a living dialectic between my ontological and epistemological realities. In my educative relationships I experience the highest level of aesthetic value when there is a confluence between what I can know and what I can be. This experience of the aesthetic grounds my being, empowers my actions and enables me sometimes, on precious occasions, to enter the realities of others in ways which are not pre-designed but develop through respect, negotiated responsibilities and a belief in the inherent worthwhileness of being. Likewise, this aesthetic is not created at once, but grows, like Dewey's (1934) notion of medieval cathedral building, as our understanding and involvement within the relationship has grown. Fuller (1987) has written something which resonates deeply within:

'the aesthetic dimension of human life extends across a wide-range of human activities; and we ought to regard it as an inalienable human potentiality, as fundamental as the capacity for language. If a society cannot provide a facilitating environment within which the aesthetic potential of all its members can find appropriate expression, then that society has failed.' (xi)

Although Fuller is writing specifically about aesthetic education and relating it to society as a whole, he clearly sees aesthetic appreciation as reaching beyond such barriers, as I do. He seems as well to regard it as one of the most profoundly human experiences. I concur because within such an experience

and attempt to understand it have emerged for me the most meaningful networks and syntheses of disparate aspects of my own most profound humanity as they communicate with you, CC. To discover an aesthetic value within, for example, our educative relationship is to see it as a profoundly human and therefore meaningful activity. I believe that our educative relationship and that the writing (yours and mine) both explain and constitute an achievement in embodying something which Abbs (1987), drawing on Fuller, concludes:

'all things are defined in some way dialectically,' (p.12/13)

A colleague, Peter Mellett, who is beginning to write up his M.Ed. dissertation read the part of the thesis about my work with Sarah and pointed out:

'You write: 'I...my,' not 'I...our.' I understand this as meaning that you are an 'I' giving an account of 'we'. Are you inside or outside the relationship when writing?' (private letter)

I believe there is a significance in becoming more comfortable about using 'we' rather than 'I' in education. This pathway from 'I' to 'we' is highly meaningful in education for within it is contained our negotiation of our human realities as we struggle to improve and communicate our understanding of what is meaningful in our lives. A synthesis, then, of a question I posed at the beginning of this Part:

'How can I show within this thesis and in my practice, the necessity of viewing aesthetics and ethics as aspects of each other?'

For if it is educational, then, as explained before, all decisions and actions are value-laden and therefore ethical considerations. In addition my first question at the beginning of Part Two:

'How can I know that I am performing [an appropriate] art of living in ways which follow from the nature of life in general and human existence in particular?'

seems to me now to be close to being answered when, in Fromm's (1980) terms:

'the nature of all life is to preserve and affirm its own existence'. (p.19)

I am prepared to say 'in Fromm's terms' because I believe now understand, having gone through the educational processes both in practice and in the writing, exactly what is significant about preserving and affirming my own existence and the existence of others. In particular, CC in relation to you. I change it to:

'the nature of my life is to preserve and affirm my own existence,'

given that I have chosen to affirm my own existence by affirming others'.

This journey that you have seen in the writing from beginning to end seems to be characterised by my coming to understand what is the significance of my affirming the existence of others, how it can happen within my educative relationships, and what it means for me to show this in a written form. This spans from the time when I first went public with my work about Zac and I realised that in fact I was not characterising his and my educative relationship, but finding what values motivated my work in education;

through the moments of confusion with Justine as to what responsibility in my educative relationship with her really signified; in my earlier work with you in which trying very hard to enter your reality enabled me to recognise what respect in action within an educative relationship could look like; in my work with Sarah and Nigel and other PGCE students, (but particularly with Sarah) my gradual understanding of the interrelationships of all aspects of an individually-orientated action enquiry to the meanings which could emerge; and finally to our later collaboration in which you drew out of me the understanding of the power of mutuality within our educative relationship: the power to affirm our existences as people striving to understand our realities in order to improve them for ourselves and others. All this seems to me to be what has happened. It has been the richest journey of my life and I am glad that you were there to share it with me.

With love, CC, and heartfelt gratitude,
Moira, XXX

Epilogue to Part Two.

My Ethics: A Question of Responsibility, Meaning and Awe

'Oh shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick', quoth he, 'I bid thee say -
What manner of man art thou?'

July, 1996. As I state in the Introduction, explore in Part One and develop in the rest of the thesis, I am increasingly perceiving the ethical in my educational processes to be concerned with finding out how to live through the consideration of moral issues. Gadamer (1985) writes:

'Aristotle [shows] that the basis of moral knowledge...is...striving and its development into a fixed attitude is ...ethics.' (p.279)

Although a 'fixed' attitude suggests something too static for my own sense of the development of my values, which I will explain later in this Epilogue, it suggests the development of moral knowledge into something conscious. I wish to be consciously harnessing my moral values in the pursuit of improvements in the learning processes with my students and pupils.

In order to clarify the ethical dimension of my educational practice, I want to examine some of the moral values in 'The Ancient Mariner'. I am doing this for two reasons. First it will help to illuminate some of my own moral values. Secondly, it will make it easier for me to show how I develop the moral values underlying my educational practice into the 'fixed attitude' (see above) or ethics of my practice. Later on I will evaluate the ethical dimensions within Part Two of this thesis both with reference to my educational development as evidenced by The General Prologue and in response to some of the comments of my external examiners. As in the Epilogue to Part One, this evaluation will

not be exhaustive but representative of my educational development and the creation of my own living educational theory.

In these Epilogues I will be interpreting the poem's text largely according to my own insights, rather than gleaning them from other sources. The exception to this is in the explanation of some of the relationships for which I am indebted to Martin Buber's work (1923), although he was not writing in reference to the poem. My analysis of the poem needs to be largely personal because it is in the nature of my own responses to the poem that I am discovering meanings which illuminate the ethical and ontological dimensions of my own educational development. In the Epilogue to Part Three I will go into more detail about the ontological dimension of my educational development and in the Epilogue to Part Four I will discuss the knowledge-base of the poem as redolent of my own in this thesis.

I chose the poetic quotation which heads this Epilogue to illustrate my perception that even towards the end of his dilemma the Ancient Mariner is still looking to others to absolve his guilt. In other words he seeks to unburden himself of an appropriate responsibility. He has killed the albatross probably out of a lack of self-knowledge; he is, after all, *'plagued by fiends'*. Then, through the agency of the supernatural, he experiences what it means to be brought face-to-face with the consequences of his actions: all his shipmates are killed and for seven days the ship moves on without human intervention during which the bodies of the men remain intact, staring at the Mariner. However, the Mariner is now more alone than if his comrades had not been there at all. He has become disconnected from the universe through his killing of the albatross and this universe is a morally active one: it is not Newton's dead or neutral universe at all but one in which good and evil are actively pursued. Goodness is perceived as being in a dialectical relationship

to different conscious moral choices. The ultimate balance sought is not between good and evil which suggests neutrality. The universe which the Mariner seeks to inhabit towards the end is one in which the striving for balance is between individual and collective responsibilities that enable each individual to aspire towards their greatest potential as a human being. Through the murder of the albatross, the balance of the universe has been disturbed. The killing of the men and the Mariner's subsequent atonement are a balancing response to the enormity of his evil in killing the albatross *'hailed in God's name'*.

The other mariners' guilt is comprised from their moral vacillation and emptiness. At first they deride the Mariner for his act because they believe the bird brought the 'good south wind'. Then, almost immediately, they change their minds because the ship is plagued with fog and mist. Both of these acts are perceived by the Good Spirits as signs of moral decay because they stem from a lack of understanding about the ways in which individuals are connected in this universe and their positions of responsibility within it. At no time do the sailors upbraid the Mariner for simply killing the bird itself. It is as if the bird only has use-value to them, and no value within and for itself. It is only a thing to them. Buber (1923) calls this failure to recognise the reality of others a manifestation of the I-It relationship in which the other exists only as an object within one's own designs. He believes the most mature form of relationship to be an I-Thou one which is characterised by a capacity to feel that the other is divine and beloved, and in no way a projection. The seamen also fail to establish an I-You (Buber, 1923) relationship with the Mariner which denotes the capacity to recognise the other as other and yet no less in reality and value than the perceiver.

However, the bird was hailed as a Christian spirit, symbolising something numinous, something beyond even the normal value of human life. This bird requires a relationship with people who have the capacity to recognise forces beyond and above their individual control. This way of relating would be felt as awe by the mariners. None of them has that capacity. Although they hail the bird in God's name it appears to be an empty ritual, a reality which does not ennoble them because they feel no genuine awe. In this morally-decisive universe their denial of so many levels of value is punishable by death. They die without knowledge. The Mariner's knowledge is borne out of their deaths and the meanings of those deaths. It is also, paradoxically, borne out of his growing realisation about the complex beauty of the bird's connection to Being itself. His knowledge arises from his gradual acceptance of the responsibility he has in severing the links between responsibility, meaning and awe. It also arises from his failure to evolve to higher forms of connectedness with others than the I-It relationship. This is more than a simple moral failure, it is an ethical one, because he does not formulate his moral insights into forms and structures through which he can lead a better life.

I infer from the poet here, that each individual is responsible for devising their own framework and that the failure to do so is morally culpable. This is something I agree with as an educator: that it is part of my role to evolve forms and structures which enhance the moral basis of my teaching. This is the ethical dimension of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships.

Before the Mariner kills the albatross (and perhaps the reason for the murder) he is in awe of nothing. Nothing evokes awe in him, either about his own or others' existences. Nothing intrinsically matters. Thus, as part of the proof of

his learning, as well as to recount authentically, he must weave meaning with the responsibility he can now infer from it in a way which evokes awe in the listener in a similar way that he has discovered the capacity for awe within himself. This capacity for awe is first discovered in his aesthetic experience with the water snakes. He stops seeing them as things (just as the other mariners earlier regarded the albatross as a 'thing' with mere use-value) and perceives them at last as beautiful within and for themselves. He has stopped perceiving everything in relation only to his own unconscious needs and is able to expand his consciousness to include the unique worth of others. It is only at the very end of the poem that he recognises the true worth of others and through his development of a capacity to experience awe in his relationship to the whole universe, becomes capable of understanding and then articulating the gravity of what he has done.

His fate - to recount his story throughout eternity to anyone who will benefit from it - seems apposite from various points of view in terms of illuminating his reality and the poet's philosophy. The narrative enables the Mariner to relive and thus strengthen his understanding about the enormity of what he did and his resolve never to act in such a way again. His retelling is each time a purification of his growing awareness of his ethical responsibilities. It was in the very early drafting of The General Prologue that I deepened my understanding of the ramifications for my own practice of treating individuals fairly. Griffiths and Davies (1995) write about what it means to treat children in a just manner:

'Processes of fairness need to be emphasised...its value depend[s] on the children believing that their perspectives and opinions matter[...]. Children are well able to recognise when there is merely a pretence of consultation.' (p.34)

When I recognised that I was probably showing favouritism to Rebecca over Zoë, it was this failure of my recognition of Zoë as fully real in her own right, of her intrinsic value as Zoë and not as a deficient substitute for Rebecca, that finally convinced me of the necessity of changing the way I was relating to her and others:

I had to let go of ideas about my own worldview and see what it might mean to be Zoë in that situation. The implications of that I now find salutary: it is not for me to confuse particular abilities with human value. This was becoming a new, living, insight for me as opposed to being the rhetoric of my educational theory. I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted. (The General Prologue, p.18)

I began to relate ethically to Zoë, and I believe this was partly because of the way I had tried previously to behave more morally with Rebecca:

'Perhaps I should stop judging her as an eleven year old child and judge her by her own criteria. Judge her as Rebecca. There's something here to do with trust. I have to trust her to be a competent judge of her own abilities. Is this just because she is so clever in a way I value?...Perhaps here the ipsative criterion is the most significant one in terms of our own educational development. Balanced with this, however, must be the sense as well that Rebecca is only one of many, not more significant because of her particular gifts. I need to stress carefully here her own role as a learning partner with Hannah and to encourage her to work with others...It is a matter of balance.'
(p.11)

At this point in my teaching of Rebecca, however, these were early days. I had not yet been confronted by Zoë and the reflections above are moral rather

than ethical, because there is no explanatory power in them which reaches beyond the individual. I had not acted on my moral insight. I believe that articulating the ethics of my educational practice must embody an explanation of an improvement in the quality of learning for as many learners as possible.

My understanding of the failure to recognise Zoë's individual needs and entitlement to my equal regard was a strong part of my motivation to reconstruct my Ph.D. through the Ancient Mariner story as you can see in The General Prologue, the Prologues and Epilogues to each Part. The story I am telling you here is a moral one and, like the Mariner, I will continue to tell it until I have fully understood its meanings within my own educational development and can perceive it gradually as more of an ethical tale. It is part of the developmental nature of the creation of my own living educational theory that I will continue to explore the ethical dimension of my enquiry. I do not believe that I will ever be able to write a list of ethical values in which the life and meaning of my educational development can be wholly contained. It seems to me that it is in the moral striving that the ethical will be distilled, however, and that the ethical is a framework within which I might learn to act wisely - in the name of education.

The Mariner's narrative is didactic and underlines the moral basis of the poem's philosophy - that we live in a morally active universe in which we play a role for good or evil and that this act is ultimately a choice we make. As an educator I do not act as if I live in a morally neutral universe. I do not believe it is right for me to do so. Being an educator means I assume that Life has purpose and meaning and that there are parameters we can develop collaboratively within which individuals and groups can live happily. I believe that my purpose as an educator is to further the assumption of the

meaningfulness of Life both for myself and for the people I teach. I believe that I am doing this through an increasing clarity in my communication about where the various responsibilities for the processes lie. In other words within the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships I am placing a growing value on making our individual and collective responsibilities transparent. Later in this Epilogue I will go into detail about the responsibilities incurred by myself and CC in our educative relationship and what that means in terms of the ownership of the story I am telling in this thesis.

The Mariner is forced to tell his tale, one in which he may not prevaricate and show himself simply in a good light. He must uncover his 'fiends' and show what they mean - in other words, how they impact on the world. Whitehead (1989b) calls this division between actions and values a living contradiction, a hiatus I now find useful to think about as an aesthetic imbalance. (See Epilogue One for further discussion on this point.) Such a way of thinking enables me to be alert to the ethics and ontology in my own practice and in the creation of my own knowledge.

The Ancient Mariner must release himself from his inner tension by embracing the reality of others with respect and love and so tap into his capacity for awe. He must perceive their reality as fully equal or even superior to his own and yet recognise the limited nature of his own ability to narrate their reality. He can value the reality of others in his own narrative but he cannot speak for those others. So, in his story he speaks for himself and on behalf of himself and takes responsibility for the story he tells. In fact, his story is a testament to his acceptance of an appropriate responsibility for himself. It is the principal reason he has to re-tell his tale. Through it he is bound to others because they are human too and more simply than that, they

are alive and thus of intrinsic worth, just as the water snakes are worthy of respect and even awe. He must learn when to intervene and when not to. He says towards the end:

*'That moment that his face I see
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.'*

This is his morality now - life is a continual process of enhancing the insights which lead to the appropriate adoption of personal responsibility in actions with others. Furthermore he has incurred the responsibility of becoming a role-model. By telling the story he must relive and demonstrate, time after time, the dangers of disconnection from the responsibilities of being human. He comes to understand that living out the responsibilities to himself and others in ways which his conscience now dictates, are themselves how he is connected to Being and constitute the morphology of his developing human relationships.

The above are metaphors for my own educational conclusions - that I must with my students and pupils acquire the insights which lead to all of us adopting the appropriate responsibilities. In addition I must learn how to tell my own tale in such a way that it illuminates the moral basis of my educational practice. I too must show the children, not only tell them, as I must show you in this thesis not simply tell you. I am also connected to my girls through the developing responsibilities I incur with them as an educator and through the ways we communicate them to each other. This responsibility breathes the emergent form and structure (morphology) into my educative relationships with learners. It is in the appropriate adoption of my responsibilities with them that I develop forms through which I can

communicate with them about when, where and with whom the responsibilities lie. Carroll (1996) goes further when he writes:

'Failure to elicit the right moral response is a failure in the design of the work and therefore is an aesthetic failure,' (p.233)

a point I made in the Epilogue to Part One. This insight gives voice to the heart of this thesis. I believe that my practice is rendered educational through the degree to which the emergent forms and structures which I develop with learners enable an improvement in the quality of learning. I perceive a balance between what I teach and how I teach it that in this thesis I am explaining as an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. In this process I strive with pupils and students for a balance between the ethics and ontology, and the knowledge which arises from such a synthesis (the aesthetic) as together we seek to improve the quality of learning. Because my research has increased my perception that there is an educational dialectic between what I teach and how I teach it, then to evolve a developmental morphology which can communicate the moral basis of the educational process is itself a necessary parameter of improvement. I would further claim that it is in the balance achievable between the two - the aesthetic and the morphological - as well as the balance within the aesthetic itself (as I explained in the Epilogue to Part One) - which augers improvement in my educational processes. I would claim that the closer the connection between the morphology and the ethics, the more educative the process. Later on in this Epilogue I will relate these comments to my work with CC Lin in Part Two in which both the ethics and morphology of our educative relationship showed weaknesses.

All the above might give the impression that I am certain about my values and the morphology within my educational processes. I am not, but in Richard Pring's (1994) words, I must act at times: *'with confidence in my uncertainty'* (p.1), for the forms and structures which emerge in my educative relationships are not finished and neither are the values to which they give voice. All of them will remain unfinished. The morphology and values are developmental. It is only within an understanding of the immanent dialectic - in which values only emerge in practice over time - that the reality of my own educational development, the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships and my own living educational theory will be truly understood. (I will endeavour to make this more explicit in the Epilogue to Part Four.) It is also the developmental aspects of the processes I am involved in with others that make it rational for me to evolve developmental educational standards of judgement when evaluating the quality of learning and this thesis as a theoretical representation of aspects of the processes my pupils, students and I are involved in. In developing educational standards of judgement with learners I also bring close together the connections between the morphology and the ethics of my practice. The improvements the girls, for example, seek in their understanding about English, through their action planning (see Part Four of this thesis for greater detail about action planning in the classroom) are embodied within the processes of teaching and learning themselves. They become inseparable:

'I believe that encouraging the girls to integrate their learning about the curriculum aspects of my teaching responsibilities with ways in which we can evaluate our own learning will serve this purpose...I want us to be able to judge our own work, not by criteria which are disconnected from others' sense of worth and purpose, but are sufficiently our own to render them personally true and meaningful, giving us as individuals and as a group, something we can build on and points from which we can

judge how far we have come. I want us all to be able to stand and tell our own stories of our own lives, not as the Ancient Mariner does as a punishment, but as a process of self-empowerment. It seems to me that developing our own educational standards of judgement, both as individuals and as members of a group, will help in this process, and that the poem can give us all clues about the worthwhileness of such an undertaking. I want each one of us to become the helmsman steering through the ice.'

(The General Prologue,
p.27)

The developmental aspects of my practice help to work against any personal assumption that I have the 'right' answers, or that my moral values are the 'right' ones. I agree, rather, with Pring again when he says:

'the authority of the teacher lies in helping the young learner to make sense of - to make personal and thus go beyond - that impersonal world...The expertise of the teacher lies in helping the search for truth rather than its transmission. And why? Because although there are true accounts of that real world, no one can be certain what they are.' (p.12)

I believe that what I am able to do with children is to enable them to understand more about their own place in the scheme of things through the curricular work. I wish them to search for personal fulfilment within a context which values others too but I do not see this as an easy or quickly achievable process, or even that it should be either. Pring says about this very issue:

'[The] search for personal fulfilment is often itself a struggle, requiring self-denial and effort, deliberation and self-criticism,

[and this] implies, indeed entails standards, not of one's own making, against which the young person judges his own performance and criticises his own aspirations. And such self-criticism and search contradicts the idea that the personal enquiry dwells solely in the realm of subjective meanings or relative values.' (p.13)

As an educator I believe that promoting personal fulfilment is only ethical when it is not separable from the responsibilities to oneself and others. Through the reflections on the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships I seek to find forms which channel the moral responsibilities which each individual has within the educational process in order to improve the quality of learning. This is not something I do simply for others, but a process within which I too am deeply implicated. This thesis is a testament to my implication within the processes for which I have the responsibility.

'The Ancient Mariner' is such an effective tool for me in the classroom because it acts as a form through which I can open up communication about issues to do with responsibility as well as being a beautifully constructed poem. With this poem I have discovered something which is both aesthetic and morphological. As I wrote in The General Prologue:

'Time after time I choose to read this poem with young people because it seems to encapsulate everything I believe in in terms of a moral universe at whose centre there is meaning, not chaos, in which people have to take responsibility for their own actions, and in which goodness and evil exist as embodied realities, not abstractions. Such qualities in the poem enable us to deliberate about what matters in human existence...I believe that one of my roles as an educator is to enable young people to make informed and empowered choices about their own destinies. Although at times

things may happen to them in their lives over which they have little control, I believe we have to be in a position to deal with fate and the moral issues which surround ways we have of making meanings out of our lives.’ (p.3/4)

In addition I wondered:

‘how much of Rebecca’s situation is my responsibility. That question again. How much is down to me, and how much is someone else’s responsibility?’ (p.23)

The acquisition of insights about the placing of responsibility does not strike me as being a discrete process, in which a decision about one situation and person will determine all situations and all people. Striving towards such an unobtainable ideal, is, however, an ethical endeavour. I am claiming in this thesis that the quality of choices I make about such decisions of responsibility, and the way I then negotiate those with others, as well as the way I choose to represent this process, are characteristic of my educational development. I am aware that in the claim above I have placed ‘taking a decision’ before ‘negotiating with others’. As an educator, as much as I care about negotiation with other learners (Laidlaw, 1994b), I believe I hold a unique position within the learning process with my students and pupils, such that there is an area of my practice which is not negotiable with them. I have responsibilities which they don’t have. For example, in the classroom with the girls I am responsible for teaching English. I also agree with the recent Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1996) document which states:

‘Young people are not automatically aware of moral values.

Through discussing moral issues, young people come to understand the criteria for making moral judgements and how attitudes are formed.’ (p. 12)

The document also explains that:

'Plans for moral development should not be limited to knowledge of right and wrong, but should seek to affect behaviour.' (p.10)

I am also not working in isolation and as Pring (1994) says:

'It is in the community of educated persons - whether that be the classroom, the school, the university, or the links established with previous generations through literature and art and history - that the personal search for meaning is fostered through access to the impersonal representations of what others have done and said.'

(p.14)

My practice is the result of research, context, curriculum as well as the individual educative relationships I develop with each learner. I am finding that problematising the dialectic between curriculum and ethical values is increasingly my preferred way of structuring the learning process in order to improve its quality. Thus in the classroom I now consciously seek to educate on two specific levels: the curricular and the ethical. In terms of my own educational practice, I perceive acting ethically to be that which is in accordance with a set of moral principles which enables the learners to improve the quality of learning about the curricular subject (with the pupils it is English, and with the Initial Teacher Education students it was pedagogy) and their responsibilities within the learning process. The School Curriculum And Assessment (SCAA) document (1996) says about the processes of coming to share responsibility in the classroom:

'in learning to handle responsibility, young people should be partners with adults in decision making. Responsibility and discipline should be inseparable.' (p.12)

How I come to conclusions about the ownership of responsibility and then put this into action with my students and pupils in the process of my teacher-research, and later create out of it all my own living educational theory - these constitute my educational development.

Richardson (1991), however, says that contemporary educational research is full of:

'doubt that any discourse has a privileged place, any method or theory a universal and general claim to authoritative knowledge.'

(p.173)

While I accept this at the macro level, I think that I am in a position to know my own practice and to be authoritative about my own knowledge through the process of this educational research. Similarly in the classroom, I cannot have the attitude that 'anything goes'. When I taught 'The Ancient Mariner' I was as concerned to enable the girls to experience the reality of what it meant to be making moral choices to them as individuals and to all of us as a group, as I was to teach them about the choices the Mariner was making and the ways in which the poet depicted his struggles. Although I do not know all the answers, I have a responsibility to seek understanding of the processes which are likely to help young people to learn what it means to make responsible choices as they improve their understanding about English. This is what my current teacher-research is for!

This thesis seeks to be a testament to the authority of my own knowledge and it is this claim to such authority which constitutes my own living educational theory. This 'authority of my own knowledge', like the educational standards of judgement I evolve with others in order to judge it, is not static. Similarly, like the ethics of my practice, it is developmental. I increasingly draw my educational knowledge about my practice from the dialectic between curriculum and the moral processes through which the curriculum can be understood. This connection between the moral and the curricular is itself in dialectical relationship to the claims I can subsequently make about that connection in the creation of my own living educational theory. It is **living** because the dialectical relationships are never-ending and self-generating. It is **educational** because they expose the moral issues in such a way that they can be understood through the processes of improving curricular learning whilst leading to more ethical relationships. This text constitutes my own **theory** because it makes claims to have explained the ways in which my educational processes work. I will discuss the significance of the authority of my own knowledge through my claim to be creating my own living educational theory in more detail in Part Four.

When I had completed Part One of the thesis, however, I was dissatisfied because:

'I was filled with the void of disappointment...I have been aware of a sense of deficiency in an explanation about the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. And within this aspect of judgement resides, in my own educational development, an ontological as well as a confluence of my educational knowledge.'

(p.296)

Grand words! And nowhere anything to do with the ethical. When I wrote Part Two I was aware that one of my motives in sharing my work with CC was seeking to liberate her from the constraints she felt in the attempting to be true to herself in an environment which she experienced as inimical to her sense of self. She expressed it (Lin, 1993) thus in her Masters dissertation:

'The story is presented in a metaphorical structure to display how the writer has struggled to find a form of education which does not violate an individual's humanity.' (p.1)

Elsewhere in the thesis, for example in enabling Sarah (Part One) to speak with her own voice about issues which concerned her, and in The General Prologue, particularly with Zoë, I highlight such an activity as ethical. However, in Part Two I did not explain the ethical significance of establishing a beneficial dialectic between collaborative and individual enquiries. In the external examiners report it was pointed out that:

'When CC Lin challenges your account, you publish the challenge and your reply, and address her...saying that you hope that this demonstrates your acceptance of her point. Is this thesis now approaching greater aesthetic harmony and balance through the embracing of your own voice as separate and equal? How can she respond? How can we respond? Can we/she say to you, 'No it isn't...?'

Another comment was expressed thus:

'Surely the bits of 'voice' you use are collected for your purpose even if in verbatim form for that bit. You must make a selection

...and to make a selection is an exercise of voice (and power)...If Sarah, or CC, or Claire wrote a bit of the Ph.D....for their purposes, maybe that would be their voice, but why should they?'

In the light of the ideas so far in this Epilogue, I would like to examine the above comments and show how I now understand better their ethical implications.

There is an imbalance in Part Two which asks questions of someone who cannot answer. Indeed this is a manifestation of my own living contradiction, essentially an aesthetic imbalance, because I expressed a respect for individual voices but didn't represent it sufficiently. My failure to do so was both ethical and aesthetic. It was ethical because I had not properly understood the moral basis of my educational practice in making the necessary connections between respecting individuals and representing their voices in a way which would have enhanced the quality of learning. In other words a moral awareness is not enough. It needs to be part of an approach to the whole learning process. It means expanding the individual moral perception into a way of working. It means developing an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships in which all the aspects within the aesthetic are appropriately balanced. I had not taken all those steps as an educator.

My failure in Part Two was an aesthetic one in the sense that there was an imbalance between the rhetoric and the reality. I had not held together the ethical, the ontological and the emerging knowledge in a balanced way. I had isolated one part of the process from the other, and in my own educational practice the aesthetic requires meaningful connections which enhance the quality of learning, not diminish it. In my representation of my educational

development with CC, the ethical dimension was not sufficiently in evidence. The ethical was not transparent enough.

As it happens, CC did respond to certain issues I raised in Part Two in her dissertation:

'She takes my letter seriously. Through the way she shows her respect to her students they can become her educational colleagues. There is a power within each individual radiating through an educative relationship.' (p.89)

However, my quoting of that now does not necessarily imply that I had originally taken CC's voice seriously enough (otherwise I would have quoted it in the original thesis). I believe I tried to take CC seriously, but I was not aware that this entailed making that transparent in the text as well. This brings me back to a point I made in the Epilogue to Part One in my discussion of various aspects of The General Prologue about why I now collect more data than I used to. The process itself of collecting data on and with individuals and being prepared to account for it I have found to be a remarkably efficient way of improving the educational quality of the processes (Laidlaw, 1994d).

The issues of ownership and voice touched on by these questions are fundamental to my educational processes which aim to improve the quality of learning. Both ownership and voice impinge upon responsibility. As this is my Ph.D. and not anyone's whose voice appears within it, then I have to be, like the Mariner in recounting his tale, infinitely careful with how I represent those voices. This is one of the reasons, as I already explained in the Epilogue to Part One, why in The General Prologue I chose not only to write about Zoë

in detail as well as Rebecca, but consciously began to try to find other interpretations of our educative relationship:

I am also perceiving in these words how important it is for my own educational development to recognise the emphasis I should place on living out my values more fully in my actions with pupils in the classroom rather than simply engaging in elegant descriptions of those values. (p.20)

I also wrote:

I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted.(p.18)

And about Rebecca I write this in a tone more speculative than usual:

I had opened up to her previously the opportunities to her to take risks with her creativity, and whether or not she was responding directly to my explicit encouragement, something in the situation was enabling her to be adventurous. Perhaps she was simply enjoying the exploration. (N.B. In the New Year, 1996, I asked her specifically why she had chosen to work in that way. *'I like working in my own way and you encourage us to work in ways that suit us. If I like something I just want to write and write.'*) (p.16)

Seeking other interpretations is also an ethical issue in relation to owning one's own knowledge. It is only in the time since reading 'The Ancient Mariner' with the group of Year Seven pupils that I have come to perceive the importance of the links between voice and ownership. If I interpret everything, then I take away the individual's right to speak on their own behalf about issues which concern them. On the other hand, in my story of

my own educational development I have to take the ultimate responsibility for my own meanings as I search for ways of representing my own living educational theory. This is why in these Prologues and Epilogues I am drawing more on my own voice because I am becoming more aware of it. As this happens I am sensing more of the relationship my 'emerging I' (Evans, 1995: 232) has with personal responsibility and meaning. The choice to write these Epilogues in this way, separate from the main text and yet seeking to integrate it, stems from the desire to render the thesis more of an answer to the question: **How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my educational development?** As my own voice emerges, and I take responsibility for the ownership of the text, in particular through the Prologues, Epilogues and The General Prologue, I seek to communicate my meanings more authentically and clearly.

It seems to me now that questions of voice and ownership constitute a useful dialectic within which issues leading to questions of trustworthiness (Kincheloe, 1991: 135) become inevitable. Seeking trustworthiness in this text is an ethical issue for me because becoming trustworthy is a matter of articulating my own concerns and worldview in ways which enable others to identify with them as having value. (I will write about this criterion of trustworthiness in detail in the Epilogue to Part Four.) If I am espousing educational values to do with the appropriation of responsibility, then enabling others to identify with these values as being worthwhile I see as an ethical endeavour. In my rhetorical questions to CC I gave her no opportunity to reply within the text (which would have lent it more aesthetic verisimilitude) and you the reader no way of telling whether the conclusions I was implying about greater aesthetic balance within the thesis were valid or not.

In conclusion to this Epilogue I would like to draw out the significance of the title: 'My Ethics: A Question of Responsibility, Meaning and Awe.' I have written much about responsibility in this Epilogue and less about meaning and awe. This is because I believe that in my own educational processes, appropriating responsibility is the ethic, and meaning and awe its ultimate aim. Let me explain this, again through the metaphor of 'The Ancient Mariner'. When he has killed the albatross, even the elements reflect back to him his evil:

*'Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad can be;*

And later:

*'The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.'*

Death then becomes personified and wreaks terrible vengeance through the agency of his mate, Life-in-Death who wins the Mariner in a game of dice. The Ancient Mariner is so far removed from any sense of meaning and awe, so disconnected in his view of reality, that he does not take responsibility for his present predicament. He does not perceive any connection between such an adoption of personal responsibility and the meaning and awe he could derive from his own existence. Neither do the other sailors. This is why their existence is essentially meaningless. Their failure to take responsibility determines their fate. The Ancient Mariner continues in his living death:

*'Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.'*

At this stage he is still waiting for others to intervene on his behalf. Until he perceives the water snakes by moonlight (a symbol of hope and goodness in the poem) he remains stuck at a lower stage of development. At the I-It stage (Buber, 1923) in other words. In order to evolve towards the I-You and then the I-Thou stages, he must first reach an understanding of his responsibility for what he has done. It is through an understanding of his responsibility to others and to himself that he comes to understand his relationship to himself and to the rest of creation. His blessing of the water snakes as a result of the love he feels for them - a state evoked through his perception of their beauty, their separateness from him, and their intrinsic value - is when he begins to adopt responsibility for the acts he commits.

In my educative relationships I too have had to learn what it means to accept responsibility:

'I am the adult in the situation, I must bear a great deal of the responsibility for what is happening. However, I must not bear it all because that deprives the girls of becoming responsible for their own behaviour. (The General Prologue, p.20)

I then ask myself questions about how I can put into practice my growing sense of responsibility:

How do I continue to support Rebecca's exceptional talent as a writer, whilst nurturing Zoë's creativity and sensitivity, Chloë's usual kindness to others and her

empathy for those less creative than her, and Lisa's formidable originality? How can I help the girls to internalise the ipsative criterion when it comes to them judging their own work? This is not just about setting arbitrary standards linguistically, it's about helping the girls to find more appropriate ways of relating to themselves and each other.' (p.21)

And then the beginnings of a solution:

I decided, after talking to the girls quietly outside the classroom in a cosy corner, to tackle it head on. I knew that if I did that I was liable to unearth some uncomfortable issues but felt that it was a matter of fairness. I stopped the lesson fifteen minutes before the end and said that I was concerned that some girls didn't always seem to feel they were being treated fairly in my lessons. Did they trust me enough to talk about it? I felt it was really an important issue and I would value their opinions. (p.21)

I perceive the acceptance of responsibility in my educative relationships primarily to incur questions to do with appropriating responsibility. This doctoral resubmission is one of the forms that the acceptance of my own personal responsibility is taking as I seek to improve the connections between my assertions and the evidence for them. Another instance is the way in which I am attempting to make issues to do with responsibility more transparent with my pupils:

I felt it was important with the girls explicitly to encourage values to do with connectedness in our classroom. If they are brought only to see themselves as individuals without responsibility for others as well as themselves, then I do not believe this is educational. (p.14)

My concerns with responsibility are becoming an increasingly significant morphological feature of my attempts to improve the learning processes with my pupils, of my own educational development and the creation of my living educational theory, for I perceive with Kearney (1984) that:

'as soon as I acknowledge that it is 'I' who is responsible, I accept that my freedom is anteceded by an obligation to the other.' (p.31)

And by implication when it becomes clear through our educational processes that the pupil is responsible then she can learn what it means to own that responsibility fully.

So what now of meaning and awe? If I am saying that the adoption of an appropriate responsibility is central to my own understanding of educational development and a significant feature of the use-value within the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships, then in what way are meaning and awe connected to responsibility in these regards? Again I turn to *The Ancient Mariner* for clarification. Towards the end of the poem, the Mariner is still waiting for others to reward him for his progress:

*'He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The albatross's blood.'*

The Hermit, a holy man, does not respond in the way I, or I suspect, the Mariner, had expected:

*"Say quick!" quoth he, 'I bid thee say -
What manner of man art thou?'*

And then:

*'Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.'*

The Mariner is entirely thrown back on his own resources and left to conclude the meaning of life himself. This is harsh and yet through it he comes to understand something of his own place in the scheme of things. He is able to enjoy his uniqueness amongst the uniqueness of others, but he stresses:

*"'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company.'*

In other words he stresses the joy of communicating with others (who are 'goodly') as together they do something worthwhile (walking to the church). This becomes the meaning of his life in the light of the tale he must recreate whenever he meets someone who will benefit from it.

I perceive this as a useful metaphor to describe my own sense of being in the world (which I will explain in more detail in the Epilogue to Part Three). My own sense of being is also one in which I am becoming increasingly aware of my own responsibility for myself. However, as an educator I am involved with others in worthwhile activities for which I also have to try to understand who should do what. This is for me one of the greatest justifications for being

a teacher-researcher as opposed to simply a teacher. Being a teacher-researcher enables me, amongst other things, to improve the ethical nature of the education for which I am responsible, particularly as I attempt to become accountable for that process as I am doing with this thesis. Just as the meaning of life for the Mariner is embodied in his daily habits and rituals, so my educational meanings are contained within the ways in which I try to improve the quality of the educative relationships I develop with my students and pupils.

And now to awe? This is not something I find easy to write. I do not have a formal religious faith and yet I often experience awe:

'I looked around at the girls and felt their beauty and I was filled with love for them. Yet again the poem had reminded me of what I feel to be of importance in my own existence, and enabled me to access those aspects of myself which speak directly to children and to myself..I know that what has happened this morning will always live with me. The poem came alive and during the reading I was reminded, as is the Mariner, about the reality of others. The girls seemed to become more real to me. The poem enabled me to recognise them afresh as individuals. Because of the power of this poem, I could recognise, as if for the first time, the beauty and loveliness of the girls as they responded.' (The General Prologue, p. 8/9)

Through aesthetic experience I can connect with aspects of reality which evoke awe in me. I believe this to be a very important experience because it enables me to perceive the reality of others, focuses me on what matters in my own life and clarifies meanings. It is awe which can most effectively connect my feelings to my understanding. Without experiencing awe I would have a narrower ethical vision, less sense of an achievable balance between my own ontology and ethics and little perception that my knowledge means

anything. Like the Mariner, I can only access this clarity that my life really matters, what I do in it is meaningful, and that I have something to tell others, through experiences which evoke awe.

**'...He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.**

**He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small...'**