

'Exorcising the Curse of Sisyphus': English Catholic education

and the possibility of authenticity

-A philosophical study after Heidegger, Derrida, Lonergan and Boeve

*A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of*

*Nottingham Trent University*

*for the degree of the Professional Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.)*

Simon Richard Uttley

**Documents V & VI**

**May 2016**

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## *Abstract to Document V*

*The Headteacher in the English Catholic School faces forces vis a tergo resulting from the specific historic interplay of State and Church which, themselves play into dominant ontotheologies (such as managerialism, assessment, productivity, 'success' criteria and curriculum design). This thesis, adopting an autoethnographic approach, which places particular emphases upon the identities of Headteacher-Researcher<sup>1</sup>, (as well as other identities including that of Catholic-father-husband-employee and convert to Catholicism) seeks to express these challenges. Second, it seeks to examine and so move some way towards their possible exploration with the aporia providing a particular focus upon a number of cul-de-sacs in practice. This serves as a basis for re-thinking and taking responsibility for pathways required for aspects of practice..*

*Identifying an on-going tension existing between authenticity – understood as 'mattering' - and inauthenticity, the latter is marked by the potential 'non-mattering' of the human being in favour of some other 'process' or 'goal' consonant with the logics and economy of metaphysical technologies. Such 'non mattering' - associated with what is described as in this thesis as alienation - represents a lack of such integration; the lack of authority ('mattering') to oneself or to the other.*

*Alienation as it affects the young, the context of this Headteacher-Researcher, is frequently expressed as their being caught within the 'tectonic plates' of late modernity: a 'violence' within which the individual 'wins' or 'loses' as seemingly unyielding cultural narratives drive against each other akin to the geological violence at the root of this metaphorical expression. While a thesis that seeks to open horizons beyond the delimiting effects of empiricism, such grounds for alienation are outlined early on as, together with the reflective practice and philosophical approach of this author, they constitute the basis for this thesis.*

*The second play of authenticity for the purpose of this thesis refers to the authenticity (or inauthenticity) of the education in which the Catholic Headteacher (including this Researcher-Author) is engaged. To what extent is the educational*

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<sup>1</sup> Capitalized to reflect their place-holding for identities.

*programme centred on the individual, as against the assessment criteria? To what extent is education parcelled into silos such that it is deprived not only of its intellectual interrelatedness, but also its moral, or at least, affective content? This is particularly acute in an educational culture dominated by assessment, and with a Church-State compact increasingly feeling the strain arising from, inter alia, an increase in secularism and a decrease in the common memory of the rationale for the 1944 settlement.*

*This thesis finds the current proclamations of Catholic education necessary but insufficient to equip the young to navigate the tectonic plates of late modernity and, by way of contribution, suggests an approach informed by the mid twentieth century Jesuit theologian, Bernard Lonergan and the contemporary Belgium Catholic philosopher-theologian, Lieven Boeve. In Lonergan, informed by his reading of Heidegger, we see an attempt to focus not merely on education-as-(utilitarian)-knowledge-acquisition, but rather education as formation – as combining the confluence of traits consonant with what he terms ‘conversion’ – including the easily forgotten realisation that to study is to be involved in an ethical practice. In applying Boeve to the Catholic school, one sees a recognition that, rather than teaching subjects well (where ‘well’ means ‘hitting the performance measure’) and (separately) teaching religion well, the Catholic School should be equipping the young with a Catholic hermeneutic by which they can critically assess a pluralistic – often hostile- world into which they are, to use Heidegger’s evocative language, thrown; its ‘truths’, ‘traditions’ and ‘axioms’. This is increasingly the case as potential vacuums of ‘meaning’ produce fertile ground for those who would wish to impart a (potentially pernicious) new narrative on the young.*

*In arguing instead for a pro-recontextualizing School – informed by the new and more radical vision of Catholic education evolved heretofore- this thesis takes the Lonergan-Boeve insight further in the use of aporia revealing (opening up) those unalterable fault lines to which both the Headteacher and her student must engage.*

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## Acknowledgements

*"Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude." — A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh*

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There is always so much more to add. And then again...

*"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for." — Epicurus*

Woking, Surrey  
May 2016



**(ii) Preface to papers V ('The Thesis') and VI: Foregrounding, Aims and Questions**

**Foregrounding**

Twenty years in English Catholic education, eighteen as a senior leader and eleven as a Headteacher led to the gradual formation of three drivers behind this thesis. The first two were experiential, the third, related to a longstanding passion for deep questioning through the medium of critical philosophical inquiry, recognising the non-triviality of one's personal, reflexive (autoethnographic) involvement in the apparatus of the English Catholic secondary school.

The first experiential driver was the lived experience of twenty years of discussion as to the aims and philosophy of Catholic education that never seemed to cross the Rubicon and engage with the volatile existential context from which young people came and returned. In its adoption of an essentially self-validating approach, the extant narrative looked to evaluate authenticity by 'Catholicity' –often in terms of lamenting the decline in numbers, the effect of marketization, or practice of both students and staff alike (see below Arthur, 1995; Grace, 2002). Experiencing first-hand the challenges facing students drawn from the poorest ten per cent led this Headteacher-Researcher to seek a new discourse which would begin from a recognition of the alienation felt by the young in this 'affluent' country, of the struggle for authenticity within the English maintained Catholic School and the reflexive relationships of this Headteacher-Researcher variously engaging as executive, Catholic, supporter, critic.

The second experiential driver related to what is referred to hereafter as the Client-Master relationship between the Catholic Church's function in this Hierarchy<sup>2</sup> and the State. Through the funding arrangement of the 1944 settlement (see below) the maintained English Catholic school provides education through state per capita funding. With political intervention and marketization over time (Grace, 1995), this Headteacher-Researcher experienced a growing awareness of a lack of attention on the part of commentators to the effect (for good or for ill) of this relationship on the orientation of the English Catholic School. Much was taken as a given – not least by this risk-averse Headteacher-Researcher in his identities as mortgage-payer, employee, father - and debate predominantly took place *along the grain* of the Catholic Educational tradition as against *across the grain*, exploring the interface with State.

The third driver came out of this Headteacher-Researcher's own belief in the urgent need for a deeper questioning and a recognition by all in English Catholic education of the dynamics of tradition and the nature of *the given object of consciousness* to be understood as *event* (*événement*, Derrida, 2002a:4) . Specifically, in this Headteacher-Researcher's practice there seemed to be a need to explore the use of the *aporia* as an antidote to the sanitising domestication of much self-serving positivism underpinning much extant discourse within the apparatus of education (Foucault 1978:86). As Kincheloe observed:

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<sup>2</sup> 'The Hierarchy' refers to the 22 sovereign dioceses constituting the Roman Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales. This 'Hierarchy', albeit slightly differently constituted, was restored in the mid nineteenth century, the subject of Document III.

‘The catastrophic processes that Western reason has set in motion from global warming to the transformations of humans, from cooperative, community conscious people to fiscal entities with their profit-based, consumption oriented consciousness threaten the very structure of our being. Our collective intuition about the calamities awaiting us is discredited by corporate-driven education including both the formal schooling wing of pedagogy and its media driven phalanx. The epistemology that supports the production and dispersion of such knowledge is a contemporary version of what has been historically labelled as positivism. As I have written about elsewhere positivism is an epistemological position that promotes what it calls objective scientific knowledge produced in adherence to the rigorous scientific method’ (Kincheloe, 2008:22).

In the internal hand-wringing regarding authenticity *qua* quantum and quality of ‘Catholicity’, with much energy being directed to the ‘sectors’ ability to hit the metrics required by the State, there appeared more than ever a need to suggest that the Emperor really had no clothes – that the need of the young (to ‘matter’) served in these schools should be foregrounded.

#### Core Aim

The core aim of this thesis is to open space for new questioning in the field of English Catholic education. This is based on the twin recognitions that (i) the young served by this Headteacher-Researcher face the possibility of alienation experienced as their non-*matter*ing. (ii) the apparatus of English Catholic education, in its particular relationship with the State, can conspire to bolster up such alienation to the extent that it remains un self-critical and at the service of the State’s educational mission.

## Subsidiary aims

- a) To posit, explore and examine the possibility of alienation – understood as non-mattering - affecting the young in a developed country such as the United Kingdom, which enjoys a highly organised and assessed educational regime. This renders problematic the simplification of stipulating that the more that is ‘done’ to children and young people (in terms of assessment), the more they will flourish.
- b) To render non-trivial the identity of Catholic Headteacher, Researcher, employee, Catholic in this sense to explore an autoethnographic approach. The aim takes seriously the Janus-like identity of the Headteacher who is, as leader of an agency of the State which is financed by the public purse, yet also a subject of the Canon law (Code of Canon Law, 1985:806) of the Roman Catholic Church, at once, called to ‘give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's’ (Mk 12: 17).
- c) Recognising the specific challenges of a system of Catholic education paid for and largely regulated by the State, to postulate a fresh approach to English Catholic education which is critically reflective of its ‘Client-master’ relationship. This challenges the notion that the Catholic identity of the school is fundamentally a function of the number or ‘Catholicity’ (however defined) of its staff and students. Instead four approaches to English Catholic schools will

be considered: (i) the *confessional*, (ii) the *pro-confessional*, (iii) the *pro-secularising* and (after Boeve) (iv) the *pro-recontextualising*.

- d) To recognise that the aim of an authentic Catholic school – for the purposes of this thesis seen as the ‘mattering’ (of the individual to herself, of herself to others and they to her) – finds its ecclesial analogue in the Catholic Church’s understanding of dignity.
- e) In favouring Model (iv), and in the light of a reading of Derrida, to identify the extent to which the school committed to recontextualizing can engage with questions in a fresh manner (the *aporia*) to better equip both the school leader (locked into the Janus-like multiple identity of State agent, ecclesial agent, Researcher, employee) *and* the student, who both face the violence of the tectonic plates of late modernity.

### Core Questions

- What is meant by authenticity in this thesis and why is such *mattering* important to *this* English Catholic school leader?

Backdrop to the staging of this question: *This Headteacher-Researcher works with some of the poorest families in the country yet the poverty experienced as a lack of self-mattering, the fundamental sense of pointlessness, appears as a national issue. Authenticity-as –mattering calls*

*for a reimagination of English Catholic education where education is context-rich and critically aware of itself as a politicised and self-serving apparatus.*

- How and to what extent can the *aporia* offer a fresh approach to questioning the basis for the apparatus and philosophy of the English Catholic school?

Backdrop to the staging of this question: *This writer, accepting an autoethnographic methodology, aware of the various identities of Headteacher-Researcher-Catholic sees, in the aporia, or non-way/cul-de-sac, not a pointless non-answer but a way of better understanding the interplay of the various forces impacting students and educators. This autoethnographic approach recognises this Headteacher-Researcher as being as much 'problematic' as 'salvific' and fully integrated in extant practices. A driving force remains his belief that many educational 'solutions' are iterative exercises in securing further internal cohesion rather than recognitions of that which is left unaddressed.*

- How has *this* Headteacher-Researcher's understanding of his role changed within the process of research and reflection on practice?

Backdrop to the staging of this question: *The answer to this question will unfold around a critical awareness of the need to de-prioritise this Headteacher-Researcher's role as 'at the service of the apparatus of English Catholic*

*education' with, in stead, a belief that the locus of authenticity is to be found in the ever-changing, contextual 'impact of the apparatus' on the existential event of children's (students) lives.*

*What does this thesis not seek to do?*

As Sartre observed, 'nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being<sup>3</sup> - like a worm' (Sartre, 2003:45). Equally the work that follows must be understood in what is *not* just as much as what is. The thesis is neither a systematic empirical study of the significant causes for concern as to children's well being, nor is it a strategic, positivistic, plan for 'recovery'. This thesis is conducted with reference to ideas of *authenticity* and with reference to the work of Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Lieven Boeve and Bernard Lonergan. Where appropriate, the primary teaching of the Catholic Church is sourced from the Vatican archive.

**What was the rationale for drawing from the writings of Heidegger, Derrida, Lonergan and Boeve?**

This thesis critically applies the work of Lonergan, Boeve, Heidegger and Derrida to a corpus of material not immediately associated with their canon, namely English Catholic education, from time-to-time examined from the specific perspective

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<sup>3</sup> Being, and Derrida's reading of this word will be central throughout this thesis. Derrida wants to reveal that every so-called 'present', or 'now' point, is always already compromised by a trace, or a residue of a previous experience, that precludes us ever being in a self-contained 'now' moment' Derrida, (1973:68).

of the Headteacher-Researcher<sup>4</sup>. The writings of Jacques Derrida and Martin Heidegger specifically are employed to render problematic the complex relationships with being and with language at the heart of the English Catholic educational project; Bernard Lonergan and then Lieven Boeve offer very different approaches applied hereafter to bridge twentieth century existential thinking and the tradition of the Catholic Church as it impacts on English Catholic education in the early twenty-first century.

Rooted in the ancient philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and reaching potency in modern times with Descartes' radically anthropocentric subjectivity, metaphysics, Heidegger argued, takes as its flawed departure point the assumption that humankind stands at the centre of all beings. Because we understand ourselves to be privileged observers of the material world we erroneously define truth as a measure of correspondence between our inquiring minds and the reified phenomena around us. But this short sighted formulation closes humankind off to what does not appear as a being, namely Being 'itself.' In short, Heidegger's work, in locating Dasein as *thrown* (Heidegger, (1962:176) and in remaining in the throw of existence, rather than Master, helpfully eschews the hubris and mastery of the post-enlightenment Cartesian 'man'.

Derrida is important for two reasons: first in his critique of Heidegger's retention of the metaphysical determination of entities, not least including being,

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<sup>4</sup> The *Headteacher-Researcher* device operates as shorthand for the multiple, reflexive and unstable interplay of formal identities (hence capitalization) carried by this author such as Father, Husband, Employee, Mortgagee, Leader...



beings, and the meaning of being, and second, in deconstruction cultivated in the play of *différance*. Derrida identifies that Heidegger's attempts to overcome representational thinking in *Aletheia* retain some semblance to representational thinking, (since the assumption of the Platonic thing-in-itself (Derrida, 1997:22) is implicit in the concealed entity and its utility and equipmentality becomes its unconcealed entity). This is relevant to this thesis in emphasising the extent to which metaphysical language is all-pervading and, it will be argued, no more so than in the English Catholic educational discourse.

Second, though Derrida remained characteristically mysterious as to the conflation of *différance* with God<sup>5</sup>, the use to which his work is put in this thesis is precisely to challenge the 'transcendental signifier' (ibid: 22) within dominant narratives while, it is accepted, this Headteacher-Researcher's choice remains to hold steady to a belief in God which is central to the autoethnographic approach adopted. Whether such 'applied deconstruction' - allowing one dominant piece of metaphysics, the Christian God, to survive while challenging other metaphysical structures - amounts to having one's cake and eating it, it is worthwhile recalling that Derrida, too, had his *untouchable* in the form of 'undeconstructible justice' (Derrida, 1994:112).<sup>6</sup>

Prior to Derrida's understanding of *différance* in terms of the coming space of time and the coming time of space and the differences and deferrals of signs,

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<sup>5</sup> Derrida's answer being 'It is and it is not' (Caputo, 1997a:2).

<sup>6</sup> Derrida's deconstructive approach contrasts with the more traditional approach to justice associated with representation, redistribution and recognition (Fraser, 1996:3).

signifiers and signified, all Western conceptual schemes relied on one form or another of a 'transcendental signifier'. A transcendental signifier is any metaphysical, hierarchical principle that presumes to determine which constructions of signifiers are 'natural' or 'proper.' Examples, for Derrida, of transcendental signifiers include Truth, God, Allah, Reason, Being and various political ideologies (though not, of course, justice). Within education, one could postulate 'success', 'attainment', 'completion' and 'accreditation' (when purportedly used as objects of consciousness) as being distant relatives to the extent that they are used as transcendental signifiers. Indeed, Derrida sees ideologies in many way aping religious belief when he speaks of a 'theologizing fetishisation, the one that always links ideology irreducibly to religion (to the idol or the fetish) as its principal figure, a species of 'invisible god' to which adoration, prayer, and invocation are addressed ('Thou visible god') (ibid: 51).

*Différance* is an alternative to and escape from the logic of the transcendental signifier, but it is more than this. It not only cultivates such logics - themselves constituted as law-like structures that include, exclude and have the capacity to make exceptions –but it also constitutes the very basis for their deconstruction in moves towards justice, when confronted with the law-like and hubristic logics of Catholic educational discourse both within and beyond the English Catholic context.

In introducing Bernard Lonergan, we introduce a Catholic priest – a Jesuit – whose formation as a leading mid-twentieth century philosopher and theologian had drawn not only from the 'standard' Thomism proper to priestly training but also on Kant (still a 'banned book' in his tradition at the time)<sup>7</sup> and, it appears, Heidegger.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was placed on the Vatican's list of prohibited works in 1827, a list discontinued in 1966 (Haight, 1978: 31).

Lonergan's foundationalist philosophy, a form of transcendental Thomism, reading Aquinas through the eyes of German idealism, together with his theological method offers to the contemporary discourse on the philosophy of Catholic education a timely reminder of the danger of the *dis*-integrated curriculum – both separated from itself through compartmentalisation of academic 'disciplines' and, powerfully dislocated from its self as moral (through the separation of ethics from 'learning'). Faced with the plethora of knowledge available to us, 'praxis, finally, raises the final issue, *What are you to do about it? What use are you to make of your knowledge?*' (Lonergan, 1997a: 578). Lonergan, then, is not deployed hereinafter as Derrida is – in terms of language and *différance*- but, rather, as a critical voice in what education routinely posits. Lonergan is no philosopher of education: what follows is this Headteacher-Researcher's distillation and application of his work to the context of *this* English Catholic school leader. It is not in spite of, but, rather because Lonergan is a philosopher and practical theologian rather than educationalist that his work is usefully employed hereafter.

Finally, Lieven Boeve, the contemporary continental liberal Catholic systematic theologian draws from, *inter alia*, Lyotard, Habermas, Rorty and Agamben (Hoskins, 2006:31) to ask how do these writers, and others, challenge today's

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<sup>8</sup> Lonergan's text does seem to indicate some familiarity with Heidegger, as for instance when it mentions existentialist exhortations to genuineness (Lonergan, 1992:652). This is not proof that he read Heidegger before or during the writing of *Insight*. However, he clearly had some familiarity with Kierkegaard, as can be seen in his reflections on irony and humour (Lonergan, 1992: 647-49). In addition, Lonergan – the Jesuit priest- was a *confrère* of the highly influential Jesuit, Karl Rahner, (both men were born and died in the same year – 1904-1984) who studied under Heidegger, not least in 1934-36 when Heidegger was much preoccupied with overcoming metaphysics (O'Leary, 2010:29).

Christian theological reflection on God, religion, human beings, history and world. How do they qualify the context in which Christian faith exists and from which this faith develops its self-understanding? And finally can they assist theology to come to a renewed understanding of what Christianity is about – an understanding which possesses both contextual and theological plausibility (ibid: 31).? Specifically, Boeve engages with what he sees as the crisis at the heart of the Christian religion stemming from the non-identity between God and history/world, while at the same time, this God is only revealed in and known from this history/world. The choice of Boeve in this thesis reflects the Catholic school as a prime arena wherein the (non)-identity of God and the world/history is played out in the development and formation of the young. However, Boeve's valuable insight, it will be argued, can be sharpened in Derrida's use of *aporia*.

**Towards an understanding of the language of authenticity and alienation used in this thesis in pursuance of research question one**

Adopting a partly deconstructive style (conscious of the delimitations placed upon oneself in practice as Headteacher in the apparatus of education) with reference to Derrida's approach, to the reading of texts the emerging elements of *authenticity* will be examined not only in terms of how they can, could or do impact the Catholic educational metanarrative, but also, through deconstruction, suggest shards of

illumination<sup>9</sup> of relevance to the broader educational community.<sup>10</sup>

In embarking upon a philosophical inquiry into the possibility of pursuing the *authentic* in contemporary English Catholic school education in England in the light of its historical, social and political tensions, this thesis begins with a backdrop of 'alienation'.<sup>11</sup> Students of Lonergan will be aware of two specific usages to which Lonergan puts the term. The first, 'man's disregard of the transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible' (Lonergan, 1971: 55). The second, alienation as what happens if one neglects one's own feelings (ibid: 33). However, for the purpose of this thesis, alienation sits more simply at the polar opposite of authenticity as postulated in this thesis; authenticity understood as *mattering*. Alienation is, therefore, the profound non-mattering: of self to self, self to other and (perceived) other to self. The desolation haunting the ostensibly rich and 'interconnected' young attending the English Catholic school reminds one that Catholic education is not an object of consciousness somehow 'poured into' empty-yet-perfect vessels, or inscribed on *tabula rasa*, but rather coexists alongside an

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<sup>9</sup> A metaphor recognizing, in its fragmentation, that illumination is, here, not that of the 'coherent' metanarrative but, instead, elements caught in the play of *différance*.

<sup>10</sup> One argument regarding the indisputable trend of secularization in the United Kingdom and other 'developed' nations predicts that the process will lead to the increased marginalisation of religion from the public realm with the increased dominance of rational but, crucially, also reductive -accounts of the material, social and psychological world. An apprehension as to reductive thinking may well provide common ground for both the religious and deeply irreligious thinker. (See for example Bruce, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Flint and Peim, drawing on Heidegger, locate alienation in the mood that corresponds to an understanding of the nothing beyond the limit of given knowledge; the fundamental 'mood' of anxiety. The 'fundamental mood of anxiety' as the state 'in which the nothing is revealed' [Heidegger, 1993] cited in Flint and Peim, (2012:105).

already *thrown*<sup>12</sup> youth. Indeed the systematic privileging by State and Church of system (curriculum, assessment approach, managerialism) over the (thrown and infinitely more complex) individual remained a core driver lending impetus to the on-going work of this Headteacher-Researcher *and father*.

Reflected in a brief empirical outline concerning young people in England, such symptoms of alienations are not posited in this thesis as a 'condition to be tackled by education based on authenticity' but as offering a stark indication of the practical manifestations of alienation, whether or not attributable to the 'death' of meaning, the relentless promotion of materialism as a proxy for any purpose whatsoever, or as a result of entirely differing reasons.

What follows are a number of questions lying at the heart of the practice of this Headteacher-Researcher with over eleven years in the role, a word etymologically rooted on the (now obsolete French) *roule*, or modern-day *rôle* – that parchment on which the actor's lines are written. The *drama* of Catholic school leadership played out on the ever-moving stage of late modernity.

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<sup>12</sup> Heidegger explains this term thus: 'This characteristic of Dasein's Being – this 'that it is' – is veiled in its 'whence' and 'whither', yet disclosed in itself all the more unveiledly; we call it the thrownness of this entity into its 'there'; indeed, it is thrown in such a way that, as Being-in-the world, it is the 'there'. The expression 'thrownness' is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*.' (Heidegger, 1962:135).

***In terms of the pursuance of authenticity, to what extent is a classical philosophy of English Catholic education fit for purpose?***

In answering this question in the negative, Section Three sets out to develop a new perspective on a philosophy of English Catholic education drawing on the work of Jesuit theologian and philosopher, Bernard Lonergan and, more recently, Lieven Boeve. In eschewing what passes for a classical, scholastic model, rooted as it was in a Christian world-view, the proposed new model argues instead that a Catholic educational model for late modernity must be marked by, at once, its integration (across academic disciplines) and, at the same time, its ability to *dis-integrate* (employing Boeve's model of 'interrupting tradition' (Boeve, 2003)) in favour of recovering Christian dignity.

**The relationship between the English maintained Catholic school and the State as non-trivial and on-going 'event'**

Alongside the alienation of the young is set the less visible alienation stimulated by an educational 'machine' inscribed with a 'law' privileging assessment (Flint, 2015:158), managerialism and 'value for money'. Specific power relationships were established in the state's 'acceptance' of the Church's re-establishment in

England<sup>13</sup> and the subsequent, formalised financing of English Catholic education in the form of the Schools Commissions in the (now) 22 independent, sovereign dioceses, which constitute the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of England and Wales. Each of these dioceses – but, more importantly, each of its Catholic schools- must, to reiterate the metaphor, navigate their own ‘tectonic plates’ reflecting the sublime forces at work involving the Church and the State. This involves a continuum stretching from, to choose the high ground of Catholic pedagogy, a desire for a Catholic anthropology of the child (unique, God-given), yet on the other, also inhabiting a ‘client-master’ (Catholic Church and State) binary, which privileges certain ‘life success criteria’. In the metaphysical exigencies<sup>14</sup> inscribed in the names of assessment, accountability and a utilitarian calculus to name but three are<sup>15</sup> to be found examples of ontotheological<sup>16</sup> structuring present in English (Catholic)

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<sup>13</sup> This was the fruit of the process of emancipation for Catholics in Britain and Ireland. The Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829, passed by Parliament in 1829, was the culmination of the process of Catholic Emancipation throughout Britain. In Ireland it repealed the Test Act 1672 and the remaining Penal Laws, which had been in force since the passing of the Disenfranchising Act of the Irish Parliament of 1728.

<sup>14</sup> Where metaphysics always purports to make a connection between a sign and a material thing, an event.

<sup>15</sup> Whelan(2009:58) noted that ‘England has implemented more of the policies that would be expected to improve performance in a school system than any other country in the world’. However, he also observed that in terms of international comparisons of examination results for young people ‘its overall performance at age 15 is little above the average for developed countries’

<sup>16</sup> Ontotheology is a term originally used by Kant to describe a kind of theology that aims to know something about the existence of God without recourse to scriptural or natural revelation through mere concepts of reason alone, (Kant, 1929:A332/B660). For Heidegger, however, ‘ontotheology’ is a critical term used to describe a putatively problematic approach to metaphysical theorizing that he claims is characteristic of Western philosophy in general. A metaphysics is an ‘ontotheology’ insofar as its account of ultimate reality combines—typically in a confused or conflated manner—two general forms of metaphysical explanation that, taken together, aim to make the entirety of reality intelligible to human understanding: an ontology that accounts for that which all beings have in common (universal or fundamental being) and a theology that accounts for that which causes and renders



educational discourse.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, this thesis recognises a need to acknowledge the metaphysical determinations of practice. Not only does this ontotheological structuring constitute delimitations in the coded space open to us as human beings located within the apparatus of education, but also the possibility of the very alienation of the self to which the *Myth of Sisyphus* alerts us. The very Christocentric basis of Catholic education itself is shot through with a recognition of the on-going – and in a sense, therefore, endless – navigation of the conflicting tectonic plates of the ontotheologies one faces: ‘Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s’. (*New Testament* 2012: Mk12: 17).

The ‘tectonic plates’, like their root geological concept, are often associated with the *trembling of the ground beneath one’s feet* as a result of hidden forces of great magnitude– a trembling reflected, for example, in the *dis-ease* referenced by, for example, the sociologist-theologian Gerald Grace’s work into the unsettling juxtaposition of mission, markets and morality in English Catholic education.<sup>18</sup> The overall discourse is intended to constitute spacing<sup>19</sup> i.e. the coming space of time and

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intelligible the system of beings as a whole (a highest or ultimate being or a first principle) (Heidegger, 1969: 42–76).

<sup>17</sup> And to educational (and other) discourses more generally. The irony of an ontotheological structure in a secular world is not missed.

<sup>19</sup> The gerund, spacing, also reflects the *play* (as against the static ‘space’) of *différance*, which is underpins this thesis. In *Limited Inc* 1988 Derrida clarifies spacing by reference to the signs or marks that are signed by an author that continue to function in the absence of the author. It is always possible for a mark to break with the context of its present inscription in the apparatus of education [including all the presences which organise such inscription, the sender, addressee, referent, meaning] and be inscribed in a different context [Derrida, 1988a: 9,12]. This force of rupture which structures the mark is according to Derrida caused by spacing, the separation of the mark from all other elements in the context in which it was inscribed, including possible referents (ibid: 9–10).

the coming time of space for a new mode of questioning – a questioning both outside of and across the tradition- of the core rationale for contemporary English Catholic<sup>20</sup> education.

### **Jacques Derrida**

In selecting Derrida and Heidegger there is a lively interplay of similar, yet different ‘existentialist’ writers with clear differences. Not least in Derrida’s deconstructive reading of being as presence and in his deconstructive reading, locating the conditionality that structures the identity of philosophical systems with the continued repetition and reiteration of *the impossible* to determine Other, here viewed in terms of *différance* and *aporia*.

The deconstructive approach of Derrida, drawing from the play of *différance* constituting the language of Catholic education is introduced with particular reference to his deconstruction of a monolith akin to education, namely the law. His approach is adopted in this thesis to render ‘unusual’ the ‘usual’, specifically to

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<sup>20</sup> Indeed for all those in educational leadership (Grace, 2002) – not merely Catholics- who are alive to the cultural, political and ideological forces that disproportionately affect the young and which can be associated with the alienation outlined in the Introduction.

questions asked of English Catholic education *by* Catholic educators and leaders.

Derrida's recognition of the instability of language usefully highlights that 'trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces and refers beyond itself' (Derrida, 1973:156). In deconstruction, Derrida postulates the parsing of the high ground of meaning to the point of exposing the supposed contradictions and internal oppositions upon which it is founded, thus demonstrating that foundations are irreducibly complex, unstable or impossible. Derrida gives prominence to semiotics<sup>21</sup> rather than the traditional consciousness of the subject and seeks to explore the human inter-relationships with signs.<sup>22</sup> From this is derived the *aporia* which offers the spacing for 'un-usual' questioning in the field of practice. At heart, from Heidegger and Derrida, this thesis looks to the possibility of a move towards authenticity through justice as an 'event' (*événement*) (see below) in Catholic education. Such an event, where the thing always exceeds calculation and prediction, is something we cannot see coming. It is the impossible arrival of something that cannot be recognized as the *arrivant* it is, which demands absolute 'hospitality', the unconditional 'yes' which, in terms of this thesis aligns itself with the radical dignity and singularity of each child in the face of system and policy. This contrasts with the conditional hospitality 'demanded' in the ontotheology of structural Catholic

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<sup>21</sup> Often dissimulated below the high ground of meaning making in various apparatus - including the apparatus of education - which constitutes 'the world'

<sup>22</sup> Derrida refers also to the 'freeplay' of signifiers: they are not fixed to their signifieds but point beyond themselves to other signifiers in an 'indefinite referral of signifier to signified' (Derrida, 1978: 25). He championed the 'deconstruction' of western semiotic systems, denying that there were any ultimate determinable meanings. Whilst for Saussure the meaning of signs derives from how they *differ* from each other, Derrida coined the term *différance* to allude also to the way in which meaning is endlessly *deferred*. There is no 'transcendent signified' (ibid: 279-280; Derrida, 1997: xvii, 23,50)

education which is consonant with both the ancient metaphysical principle of being – ‘something is repeatable to the extent that it is’ (Caputo, 1987:123) –and, with the metaphysics of being as presence.<sup>23</sup> Derrida’s deconstruction positions being as proportionate to the repetition and reiteration of signs where the practice of repetition comes first rather than being regarded as something that follows being as presence. Such reiterations are already deferred in what Derrida (Derrida, 1973: 142-143) indicates is ‘spacing’ separating the mark of ‘the present from what it is not’. The heart of the play of *différance*, therefore, always points to aspects of the Other – those ghosts from the past, that cannot be gathered by educators within the present.

### **Towards an understanding of ‘authenticity’ employed in this thesis**

As for authenticity itself, this thesis adopts an original and ‘weaker’ view namely recognising authenticity as having an authority to oneself and to the other (‘being’) - as a ‘mattering’ - as against an (inauthentic) *dis-entitlement* or lack of authority (‘non-mattering’). Such mattering, keeping in mind (for Derrida at least) the impossibility of the determination of the other in any identity, finds its ‘object’ in the Catholic-Christian notion of dignity, expounded both in scripture and the Church’s social teaching (Section 3.4, below). Heidegger’s work (a crucial influence both on

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<sup>23</sup> Again, this finds its practical manifestation in daily ‘realities’ of school leadership such as admissions policies, achievement/attainment, the satisfaction of government inspection regimes and the tension between the individual and the (data driven) ‘group outcome’, all of which find their way into this thesis’ interpretation of *aporia*.

Derrida and indirectly on Lonergan) around authenticity as letting things matter'<sup>24</sup> and Derrida's questioning of our everyday inauthenticity<sup>25</sup> begin to create spacing for asking new questions of Catholic education. This thesis therefore eschews the 'stronger' approach to authenticity which can postulate a need or capacity to somehow 'transcend' the (fundamentally spoilt?) 'here and now' in favour of some 'alternative' *Shangri-La* (whether Marxist, totalitarian, theocratic...). In eschewing the transcendental approach to authenticity, the irony of this position is not lost on the author whose practice as the Head of a Catholic (ecclesial) school requires him to operate within the teleo-metaphysical ontotheology of 2000 years of Catholic history and theology.

### **Towards an understanding of how has this author's thinking shifted over the course of this work (Research Question Three)**

Reflecting on the body of research undertaken and presented in Documents I-IV inclusive a shift is detectable from the early phase (seeking the 'radical' as object – with Platonic certainty) through to eschewing a contrast between research and

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<sup>25</sup> In *Aporias* Derrida posits that classic *aporia*: that there is nothing more closely 'mine' than my death and yet death is that which *I* cannot fully experience. Derrida's deconstruction of Heidegger's existential analysis amounts to a rethinking of death not as pure possibility (as Heidegger would have it) but as *the aporia of the impossible*. *Aporia* means not getting through, being without passage. There will be, in other words, a change of conceptual priority from possibility (Heidegger) to impossibility (Derrida) in the philosophical meditation of death. Yet it is far more than the death of a person – it's the death of the subject, the death of consciousness... That as emergent performatives are always in danger of experiencing their own death in being reduced to mere inert representations rather than being constituted in the play of *différance* (Derrida, 1993).

practice and ultimately locating authenticity as an event in which its participant[s] seek a way forward towards justice when faced with a number of *aporia*. Therefore, both this thesis and Document VI reflect on the unfolding event in which the author has moved during the development of this research as static assumptions and certainties as to what Catholic education ‘does’ and ‘has done’ (orthopraxy) give way to gentler, less ‘definitive’ but more radical understandings that emerge within the space constituted by the event of authenticity.

### **(iii) Reprise of documents I –IV**

Documents I-IV reflect two elements of foregrounding from which this thesis draws: historical re-evaluation (Document III) and critical philosophical questioning (Document IV).

In Document I, anticipating Research Question Three, this author sought to position his role as a Headteacher of an English Catholic comprehensive school as both ‘mattering’ and as ‘problematic’. ‘Mattering’, given the impact (including in terms of numbers) of young people ‘subject to’ education, in the Catholic school nationally – ‘mattering’ as entitling the speaker to comment critically (with authority) on the shifting sands facing the child (Research Question One). Problematic’ - as being caught up in the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic (educational) tradition (Research Question Two) understood not as linear

progression or as unfolding but as, itself, the violent interplay of the *tectonic plates* of its own history and the interplay of this history on the dominant culture in which it subsists.

Document I brought together the principle agencies: historical and philosophical where their irregular, asymmetric and volatile interrelationship rendered them worthy of inquiry. On the one hand, a modern day English Catholic Church with an ambiguous, sometimes love-hate relationship with its maintained schools. On the other hand, a volatile<sup>26</sup> interface of social and cultural drivers leading to the nineteenth century restoration of the Catholic Church (including its mass teaching function). This was a history predicated on the very real penal laws inflicted on Catholics in these islands for over three hundred years (Paz, 1992; Wallis, 1993)<sup>27</sup>, the suggestion being of a metanarrative which can now be seen as ‘the persecuted, freed; the disestablished, re-established’. It constituted grounds for a Catholic community both in love with, and defined by, its own history with, and sometimes in tension with, the perceived Establishment. As in every sentimental historical conflation, it was, of course, somewhat mythical, as Quinn recognises:

‘...[b]y the middle of the 1850s euphoria of the restoration of the hierarchy began to dissipate. English Catholics lost their sense of being *fratres in unum*, an evanescent quality at the best of times. Catholic social inequalities, for example, were enormous’ (Quinn, 1993:7).

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<sup>26</sup> Volatile here in the sense of being asymmetric, non-linear, emerging-rather-than-planned.

<sup>27</sup> Paz in particular is aware that, particularly in the mid nineteenth century, there was a strong correlation between anti-Catholic and anti-Irish (immigrant) sentiment, especially when sharpened by poverty (Paz, 1992:51).

The myth of Restoration is, nevertheless, powerful. Such symbolic thinking is a coherent system and symbols have their own metaphysics. As Eliade observes, albeit reflecting on antiquity:

‘...[o]bviously, the metaphysical concepts of the archaic world will not always formulated in theoretical language; the symbol of the myth, the rights, express, on different planes and through means proper to then, a complex system of coherent affirmations about the ultimate reality of things, a system that can be regarded as constituting a metaphysics’ (Eliade, 2005: 3).

Such ‘pro-coherent thinking’, such a tendency to ‘tidy up’, that which cannot – or should not – be so tidy - was experienced by this Headteacher-Researcher to be prevalent within practice. For example, in straightforward educational discourse this pro-coherent thinking was manifest in linear progression through year groups, ‘subjects’ still taught largely in silos, assessment ‘criteria’ and a teleological approach to achievement equated with reaching and then being successful in public examinations. The sovereignty of the apparatus of the English Catholic school and this author’s role as an agent promoting this sovereignty increasingly came into creative (destructive?) tension with the Catholic educational focus on each child as an individual, reflected in the discussion of dignity below.

Document II sought to justify the deployment of Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault and Lonergan in preparation for an archaeological (Foucault, 2013) examination (in Document III) of the history and philosophical dynamics of the English Catholic education project. Heidegger’s writings constitute a focus upon existentialist, historicist readings of practice constituted in the play of temporality, bringing to the fore questions concerning meaning-making, *das Woraufhin* (the ‘upon which’)



(Heidegger, 1962:145, 151) along with a distinction between being and beings.

Derrida brings forth a thoroughgoing exploration of languages constituted in the play of *différance* together with, in his later writings, challenging readings of justice (constituted in language rather than agency), of law and of hospitality in its differing guises.

Further, Heidegger and Derrida provided the impetus for a subsequent deconstructive reading of authenticity<sup>28</sup> in the context of English Catholic education. In so doing the English Church's teaching mission could be seen as an non-straightforward interplay of 'looking after' (the imminent), the (predominantly immigrant Irish) poor and needy, saving souls (the transcendent/eschatological<sup>29</sup>), seeking acceptance from the Establishment (the pragmatic) and yet seeking separation at all costs (the tribal), whether seen as represented in Eliade's metaphysics or perhaps, in Wittgensteinian terms as *Lebensform*, form of life.<sup>30</sup>

In Document III drawing on archive material, English Catholic education was positioned in the context of a) a multifaceted English Church: the Irish, the middle class, the aristocracy and, b) power relationships, which would, it was argued,

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<sup>28</sup> In Derrida's terms authenticity is another dimension of Heidegger's retention of metaphysical exigencies, despite his attempts to the contrary, (Derrida, 1993:77).

<sup>29</sup> From the Greek ἐσχατος *eschatos* meaning 'last' and *-logy* meaning 'the study of', this theological term refers to the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell.

<sup>30</sup> "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"-What is true or false is what human beings say; and it is in their *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life' (Wittgenstein, 2009:241).

produce a specific trajectory – a Church and educational function attempting, not always successfully, to be ‘the King’s good servant, but God’s first’ (Monti, 1997).<sup>31</sup> For this reason the title of the Document III remained: *‘Unbalanced, Heterogeneous, Unstable: Power, Statements and Dividing Practices in the formation of the mid-nineteenth century English Catholic Church’s education mission - a Foucauldian reading’*. This recognition of the non-linearity of power relationships and the significance of what is not demonstrable or solvable would develop, in this thesis into a concern with the *aporia* and Research Question Two.

Document IV, concerned with a philosophical repositioning of Catholic education, began by reviewing the structure of knowing with particular reference to the Catholic tradition. Document IV introduced the works of Bernard Lonergan whose attempt, in self-transcendence and conversion, to cite authenticity as a function of the intellectual, the religious and the formative was, it was suggested, a helpful contribution to the discussion as to what the primary purpose of Catholic education should be: specifically, a search for the authentic, albeit in Lonergan’s terms. Lonergan’s foundational formulation contrasts with the fundamentally anti-foundational reading undertaken with respect to Derrida, but, Lonergan’s work nevertheless represents an attempt to bring to practice elements of his own Heideggerian reading with his Catholic, Christian faith.<sup>32</sup> Such an attempt is in

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<sup>31</sup> Quotation of the last words of Saint Thomas More prior to execution.

<sup>32</sup> Snell (2006:166) remarks that, although Lonergan is rightly described as a foundationalist he is not so in the classic sense. ‘...in fact, his critical realism, since he applies it consistently, demands a rejection of the Myth of the Given...’ ‘Self-knowing, self-appropriation and self-affirmation are...’ ‘...foundational...’ ‘...but they simply are not given in

evidence when, adopting his take on authenticity which – somewhat different to the weaker form developed in this thesis - can be summed up as being true to one's rational, (God-made) enlightened self (Lonergan, 1971:254).<sup>33</sup> In the language of his Catholic theological worldview with its metaphysical determinations, he goes on:

'Human authenticity is not some pure quality, some serene freedom from all oversights is, all misunderstanding, all mistakes, all sins. Rather it consists in a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and the withdrawal is never a permanent achievement. It is ever precarious, ever to be achieved afresh, ever in great part a matter of uncovering still more oversights, acknowledging, still further failures to understand, correcting still more and more deeply hidden sins' (Lonergan, 1971:252).

This represents a clear articulation of an attempt to bring the Heideggerian notion of authenticity (related intimately to inauthenticity, never permanently achievable, inextricably linked with 'uncovering') to the Christian notion of 'self correction'<sup>34</sup> (failures to understand, hidden sins), which, for the purposes of this thesis, renders the possibility of (the recovery of) radical human dignity. 'Lonergan's 'self correction' may seem both overly stoic and somewhat Cartesian, yet the notion of *authenticity as 'mattering'* - where mattering is to recognise the authority (entitlement) in oneself and the other<sup>35</sup> - is precisely what a holistic (Catholic)

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experience...' '...but only at the end of a very long and taxing process of appropriation'.

<sup>33</sup> Lonergan adds that authenticity is 'man's deepest need and most prized achievement'. This clearly demarks him from Heidegger in adopting a clear preference for (a determined human orientation towards) the authentic as against the inauthentic.

<sup>34</sup> For instance Mark 1: 15 'Repent and believe the good news!' *New International Version* op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> In Derrida's terms 'oneself' and the 'other' may well represent a binary separation that is constantly destabilized and imploding: rather than two objects of consciousness there is, instead, the event of the encounter. Without attempting to 'Christianize' Derrida, a deconstruction of the 'oneself' - 'other' binary' could be seen as radical interdependence with resonances in Catholic social teaching: As Pope John Paul II (1987:36) said in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* - (The Social

education is there to engender (Section 3). For this reason, the discussion of the philosophy of Catholic education attempts to read the Catholic notion of *dignity* both as an outcome of authenticity and a condition precedent for its exercise.<sup>36</sup>

### **Synthesising the lessons learnt in Documents I-IV prior to the thesis**

Documents I-IV had used historical discursive writing and philosophical investigation to render problematic three elements. First, the non-linearity of the English Catholic 'story'. Second, the question the fitness for purpose of a philosophy of Catholic education sometimes distanced from the contexts it serves. Third, the position of the Headteacher in these narratives as, Janus-like, one bends the knee at once to Church and State. This, therefore, underpinned the questions and aims to be addressed.

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Concern of the Church): '...a recognition of the interdependence of humanity can help. When it is recognised as a moral category, this interdependence can become the virtue of solidarity, an attitude that is diametrically opposed to structural sin. It is 'a commitment to the good of one's neighbour with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to "lose oneself" (my emphasis for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to "serve him" instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage'.

<sup>36</sup> Section 3.4.2 below

#### **(iv) Introductory meditation – a triptych of despair?**

Authenticity, understood in a specific way in this thesis as *mattering*, has, as its polar opposite, alienation, a notion long recognised in accounts of the futile, the banal and the disconnected. Percy's writing and the *Myth of Sisyphus* bring this to the fore. In so doing, key notions of alienation and the irresolvable (the *aporia*) are hinted at. This brief meditation also signals the movement of this Headteacher-Researcher over five years as his critical engagement with practice *and his part in producing 'practice'* was considered.

#### *Exhausted dreams*

'The American novelist Walker Percy offered what he called a diagnosis of the malaise of the modern and the post-modern (Percy, 1992:204-221). His language echoed his multiple identities as a medical doctor, a Catholic convert, and a distinguished imaginative writer. In his view, if modernity is edging into a different town called post-modernity, it is because we live in a time of exhausted dreams, of failed promises and of the breakdown of rational humanism with the resultant 'homelessness of a man who (in this world) is not in fact at home' (Percy, 2000:9).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The not-at-home-with or non-acceptance of existence is reflected in the 'inauthentic' (see section (iii) below.)

In such a moment of crumbling illusions, Percy saw humanity as suffering from a fragile sense of identity, and suggested that only when we feel the pain of our loss can we move towards a threshold of 'extraness' (Percy, 1966:332). From this to an intimation of the strange gratuitousness that, in his terms, is God (Percy, 1992): yet against what odds? Such homelessness is another way of describing the very alienation, standing as an antithesis to a move towards authenticity in the sense developed below. The 'not mattering' here as 'not at home', as not-an-authority to-oneseif-or-the other, as not entitled, as rootlessness, as drift and as without dignity.

### *Suicidal thoughts*

In *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Camus, 1955:3) Camus introduces a philosophy of the absurd: the human futile search for meaning, unity and clarity in the face of an apparently unintelligible world devoid of God, eternal truths, values and all the other metaphysical *detritus* that post-modernism, or at least some readings of post-modernism, would have us believe. To the question 'Does the realisation of the absurd require suicide?' Camus answers, no (Camus, 1955:3). He begins by describing the absurd condition: much of our life is built on the hope for tomorrow yet tomorrow brings us closer to death, the ultimate enemy (Camus, 1955:75).<sup>38</sup> People live as if they did not know about the certainty of death; once stripped of its common romanticisms, the world is a foreign, strange and inhuman place; true

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<sup>38</sup> Camus continues: 'All that remains is a fate whose outcome alone is fatal' (ibid:16).

knowledge is impossible and rationality and science cannot explain the world: their stories ultimately end, not in meaning, but rather in meaningless abstractions<sup>39</sup>, in metaphors. 'From the moment absurdity is recognized<sup>40</sup>, it becomes a passion, the most harrowing of all' (Camus, 1955:16).

This passion may surely take many ostensibly differing forms: self-loathing through the absence of dignity leading to a 'giving up', an overly 'evangelical' approach to scientific inquiry, or a drift to fundamentalism<sup>41</sup> in its many forms. It is entirely possible to see the Catholic foundationalism of the Headteacher of the Catholic school as precisely such a response to the absurd. An escape: and yet this thesis is predicated on the possibility of moving not further into alienation – into dislocation and disentitlement -, but towards, the authentic, the dignifying. Autoethnographically it became interesting to this Headteacher-Researcher-Catholic to note the extent to which he needed this foundation – this purported happy ending – as a support for his own emotional and affective self. However, any attempt at 'pure objectivity' – at removing this self from research and practice – would be both futile and inauthentic given the central tenet of 'mattering'.

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<sup>39</sup> A charge, which could, of course, be levelled at the use in this thesis of the metaphor, namely 'tectonic plates'.

<sup>40</sup> A proxy for a movement towards authenticity, the implication being that authenticity is not to be equated with utopian happiness – it may indeed be a vision of, however one defines this term, hell.

<sup>41</sup> A drift to fundamentalism, akin to Manichaeism, offers the replacement of the (dignity of the) individual with a cosmic struggle between light and dark, represented in the Christian tradition in God versus Satan (Riesebrodt, 1990:61).

Camus goes on to outline the legend of Sisyphus who defied the gods and put Death in chains so that no human needed to die. When Death was eventually liberated and it came time for Sisyphus himself to die, he concocted a deceit, which let him escape from the underworld. Finally captured, the gods decided on his punishment for all eternity. He would have to push a rock up a mountain; upon reaching the top, the rock would roll down again, leaving Sisyphus to start over. Camus sees Sisyphus as the absurd hero who lives life to the fullest, hates death, and is condemned to a meaningless task. Camus presents Sisyphus's ceaseless and pointless (non-mattering?) toil as a metaphor for modern lives spent working at futile jobs in factories and offices. 'The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious' (Camus, 1955:77).

This sketch helpfully foregrounds the thesis with respect to each of the research questions.

Research question one identified earlier is concerned with authenticity. It reflects the antithesis of authenticity understood as mattering – the seeds of alienation not reserved for the materially poor but for all who realise a disjunction between their life – aspirations, hopes, fears – and the dominant ontotheologies bearing down on them. Such ontotheologies can include, *inter alia*, the mandate to conform (gendered roles, class issues, ethnically-based assumptions and expectations); to consume (rampant consumerism at both the retail and ecological levels); ideological pressures (including coercive pressures to believe – or to



disbelieve – secular or theistic programmes); sexual pressures, particularly on girls, and young women; career pressures based around the pursuit of status and unremitting competition.

Research question two: identified earlier concerning the *aporia*. The characters in the sketches above are caught up in the aporetic tension of a) performing the acceptable in conformity and b) the unacceptability of this conformity to authentic living. This is a non-way, existentially irresolvable to the extent that the human – and especially the young person – wants to *fit in*.

Research question three: referred to earlier concerning the effect on this Headteacher-Researcher. The ‘Sisyphus’ device is no mere metaphor for desolate young people – it is also a metaphor for the Headteacher whose self-identity and sense of purpose is a function purely of the effectiveness with which s/he manages the apparatus of the English Catholic school to the satisfaction of the measured metrics. The many years of school leadership, if left unchallenged, were becoming self-serving and caught up in their own validation-by-internal-coherence. Deliver the results in the summer, deliver the students through the admissions process and, from time to time, remind them the school is ‘Catholic’. Then return to the foot of the hill to roll the boulder up one more time. No self-challenge, no suggestion that the radical message of the Christian Gospel underpinning the existence of the school should contribute to the inculcating within the young people a faculty for a similarly radical hermeneutic. No questioning of the impact of the Faustian pact between Church and

State underpinning the English Catholic (maintained) school, for good and for ill. Thus, this meditation draws out the ethical underpinning of these research questions.

## **1. Shards of alienation**

Recalling the first research question, identified earlier, concerning the issue of authenticity, an understanding of the use to which the word 'alienation' is put in this thesis will serve to draw out that which is properly called authentic.

For the purpose of this thesis, alienation is precisely such a not-being-at-home, a dislocation experienced as a profound non-mattering, an absence of dignity, which confound the authenticity, of a given event. In authenticity, where one matters to one self and stands aware of one's mattering to the other, the individual exercises an authority – an authorship.<sup>42</sup> But how is this manifest for this writer as a Catholic Headteacher working in a school where his students are drawn from the top 7% most socially deprived children in the county? A broader empirical overview is instructive.

In 2009 Unicef ranked the UK at the bottom of a league table for child wellbeing across 21 industrialised countries, by looking at poverty, family relationships, behaviours, and health (Unicef, 2009) and, crucially, their subjective

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<sup>42</sup> Accepting that such an authorship, or *at-home-ness* may, in its constitution (and alive to Derrida's deconstruction of the binary) render alienated some 'other'. The 'mattering' of the young, groomed proto-fundamentalist may require for its consummation [*com-* "together" + *summa* 'sum, total,' from *summus* 'highest'] precisely the non-mattering (alienation) of the (heretical/un-orthodox/outsider) other.

well-being (Henley, 2012). Austria, Greece, Hungary, the United Kingdom and the United States are ranked in the bottom third of the table for both 2001/2002 and 2009/2010 (Unicef, 2013:5). At the same time 'Growing numbers of children are failing to develop properly at a young age because of the toxic pressures of modern life' (Paton, 2012) it was claimed. The powerful lobby of childcare experts said that many 'commercially vulnerable' under-16s were spending too much time sat unsupervised in front of televisions, games consoles and the Internet in their bedroom instead of playing outdoors. UK children are also among the most tested in the Western world after being pushed into formal schooling at an increasingly young age and more likely to be exposed to junk food and poor diets than elsewhere, they said' (ibid: 5).

By 2013 the UK position had improved to mid-table, not least as other countries joined the Unicef league table. Nevertheless:

'The bottom four places in the table are occupied by three of the poorest countries in the survey, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, and by one of the richest, the United States. 'Overall, there does not appear to be a strong relationship between per capita GDP and overall child well being. The Czech Republic is ranked higher than Austria, Slovenia higher than Canada, and Portugal higher than the United States' (Unicef 2013: 46).

In terms of births to teenage mothers<sup>43</sup>, globally these declined in 18 out of 21

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<sup>43</sup> 'Poverty is both a cause and consequence of early and unplanned planned pregnancy. Some impoverished young mothers may end up fairing poorly no matter when their children are born. Nevertheless, although disadvantaged backgrounds account for many of the challenges that young women and men face, having a baby during adolescence or as a young adult struggling to complete their education or obtain skills needed in today's job market certainly makes it harder to break the cycle of poverty' (Brown, 2010:14).

countries between 2003 and 2009. Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and United States all recorded a fall in teenage fertility rates of 10 points or more. The exceptions to the falling trend were Belgium, Spain and the United Kingdom. 'This finding is particularly significant for the United Kingdom because its teenage fertility rate at the beginning of the decade was already the highest in Europe' (Unicef, 2013:51).

In addition, despite Whelan noting that 'England has implemented more of the policies that would be expected to improve performance in a school system than any other country in the world' (Whelan, 2009:58), the UK educational well-being indicator<sup>44</sup> in 2013 was below average and below Latvia, Slovakia and Lithuania (Unicef, 2013:18).

The further education enrolment rate exceeds 80% in all of the more populous developed countries except the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is the only developed country in which the further education participation rate falls below 75%. For the Researchers: 'this may be the result of an emphasis on academic qualifications combined with a diverse system of vocational qualifications which have not yet succeeded in achieving either 'parity of esteem' or an established value in employment markets' (ibid: 58).

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<sup>44</sup> Methodologically comprising preschool participation rate (% of those aged between 4 years and the start of compulsory education who are enrolled in preschool). Further education participation rate (% of those aged 15 to 19 enrolled in further education) NEET rate (% aged 15 to 19 not in education, employment or training.) Achievement Average score in PISA tests of reading, maths and science literacy.

A study published by the Children's Society (Ward, 2013) following interviews with 42,000 children aged between eight and 17, found that after a long period of gradual increase, children's happiness began to stall in 2008 and had more recently been in decline. Experts warned that such well-being and mental health issues were too often dismissed as teenage angst, creating a culture of misunderstanding and ignorance. Emma-Jane Cross, founder of MindFull, the mental health charity for children and young people, said:

'This damaging attitude can no longer continue when so many are desperately unhappy and struggling with serious issues including self-harm and suicidal thoughts.'...'Instead of a nation where young people are supported to be healthy, happy and fulfilled, we have a culture of stigma, misunderstanding and ignorance. Our young people deserve better'. (ibid.)

*The Good Childhood Report* (2014:31) found, in a survey of 42,000 children and young people, that Children in England ranked 30th out of 39 countries in Europe and North America for subjective wellbeing and ninth out of a sample of 11 countries around the world (The Children's Society, 2015) and that 'We can conclude that after a period of increase from 1994 to 2007, children's subjective wellbeing has stopped increasing during the last few years for which data is available' (ibid: 23). Teenagers aged 14 and 15 had the lowest satisfaction levels (ibid: 10), with 15 per cent found to have 'low well-being' compared to just four per cent of eight year olds. It warned that although many young people did not meet the criteria for mental health problems, they were nevertheless 'substantially unhappy' with their lives. Though education is no replacement for familial and societal conditioning it is, in its formative role, surely bound to take into account any and every 'barrier to learning' – any and every

obstacle to human flourishing. In terms of the Catholic identity, this is accentuated as in Catholic social teaching: 'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (*New Testament (NIV)*, 2012:Gen. 1: 27).' This finds its culmination in the words of Pope Paul VI in the landmark declaration on Catholic education:

'All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education (5) that is in keeping with their ultimate goal,(6) their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share' (Pope Paul VI, 1965a:1).

As a 'moral imperative' – whether deontological, utilitarian, Kantian-Categorical or otherwise - , the need to promote the well-being of children may seem persuasive. As a pragmatic imperative, it is equally deserving of priority; failure to protect and promote the well being of children is associated with increased risk across a wide range of later-life outcomes. Those outcomes range from impaired cognitive development to lower levels of school achievement, from reduced skills and expectations to lower productivity and earnings, from higher rates of unemployment to increased dependence on welfare, from the prevalence of antisocial behaviour to involvement in crime, from the greater likelihood of drug and alcohol abuse to higher levels of teenage births (Duncan, Telle, Ziolo-Guest and Kalil, 2009).

So this brief empirical sketch provides empirical evidence of different forms of

alienation and therefore the scale of the challenge involved in attempting to move towards the cultivation of authentic education in the English school. This Headteacher-Researcher, however, experiences these concerns magnified through the lens of real material depravation and, therefore, this understanding of the national perspective has begun to inform the local context, affecting therefore one's practice in the sense of research question three. In terms of research question two, however, this empirical sketch began to challenge this author as to the extent to which late modernity and its un-deconstructed ontotheologies, especially including those found and promoted in the maintained, English, *client-master* Catholic school, themselves conspire to obfuscate, dehumanise and lead to the dis-entitlement and non-mattering which underpins this working rendition of 'alienation'. Secondly, how can Catholic education challenge such a desolate landscape, both within its tradition and through (in Boeve's language) an 'interruption' of tradition?

## **2. Methodological Considerations: Autoethnography and Deconstruction**

Already this thesis has frequently referred to the interplay of *this* Headteacher-Researcher whose self-understanding lies at the heart of research question three *within* the agency of school and ecclesial leadership *within* the master-client formation of English Catholic maintained education *within* the early twenty-first century. Such concentric circles of meaning immediately challenge the linear view of school leadership as a one-way agency for good or for ill. The multi-faceted interplay of identities contributes to a need for aporetic questioning (research

question two) in search of authenticity (research question one) at the service of the young. This will now be developed more analytically.

‘The self both is and is not a fiction; is unified and transcendent and fragmented and always in process of being constituted, can be spoken of in realist ways and cannot; its voice can be claimed as authentic and there is no guarantee of authenticity’ (Davies and Gannon, 2006:95).

The deconstructive approach adopted in this thesis, emerging from the very language of positive research (the latter being constituted in the play of *différance*) stands in opposition to positivist research practices, which, in the positing of the researcher and the researched, can offer a fractured and fragmented ‘subject’ position. This was a central insight from the outset reminding this Headteacher-Researcher that he was a constitutive part of the event of Catholic education in his place and that it was both futile and disingenuous to try and take a disconnected ‘global’ overview. The freedom to be caught up in the messiness of context was critically important in understanding what was to come as well as to entertain the *aporia* as providing an insight of the *cul-de-sac*, the non answer, generated by such complex interplay. The eleven years of school leadership and the school improvement agenda underpinning it alerted this Headteacher-Researcher to his role in executing and, thereafter monitoring, (*re-*)iterative steps at the service of the internal coherence of the apparatus. ‘Strategic thinking’ on the part of this Headteacher-Leader so often rendered ‘other’ those colleagues whose dignity (placing them beyond merely means to an end) would be limited (sacrificed?) by this need to service the apparatus.



While autoethnography is no single 'School' (Ellis, and Bochner 2000:739) the writing context, in autoethnography, appears to be just 'me' here writing 'my story' in my particular complex everyday,, but as Denzin (2003) elaborates, these 'mystories' might also be 'reflexive, critical, multimedia tales and tellings' (Denzin, 2003: 26). The authority for the 'my story' begins with the lived memories of the autoethnographic writer at the scene of lived experience.<sup>45</sup> In the context of this thesis, that of this specific author in role as Headteacher of a Catholic comprehensive school *in London in 2011-2015* but also as father, husband, mortgagee, convert to Roman Catholicism and political centrist. Further, in the language of this thesis, affected by the varying socio-politico-cultural and professional 'tectonic plates' – the 'bad' metaphysics - which serve to variously render and distort. The strength of recognising the acceptance of an autoethnographic approach lies in a recognition that the 'subject' is never 'neutral', nor hermetically sealed off from the 'object' and, in this sense, offers some remedy to the imperious, dislocated 'researcher' operating a space 'above' her 'subject'. This is not entirely non-controversial however. For Probyn, (1993:5) a focus on the subject leads to work where 'the force of the ontological is impoverished . . . through an insistence on the researcher's self'. This is particularly relevant for the work of the Headteacher where a high degree of personal belief, style and ego conspire to render the school's self-image rather closely aligned to that of the Headteacher's own view. While Louis XIV statement, *L'Etat, c'est moi* (Dualaire,1834)

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<sup>45</sup> It is useful to note in anticipation of a close examination of Derrida's work: 'deconstruction is not something to be identified 'here and now' but can be found precisely in such memories. '... deconstruction is not an operation that supervenes afterwards, from the outside, one fine day. It is always already at work in the work. Since the destructive force of Deconstruction is always already contained within the very architecture of the work, all one would finally have to do to be able to deconstruct, given this always already, is to do memory work' (Derrida, 1986:153).

- 'I am the State' – is probably apocryphal, it nevertheless alerts *this* Headteacher to the danger, yet inevitability, of reading into one's own practice an (idealised) teleo-messianic mythology.

From a post-structuralist perspective, not only are subject-object paradigms unfounded but, for Barthes, the issue of temporality remains foregrounded; 'the subject of the speech-act can never be the same as the one who acted yesterday: the I of the discourse can no longer be the site where a previously stored-up person is innocently restored' (Barthes, 1989:17). This insight cohered with the adoption of Derridean deconstruction, eschewing being as presence in favour of the heterogeneous, the incalculable. Where better, then, to start with oneself who, in one's temporality is thrown rather than pinned (see Heidegger below) and whose essence is her existence. When one moves from the 'I' of the individual to the 'voice' of the Catholic Church, 'speaking' across generations, how much more important to see the multi-faceted, decentred mass of power drivers at work in that perceived 'entity'.

In seeking to retain an autoethnographic approach in this thesis, yet working within the Derridean paradigm of deconstruction, the traditional notion of knowledge production can be seen to be closely linked to the particularity of the practices of *this* author *in person and in role* within context and fully subject to various (cognitive and non-cognitive) intellectual and emotional drivers. This affirmation that the body is 'a site for the production of knowledge, feelings, emotions and history, all of which are central to subjectivity' (Probyn, 2003: 290) has resonances not only in terms of poststructuralist thinking but also in Lonergan's writings (see below) where the

importance of subjectivity in absorbing (and therefore negating the modernist obsession with) objectivity is expounded.<sup>46</sup> In school terms, facing a crowded curriculum and the privileging of assessed, cerebral and arguably dislocated (see Lonergan below) 'learning' to which the student in the English (Catholic or otherwise) school is 'subject' – this recognition of the bodily and affective grounding for (the possibility of) learning seems particularly compelling. As Probyn goes on 'bodies are connected to other bodies. They exist and acquire meaning in social spaces: 'the body cannot be thought of as a contained entity; it is in constant contact with others . . . subjectivity [is] a relational matter' (Probyn, 2003: 290). This insight importantly challenges the educational hegemony that renders the treating of the child as an individual as paramount. In this Headteacher-Researcher's practice it has been as important in the authentic Catholic school – where the mattering of the other is as important as the mattering of the self – that the child is treated not as an individual but precisely as inter-dependent. Further, the Headteacher-Researcher, too, is variously caught in, *inter alia*, the 'communities' of Catholic school leaders, non-Catholic school leaders, educationalists and politicians providing an on-going, formative moulding.

That one can embrace an autoethnographical approach while continuing to destabilise the authority of the self who writes and who 'knows herself' has been recognised variously in the work of Gannon, (2001), Jones (1999) and Rambo Ronai (1998; 1999). In this thesis, rather than (post-structurally) 'circling 'the truth' with all

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<sup>46</sup> 'Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity' (Lonergan, 1971:292). Gerard has traced how close a reading Lonergan made of Husserl in influencing his formulation of pre-reflective subjectivity (Whelan, 2013:109).

kinds of signs, quotation marks, and brackets, to protect it from any form of fixation or conceptualisation' (Cixous, 1993:6), instead the approach adopted addressing research question two in this thesis is by way of the *aporia*, the non way. While the choice of *aporia* remains those of this Headteacher caught up in his own subjectivity and subject to the temptations of adopting a sovereign authority over the material at hand, the strength of the *aporia* is that it does not lend itself to easy answers or formulaic (iterative) thinking. In this sense the sovereignty of authorship, it is argued, is held in check.

### 2.1 Autoethnography as a 'technology of the self'

Tracing personal writing through classical and early Christian periods as a reflexive technology of the self, Foucault sees in the self 'something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity . . .' and as such it 'is one of the most ancient Western traditions' (Foucault, 1997:233). Writing offers an opportunity to 'release oneself from oneself' or to 'disassemble the self, oneself' (Rabinow, 1997:xxxviii), through the two imperatives: 'care of the self' and 'know the self' and just as there are different forms of care, so to are there different forms of self (Foucault, 1997:238). Foucault sees in the classical period an approach to the self that is predicated on a 'training' model where one learnt 'progressive mastery of the self...through the acquisition and assimilation of truth'.<sup>47</sup> Within the Christian period, however, while the idea of training remains, Foucault sees in it a heavy focus on

knowing oneself in terms of strengths –and particularly ethical weaknesses – with the need to confess regularly which have led Clough to see in autoethnography the danger of a trauma culture (Clough, 2000). Autoethnography in this sense could be seen to carry with it a therapeutic spin, offering on the one hand the ‘threat’ of distortion (through picturesque story telling<sup>48</sup>) even as, on the other hand, it at least offers the colour and texture of writing, which does not try and sell the dangerous myth of dispassionate ‘objectivity.’ In terms of the Catholic Headteacher, the teleo-messianic narrative at the heart of the Catholic project (‘mission’, ‘salvation’, ‘grace’ to choose three elements) offers precisely such a ‘danger’ of ‘story-telling’ – of fitting the experience into something. Yet, at the same time, a colleague Headteacher with, for example a non-theistic passionate socio-political liberalism would surely, herself, be similarly reliant on the ‘stories’ one needs to tell oneself in engaging with practice. The traits may differ but the metaphysics would be equally present. For example the ‘secular’ colleague may ‘live by’ a belief in (metaphysically laden) ‘absolutes’ such as ‘equality’, ‘development’ ‘multi-culturalism’ and a ‘a fairer society for all’ to cite but four potential narratives.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> ‘Culture seen in the rear view of memory comes alive as a spectacle, a performance . . . the personal and the political interacting with one another’ (Denzin, 2003: 141).

<sup>49</sup> For Lyotard the narrative was no benign backdrop but fundamentally distorting: ‘the narratives we tell to justify a single set of laws and stakes are inherently unjust.’ (Williams, 2002: 210-214). For the non-theistic observer, the Catholic educational narrative would be equally guilty-as-charged, leading to the inevitable conclusion that one picks and chooses ‘good’ and ‘bad’ narratives, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ metaphysics.

At once, adopting this autoethnographic approach, this Headteacher-Researcher-Catholic faces a personal *aporia* in his own identity as, firstly, the leader of an ecclesial School community caught up in the metaphysical underpinnings of a theistic world view while, secondly, being committed to challenge the metaphysics within the ontotheologies facing the young. However, as an illustration of the strength of the *aporia*, the effect was not to close down further research on the grounds of being ‘dis-entitled’ but, instead, keeping in tension the various elements which are not to be tidily reconciled by way of, for example, a dominant binary position overcoming its opposite number (‘yes’ versus ‘no’). In terms of research question two and three, this understanding allowed a fresh approach to practice in the form of deeper questioning that was not limited by the need to close it down in a ‘solution’. This was practically manifest when, for example the decision was taken to ‘define’ the School ethos on a yearly basis based on the students and staff who provided the current context (see below).

Returning to autoethnography, when one reflects on Document III, for example, the narrative of the restoration of the English Church and its education function can be seen to borrow from a poststructuralist autoethnography in welcoming – even privileging – not a linear, process narrative (*the Church did x, then the Church did y*) but instead the discontinuities and messiness (for example of the interplay of middle class, Irish poor, clergy, Rome and so on). There is interplay and fissuring of subject (who is writing the history?) and object (Who is/was/are the Church?). This temporality brings us to the issue of presence, which Derrida will address below. Suffice to cite two quotations:

‘By beating around an impossible thing which I no doubt also resist, the ‘I’ constitutes the very form of resistance. Each time this identity proclaims itself, each time some belonging circumscribes me, if I may put it this way, someone or something cries out: Watch out, there’s a trap, you’re caught. Get free [*dégage*], disengage yourself [*dégage-toi*]. Your engagement is elsewhere (Derrida and Ewald, 1995: 275).

And more dogmatically, expressing a core Derridean doctrine:

‘The self does not exist; it is not present to itself until that which engages it in this way, and which is not it. There is not a constituted subject which engages itself in writing at a given moment for some reason or another. It exists through writing, given [*donné*] by the other: born [*né*] . . . through being given [*donné*], delivered, offered and betrayed all at one and the same time’ (ibid: 279).

However, for Derrida the body is a source of knowledge of the self in culture, not least in *Veils* (Cixous, Derrida, 2001). Strikingly, Derrida’s ‘Circumfession’ (Bennington and Derrida, 1992) represents a very Derridean take on autobiographical writing, whereby he takes the figures of circumcision (his own) and of confession (St Augustine’s) and weaves these through a text of writing himself in a particular context (as a son whose mother is dying). Derrida seems to be coping with that thing that happens when one starts writing or talking about oneself which is to start to *explain* oneself as one is. With surprising speed, relating something about oneself becomes something like self-justification, as if one’s actions could also have been mistakes. ‘Circumfession’ is infused with concern for the other and the uses to which he puts others in his text. Derrida’s autobiography is characterized by vulnerability and responsibility for the other (Gregoriou, 1995). He worries about the moral consequences of writing his mother into this text and of the impossibility of writing himself alone as an alternative:

'I feel really guilty for publishing her end, in exhibiting her last breaths and, still worse, for purposes that some might judge to be literary, at risk of adding a dubious exercise to the 'writer and his mother' series, subseries 'the mother's death,' and what is there to be done, would I not feel as guilty, and would I not in truth be as guilty if I wrote here about myself without retaining the least trace of her, letting her die in the depth of another time' (Bennington, 1992:36-37).

In this Headteacher-Researcher's practice there is an on-going recognition of other, not least in those people-worthy-of-absolute-dignity who are referred to as 'staff' and 'student'. Any deployment of language such as 'leadership', 'strategy', 'implementation', 'overcoming barriers' carries within itself the possibility of violently diminishing the place of the other and, instead, dehumanising 'them' in favour of the language of the apparatus. People diminished to the part of 'transmission mechanism' or 'conduit'. For the student – the vulnerable potentially alienated searcher -, the more the apparatus defines itself by an improvement agenda predicated on the performatives of ever-greater (*re*-iterative) internal coherence to achieve ever-greater approbation by the State metric, the higher the risk the student *qua* human being is rendered 'other'.

Derrida, in inimitable language, is clear that, for him, circumcision is 'all I've ever talked about' (ibid: 37) by which he is making the point that, as (infant) circumcision for him was an entrance in to a culture, so too all our bodies are always already inscribed within culture and all that has been said before:

'Even when speaking of the most intimate thing, for example of one's own circumcision, it is better to be aware that an exegesis is in progress, that you carry its detour, its contour, and its memory inscribed within the culture of your body, for instance' (Derrida, 1995:281).



Within the practice of the English Catholic Headteacher, it is a fair assumption<sup>50</sup> that the ‘normal’ Catholic Headteacher has herself been subject to a Catholic education in their youth where such as a belief in God, the Sacraments of the Church, a belief in forgiveness, redemption, and an eschatological worldview have indeed been inscribed. Significantly, however, for this Headteacher-Researcher who chose to become Roman Catholic aged 18 having attended a loosely Anglican grammar School, that history is not the same. The ‘circumfession’ here is that of the convert –the zealous enthusiast - wanting to reconcile practice around Church teaching, to secure the *happy* (tidy?) *ending* – a trait that was evident throughout this research: A trait, which, if unchecked, could lead to the dominance of the tidy story over the messy narrative – the dominance of authenticity-understood-as-internal coherence as against authenticity-understood-as mattering.

Already in this discussion of autoethnography as methodology there has been a response to the constant interplay of the three research questions: the nature of authenticity, the *aporia* within Derrida’s understanding and the question of how and to what extent this thinking was moulding and changing the practice of this Headteacher-Researcher.

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<sup>50</sup> Given the requirement by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, through the Catholic Education Service, that the Head of a Catholic school – maintained or independent – be a practicing Catholic. (See Catholic Education Service, England and Wales 2014).

Returning to those other ‘bodies’ with whom this Headteacher-Researcher share an interconnectedness – those other Headteachers of English maintained Schools, many – unlike this one - attended Catholic primary and secondary School in the 1970s/1980s, they may also have experienced education at the hands of ‘professional’ religious – these religious priests, sisters and brothers who, until relatively recently, were at the cornerstone of many Catholic Schools. For these Headteachers in experience, and for this Headteacher-Researcher through anecdote, the impact of those bodies of what one could call professionally religious people on students and staff alike is not to be underestimated. As Lydon, (2009) argues, the Schools run by the ‘religious’ were, given the profound witness of the life choices made by the very individuals at the heart of the organisation, able to transmit a powerful charism. Writing specifically on the Salesian Catholic School model, founded by nineteenth century Italian priest Saint John Bosco – identical with the School run by this author – he identifies the following as formative:

- Self-sacrifice on the part of the founders and their disciples, reflecting the radical nature of the commitment of Jesus' first disciples.
- Creation of a family spirit.
- A holistic approach to education with an emphasis on an 'intrusive interest' in students, primarily through the medium of extra-curricular activities.
- The architectonic nature of religious formation.
- Pastoral care, advocated by Bosco, is modelled on that of Jesus the Good Shepherd. The teacher is, in effect, a sign, or sacrament, of the presence of Christ among young people (Lydon, 2009:51).

Such a cohesive experience precisely mirrors Derrida’s idea of the inscribed ‘circumfession’ – a formation which would inform the autoethnography of one so ‘formed’ though, as we will see below (Marcus and Fisher, 1986) the fissuring and

fragmentation explicit within Derrida finds its nemesis in the constant call of the grand narrative, given expression within the autoethnographic voice.

Derrida, in his relationship to the impending death of his mother is acutely aware of the extent to which one's relationship to death can dominate everything. Morphing death to temporality, in the context of this thesis, for example, this author is acutely aware in his own professional and personal practice of the interplay of ambition, reputation and the teleology of 'achievement' which is not only a feature of the education landscape but also directly affects the fundamental orientation of the Headteacher. A 'being before death' has resonances with, for example, the focus on risk-averse compliance prior to an inspection, the presentation of an 'acceptable' (if in some senses dishonest) façade to prospective parents or in seeking to 'collect all the necessary evidence' to expedite a disciplinary proceeding. While there is no antidote to this *Pharmakon*<sup>51</sup> – which can both sharpen professional practice (as 'cure') yet can rid it of creativity and care (poison) in *Circumfession* Derrida suggests the importance of the other:

'Deconstruction as a writing indebted to the other; writing as the effect of a vulnerability to the other; vulnerability as the impossibility of escaping the responsibility to and for the other because the other already creates and recreates my body through repeated inscriptions: events of birth, circumcision, sickness, loss, death, and mourning' (Gregoriou, 1995:314).

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<sup>51</sup> The ancient Greek word '*pharmakon*' is paradoxical and can be translated as 'drug,' which means both 'remedy' and 'poison' (Derrida, 1981:99).

In *Circumfession*, Derrida's memories of his early life as 'a little black and very Arab Jew' (Bennington and Derrida, 1993:58) in the particular time and place that was colonial Algeria come into play in the text. This is part of his practice of writing the subject (into play). Derrida has always maintained that 'I don't destroy the subject; I situate it. . . . It is a question of knowing where it comes from' (Derrida, 1972:271).

In this thesis, too, one is aware of being educated 'by the State' (in a state-funded non-denominational Grammar school), working 'for the State' (in a state-funded Catholic comprehensive school) and being formed as a Headteacher by 'others', as a man, by 'others', as a Roman Catholic, as a father of children educated by the State within the client-master domain of a maintained Catholic school and so on. This author is also: the product of a state grammar school *and not of an independent school*; comfortably off *but not rich*; generally successful professionally, *which means less successful than 'others' and more than 'others'*; the Head of a school judged by the State as 'Good' *which means not 'Outstanding' or 'Inadequate.'* Slowly the place of deconstruction as rooted in autoethnography-as-vulnerability-to-others becomes clearer. In addition, this serves to heighten in this author's mind the disturbing appropriateness of the notion of *Pharmakon* to state funded Catholic comprehensive education. The largesse of Church and State offering poor children free, faith-based education suggests the medicinal, at the same time, in the constant genuflection (compromise, compliance, managerialism) demanded of the school in England (see Document III), by the sovereign state, the medicine-poison play is brought forth.

Considering the anthropological work of Marcus and Fischer's *Anthropology as cultural critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (1996) these authors see the demise of the 'grand theory'<sup>52</sup> of anthropology as giving way instead to fragmentary representations; a process besieged by the over interpretation of ethnographic data. Simply, the discourse of the human experience has been marginalised and saturated with political and social agendas of the abstract post modern ideals, instead of focussing openly on inductive empirical data analysis from the cultural paradigm. In so being that, the fragmentation of theoretical perspective led to the disarray, or more aptly put, the chaos of 'post' knowledge designations in its wake, such as 'post-modernism, post-structuralism, or post-Marxism,' (ibid: 7; 10-11) to name a few.

'The authority of 'grand theory' styles seems suspended for the moment in favour of close consideration of such issues as contextuality, the meaning of social life to those who enacted, and the explanation of exceptions and indeterminants rather than regularities in phenomena observed- all issues that make problematic what were taken for granted as facts or certainties on which the validity of paradigms had rested' (Ibid:10-11).

This amounts to a 'crisis of representation' (ibid: 7) in that there seems to be 'no certainty'; everything is 'suspect' and the viewing of post-World War II paradigms have failed. In order to secure the 'repatriation of anthropology as cultural critique' (ibid: 111), therefore, Marcus and Fischer detail the fieldwork of anthropologists, cultivated expressly in self-reflective narrative.

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<sup>52</sup> In the spirit of Lyotard's 'incredulity towards metanarratives' (Lyotard, 1984:xxiv).

‘First, to bring out the critical potential embedded in the ethnographic method requires that anthropologists take seriously the notion of modern reality as a juxtaposing of alternative cultural viewpoints, which exist not merely simultaneously, but in interaction, and not as static fragments, but each as dynamic human constructions. Second, the view of culture as a flexible construction of the creative faculties encourages ethnographers to expose their procedures of representation, makes them self-conscious as writers, and ultimately suggests to them the possibility of including other authorial voices (those of the subjects) in their texts’ (ibid: 124).

As a renewed, more vital, form of cultural criticism, it's ethnographic methods would seem to provide realistic solutions to the problems of the positioning of the critic and proposing alternatives. With regards to positioning, ethnography offers engagement with others lives through fieldwork where the ethnographer is always implicated in his critique to his self-conscious interactions with a particular group of subjects. Not dissimilar to the authentic Catholic teacher whose practice is constantly in-formed, *re*-formed and *trans*-formed through the process of the dialogue of teaching.

What Marcus and Fischer's work in ethnography does is to highlight context and the involvement of the 'subject' in a manner, which will be relevant when we examine Boeve's work on recontextualisation, and it is recontextualisation that can, for the purposes of this thesis, be seen as *advanced authenticity*.

## 2.2 Autoethnography and deconstruction

This discussion of the relationship between autoethnography and, first, post-structuralism in general and latterly deconstruction (see section 4 below) suggests

that, rather than representing a binary: one utterly concerned with 'subjectivity' and the other utterly concerned with the repudiation of 'subjectivity' – there is, in Derrida, a commitment to deconstruction which is richly predicated on the extent to which the one undertaking the deconstruction exists within the dynamical and functional interrelationship with the other – family, culture, faith, context. In undertaking deconstruction there is not a repudiation of the self but an attempt to break free from the dominant hegemony of the self (as Researcher, Headteacher, boss...) in the text. In attempting to explore authenticity and the role of the *aporia* (research questions one and two) Derrida's insight alerted this Headteacher-Researcher to his (this author's) interrelatedness with context. Belonging. At the same time, the alienation of the young for whom there appears little connection – little fabric to their context – also refocused this author on the ethical driver behind this research.

Derrida stresses that the dislocation of an author's life from his work and the fragmentation of identity that post-structuralism has provoked 'doesn't mean that one has to dissolve the value of the autobiographical *récit*. Rather, one must restructure it otherwise' (Derrida, 1986a: 45). A differently structured Derridean (anti) autoethnography might be a 'messy text [that] says 'yes' to that which interrupts and exceeds and renounces its own force toward a stuttering knowledge' (Lather and Smithies, 1997:214). Equally supportive of a view that deconstruction and autoethnography go hand in hand, Jackson and Mazzei, argue that, in an attempt to engage the crises of representation by transgressively blurring the genre of writing against disembodied voices of objectivism, autoethnographers run the risk of simply replacing one privileged centre with another, making similarly narrow claims to truth, authority and objectivism (Jackson and Mazzei, 2008). This is particularly

interesting when the privileged centres of English Catholic education – the Church, Christ, Tradition – subsist (or non-subsist, in that in their use as subject they can only ever be personifications) outside all possible interrogation.<sup>53</sup> This insight was instructive in asking the question in practice as to where ‘is’ the ‘centre’ of this Catholic School *for this* Headteacher-Researcher. Was it the Governing Body? – a centring that could distort practice towards outcome indicators to the detriment of the authentic. Was it the students? In which case how does one locate a centre in an ever-changing ‘cohort’? With the staff? And so on. The awareness (research question three) of this Headteacher-Researcher seeking, as a default position, to locate the ‘centre’ of particular aspects of practice, with the potential for this to detrimentally affect authenticity understood as mattering was a profoundly important insight.

For this author, poststructuralism (remembering that Derrida does not see himself as defined by this term) brings to autoethnography a recognition of, and therefore a modest contentment with, the hubristic and ultimately impossible attempt either to ‘position oneself’ or to ‘remove oneself’ from the writing. Ultimately in writing oneself as Headteacher, man, Catholic, one is ‘unreliable’ to the extent that self-knowledge is always already problematic. At the same time, Derrida’s often touching accounts of the ‘other’ (his mother, Paul de Man) also recognise the place of care and the impossibility of unconditional love except in death. All self-knowledge – and knowledge of the other – is ethical, just as it is distorted and unstable. Given the emerging theme of (Christian) dignity as the fruit of authenticity, the emotional and

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<sup>53</sup> It can be argued with justification that theology provides just such an interrogation, but dogma in tradition nevertheless represents a difficult barricade to traverse, especially for the *jobbing* (Catholic) Headteacher.



ethical import of the author is a key understanding for this author. As Britzman notes):

‘In a poststructural approach to (auto) ethnography, experience is ‘a category that bracket[s] and even perform[s] certain repetitions, certain problems, certain desires,’ and the (autoethnographic) Researcher questions how ‘experience [is] structured, how what [is] constituted as experience [is] reminiscent of . . . available and normative discourses’ (Britzman, 2000: 33).

Autoethnography, in this regard, is a critical ‘response to the alienating effects on both Researchers and audiences of impersonal, passionless, abstract claims of truth generated by such research practices and clothed in exclusionary scientific discourse’ (Ellingson, Ellis 2008:450). For the purpose of this thesis, the notion of reflexivity (Richardson, 2000:253-255) is privileged whereby interplay exists both of author-as-product of authentic/inauthentic Catholic educational culture *and* author-as-producer of such a culture. In so doing the thesis departs from a positivistic approach not only in the adoption of deconstruction but also in seeing in the interplay of author as Catholic’, ‘English-*man*’, ‘Head-*teacher*’, ‘Researcher’, ‘Employee’ a multifaceted ‘subject’ which has implications for the normal criteria by which one seeks validity.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, in adopting an autoethnographic approach, Ellis sees a crystalline multiplicity of sources of validity: ironic validity, concerning the problems of representation; paralogical validity, which honours differences and uncertainties; rhizomatic validity, which seeks out multiplicity; and voluptuous validity, which

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<sup>54</sup> In seeking validity one’s docility with respect to how one is moulded and assessed reflects Foucault’s insight that ‘discipline produces subjected and practiced ‘bodies’, ‘docile’ bodies Foucault (1979:138).

seeks out ethics through practices of engagement and self-reflexivity' (Ellis, 2004:124-125).

At the same time, Chang offers five warnings against complacency within autoethnography:

'(1) excessive focus on self in isolation from others; (2) overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation; (3) exclusive reliance on personal memory and recalling as a data source; (4) negligence of ethical standards regarding others in self-narratives; and (5) inappropriate application of the label autoethnography' (Chang, 2008:54).

For the purposes of this thesis, the rhizomatic model, whereby validity is less a function of a concrete centre (object of consciousness) but rather the *ever-in-flux* author moving through various identities: man, Catholic, father, teacher, Headteacher, Researcher – offers, if not validity, then certainly an existential honesty which holds out the possibility of authenticity (research question one). But what is the rhizomatic model?

As a metaphor for knowledge development, Deleuze and Guattari note that, unlike trees or their roots, it is the rhizome that connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even non-sign states. The rhizome is reducible to neither the one nor the multiple. It is not the one that becomes two or even directly three, four, five etc. It is not a multiple derived from the one, or to which one is added (n+1). It is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It

has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle, from which it grows, and which it overflows (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:4; 21).<sup>55</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's useful image operates at two levels: first for this Headteacher-Researcher in understanding his constitution-in -leadership over many years and, second, in better understanding the ever-changing rhizome that is the Catholic school.

To conclude, therefore, this thesis reflects an autoethnographic approach, in three ways: a) the writer as 'subject to' the play of 'Headteacher', 'Researcher', 'father', 'employee', 'friend', b) the writer both as *subject of* (as loyal Catholic Headteacher) and (re) *producer*<sup>56</sup> *of* (as a leader of a Catholic ecclesial community) Catholic educational narrative (reflexivity) c) the subject of violence: lived experience of the violence of the clashing of contemporary 'tectonic plates' as experienced by *this* Headteacher, *this* researcher, *this* Catholic (contextuality), this place.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See Document V section 4.4

<sup>56</sup> For Giddens, sources of social production and reproduction are seen as two sides of the same coin occurring simultaneously and leading to effects of equal strength and intensity. For instance he says 'every act that contributes to the reproduction of the structure is also an act of production, a novel enterprise and as such may initiate change by altering the structure at the same time as it produces it' (1976:123).

<sup>57</sup> For Casey, place, by virtue of its unencompassability by anything other than itself, is at once the limit and the condition of all that exists... [Place] serves as the *condition* of all existing things...To be is to be in place' (Casey, 1993:15-16). Casey goes on, place has suffered great neglect in favour of space: 'not only neglected but actively suppressed...A discourse has emerged whose exclusive foci Time and Space... For an entire epoch, place has been regarded as an impoverished second cousin of time and space, those two colossal cosmic partners that tower over modernity' (Casey, 1993:xiv).

### **3. Towards a contemporary philosophy of Catholic education: Lonergan and Boeve**

#### 3.1 Contemporary English Catholic educational fissures and the limitation of language

This section will continue to tease out authenticity as mattering as was being developed throughout this research (research question one) and that has had a formative effect on this Headteacher-Researcher-Catholic.

Until the close of the Second Vatican Council<sup>58</sup> much of what took place at Catholic educational settings operated largely within the context of Scholastic philosophy (Carr, Haldane, Pring, 1995:163). Neo-Scholasticism, often dated to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) was a reading of Aquinas, which underpinned much Catholic thought until and beyond 1965 and informed *inter alia*, Lonergan's transcendental Thomism. The approach was rational, focussing on proofs and speculative reason and operating within a conceptualistic metaphysics. From the perspective of religious education it entailed an apologetic catechetical approach with heavy emphasis on transmission and memory (Buckley, 1998; Groome, 1998). At this time, too, the Catholic school was reserved almost exclusively for Catholic children. Vatican II however challenged the Church to respond to the demands of the modern

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<sup>58</sup> The Second Vatican Council (Latin: *Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum Secundum*, informally known as Vatican II) addressed relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world. Its clearest statement of intent set out by Pope Paul VI (1965).

world (Gleeson, 1995). Although after Vatican II, membership of the Catholic Church was still seen to be necessary to salvation those outside could be saved through the dictates of their consciences and non-Catholic traditions were seen to be salvific (Race and Hedges, 2008). The Catholic viewpoint on education also changed while continuing to emphasise the integral formation of the person with Christ as foundational and the school as a locus, especially focussing on the promotion of , and moves towards, justice.

In their most recent pronouncement on the nature of Catholic schools in the twenty-two sovereign dioceses, which constitute the hierarchy of England and Wales, the Bishops have stated their core philosophy (Catholic Education Service, 2014:2-3). Inevitably, yet interestingly, each aspect is as rich in what is *not* stated as what is and this questioning was, for this Headteacher-Researcher, a direct consequence of his research.

**The Search for Excellence:** *Christians are called to fulfil their potential and strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives. Catholic education therefore strives to offer students every opportunity to develop their talents to the full through their academic work, spiritual worship and extracurricular activities.*

What this does not include is instructive: how is such excellence to be assessed and to what metric? In the standard form of assessment located within the apparatus of education (Foucault, 1978:86), does not its reflective practice conveniently constitute the object of assessment consonant with the image formed in any mirroring of such practice? And by whom? Also where is the balance to be struck

between the *subjective* experience of 'excellence' and its *objective* validation? Further, does not this question succumb both student and the teacher to a binary separation along with the violence of objectivity in constituting itself as a unitary identity and so, in effect excluding the other at play in such identity?

**The Uniqueness of the Individual:** *Within Catholic schools and colleges, each individual is seen as made in God's image and loved by Him.<sup>59</sup> All students are valued and respected as individuals so that they may be helped to fulfil their unique role in creation. It is important therefore that we provide high quality pastoral care<sup>60</sup> throughout our schools and colleges in order to support the individual needs of each student.*

Quite clearly such uniqueness is no longer reserved for the Catholic child, but is extended to all who are subject to the 'Catholic educational experience'. *Inter alia*, what is not stated is the specifically Catholic-Christian notion of 'respect' at work which, emanating as it does from Catholic social teaching<sup>61</sup>, is in danger of being

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<sup>59</sup> Agamben's insight into the unconditionality of such a love as tantamount to a challenge to God's other classical attribute, 'omnipotence', is striking: 'Creation -or existence- is not the victorious struggle of a power to be against a power to not-be; it is rather the impotence of God with respect to his own impotence, his allowing -being able to not not-be- a contingency to be. Or rather: It is the birth in God of love' (Agamben, 1993: VII).

<sup>60</sup> 'Pastoral care', in its composite formulation as a term of art (duty of care, (Christian?) love, varying post-Enlightenment notions of rights and respect, Victorian educational notions of propriety together with quasi-parental attributes constitutes a metaphysical exigency to which this Headteacher-Researcher is fully thrown.

<sup>61</sup> For example, see Pope Leo XIII (1891:para.20) *Rerum Novarum* (*Rights and Duties of Capital Labour*) Vatican: Vatican Archive: 'but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character' Here it is not the 'rights' which command respect but the Christ-in-the-other. In other words respect is simply the right response to encountering Christ (Leo XIII, 1891). It is not 'earnt' (by, for example,

understated as, perhaps, 'mindful of the rights of others'. Also, the dynamic of individualism and interdependence are not explored. We will see below that 'respect' must be set in the context of (Christian) dignity to understand properly its use in this context.

**The Education of the Whole Person:** *Catholic education is based on the belief that the human and the divine are inseparable. In Catholic schools and colleges, management, organisation, academic and pastoral work, prayer and worship, all aim to prepare young people for their life as Christians in the community.*

Within the apparatus of education it remains attractive to hold to the simulacra of wholeness – imagining that every dimension of context may be fulfilled. For Derrida, however, identities are inhabited by a 'ghostliness that renders all totalization, fulfilment, plenitude impossible' (Derrida, 1988a: 116). Even holding to the notion of personhood as intended by the Bishops, their statement does not indicate is the relative weighting to be given to each aspect of the formation of the whole person, especially when weighting (resourcing?) must be 'justified' in terms of measurable outcomes within the assessment regime (and see previous comments re assessment) to which the English Catholic school is subject. A secondary limitation is the word *community*. Is there a binary? – the Christian *and then* the community? Or is this a *Christian community*? Finally, the word 'aims' seems to be doing much 'heavy lifting'. For example, if the administration function in the English Catholic school has an 'aim' of prepar(ing) *young people for their life as Christians in the community*, is this

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time-served, citizenship or place in a hierarchy) or predicated on *rights* language – it exists as a function of the encounter with Christ-in-the-other.

a futural statement of intent,? How is it manifest? If an ideal, has it any basis in experience?

**The Education of All:** *The belief in the value of each individual leads Catholic schools and colleges to have the duty to care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged. Service to those who are amongst the most disadvantaged in our society has always been central to the mission of Catholic education.* Here the statement runs up against the schools' admissions criteria: those stipulations which ultimately decide who qualifies or does not qualify for admission and which families are most adept/resourced to 'play' the system. The exercise of sovereign power to include and exclude (Schmitt, 1985: xlv) remains a problematic counterpoint to the core proposition, as exemplified in a neighbouring school to that of this author where, reflecting the various claims to sovereignty at play, the parents themselves wished to prevent 'non-Catholics' from being admitted and 'diluting' the school's 'Catholicity' (Butt, 2011).

**Moral Principles.** *Catholic education aims to offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on the Christian virtues. In religious education in particular, the Church aims to transmit to them the Catholic faith. Both through religious education and in the general life of the school, young people are prepared to serve as witnesses to moral and spiritual values in the wider world.*



The first observation will await the discussion of Lonergan's insight, specifically the shortcomings associated with a stratified school model where 'religious education' or moral thinking is one 'subject' among others. Suffice to say, unless the study of each and every subject is inextricably bound up with the affective, the spiritual, the ethical, then there lies a gaping hole at the heart of what is deemed to constitute education. For the purposes of this stage of the response, however, the lack of explanation of what Christian virtues *are*<sup>62</sup> is telling, in particular the extent to which, in the Christian tradition, they come from on-going practice, not moments (objects of consciousness) in intellectual or moral insight or 'lessons' – religious or otherwise.

Virtue, in the Catholic tradition, is a habitual (therefore on going, subject to practice and predicated on interdependence, not individualism) and a firm disposition to do good (1833).<sup>63</sup> 'The human virtues are stable dispositions of the intellect and the will that govern our acts, order our passions, and guide our conduct in accordance with reason and faith. They can be grouped around the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance' (1834). The Catechism goes on: (1835) Prudence disposes the practical reason to discern, in every circumstance, our true good and to choose the right means for achieving it (1836). Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and neighbour their due (1837). Fortitude ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good and (1838)

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<sup>62</sup> There is much discussion in Catholic teaching as to the nature of Virtues (see 1803-1832, Catechism of the Catholic Church).

<sup>63</sup> The following section references are taken from the Catechism (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1995).

Temperance moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods. (1839) The moral virtues grow through education, deliberate acts, and perseverance (Catechism, 1995) in struggle. Divine grace purifies and elevates them.

None of this is developed in the Bishop's advice, presenting the danger of virtue being construed as right versus wrong, perpetuating a simplistic world-view instead of exploring a rich seam. Notwithstanding one's acceptance of the theism within the above exposition, what is clear is that virtues, therefore, are seen as evolving and inextricably linked to the person developing virtue. This is not easily 'centred' as the binary 'right versus wrong'; neither is virtue an object of consciousness or some separate (Cartesian) entity to the person developing such dispositions.<sup>64</sup> It owes far more to the idea of, in Derridean terms, an event (section 6, below) requiring of the individual exercising, or developing such virtues, a sense of 'mattering' – to herself, to her God and *the other* – which is (see above) itself the basis of authenticity in this thesis. Further, the asymmetric yet profoundly human development of virtue-as-character offers the *aporia* of student development that can be judged good and bad across a wide range of dispositions. The 'good-bad' child is a far better, if less convenient, descriptor.

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<sup>64</sup> Disposition, based on *disponere* (the arrangement or ordering) in the context of virtues *which are learnt* are no mere objects of consciousness but reflect Derrida's quasi-definition of *event rather well: Event as 'rupture' and 'redoubling.'* But of what? 'The appearance of a new structure, of an original system, always comes about--and this is the very condition of its structural specificity--by a rupture with its past, its origin, and its cause' Derrida's lecture (Natoli, Hutcheon 1993:239).

This section has critically reflected on the limitations of the Bishops' summary of the philosophy of English Catholic education. In its use of language – whole person, education for all – it appears to borrow from a dominant utilitarian register. The young person is being *done to* in this language -however generously – and this alerted this Headteacher-Researcher of the importance of identifying the locus of authenticity in English Catholic education with the young person as against the apparatus. This suggests the need for a virtues-based approach to the 'moral principles' element in the Bishops' advice. Once again, the research questions as to authenticity and the *aporia* were to the fore.

### 3.2 Contemporary English Catholic Educational philosophy: fissures through cultural shift and the limitations of practice

Post Vatican II discourse reflected a major shift in the Catholic approach to the modern world. For Bernard Lonergan this represented a crisis of culture. What he termed classical culture had operated in the pre-Vatican II Church but had been superseded (Lonergan, 1971:xi; Lonergan, 1967). For Lonergan classical culture had been normative and so regarded its efforts to control meaning to be exclusively valid. Therefore within this the education system had been normative wherever one was being educated (Dupuis and Gordon, 2010). With the onset of viewing culture empirically, the criteria for educational normativity were no longer taken from the classical ideas and so the classical curriculum was no longer seen to be normative for all places and times. The human could no longer be derived from one particular culture (Gelpi, 1997:50-72; Noddings, 2016).

Locating the authentic Catholic school in the substantive 'Catholicity' of the school itself, predicated on the binary of *sacred* and *secular* – a view explicitly eschewed in this thesis – has led to trenchant criticism of the modern English Catholic school to the extent of constantly leading to introspection and crises of confidence. For example, the contemporary Catholic school is seen, particularly by Arthur (1995:227-228) as dualistic or pluralistic as against holistic. As holistic, Catholic teachers and staff predominate and provide a specifically Catholic ethos. As dualistic it remains a single institution, which conducts two separate activities within itself: secular and sacred. In addition there are ever increasing pluralistic settings where teachers and students of other denominations and faiths form an ever-larger segment of the school population. As a result of this change in the nature of Catholic schooling at all levels Arthur (ibid: 245-246) contends there is no agreement on the necessary means to achieving the objectives of Catholic education. Further he and Grace (Grace, 2002:12; Grace, 2009:907-933) see a conspicuous lack of reflection on the goals that underpin the Catholic school system.

In this they are right; there has been a lack of reflection in this area. However, their views are, in the language of this thesis, thinking *along the grain of* the tradition: Holistic – good; pluralistic – perhaps less so. What is lacking here is an equal place in the loci of authenticity for the existential context of the student. In terms of research question one, where is the unremitting focus on authenticity *qua* mattering which gives equal validity to the context of those taught as to what – and how – is taught?

While in the practice of the Catholic Headteacher the necessity for goals is self-evident, the danger is equally so. To the extent that a range of success criteria can or *should* be evolved to indicate when students have ‘crossed the line’: academic, social, ‘spiritual’ (by what metric?), the inevitable consequence is that systems are more and more configured for outcomes expressed as objects of consciousness (metrics) and, the idea of engendering a quest for authenticity understood as a school experience based on *matter*ing – in both the school system, leadership and the students themselves – becomes less and less likely. What matters is what is measurable – the sovereign metric- and a *focus on the individual* in the (Catholic) school can so easily slide into a focus on the individual’s likelihood or otherwise to hit that metric. But this is not all: Why expend energy developing a disposition for justice, when ‘bad behaviour’ can be measured by the proxies of exclusion from school (required by Government) (Department for Education, 2010)) or ‘recorded incidents’ (required by Ofsted) (Ofsted, 2014)? The point here is not to suggest an idealistic vision of the otherness of all Catholic schools but, at least, to suggest the ease with which the Bishop’s call for excellence (including educational attainment) and educating the whole person (including discipline) can collapse into the sovereignty of the metric: a metric so readily able to propose being as presence in the manner with which Derrida (below) takes issue.

This section, therefore, has suggested that reflection *along the grain* of English Catholic educational thinking is necessary but not sufficient for strengthening the possibility of authenticity. Thinking *across the grain* will, inevitably, be more challenging as it welcomes the notion of pluralism, which Arthur (see above) sees as not part of a holistic educational programme. Indeed, in dialoguing with ‘the world’

the *aporia* will be evermore to the fore as the interplay of individuals with events themselves affected by those tectonic plates – those unseen, powerful and sometimes violent -forces – becomes evident.

### 3.3 The contribution of Bernard Lonergan's 'turn to the subject' to the questions at hand

Lonergan's analysis of the philosophy of education within the Catholic narrative holds there is a conflict between a Neo-Scholastic worldview that holds to immutable truths (Lonergan, 2004) with modern scientific or historical research (McCool, 1993:327). The argument goes that if the Catholic philosophy of education is to provide a vision for the future it must be closer to practice:

'... insofar as one attends merely to concepts one can think of universals being applied to particulars: the universals would be the philosophy and the particulars to which they are applied. But you have to think of understanding, insight, the ground of conception. This understanding arises from sensible data. If we think in this way we will see quite a different relation between intelligence and sensible data. Intelligence, understanding as insight, as the ground of conception, has quite a different relationship with the particular and the concrete from the relationship found in the abstract concepts 'the universal' and 'the particular'. There are, then, at least two ways of having a theoretical discipline connected with particulars: one through insight into phantasm, the other through the subsumption of particulars under universals' (Lonergan, 1993:20).

Lonergan, writing in the 1950s and 1960s, thus argues that the older approach of Catholic education, where theory as subsumption of particulars under universals operated, is unsatisfactory because of its distance from a modern understanding of

learning (Sullivan, 2001:9,40; Dupuis and Nordberg, 1964: 95). A new, more dynamic approach is required if education is to prepare the individual for a changing, not a timeless, world. Such an approach should focus on the developing person and his or her levels of consciousness – by no means a mainstream view at the time of writing. In this sense, Lonergan’s mid-twentieth century identification of the person (the student) as the locus of authenticity within the apparatus is the first reason his work rendered itself relevant to this Headteacher-Researcher.

The second reason is concerned with his idea of the subject. Lonergan saw historicity as dethroning speculative intellect in favour of an empirically based philosophy (Lonergan, 1974:236). The existential subject is constituted by data of both sense and consciousness. Lonergan’s notion of ideas and concepts must be verified in his or her own experience or reflection (Gallagher, 2010:66). A consequence of this turn to the subject is that academic questions are no longer abstract and reified but become the kinds of question, which lie at the heart of religion (Wright, 2004: 173). This turn to the subject forms the basis of the new approach to the Catholic philosophy of education where one becomes aware of oneself operating; closely identified with that the view of authenticity being developed in this thesis (Lonergan, 1971:9). This represents Lonergan’s second area of significance for two reasons.

First, he is arguing that, within a Catholic understanding of the person, all academic discourse, to the extent that it ‘touches’ the individual (whose subjectivity, including as an ethical decision maker, Lonergan has affirmed) is part of that ‘religious’ education. This was an important insight, not least in this Headteacher-

Researcher's desire to seek authenticity-as-mattering (research question one) where *all* academic discourse – all the curriculum- should be seen as a 'religious' engagement with culture. The topic, then, does not determine the religious content and importance – it is the 'subject', the student who, properly formed, engages with the subject in a spirit of inquiry. Second, this affirms the individual-as-mattering: their insight is not inferior to the corpus of material; their insight in their context is both validated and sanctified. But this is not to suggest that any ill thought through conclusion is thus 'validated and sanctified' – there is a way of progressing, which – crucially – can be formed in that (young) person.

Lonergan's turn to the subject finds clear expression in his philosophical synthesis, *Insight*, first published in 1956. The explicit aim of *Insight* is to foster the reader's personal 'self-appropriation' of the cognitive operations that lead to knowledge. Similar to Kant, Lonergan stresses the active role of the knowing subject, and he contrasts this approach with 'naïve realist' epistemologies that conceive knowledge as a passive contact with real objects that exist 'already out there now.' Unlike Kant, however, Lonergan (in *Method*) insists we can know the world itself (Lonergan, 1971: 35). But *how* we know reality has a structure that involves human subjectivity. The specifically human mode of knowledge appears in the core structures of inquiry, whose stages of experience, understanding and judgment constitute the underlying strata of knowledge. More precisely, human knowledge is constituted by *judgments* whose content correctly asserts the invulnerability (to further questions) of a determinate *understanding of experience*, that is, a grasp of the intelligibility immanent in experience. Thus Lonergan can assert that 'genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity' (Lonergan, 1971: 292). Behind this



lies a distinction between the meaning and ‘criterion’ of truth. The common meaning of truth is to state ‘what is or is not so’ independently of the subject. But the criterion that governs our efforts to arrive at truth, for Lonergan as a transcendental Thomist, lies in the authenticity of the subject (ibid: 37). For the authentic subject is precisely the one who remains faithful to the ‘immanent dynamism’ of inquiry that takes one beyond oneself, that is, beyond fantasy to careful attention to experience; from experience to intelligent ways of understanding that experience; from intelligent understanding to critical testing of one’s understanding in light of objections, further questions, and alternative views; from critical testing to reasonable judgments, in which one asserts one’s understanding as correct. In terms of the view of authenticity developing in this thesis, Lonergan – for all his mid-twentieth century cognitive mechanism – is positing the absolute centrality of the authentic person as engaged, self-assured, and authoritative.

This affirmation of the critical faculty of the engaged learner stands in stark relief to the image either of ‘empty vessel’ or as relatively subservient ‘learner’ whose job is to reach a government metric and increasingly reminded this Headteacher-Researcher both of the possibility, and the threats to achieving wisdom in education. In addition, this affirmation of the context of learning: the learner (subject) and the ‘material’ equally responsible for the possibility of learning – appeared to this Headteacher-Researcher a deeply affirming and existentially located approach. Though not spoken of, this also spoke to the efficacy of the *aporia* that will follow later in this thesis. If learning is now a function of the person dynamically engaged with the material then the *cul-de-sac* in learning, or decision making of any sort, represents not a lost cause but rather the possibility of a greater insight. The

‘material’ is no longer the ‘keeper of the secret solution’ but is as likely to be the keeper of many non-solutions too.

The critical, reflective attitude, which is prepared to subvert and challenge where justice requires it is a far cry from passive recipient of knowledge. Just as was the case with virtue, this understanding is predicated with ‘character’ – the multiplicity of interdependencies, learnt experiences, mistakes, loss, love and regret which inform rich judgement. No longer are facts objects of consciousness, but instead they tumble and rupture together with the moral and affective substrata, rendering them worthy of ‘mattering’. However far removed is Lonergan to Derrida, there appeared to this Headteacher-Researcher a common insight expressed differently. Taking ‘learning’ Lonergan’s programme does not focus on material to be absorbed ‘objectively’ and dispassionately by a passive recipient but rather a multi-faceted engagement of the ‘subject’ with material, in (ethical) judgement. For Derrida, though he would roundly eschew such ‘subject’-‘object’ language, it is likely (though there is little evidence he spoke to this directly) that he would see the learning process as event: as *événement* – something coming and yet to come.

Returning to Lonergan he called the process of self-awareness ‘conversion’: to convey a sense of profound change (Gregson, 1988:16-35). In Lonergan’s writings, it assumes both a secular and religious usage and assumes a major role in *Method of Theology*. Intellectual ‘conversion’ is not, however, exclusively subjectivist. When we say that something is, we mean its reality does not depend on our cognitional activity. If a person identifies in him or herself the pattern of cognitional operations needed to

make any affirmation, he or she reaches a position that, for Lonergan, cannot be revised without engaging in contradiction (Lonergan, 1992; Gelpi, 1994: 111-117).

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan speaks not only of the intellectual but also the moral and religious conversion. Conversion is a mode of self-transcendence, which happens first when, as children, we move from a limited view of the world to a wider view through a restlessness of heart (Lonergan, 1957:319-320; 9). Insofar as we allow this inner drive – eros of mind – to unfold, we attain levels of self-transcendence. Empowering this fundamental human restlessness to gain momentum can be seen as a key to education (Noddings, 2006:290; Buckley, 1998:160)<sup>65</sup>. In deconstructive terms this opens up space and spacing outside the dominant homogeneous ethic/economy/pedagogy of education found in the apparatus of education. It constitutes part of our challenge as children to distinguish ourselves from the immediate world (Lonergan, 2004:321-322). Lonergan's expression here finds its deconstructive counterpart reading precisely in terms of opening space where 'we ourselves' do not ever fit within the metaphysical exigencies constituted by those assessments of 'measures' – however constituted – of aspects of our performativity as individuals.

For Lonergan the idea of self-transcendence underpins ethics, again finding its deconstructive analogue in the opening up of the heterogeneous ethic, which is unconditional and incalculable. For Lonergan if we reach intellectual self-transcendence through intellectual conversion, with its high achievement, we will be

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prodded to further discontent as we see millions starving while we are satisfied. We will be challenged to move beyond a situation where educated people can participate in torture, abuse and even extermination (Lonergan, 2004:322-323). Here is the still radical, still attractive insight of Lonergan that ethical development is never a subset of education but is intrinsic to it. Therein lies learning as virtue. Further, for Lonergan this self-transcendence is precisely what leads us to wonder at the intelligibility of the order of which we are a part, confronting us with a sense of mystery and leading us, potentially, with an engagement with the Divine – or at least the possibility of the Divine (Lonergan, 2004: 327; Lonergan 1971: 19-20; 117-8). For Lonergan, writing in the 1960s (Catholic) education needs to be more than producing professional competence. Intellectual development from below upwards, however necessary, is insufficient (Lonergan, 1988:108-113). A focus on self-transcendence as an ideal underpins the kind of education identified by Lonergan as from ‘below upwards’ insofar as it emphasises intellectual development. However it strives to promote conversion – intellectual, moral, religious – offering what could be called an ‘above downwards’ model too.

The attraction of this language in this Headteacher-Researcher’s work is self-evident. It draws together the sensible, intellectual and ethical in an affirmation of the ‘mattering’ of the (in this case) student; without the student, the material hardly matters. The ‘material’ is shot through with ethical content, is interrelated to other ‘material’ (therefore showing the limitations of schools learning ‘subjects’ in silos) and, most importantly, increased self-awareness (as ‘mattering’?) is seen as conversion – deliberately fusing together the ‘secular’ with the religious.

Within the practice of this Headteacher, it is precisely those sticky moments when the young must move from the known register to the other, that awe and wonder, are combined with deep learning to yield the possibility of wisdom. Rather like the accomplished tenor's *passaggio*, as, striving to hit a top C he moves from the chest voice into the head voice, Lonergan's transcendental language of conversion strikes a melodic chord with the experience of the young enraptured in learning *because it matters to them*. The effect of this insight on practice was practical. As an example, each 'subject' would deliver an aspect of what was traditionally the preserve of religious education. Physics, for example, included in its teaching reference to how the material has been used by some to provide a religious discourse on the cosmological argument for the existence of God. Biology, too, referenced the argument for and from design. In neither case was this seen as an attempt to 'teach creationism' – the arguments were foregrounded and balanced - but, rather, to alert students to the place of intellectual inquiry as the basis for both non-religious and religious discourse.

Notwithstanding the contribution of Lonergan's insights, a weakness of Lonergan's writings at this point may well be the 'given-ness' of the term 'education' that any deconstructive reading alerts one to. In other words, Lonergan's 'education' seems to enjoy an almost metaphysical untouchable-ness. Yet surely, in the language of deconstruction, education can be 'deployed' in different ways and, as a State instrument, is subject to the machinery of assessment?

On the one hand, within the apparatus of education (Foucault, 1978:86) constituted in the language of instrumental metaphysical exigencies – a language that

purports to constitute a homogeneous ethic with its conditionality delimiting the possibilities and constitution the grounds for the calculation of what happens in the performativity of practice: On the other hand,<sup>66</sup> that suggested above constituting a heterogeneous economy/ethic/pedagogy of practice. While a retrofitting of Lonergan within a post-structuralist reading would be impossible, it is his commitment to self-transcendence that suggests to this author at least that he was alive to the limitations of the first 'reading' of education albeit in his own terms.

To summarise, Lonergan's insight as applied to education at a time when education in general was essentially didactic and Catholic education still owed much to Thomism was to recognise the critical importance of the individual's engagement. Learning was a co-construction of knowledge reflecting the material and the learner and therefore spoke squarely to the promotion of authenticity as mattering at the heart of research question one. Lonergan's education was ethical – because to learn is an ethical programme – and eschewed the compartmentalisation that continues to dog the (essentially Victorian) school curriculum models, geared, as they are to satisfy the performatives of the State's assessment metric.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> There is an evident simplification expressed by this binary.

<sup>67</sup> For a scholarly example of the extent to which preparing for the test can harm deep learning see for example, (Hout and Elliott, 2011) 'Test-based incentive programs, as designed and implemented in the programs that have been carefully studied, have not increased student achievement enough to bring the United States close to the levels of the highest achieving countries'. 'Given the broad outcomes that are the goals for education, the necessarily limited coverage of tests, and the ways that indicators constructed from tests focus on particular types of information, it is prudent to consider designing an incentive system that uses multiple performance measures' *ibid*: 3.

This issue of satisfying the performativity of the 'metric' of assessment, the demands of the Church, of parents and the wider legislative and policy environment touches on the second part of this Headteacher-Researcher's autoethnographic identity as mentioned above. Specifically one's awareness of being caught in the violence of the interplaying tectonic plates of dominant narratives.

As a process of co-construction (author's expression, not Lonergan's) this approach was not looking to extract a rabbit from a hat – education as the disclosure of the hidden solution – but would, in its engagement with the rich subjectivity of the individual, be as likely to throw up the impasse as it would the 'solution'. Therefore this speaks to the intellectually and ethically rich possibility of the *aporia* at the heart of research question two. Finally, as has been touched on above, this approach contributed to this Headteacher-Researcher's reimagination of the school curriculum to reduce the power of subject silos – hermetically sealed subject areas -, co-extensive with the building of a new school.

If the Catholic Headteacher wishes to engender a culture of authenticity understood as the *mattering* of the student (to themselves, to others, experienced from others) in the educational programme on offer – and if it is accepted that, for many young people, the *not-mattering*, the profound alienation presents a damaging blight on themselves individually and societally - it seems appropriate to understand the Catholic Christian notion of dignity (*dignus*, worthiness) as precursor, and outcome, of the possibility of authenticity.

### 3.4 Dignity in the Catholic tradition as precursor to authenticity understood as 'mattering'

#### 3.4.1 Scriptural revelation

Christian dignity centres on relationships, intrinsic worth and the belief that the individual (pupil) is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-31). This advocates the centrality of love: for the orphan, the widow or the stranger with, to borrow Derrida's terms, (see below) - an unrestricted hospitality (Deuteronomy 10:17-19).<sup>68</sup> God, as omniscient, is seen to know us each perfectly (Psalms 139:13-16) whether rich or poor (Proverbs 22:2), therefore, knowledge of the other whose value is not lessened by their material lacking. Christ commends in particular those who respect the dignity of the other – of those harder to love, such as the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) or the Samaritan woman whose gender, form of life and ethnicity rendered her deeply objectionable to established (Jewish) society (John 4:1-42). This dignity, then, is a tripartite function of the person receiving it, the person giving it, and God. In this sense it differs from a rights understood as principles of freedom (*from*) or entitlement. Thus, dignity contributes to authenticity-as-mattering by requiring in the one offering it a condition of understanding – of care- as against a fear of the other's Right.

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<sup>68</sup> While Old Testament accounts of God striking down his enemies may challenge the view of God as unrestricted hospitality, the New Testament reading appears to offer a strong endorsement. The Bible tells us that 'God is Love' (1 John 4:8). Later, *'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'*. The offering of Christ's sacrifice is also striking: Romans 5:8, *'But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'*



Theologically, the Christian life can be summed up as a call to love God and love neighbour (Romans 12:9-18) which is possible as the human person is (already) holy (1 Corinthians: 3-16) and love is from God (1 John 4: 7-12) In terms of hospitality, we are all one in Christ (Galatians 3: 27-28) with a special mandate to honour the poor (James 2: 1-8). Such dignity in scriptural terms, then, is absolute, experienced *in communio* and is transcendental in finding its source in God who loved us first (1 John 4:19).

This theological language speaks directly to authenticity-as mattering, that 'authorship' or entitlement which is not a function of rights or coercive power but of being in a relationship. In terms of this Headteacher-Researcher's professional practice within research question three, the implications have been to promote an absolute focus on the openness of the young people to the neighbour. The 'Justice and Peace' group helping the local elderly, the students working with sick and disabled on pilgrimages to Lourdes, the exchanges with schools across the globe, the 'Advanced Citizenship' programme involving presentations by Ambassadors and Business Leaders alike. All focussed on opening the student to the existence of the other, to their similarities as human beings.

### 3.4.2 The teaching of the Catholic Church with regards to Dignity

Within the Catholic worldview, teaching is a function both of scripture and the teaching of the Church. Placing the Church's teaching in italics, this section will then (non italicised) begin to pose questions to intentionally provoke questioning of the

possibility of ‘delivering’ an authentic Catholic education, understood as the ‘mattering’ of the individual and promotion of their dignity. The questions will be revisited in terms of *aporia* below.

\_\_\_\_\_ *The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner (Benedict XVI, 2009:32). Human persons are willed by God; they are imprinted with God’s image. Their dignity does not come from the work they do, but from the persons they are (John Paul II, 1991:11).*

This has a direct bearing on the danger of the Catholic Headteacher conflating qualifications with self-worth, especially in the minds of the young, and especially given the dominance of academic outcomes in the metric of school success or failure (Department for Education, 2015). In addition, the Church’s use of ‘human person’ alerts us to the non-triviality of how one identifies – or locates -the human: as person, individual, ‘being’, ‘being among beings’:

‘... the identity, ‘individual’, falls considerably short of being an effective synonym for human being; the former, as an isolated discrete and completely dead representation of a completely isolated unit, will always be open to calculation as the subject and object of any economy of practice. The latter vital figure in life, in always already ‘being-with’ others and the Other at play in any identity, in living in its ever-unfolding temporal world it sometimes opens space for exceeding any such economy. In so doing the possibilities opened by human beings certainly remain beyond the calculus of any statistically based formulation’ (Flint, Palmer, Barnard, 2016:5).

The Church’s document continues.

The dignity of the human person, realised in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life<sup>69</sup> must be measured. All human beings, therefore, are ends to be served by the institutions that make up the economy, not means to be exploited for more narrowly defined goals.<sup>70</sup> Human personhood must be respected with a reverence that is religious. When we deal with each other, we should do so with the sense of awe that arises in the presence of something holy and sacred. For that is what human beings are: we are created in the image of God' (U.S. Bishops' Conference, 1986 Chpt. 2, 28).

Again, as the Headteacher is caught up with the performatives of academic 'progress', the question remains to what extent the Headteacher 'chases the metric' and, equally, the extent to which the metric contributes to the human flourishing (or otherwise) of the individual. Is not the object of 'progress' constituted within reflective practice within the apparatus not a product of the mirror of reflection on practice as against the beings hidden on the other side of the mirror' (Flint, Palmer, Barnard, 2016)? The *aporia* within securing the optimal global outcome for the class set against each individual is palpable in practice: the student whose behaviour becomes 'untenable' with *given resources* within the law-like inscription of the school *behaviour code* may well be *excluded* (formally known as expulsion) permanently. There is no escaping a utilitarian element to school leadership and its existence as *aporia*, helped this Headteacher-Researcher recognise the limitations of possibilities which, however frustrating, allows a fresh appraisal and re-imagination. Again:

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<sup>69</sup> The Church does not at this point explain its reading of what is constituted in the metaphysical exigency of the term 'economic life'.

<sup>70</sup> Exploitation such as that expounded by Macintyre in *After Virtue*, diagnosing contemporary society as a 'culture of emotivism' in which moral language is used pragmatically to manipulate attitudes, choices, and decisions, so that contemporary moral culture is a theatre of illusions in which objective moral rhetoric masks arbitrary choices (Macintyre, 1993: Chpt 1).

*Every individual (see note on individual-human-being-beings above), precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church. Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart; it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God, and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature' (John Paul II, 1995:3).*

The difficulty with this is how the Catholic school – as an ecclesial community under the direction (generally) of the Bishop, engages with those students who are hard to reach and for whom the Catholic school is their only interface with 'Church'. In addition, those students 'excluded' by admissions criteria for fear of 'de-Catholicising' the school remain equally challenging in this regard. In other words, Derrida's challenge of absolute hospitality remains a powerful counterpoint in terms of the limits of authenticity-as-mattering. The possibility of *dis*-entitlement within Church educational systems presents the sovereign limits of hospitality and a challenge to transcendental dignity as postulated above in revealed theology.

*As explicitly formulated, the precept 'You shall not kill' is strongly negative: it indicates the extreme limit that can never be exceeded. Implicitly, however, it encourages a positive attitude of absolute respect for life; it leads to the promotion of life and to progress along the way of a love that gives, receives and serves (ibid: 54). This teaching rests on one basic principle: individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution – individuals are never the means to an end, neither are institutions to exercise coercive powers. That is necessarily so, for men and women are by nature social beings (John XXIII, 1961:219).*

The challenge for the Catholic Headteacher is how to believe this of the assessment regime facing the students in his care, where the organization is geared around teaching to the test as a proxy for 'success'. In addition, to what extent can an educational programme prepare its young without preparing them for the experience

of being routinely the 'means to an end'? Alasdair MacIntyre says that 'the key to the social content of emotivism...is the fact that emotivism entails the obliteration of any genuine distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations' (MacIntyre, 1993:23). Each regards the other members of society as means to ends of our own. Because one cannot persuade people, and because one cannot have any common good that is not purely temporary and based on our separate individual desires, there is no kind of social relationship left except for each trying to use the others to achieve one's own selfish goals. Even for someone who did not want to live this way, the fact that others would be trying to gain power over them in order to manipulate them would mean that they would still need to seek as much power as they could simply to avoid being manipulated. It would also mean that each of them would need to manipulate others in ways that would make it more difficult or impossible for them to be manipulated in return.

The challenge to form the young to be as 'wise as serpents and as harmless as doves' (Matthew 10:16), while not necessarily an *aporia*, remains a fundamental existential challenge for the Catholic educator. Within the practice of this Headteacher-Researcher there appears to be interplay of, on the one hand a (childlike) trust and openness manifest in a pursuit of justice (social, ecological, against poverty). On the other, as children growing up post *The Selfish Gene* (Dawkins, 1976:93) there appears to be a clear and understandable questioning of the possibility of altruism<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> This includes the suggestion that religious young people may report even less altruistic tendencies than the mean, though may be linked to where they locate themselves on the continuum between 'vengeful' versus 'forgiving' deity. This research continues the tradition of (critically)

In terms of the autoethnographic approach adopted, this Headteacher-Researcher has become increasingly aware of the trade off between dignity and expediency within the performative (emotivist?) culture dominating the English Catholic educational landscape. However, this is not merely someone else's problem – in reflecting on one's own management of 'performance' and 'capability' (and the need to 'move on' poor teachers) throughout the time of writing, here too dignity can be an afterthought for the (effective and lauded) 'task oriented' Headteacher. The pursuit of authenticity-as-mattering will never be perfect.

*There exist also sinful inequalities that affect millions of men and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel: Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace' (Catechism, 1995:1938).*

The experience of dignity described here by Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI points to another reason for the promotion of dignity, namely, the de-centring of the person in favour of their engagement with the other: 'The 'decentring' of the person, triggering 'an on going exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God' (Pope Paul VI, 1965:38). Such a spiritual *deconstruction* is an important reminder of the Christian notion of breaking down – de-centring, moving from the calculable to the non-calculable – for the possibility of justice-as-authentic

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using 'religious' as a collective rather than entertaining the possibility that there can be good and bad religion (Decety, 2015).

(mattering)-personhood-in Christ. : ‘Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds’ (John 12:24).

This account of dignity understood within a Catholic context could, to secular readers, fall at the first hurdle: it presupposes the existence and active intervention of a God of love. However, this is to minimise it: its strength also lies in its unremitting focus on relationship, on love and on a belief that collaboration and co-operation are mutually beneficial. This analysis immediately transcends the ‘ownership’ of rights and validates a model of education – Catholic or otherwise-concerned with interdependence, care for the other (known or unknown) care for the poor and a belief that one’s own flourishing is inextricably tied in with one’s engagement with the other. The significance to the promotion of authenticity-as-mattering (research question one) is apparent. Also apparent beneath the surface is the importance of the *aporia*.

Though not an *aporia* in the formal sense, there appears to this Headteacher-Researcher to be at the very least a *quasi-aporia* experienced by the young in their discovery of wisdom. The *quasi-aporia* of the student working with the disabled person whose cheerfulness stands at odds with their disability. The *quasi-aporia* experienced on a school visit to a sub-Saharan partner school where one’s hosts’ generosity far outstrips their economic means. The *quasi-aporia* of the classmate forgiven for a grave injustice through a process of Restorative Justice.<sup>72</sup> It is not the

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<sup>72</sup> The approach is adopted in this Headteacher-Researcher’s school, whereby wrongdoing is addressed with reference to how it has damaged the

solution but the mysterious non-way, which is the source of the potentially life-changing moment. Whatever the student, once grown up, may intellectually *re-member*, it is the wonder of the mysterious non-way ('It makes no sense') which is formative to the child.

Clearly this can be criticised, as being not *really* aporetic – the poor person with the big heart or the wronged person who forgives are all instances that are recognisable. But recognisable only to those who have experienced them – to others, to the child who has perhaps not encountered love or generosity on this scale they are genuinely aporetic. Here, then, the *aporia* (research question two) and the pursuit of authenticity-through-meaning (research question one) begin to occupy the same space and, as has been described, have impacted in very practical terms the direction taken by this Headteacher-Researcher in his practice (research question three).

### 3.5 Tradition interrupted: Lieven Boeve

#### 3.5.1 Overview of Boeve's position

In the light of an autoethnographic approach which locates this Headteacher – Researcher in multiple identities including an identity as a convert to Roman

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relationship between the perpetrator and injured party and how this can be repaired. The so-called *encounter-reparative-transformative* model (Johnston, Van Ness, 2007:1). It contrasts with models predicated on punishment though does not preclude the imposition of a sanction entirely. In affirming the importance of reparation it is consistent with the promotion of authenticity-as-mattering and reflects the impact of such thinking on the development of this Headteacher-Researcher's new school.



Catholicism – with the corresponding zeal and desire for a teleo-messianic ‘happy ending’ associated with the convert <sup>73</sup>- it appeared important to approach the subject of this thesis using an approach which would challenge such hubris. Recognising in the grand narrative of Roman Catholicism the same tendency to distortion and a corresponding inauthenticity proper to any grand narrative, a different approach was needed. Having recognised at the individual student level the relationship between dignity, authenticity-as-mattering and the *aporia* the focus now turns to the macro level of the purpose of the authentic Catholic school. To this task comes the work of contemporary liberal Catholic theologian Lieven Boeve. Again, as with Lonergan this represents an application of his work to the field of Catholic education.

As a theologian writing within his native Flanders, Boeve (2003) speaks of a transmission of the Christian tradition that has been weakening in recent years leading not only to a fall in Church attendance, but also to the ‘de-traditionalising’ of the faith. ‘Traditional’ Christian culture is worn out, heightened by the chasm that has opened up between faith and culture. Rather than adopting a pessimistic or fatalistic stance, Boeve instead argues that every new context challenges the Christian tradition to re-contextualise its presentation of meaning and purpose in a cogent and credible fashion. Christians today do themselves a disservice when they withdraw into a world of absolute self-justification.

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<sup>73</sup> Reflected by St. Augustine’s account of his own all-consuming experience of conversion ‘You had pierced our hearts with the arrow of Your love, and our minds were pierced with the arrow of Your words’ (Augustine, 1984:144).

In the first part of the book Boeve briefly explains the value of tradition as a means of passing on to the next generation the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. He concludes, 'There is no Christian faith or Christian community outside the framework of the Christian tradition' (ibid: 20). Boeve criticizes two common attempts the contemporary church has used. In the pluralistic context of postmodernity some Christians have attempted to adopt an approach in which the claims of Christianity are seen in contrast to science and philosophy. Others have employed a modernizing approach that seeks points of context with the claims of modernity (ibid: 49). 'Both positions are at fault because they each adhere to only one single pole of the relationship with tradition' (ibid: 49). He proposes a method that he calls 'open narrative.' In this approach the Christian tradition 'is both conscious of its own historicity, contingency and particularity, and perceives of its own meaning and truth claims in relation to the claims of other narratives' (ibid: 61). In short this approach recognizes the continuity in the Christian tradition without rejecting the insights of science, philosophy, and other disciplines.

In the second part Boeve shows how the development of the Christian tradition occurred in the context of heresies and other deviations from orthodoxy. His claim that 'in the history of tradition there is not continuity without discontinuity' (ibid: 103) seems accurate. When he calls for dialogue with other views in order to clarify and articulate Christian truth, this points to the need to contextualize the truth of Christianity in contemporary cultures. But this is no facile relativism: rather again it points, in Derrida's terms - to Christian culture as event - as *événement* - something

in the past and as yet to come, rich in heterogeneity and the incalculable and not the sequential manifestation of being as presence. As Marder understands Derrida:

‘In keeping with Derrida's thinking of the event as the impossible arrival of something or someone who/that cannot be recognized as the *arrivant* she, or he, or it is, these confusions and cross-contaminations madden those who put their faith in the mechanisms of identification and recognition, the mechanisms whose inefficiency disseminates the exact time, place, and meaning of arrival’ (Marder, 2009:4).

For this Headteacher-Researcher, this has profound significance in terms of the place of the student in the Catholic school. In this Boeve-Derrida reading, not only is the student a *beneficiary* of a transcendent dignity within *the tradition* of Catholic theology (see above) but also, this dignity is further enhanced to the extent that *their presence in the school* directly leads to the unfolding of Catholic understanding understood as ever-unfolding and – at its creative cutting edge<sup>74</sup> – is incalculable and heterogeneous. The student transfigures tradition from a backward-focussed (solely retrospective) object of consciousness into a dynamic, reflexive space where, in its incalculability and heterogeneity, what it is to live as a Catholic and what it is to live life authentically are constantly played out. Authenticity-as-mattering is explicitly drawn out by recognising in the school community the ability to critique issues of concern through an informed Catholic hermeneutic predicated on dignity and the pursuit of justice. The extent to which the apparatus of this Headteacher-Researcher’s

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<sup>74</sup> Again this should not be confused with theological relativism. What is being described here is the all so human, and inevitably short-term, interface of actions in life which are, in their manifestation, clashing, creativity and violence, incalculable and heterogeneous, notwithstanding the theologian’s job to understand these actions in the long terms within doctrine and (if we follow Boeve) with respect to context.

school contributes or otherwise to this end is the extent to which it can be described as authentic or not.

In the third part Boeve provides his approach to recontextualizing the Christian tradition in a pluralistic postmodern world. 'Every context gives rise to new opportunities to recontextualise the Christian faith, in spite of the dangers that such a process must involve. Our so-called postmodern context is no less such an opportunity' (ibid: 162). As a theological category, recontextualisation implies that Christian faith and tradition are not only contained in a specific historico-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political context, but are also co-constituted by this context. For sure, faith cannot be reduced to context, nor can tradition to mere adaptation to the context. Nevertheless, there is an intrinsic bond between faith and tradition, on the one hand, and context, on the other. In both taking part in, and confronting itself with this changed context, Catholic communities – and this thesis suggests the Catholic school - may find new ways to express their faith, in fidelity to the tradition as well as to the context in which they are situated – balancing between continuity and discontinuity (akin to Derrida's eschewing of binaries (Derrida, 1981:xviii)). The concept of recontextualisation thus functions both descriptively and normatively. As a normative category, recontextualisation calls for a theological programme, in which the insight in the intrinsic link between faith and context inspires theologians to take the contextual challenges seriously, in order to come to a contemporary theological discourse which at the same time can claim theological validity and contextual plausibility.

The challenges of faith and context will undoubtedly include the *aporetic*. Propositional clashes, as they impact on individual students in fields such as sexual practice, the environment, the limitations of democracy (as Derrida speaks to, see below) or, for example, the payment of taxes, will be manifest as the personal interest comes up against the 'greater' good.

As for research question three, within the practice of this Headteacher-Researcher there was a very simple and practical implication in terms of the new school built between 2011 and 2015. Specifically, in the place of *Mission Statements* and *Vision* documents was, first, an annual student-led self-evaluation statement describing, *inter alia* how the school had changed (for the good) under *their* stewardship and, second, a simple statement of identity for *their* school *that* particular year which would tell prospective students and others exactly what the school was about. In this way the *what* is ordinarily represented as 'context' – their unique place in the history of the school – co-constituted the identity of the school together with (retrospective) tradition and established expectations. In addition, this 'Student Voice' was a key and defining feature<sup>75</sup> of ensuring the dignity of each student and member of staff was made manifest and their authenticity as *matter*ing – to themselves, to each other – was writ large.

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<sup>75</sup> Pope Paul VI (1965a: [8] 24) The role of the Catholic school leadership) 'is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith.'

Boeve's readings of Lyotard and others are evident and normative in his writing: 'Narratives all too easily forget the 'differend', the otherness appearing at the border of every identity constitution, both enabling and limiting it. And because of this forgetting, narratives often have victimized this otherness, and caused the many victims of history' (Hoskins, 2006:33). However, Boeve is not suggesting (anymore than was Derrida) 'death to the narrative': Narratives, like the poor of Matthew 26:11, are 'with you always'; they are part of our landscape. What Boeve finds problematic is the 'hegemonising tendencies- that which makes of narratives closed master narratives' (ibid: 33). For this Headteacher-Researcher seeking to understand the dynamics of the autoethnographic relationship in which he finds himself these narratives are expressed as the tectonic plates whose unseen and considerable forces impact all, especially the young in their vulnerability (to alienation).

For Boeve the marginalisation of the 'other' in master-narratives (capitalism, political established group-think, ideologies, gendered positions...) finds, in the Christian narrative, a constant refocusing on the 'other' in the 'otherness' of God. 'The Christian narrative bears witness to God who as the other of this narrative interrupts the course of the narrative where it tends to close in upon itself' (ibid: 33).

So in contrast to any mere 'correlation' between faith and its context, Boeve calls for a radical 'recontextualisation' of faith's context.<sup>76</sup> This means that, although

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<sup>76</sup> Analogous to Bernstein's view that '*pedagogic discourse is a recontextualizing principle*' (author's italics)... constructed by a recontextualizing principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order. In this sense, pedagogic discourse can never be identified with any of the discourses it has recontextualised' [Bernstein, 2000:33).

dialogue with the context can never be suspended, we must resist the correlationist longing 'for harmony and synthesis between tradition and context,' and instead foreground the Christian faith's own 'particularity, contextuality, narrativity, historicity, contingency, and otherness' (Boeve 2007:40). For Boeve, therefore, the fundamental datum for theological method is the fact that Christian faith is always one contingent possibility amidst a plurality of others. This confrontation of faith with plurality and otherness sets in motion the process of recontextualisation, which, of itself is both confessional (the leading on of the soul) – and pedagogical (the leading on of the intellect<sup>77</sup>). Faith is neither a (discontinuous) 'counter-culture' nor a (continuous) 'partner' of secularised culture – instead, it is the irreducibly singular *interruption*, in taking the cultural context that opens it anew towards the reality of God. This is to affirm precisely the inseparability of humanity and divinity as set out at the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>78</sup> For this author, this amounts to a cultural deconstruction analogous to, but not equivocal with, that postulated in Derrida's (see below) system.

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<sup>77</sup> Pedagogy, Greek παιδαγωγία (*paidagōgia*) from παιδαγωγός (*paidagōgos*), in which παῖς (*país*, genitive παιδός, *paídos*) means 'child' and ἄγω (*ágō*) means 'lead'; thus literally 'to lead the child' (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2015).

<sup>78</sup> 'Following the holy Fathers, we unanimously teach and confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, composed of rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father as to his divinity and consubstantial with us as to his humanity; "like us in all things but sin". He was begotten from the Father before all ages as to his divinity and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, was born as to his humanity of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. We confess that one and the same Christ, Lord, and only-begotten Son, is to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division or separation' (Catechism, 467).

In this mode, the Catholic school offers a theology understood as the reflexive expression of the critical consciousness of Christian faith – indeed is redefined as a ‘radical hermeneutics of God’s interrupting action in history<sup>79</sup>, continuing the hermeneutic labour Christians throughout history, in rereading Scripture and tradition in relation to their contexts, have done’ (ibid: 33): The (metaphysical) God, then, as remedy to the ‘bad’ metaphysics of dominant master narratives: The *pharmakon* (Derrida, 1981: 98) *par excellence*.

In challenging the autoethnographic self understanding as conservative, teleological in thinking and orthodox in practice, this work offered an upturning of the (stereo-) typical model of the ‘faith’ school as ‘conservative’ or the enemy of diversity (Gardner, Lawton, Cairns 2005:67) . It offers a theoretical perspective supportive of the experience of eleven years of practice. However, as one became more conscious of the ever-present auto-ethnographic slide into writing one’s own teleo-messianic self-justifying narrative, equally one became aware of the extent to which attempts to recontextualise in Boeve’s framework would come up against forces vis-a-tergo such as Diocesan, local and central Governmental and parental expectations. In so doing, the triple identity of Headteacher-Researcher-Employee came ever more to the fore bringing with it the inevitable limitations of what was possible within the expectations of the role of English maintained Catholic school Headteacher.

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<sup>79</sup> Boeve’s language provides a link to Derrida and Heidegger where radical hermeneutics places an emphasis on the reiteration and repetition of signs (Caputo, 1987:17).



Clearly Boeve's writing is not unproblematic. As a purported Christian world-view it is open to (*mis*-readings of) relativism, situation ethics and thoroughgoing, systematic, unorthodoxy. The latter, however, is a mistaken criticism for the reasons indicated above. What remains powerful in Boeve's writing is the extent to which it coheres with the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Parables such as the Woman at the Well (John 4:4-26), the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) appear to this school leader at least to represent both a form of radical hermeneutics (seeing differently) as well as the prevalence of the 'open narrative' (forgiveness, justice) over the closed narrative (retribution, the Law). Taking the Woman caught in Adultery, verse 8, there is a vivid example of a Boevian interruption of tradition: *I do not condemn you: go and sin no more*. The call on the woman to return to a coherence with the master narrative (of non-adultery) reflects the validity of the pole of *tradition*. The non-condemnation (as a means to authentically allow the woman to return to the tradition) represents the *interruption*. In Derridean terms, this is no mere datum of malfeasance followed by a datum of sanction (stoning to death) but is an event – of the interplay of law and justice in the incalculability of the narrative discourse.

The narratives of 'the other' – whether the other is the Christian school, the Fundamentalist, the cynic – 'matter': they are, within a Christian idiom, spaces through which grace can break forth, insights made and 'religious education' take place. Evangelisation, the interruption of tradition, must become centred as much on the experience of the young as it is on the agreed curriculum of the school leader. The ethos of the school – its Catholic identity – becomes a function of the interplay

between student encounter with the transcendent and that of the teacher and, in so doing there is a concomitant promotion of dignity as understood above.

At the same time, the core message must, for Boeve, go beyond benign guidance, good advice, or 'wisdom for life'. Boeve notes that the demythologising tendency to purge the Christian message of its apocalyptic dimensions 'introduce[s] a perception of time that makes it impossible in principle to authentically conceptualise the radicality of the Christian faith' (Boeve, 2007:188). If the school *really* places itself at the foot of the Christian cross, aligning itself to a truly eschatological and soteriological worldview, then its core purpose must never become 'at home' with (subsumed into?) the narratives of the day. Further, this placed the school leader as properly and intentionally *misaligned* with respect to the alignment of the state's understanding of 'School'. In interrupting tradition, there is surely a mandate to the young to be equipped for benign subversion – understood as being critically aware of, though not possessed by, the dominant ontotheologies to which they are, or may become 'subject'. This position does not owe its provenance to left wing Christian socialism or Liberation Theology, but rather has a core basis in revealed theology: 'Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves' (Matthew 10: 16). In the process, this presents an exciting and challenging new modality for the Catholic Headteacher, dispelling the binary of *Faith* versus *Culture*, *Catholic* education versus *Secular* Education, *Sacred* versus *Profane* and, instead both offering the opportunity – and the challenge to allow for a radical, all-persuasive Catholic anthropology to take hold of the Catholic school.

In the school run by this Headteacher-Researcher this has taken the form of two measures. In the first place a rewriting of the curriculum to render the (fundamentally fictitious) boundaries as porous as possible. Faith and reason are reflexively deployed in the science lesson, the mathematics lesson and the domain of physical education as students critically reflect on *why* they are learning *this* material. In the second place, the programme of Advanced Citizenship has sought to help place the student self-consciously within the key debates of the time employing an analysis built on the reflexively (rhizomatically – see below) intertwined .faith and reason.

Following Johann-Baptist Metz, Boeve observes that the relation between God and time is structured *apocalyptically*: ‘God interrupts time’ (ibid: 195). God is not part of the process of history, nor does God stand outside history. Rather, God is the *boundary* and *crisis* of history. Such a conception of time, Boeve argues, produces a ‘radical temporalisation’ of the world, with ‘a radical awareness of the irreducible seriousness of what occurs in the here and now’. History thus becomes real history, and the future becomes a real future that is always unknown, contingent and cannot be reduced to the engineered tomorrow in a mere ‘seamless continuation’ of progress, development or evolution (ibid: 197). The task of Christian theology is thus to submit to the interruptive judgment of God over history – and this is always a fundamentally *political* task, since the church must remind its cultural context that human history is also ‘a history of anxiety and the cry for justice.’ In this way, as Boeve notes, Christian faith ‘disrupts the histories of conqueror and vanquished, interrupting the ideologies of the powerful’ (ibid: 201-204).

For the Catholic educational tradition, this presents a new radicality: the

possibility of allowing the students' own experience of late modernity to reveal the God whose existence is so often predicated by 'the tradition'. In other words to search within the detritus of the alienated young the shards of divinity, which 'the tradition' may have inadvertently smothered. For the Catholic Headteacher, the role of Story Teller needs to be complemented by that of Watchman – alive to the hidden divine in the outcast, those not 'included', those not offered 'absolute hospitality', those not meeting the 'success criteria'.

Boeve's analysis allows the possibility of the *aporia*, the cul-de-sac, in the acceptance of pluralism while also promoting authenticity-as-mattering in recognising the importance of justice, the finitude of history (including being sceptical to the grand narrative), and what this Headteacher-Researcher chooses to call Boeve's theological deconstruction. The recontextualisation reflected in Christ's own deconstructive approaches as revealed in the scriptural examples above. Again, Boeve is clear that this is no prêt-à-porter Marxist manifesto but, rather requires the fully rounded apocalyptic reality of God at the centre as the boundary and crisis of history. For this Headteacher, the call to be Watchman for the breaking forth of tradition in one's own school – one's own context- offered the impetus, as detailed above, to include the students directly and meaningfully in the on-going process of 'naming'<sup>80</sup> their school.

### 3.5.2 A refocused philosophy of Catholic education: multiple trajectories

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<sup>80</sup> Naming in the sense of an annual self-evaluation of the ethos of the school including, *inter alia*, identifying those adjectives and gerunds best describing it.

A key impetus for this research was this Headteacher's belief in the importance of rendering problematic his Janus-like relationship with the State and Church (aim B) and to postulate a model alive to, but not overcome by what was termed the client-master relationship it *enjoys* with the State (aim C). This will also address one of the foundational questions asked from the outset, namely to what extent is the relationship between the English maintained Catholic school and the State significant in understanding the challenge of engendering authenticity in Catholic education. To rephrase, how could an ostensibly 'successful' Catholic school, as an apparatus (Foucault, 1980:84) of Church and State, conspire to promote or to diminish authenticity understood as the centrality of student 'mattering' over the efficiency of the apparatus? This directly fed into research question one and, insofar as it was undertaken conterminously with this Headteacher-Researcher's design and build of a new school, it would lie at the heart of research question three.

Autoethnographically, this Headteacher-Researcher had begun to cross the Rubicon from identifying authenticity in terms of the purity and internal coherence of clear thinking *along* the grain of the metanarrative to a view that this was no longer authentic. Authenticity lay in thinking *across* the metanarrative. Therefore to draw on Boeve's insights (above) to postulate four hypothetical models of Catholic schools, all of which could be 'successful' by the State's metric (and are therefore not *straw men* arguments) : the confessional, the pro-confessional, the pro-secularist, the re-contextualizing (after Boeve).

### 3.5.3 Type one: The Confessional Catholic school (leader)

One model is to see the Catholic school as carrying on with no regard for context. In the face of secularisation, pluralisation and the erosion of the tradition outside the school walls, the school retains its confessional character expressed in a *parallel running* alongside but seemingly unaffected by secularisation and pluralisation. The school, retaining traditional liturgy and celebration and the faith commitment of staff and pupils, is either taken for granted or not seen as problematic through deep questioning. 'Alternative' lifestyles are discussed as part of curriculum Religious Education or Personal Social and Health Education, but the extent to which staff (or students) are themselves engaged in such lifestyles is either not discussed or remains behind the firewall of the Catholic Education Service (or similar) standard contract which, *inter alia*, provides that employees – in particular key employees (Headteacher, Governor, Head of Religious Education, Chaplain) must refrain from certain practices not compatible with the teachings of the Church.<sup>81</sup> The school, no doubt to the applause of parents, rigorously and effectively socialises students in Catholic thought though without necessarily investing similar energy or capacity in equipping students to navigate the tectonic plates of (at the very least) religious

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<sup>81</sup> For example, see Stock, (2012:32). *A Catholic contracting a marriage in a non-Catholic church, registry office or any other place without dispensation from canonical form... or contracting a marriage where one or both of the parties have been previously married (and whose former spouse[s] is [are] living) without the former marriage(s) being annulled or declared invalid by the Church; • maintaining a partnership of intimacy with another person, outside a form of marriage approved by the Church and which would, at least in the public forum, carry the presumption from their public behaviour of this being a non-chaste relationship; and, where such a presumption in the public forum is not repudiated by the parties within the relationship.*

pluralism. In Boeve's terms there is a lashing of the school to the mast of tradition to the possible detriment of context.

### 3.5.4 Type two: The pro-confessional school (leader)

This type of school recognises the drift away from traditional Catholic schooling – its liturgical observance and explicitly 'Catholic' religious education - and seeks to reverse this drift.<sup>82</sup> This school type desires to make its Catholic identity more explicit by an active strategy of re-confessionalisation. The school's Catholic character must, by diktat rather than by convention, be explicitly and publicly affirmed. Next to providing education, the School strives for the Catholic faith formation of all its students and staff members in a secure, caring, Catholic environment. Explicitly a school *for* Catholics, run by Catholics, there is a robust preference for the recruitment of Catholic teachers<sup>83</sup> and a belief in its own identity while participating in plurality. So this strategy need not necessarily bear witness to a narrow-minded, closed mentality. Yet this school may take a critical and condescending stand against secular and de-traditionalised culture. The Catholic faith

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<sup>82</sup> The motivations for this may be varied: new leadership in the form of Headteacher or Governance, the desire to score highly in a so-called 'section 48' inspection of Christian life (in the case of Catholic and Church of England Schools this is commissioned by the Diocese under the Education Act, 2005) or parental pressure.

<sup>83</sup> This is not discriminatory in law *per se*: (see McMahon, 2014).

and lifestyle are defended and promoted as a counter-story. The possible risk that students could grow up to be alienated from the 'secular' outside world is considered an unavoidable side effect, rather than a valid objection. The school actively markets a 'Catholic' education for its children with active collaboration with the local (Parish) and regional (Diocesan) Church. Religious education courses seek to imbue a sacramental spirituality among students, reflected in (for Primary schools) First Holy Communion, and (for secondary schools) confirmation. In Boeve's terms there is, again, a lashing of the school to the mast of tradition but the intensity and nature of this is affected by the (perceived hostile) surrounding context.

### 3.5.5 Type 3: The pro-secularist school (leader)

This school leader goes along with dominant culture such that Catholic school identity erodes slowly but steadily. The school's former Catholic background and its Christian inspiration may still be lively, or may have become of token or sentimental relevance. Often this gradual erosion of Catholic school culture is an implicit process that occurs silently, rather than a conscious policy option and there may be a range of 'traditions' remaining – such as Masses, celebrations of the Church's season and so on – but these no longer act as a locus around which the school's identity is manifest. The school's self-identity, *raison d'être* and core reason to be proud is a function of the extent to which it achieved Government metrics<sup>84</sup>, hence the soubriquet *pro-*

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<sup>84</sup> Metrics, which may also be either critically or uncritically accepted (and promoted) by Church authorities such as Diocesan Directors of education, reflecting their obligations under Canon 806/2: 'Directors of Catholic schools are to take care under the watchfulness of the local



*secularist*. For this reason such a school may well be both very popular and very successful in terms of the metric of achievement set by the State. The radicalism of Christianity is less acknowledged and inclusivity, as a well-meaning, sentimental proxy for Catholicity comes to the fore. Approaches to management of teaching staff may be humane ('law abiding') or stray into the (utilitarian) ruthless, using the rallying cry of *children only get one chance* to adopt management techniques which move from being robust to being coercive, leading some to question to what extent the school can call itself 'Catholic' anymore.

Much may be made of how unjust it is not to place non-Catholic siblings at a higher level in the admissions process than practicing Catholic students. The school's population is characterized by a diversity of religious outlooks and philosophies of life. A secularised school has two options with regard to this diversity: Option one: It adopts a 'neutral' stance: one's philosophy of life is a private matter that doesn't belong in the public sphere. (NB. Strictly speaking, a 'neutrality' of this sort is itself not neutral, nor free of value options - the colourless school). Option 2: While showcasing its 'Catholicity' as part of its marketing strategy, it may, on the one hand, opt for a neutral-pluralistic identity, predicated on 'welcome' or, on the other, use the Catholic 'filter' to attract 'articulate' or 'engaged' families. This school – however replete with Catholic iconography and talk of caring ethos -, in Boeve's terms, would have lashed its identity to the mast of context (success in metrics and parental approbation) as against theological narrative (tradition).

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ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area' (Holy See, Code of Canon Law 1985).

### 3.5.6 Type Four: The pro-recontextualisation school (leader)

This school leader is purposefully looking for a renewed Christian profile in a context marked by plurality.<sup>85</sup> There is a unified focus on plurality and Catholic identity but what distinguishes this model from that above (the pre-secularist) is that the locus of identity remains the integrity of such a religious identity over and above success judged predominantly with respect to Government metrics and aspects of parental approbation. The question at the heart of this leaders programme is to ask how, in the midst of contemporary culture, to live like a Christian and to be a Catholic school? The recognition that Christian faith should recontextualise, along with changing culture may be less attractive to both some parents and some Church leaders who see in this model a departure from 'tradition' (therefore contrasting with the Confessional and Pro-confessional schools). Further, to those who prefer the popular, if fundamentally, pro-secularist school with its 'excellent record', talk of recontextualisation, or moves to authenticity within Catholic education may seem to be trading in 'distractions' (perhaps even irreligious distractions) from the 'achievement agenda'. In and through the dialogue with plurality, Christianity is re-grooved (not relativized) in a new context. Religious and cultural plurality is not only formally recognized, but also valued as a positive challenge and a chance to enrich Catholic school identity. Philosophy and religious education are taught in every year. Openness towards, and a dialogue with 'otherness' is encouraged, thereby

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<sup>85</sup> This engagement with plurality does not reflect a view, for example *for or against* multiculturalism as policy but, rather, seeks to engage with late modernity as it finds it.

withstanding the tendency to look for the lowest common denominator. Not build on patterns that aim for consensus, but impelled by multiplicity and difference, students are 'taught philosophy' as a core entitlement with 'critical thinking' no longer being merely an 'option' or, indeed, the preserve of the post-16 year old curriculum. There is a belief that through dialogue with otherness, one comes to know oneself with Christianity taking its position as a preferential perspective, though without an unchallenged 'assumption' of (unquestioned) superiority. This latter element may prove too much for Church leaders or parents who see Christianity being relegated to 'one life choice among others' yet this is to misinterpret the point which, rather than relegating Christian theology from the school, the result is to welcome it as the radical hermeneutic it represents.

This school recognises and acknowledges plurality and the valuable input others could have, and then allows the voice of Christianity to sound out of its own strength and depth, in the middle of this diversity. So, the intent is to have all students challenged and enriched by the offer of the Christian story as it engages with every aspect of context: all disciplines (Lonergan), all processes. By means of the hermeneutical-communicative model students are challenged to give shape to their personal identity: through a conversation with others. As 'student', I become who I am, in *dialogue* and sometimes also *in confrontation* with the Catholic tradition with a commitment to the (unrealisable) unrestricted hospitality to the other. There is a diverse school population specifically because of openness to what Christianity has to offer. In this model the school leader has the function of relating practice to this specific dialogical Christian identity and, in this sense, such a Christian anthropology marks the school as 'deeply Catholic' notwithstanding its challenge and radicalism

which may, for some, smack of unreasonable compromise or even apostasy. What should be part of every-day life in society as a whole is already being taught at school.

### 3.6 Summary of impact of Boeve and the Four Models

In terms of the autoethnographic location as Convert-Headteacher it reflected a tempering of the hubris of the Catholic metanarrative, which is not to say a decline in faith. Instead it reflected a maturing of faith around a more critical faculty. Unsurprisingly, Model Four reflects the evolving paradigm in which this Headteacher-Researcher sees the possibility of authenticity-as-mattering within a transparent openness to the volatility of the tectonic plates in within which the young, this Headteacher-Researcher and his colleagues, knowingly or otherwise, find themselves. It is also, in the maintained sector, almost non-existent, not least because of the Admissions criteria for Catholic schools, which prioritise Catholic applicants for the very understandable reason that the Catholic community has financed these schools over time. Successful Catholic schools inevitably become filled with Catholic children (of varying degrees of practice), a fact that could be seen to play against the pluralism reflected in Model 4.

The sketches of the four models of Catholic schools are sketches and, as with any sketch, may contain elements of caricature. However, this Headteacher-Researcher has encountered numerous examples of each and, to the extent that all may achieve 'Ofsted Outstanding', be fully subscribed, financially viable and generally

popular, they are not unreasonable caricatures. The point is to demonstrate the wide variation – and considerable power- of the Headteacher with Governing Body to construct a school where the locus of its identity can be located across a broad continuum stretching from the school focussed on expediency and internal coherence, or the school taking its cue from the existential context of the children it serves. More than anything else this reflects the breadth of student experience in the English Catholic school with a bearing on the pursuit of authenticity.

Returning to research question three and the impact on this Headteacher-R Researcher (-Employee-Catholic) this work was formative especially in the process of building a new school with the opportunities to radically overhaul accepted processes. Specifically (i) it challenged the increasing conflation of success-as-a-Catholic-school with success-by-Governmental-metrics reflected in Model 3. (ii) It removed from the school management plan the ‘addition’ of ‘Catholic ethos’ as a supplementary add-on to core planning. Subsequently every process would reflect both the notion of authenticity as developed as well as ensuring a critical attitude towards ‘given’ management modalities. (iii) In recovering dignity, this simple word replaced both mission and vision statements: the latter as our ‘destination’ was the core dignity of every child through the development of their vocation; the former, given that the emplacement of dignity rendered the school authentically Catholic in its processes. However, the challenge remained for this school leader in how to maintain a critical distance from precisely such seductive language of ‘complementarity’ as reflected in the Bishops’ statements.

In terms of the autoethnographic realisation that this Headteacher-Writer is always seduced into postulating a solution rather than in affirming the non-solutions, including the *aporia*, a new form of leadership was developing. Leadership which held in check the strengths and weaknesses recognising their constant interplay rather than their future (necessary) eradication.

#### **4. Derrida and deconstruction: from *interrupting* to *fissuring* tradition**

While Derrida has already made frequent appearances in this thesis it is worth understanding the project of deconstruction and its significance to the work of the Headteacher in and through, in this case, the Headteacher as Researcher. In deconstruction there is a challenge to the extant order of a radical kind; one necessary in the thinking so far.

‘Deconstruction’ is the most famous of Derrida's terms, probably drawn from Heidegger's use of ‘destruction’ in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962:19-27). Referencing Descartes’ *First Meditation* and his search for a ‘establishing a ‘foundation for philosophy’.<sup>86</sup>

According to Heidegger, the phenomenological method is distinguished by three related moments: reduction or retrogression from what is to being,

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<sup>86</sup> Descartes refers to this as his overarching project in response to a claim by one of his critics that speculation should remain in certain limits. (*Descartes: on the answer to Question 2*, 2008:229).

construction of being, and destruction or the dismantling of tradition. Destruction is the necessary correlate of both reduction and construction:

‘It is for this reason that there necessarily belongs to the conceptual interpretation of being and its structures, that is, to the reductive construction of being, a *destruction*-a critical process in which the traditional concepts which at first must necessarily be employed are de-constructed (*kritischer Abbau*) down to the sources from which they were drawn. Only by means of this destruction can ontology fully assure itself in a phenomenological way of the genuine character of its concepts’ (Heidegger, 1982:22-23).

At the same time Caputo alerts the reader to the importance of the restoration within deconstruction. “*Ab-bau*’ is a suggestive and less misleading word than *Destruktion*, which implies a sheer levelling or razing. *Ab-bau*’ means a dismantling or undoing of a surface apparatus which has been allowed to build up over an originary experience-a dismantling not in order to level but in order to retrieve’ (Caputo, 1987:64).

This approach appealed to this Headteacher-Catholic who wished to adopt an approach, which, if turned on one’s own metaphysically-laden Church, could be used to violent effect but, for the purpose of this thesis would be deployed sparingly.<sup>87</sup>

Derrida’s project, in stark contrast to Lonergan’s, is anti-foundational. It is precisely to alert the reader or listener to the notion that *all* Western literature and

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<sup>87</sup> Reflected in Caputo’s other work, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*- where he adopts a deconstructive approach to the mission of Jesus Christ (Caputo, 2007).

philosophy implicitly relies on the metaphysics of presence<sup>88</sup> where intrinsic meaning is accessible by virtue of pure presence:

‘The entire history of the concept of structure before the rupture of which we are speaking, must be thought of as a series of substitutions of centre for centre, as a linked chain of determinations of the centre. Successively, and in a regulated fashion, the centre receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymes. ...It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the centre have always designated an invariable presence—*eidōs, arche, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *aletheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth’ (Derrida, 2005:353).

In section 5 of *Being and Time* Heidegger resolves that his ‘treatment of the question of the meaning of being must enable us to show that the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomena of time, if rightly seen and rightly explained, and we must show how this is the case’ (Heidegger, 1962: 18).<sup>89</sup>

Section 6 of *Being and Time* announces the ‘destruction of the history of ontology’ (ibid: 23). Derrida ‘s rereading<sup>90</sup> is a matter of exposing and celebrating aspects of the radical dimensions of Heidegger’s work while at the same time

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<sup>88</sup> This is in contrast to the later Heidegger. Much of *Being and Time* constitutes a metaphysical structure of being-in-the-world of *Dasein* and being-with others. Heidegger's later philosophy shares the deep concerns of *Being and Time*, in that it is driven by the same preoccupation with Being and our relationship with it that propelled the earlier work. In a fundamental sense, then, the question of Being remains the question. However, *Being and Time* addresses the question of Being via an investigation of *Dasein*, the kind of being whose Being is an issue for it.

<sup>89</sup> The original German pagination will be adopted.

<sup>90</sup> Key themes in *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*



uncovering the extent to which (early) <sup>91</sup> Heidegger's discourse serves to close down and delimit such radicalism with its retention of the metaphysics of being as presence.

Temporality makes history possible; the history of Western metaphysics eliminates temporality thereby hiding its own history. 'Tradition,' Heidegger states, 'takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence (Heidegger, 1962:21). In Western ontology, 'Entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time - the 'Present' (ibid: 25). This is the metaphysics of presence, the doctrine of eternal, immutable presence that conceals and denies temporality, contingency, and change supposedly yielding objects of indubitable knowledge. Heidegger, opening up questioning concerned with the hermeneutic of Being, goes on:

'The problematic of Greek ontology, like that of any other must take its clues from ... man's Being ... as that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse ... This is why the ancient ontology ... turns into 'dialectic'. As the ontological clue gets progressively worked out - namely, in the hermeneutic of the λόγος, it becomes increasingly possible to grasp the problem of Being in a more radical fashion' (ibid: 25).

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<sup>91</sup> Heidegger recognizes this in his later work. So, for example, Joan Stambaugh recognizes that, in using 'appropriation' Heidegger sees this as not designating a 'realm' as does Being, but rather a relation, that of man and Being. 'What is radically new and non-metaphysical about Appropriation is not only that it is an 'activity'-a non-static process-Appropriation is non-metaphysical' (Heidegger, 1972:x). This paper is written in the spirit of the later Heidegger and, in particular, a Derridean reading.

It is Derrida's constitution of *différance* – the protention and retention of projections of understandings of beings - (Derrida, 1973:64, 66) which could be seen as a radical reading of Heidegger's temporality (where temporality temporalizes as a future which makes present in the process of having been (ibid: 350)) and makes possible any deconstructive readings in exploring in novel ways the ancient connection between the *logos*, dialogue as speech, and the objects speech is about. Logocentrism, for Derrida, means the immediate presence of a perfectly self-identical meaning or object; especially the immediately present object of pure knowledge. Logocentrism presumes that inquiry may arrive at an immediately present, self-identical object of thought or reason.

'We have experienced the systematic interdependence of the concepts of sense, ideality, objectivity, truth, intuition, perception and proximity of self- identity, the being-in-front of the object available for repetition, the maintenance of the temporal present, whose ideal form is the self-presence of transcendental *life* whose ideal identity allows *idealiter* of infinite repetition ... (Everything that is purely thought in this concept is thereby determined as ideality') (Derrida, 1973:99).

The supplement is precisely what epistemology seeks to replace with the immediate, eternal, and immutable essence and identity, the transcendental signified, even if that reality only exists for an instant. Yet such replacements are themselves, supplements. The problem of epistemology is 'solved' when the sign or representation is eliminated and consciousness, or its idea, is in immediate self-identical union with its transcendent objects. Believing that we will be presented with timeless and unchangeable truth at the end of inquiry (or history) is a variant of the metaphysics of presence, a discourse that is itself gathered together (albeit un-

reflexively) by the naming force and gathering powers of being as presence. So, too, is the belief that we will be restored to some primordial pristine state’.

‘Now this classical determination presupposes that the sign (which defers presence) is conceivable only on the basis of the presence that it defers and in view of the deferred presence one intends to reappropriate.... Yet we could no longer even call it primordial or final, inasmuch as the characteristics of origin, beginning, *telos*, *eschaton* etc., have always denoted presence - *ousia*, *parousia*, ’ (Derrida, 1973:88).

There is no transcendental signified, nor is there any fixed, immovable centre to any system. In his much-celebrated essay, *Structure, Sign and Play*, Derrida describes the notion of centre thus: ‘As centre, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. At the centre, the permutation or the transformation of elements ... is forbidden’ (Derrida, 1978:279). The centre sets in motion an endless play of sign and signified, but the centre itself never appears, that is why it can, and must, always be deconstructed. In such a system, ‘the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely’ (ibid: 280). The centre is thus constituted in *différance*. A supplement is once what is added onto something to enrich it, *and* what is added on is a mere extra [from the Latin for outside]. It is both a surplus enriching another plenitude, and it makes up for something missing, as if there were a void to be filled up: it is not simply added to the positivity of presence; its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of its emptiness (Derrida, 1989: 144-5).

In terms of this Headteacher-Researcher the supplementarity of that which is called *ethos* in the Catholic school became significant. From a Derridean perspective the iconography, liturgies, ceremonials and overt representations of the tradition were representational – they contained absence in their purported presence. The Eucharistic liturgy, at the heart of the Catholic identity, is a memorial of the Last Supper and in a Derridean sense is a supplement – the absence of the no-longer-present messiah who says ‘Do this in memory of me’.<sup>92</sup> However, in Catholic thinking this is absolutely not the case. The ontological perspective in the Eucharistic mystery precisely affirms the ‘real presence’ of Christ - his being -each and every time the Mass is celebrated. It is a signifier (Sokolowski, 1993:31) but, in Catholic theology, it contains what it signifies (Vonier 2002:102). Notwithstanding the obvious incompatibility of the theistic metaphysics of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist with Derrida’s use of the supplement, this ‘presencing’ became a theological justification for the interruption of tradition in Boeve’s sense. The authentic Catholic school was called to critically reflect on its identity/identities not every decade, or every three years, but every time Mass was celebrated. The drama of the Eucharist – the school Mass - precisely uproots the hegemony and the hubris of ‘the tradition’ in its assertion of radical presence. To the task of breaking out of the ossifying effect of tradition understood as metanarrative, the language game (Wittgenstein, 2009) to which this ‘presencing’ contributed was, to this Headteacher-Researcher, a rich seam of authenticity.

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<sup>92</sup> The words taken from the first Eucharistic prayer, *The Roman Missal* 2011.

Derrida is explicitly offering a critique of the view that the classical metaphysical tropes such as being /essence/reality can be 'found':

'The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place, for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace.... The effacing of this early trace ... of difference is therefore 'the same' as its tracing within the text of metaphysics. This metaphysical text must have retained a mark of what it lost or put in reserve, set aside' (ibid: 156).

Derrida has provided many definitions of deconstruction, as concerned with *the impossible or heterogeneous dimensions of Western metaphysics* – namely the unconditional, impossible and incalculable dimensions of Western metaphysical systems.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, deconstruction as being inextricably tied up with, indeed 'mad' about justice which reflects Derrida's rejection of a nihilistic programme (Derrida (1992:25). Three may be seen as particularly significant. The first in the 1971 interview *Positions* and in the 1972 Preface to *Dissemination*: deconstruction consists in 'two phases' (Derrida, 1982:41-42; Derrida, 1981:4-6). Derrida famously (or infamously) speaks of 'metaphysics' as if the Western philosophical tradition was monolithic and homogeneous. In one sense, deconstruction may be understood as a re-reading of Platonism, which is defined by the belief that existence is structured in terms of oppositions (separate substances or forms) and that the oppositions are

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<sup>93</sup> Part of the controversy within the approach is that, as Derrida said in response to the question what is deconstruction, 'I have no simple and formalisable response to this question. All my essays are attempts to have it out with this formidable question' (Derrida, 1985:4). Indeed he says: 'Deconstruction is not a method, and cannot be transformed into one' (Ibid:1). Finally, Derrida states that deconstruction is not an analysis in the traditional sense—This is because the possibility of analysis is predicated on the possibility of breaking up the text being analysed into elemental component parts. Derrida argues that there are no self-sufficient units of meaning in a text. This is because individual words or sentences in a text can only be properly understood in terms of how they fit into the larger structure of the text and language itself (ibid: 3).

hierarchical, with one side of the opposition being more valuable than the other. The *first phase* of deconstruction<sup>94</sup> attacks this belief by *reversing* the Platonic hierarchies: the hierarchies between the invisible or intelligible and the visible or sensible; between essence and appearance; between the soul and body; between living memory and rote memory; between *mnēmē* and *hypomnēsis*; between voice and writing; between, finally, good and evil.

‘From the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs. We think only in signs, which amounts to ruining the notion of the sign at the very moment when, as in Nietzsche, its exigency is recognized in the absoluteness of its right. One could call play the absence of the transcendental signified as limitlessness of play, that is to say as the destruction of ontotheology and the metaphysics of presence’. (Derrida, 1997:50).

This first definition of deconstruction as two phases give way to the refinement we find in the *Force of Law*.’ This *second* definition is less metaphysical and more political. In *Force of Law*, Derrida says that deconstruction is practiced in two styles (Derrida, 1992:21). These ‘two styles’ do not correspond to the ‘two phases’ in the earlier definition of deconstruction. On the one hand, there is the genealogical style of deconstruction, which recalls the history of a concept or theme. Earlier in his career, in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida had laid out, for example, the history of the concept of writing. But now what is at issue is the history of justice. On the other hand, there is the more formalistic or structural style of deconstruction, which examines a-historical paradoxes or *aporias*. In ‘Force of Law,’ Derrida lays out

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<sup>94</sup> In his essay ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, Derrida deconstructs several texts by Plato and reveals the inter-connection between the word chain *pharmakeia-pharmakon-pharmakeus* and the notably absent word *pharmakos*. In doing so, he attacks the boundary between inside and outside, declaring that the outside (*pharmakos*, never uttered by Plato) is always-already present right behind the inside (*pharmakeia-pharmakon-pharmakeus*). As a concept, *Pharmakos* can be said to be related to other Derridean terms such as trace (Derrida, 1981: xxv).

three *aporias*, although they all seem to be variants of one, an *aporia* concerning the unstable relation between law (the French term is '*droit*' which also means 'right') and justice. It would be to *aporia* that this Headteacher-Researcher would ultimately turn (below).

In the opinion of Dooley and Kavanagh (2007), the difficulties widely associated with reading Derrida are less a function of the complexity of his ideas than of his obscure prose style and the reluctance of commentators to attempt thematic treatments of the central thrust of his work. The 'simple idea' that lies 'behind all the controversy,' they claim, is that 'full self-understanding is impossible because we cannot roll back the layers of time and history – another manifestation of the *tectonic plate* metaphor- that precede us to reveal our origins in their purity'; in a nutshell, there is no such thing as 'pure' identity since identity is a construction of finite memory (ibid: ix). By reading Derrida in light of this 'simple idea,' the authors maintain, we may come to see that deconstruction is 'neither radical nor iconoclastic,'<sup>95</sup> but is motivated, instead, by the desire 'to preserve the best of our philosophical, scientific, religious, and political traditions' (Dooley, Kavanagh, 2007:ix). What Derrida's work offers is a deconstruction of the transcendental signified – the supplement. It will contribute to the avoidance of 'the catastrophe of memory' through 'the work of mourning', that is, of confronting the 'impossibility' of

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<sup>95</sup> Indeed Derrida stipulates: 'I love very much everything that I deconstruct in my own manner; the texts I want to read from the deconstructive point of view of the texts I love...They are texts whose future, I think, will not be exhausted for a long time...(M)y relation to these texts is characterized by loving jealousy and not at all by nihilistic fury' (Derrida, 1988:87).

knowing fully who we are by discerning within the fragments of our dislocated past the ideals, values and institutions that are worth preserving, albeit through a process of ceaseless dismantling and recontextualising that avoids claims to a 'mastery over the past' for which the likes of Plato and Hegel once yearned (ibid: 5).

That this resonates with (though by no means equates to) the theological project of recontextualisation through a critical approach to tradition proposed by Boeve is clear. However, within the educational discourse too, the 'supplements' facing this Catholic Headteacher-Researcher were varied and apparent: *inter alia*: 'achievement', 'success', 'learning', and 'curriculum' *when understood as objects of consciousness*. And there can be no such origin as consciousness is not the origin because the supplement is always already at work within any possible origin. But more fundamentally deconstruction is best understood not as a repudiation of the Western tradition leveraged from some critical standpoint outside it, but rather as a way of critically appropriating the tradition from within, both by targeting the *aporias* and exclusions that necessarily perforate finite human understanding and by activating 'other' insights and epiphanies that the tradition has left underdeveloped or untapped.

A further aspect of Derrida's insight into the lack of 'centre' (where centre is a metaphysical entity of sorts) reminded this Headteacher-Researcher of the impact on Catholic education generally – and on his school in particular – of de-centeredness. Where was English (and Welsh) Catholic education *located*? The twenty two sovereign dioceses within the hierarchy of England and Wales? , The two sets of Trustees to whom he is accountable? The Catholic Education Service? Language so



often presents a sanitised and, superficially, internally coherent image to that which is neither. Just as the multivariate historical elements generated by the Restoration of the Hierarchy (Document III) were centre-less and did not 'produce' what 'we have today', equally, the current 'English Catholic educational 'community'' is also a useful and well-intended fiction. The *aporia* – the cul-de-sac - in the language of 'community' comprising disparate elements was both chastening and also liberating for this Headteacher-Researcher. More than anything else it reminded one of the need to focus one's energies on the locus of authenticity centred on the students' existential context (research questions one, two and three) which opens spacing – the coming space of time and the coming time of space within a heterogeneous ethic/ economy of practice for the school in each of Boeve's four types.

At the same time within the autoethnographic recognition of this author being always already implicated in the work undertaken, there was a realisation of non-belonging. Of a homelessness as the fictions of the metaphysically-laden 'communities' were laid bare.

## **5. The possibility of *justice-as-mattering* in English Catholic education**

In approaching Derrida's work with justice it is important to note that this is not a representational approach but a radical step towards justice as a way of giving structure to the event of authenticity.

Laws and customs<sup>96</sup> underpin the nature of schooling in England but so too should/does justice. For Rawls, 'Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought' (Rawls, 1972:3) but the question is to what extent the systematising of the English Catholic school conspires to crowd out justice. Flint, discussing the world of academic research as against schools, draws us on Rawls' comment in order to alert his readers to the separation of systems of thought with justice and its relation to social institutions (Flint, 2015:85). This has a striking resonance when seen in terms of the management and procedures proper to the 'running' of the English Catholic school. Referring to the deontological force (in his example, of the 'guidelines' within research (but easily substitutable with the policies of Catholic schooling)).<sup>97</sup> Flint goes on: 'Rawls's division may have worked because, in ideological terms, when somehow researchers were imagined to be primarily concerned with knowledge and its relation to truth. But, it is not working 'now'. The ontotheological structuring research driving the ever-growing powers in enframing is not a locus for justice' (ibid: 85). Flint's insight indirectly alerts this Headteacher-Researcher to a threat to authenticity-as-mattering in the Catholic School through the established and seemingly incontrovertible maxims (ontotheologies), which develop in schools which purport to proclaim the mission of that same radical Nazarene who would not judge the adulterous woman (see above). One example has been given – the restricted hospitality of the school admissions code, which is – however

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<sup>96</sup>See above, the Department for Education (2014) London: Department for Education. As 'guidance' this could be construed as 'custom', though to the extent to which inspectors will expect to see the 'guidance' in place (ibid: 7), it is more resembling of law.

<sup>97</sup>In Flint's example, such as those set by funding bodies.

reasonably- designed to exclude the *non-entitled* children<sup>98</sup> and can lead to children being variously coerced into a practice of religion by parents keen to get them into a particular Catholic school.<sup>99</sup> Another example is the examinations industry, which contributes to the development of a model of education *qua* assessment whereby what is valued is the test (Scott, 2016: 38). An interesting counterpoint to this, which proves the hegemony of the ontotheology of assessment, is the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue (University of Birmingham), identifying its role as researching and developing virtue education within and beyond Schools. Tragically, in identifying some of their aims, they show (in italics) the extent to which (possibly for funding purposes) they continue to bend the knee to the assessment industry:

- Character is educable and its progress can be *measured* holistically, not only through self reports but also more *objective research methods*
- Character is important: it contributes to human and societal flourishing
- Character is largely caught through role modelling and emotional contagion: school culture and ethos are therefore essential
- Character should also be taught: direct teaching of character provides the rationale, language and tools to use in developing character elsewhere in and out of school
- Character is the *foundation for improved attainment*, better behaviour and increased employability (Jubilee Centre, 2013:2).

This work provides an exciting movement away from bland deontology. At the same time, the focus upon character here as providing an object of consciousness also

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<sup>98</sup> Itself controversial given that maintained Catholic schools have been supported by tax payers since the Balfour Act of 1902. Dissenters and Doubters objected to state funds being used to support denominational schools, including those of the Church of England but more especially those of the Catholic Church. 'Inside and outside Parliament there was outcry against 'Rome on the rates' (Gates 2005:19).

<sup>99</sup> For example the Sutton Trust reported that 9% of socio-economic group A and 7% of group B attended church services purely so that their child (ren) could enter a church school (Francis, Hutchings, 2013: 25).

serves to neatly obfuscate any consideration given to human beings and the events unfolding in the lives of human beings in the school served by this Headteacher-Researcher.

In the Catholic school, the apparatus of Catholic education, which is ostensibly constituted to prioritise the transcendent (a divinely predicated model) interfaces and vies for attention with the ostensibly calculable tectonic plates of the disciplinary regime, regime of assessment and the mediation between the ecclesial identity of the school and the managerial identity of Government. (In Model 3 (above) it was suggested that the calculable invariably win within a pro-secularist model.) Flint speaks to the nefarious impact of the primacy afforded to the 'calculable' within the research world of Higher Education:

'In practice, earlier injunctions concerned with 'now' are always fissured by both a multiplicity of possible historical connections and many possibilities unfolding in the future. But, in harmony with its ontotheology, the criterionology of what is deemed to be 'ethically' grounded research is concerned almost exclusively with the conditional, calculable, and possible dimensions of practice. It has to be so in order to exclude the Other, preserving the object of research – namely, truth claims to knowledge, as though the object remains unsullied by the play of *différance*' (ibid: 87).

This strikes a chord with the Catholic school leader's 'School improvement' mandate where an input-output analysis<sup>100</sup> fails to properly render problematic key

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<sup>100</sup> Input-output can operate on more than one level in the school: (i) at the level of resources: for resource allocation 'x' (teachers, equipment...) there is an output (represented by definable, prescribed, nationally moderated academic 'outcome'), 'y' (ii) at the level of 'learner' – her academic input at secondary level is based on a crude average of (predominantly) English, mathematics and science at Primary level 'x' from which 'progress' can be judged (mainly) at age 16 at outcome 'y'. That 'x' and 'y' operate both as gathering powers and as

binaries such as the student's intrinsic dignity *versus* the requirement and hegemony of (politicised) assessment regimes, or, the teacher's responsibility to inculcate authenticity in practice to secure dignity *versus* the requirement and hegemony of (politicised) assessment regimes. In terms of promoting authenticity within the school served by this Headteacher-Researcher (research questions one and three) this reinforced the on going – relentless – challenge of promoting authenticity –as-mattering at the individual student level and locating such an approach as the locus of the school's identity.

Derrida's reading of Husserl brings to life that 'there is no intuition of the other *as such*; that is, I have no originary access to the alter-ego *as such*' (Derrida, 1999: 71).<sup>101</sup> There is 'no pure phenomenon or phenomenality, of the other or alter-ego *as such*' (ibid: 71). Right at the heart of the gathering powers of being as presence, therefore, there is located our incapacity to gain access to the other. The 'unconditional' affirmation of this incapacity in our relationship with the other, in which the other is 'impossible' to recognize completely and therefore within any economy remains 'incalculable' came to be understood in his later writings as a manifestation of 'justice to come', and hence moves towards absolute hospitality, which is always impossible and which challenge the restricted hospitality inscribed in the laws of, *inter alia*, education, economics and managerialism (Derrida, 1990:947, 953).

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enframing does not preclude them from a national role in 'benchmarking' 'success' and 'performance measurement'.

<sup>101</sup> Reflecting the significance of the autoethnographic approach- an honesty with respect to this insight.

Ironically, that justice within the world of Flint's Higher Education research or the English Catholic school can be so easily 'avoided' by 'doing the right thing' (deontologically – following one's 'duty') is clear enough. In reflecting Autoethnographically on the multiple identities at play in the role/ rôle of Headteacher it became apparent how easily one took on the cowl of the convenient identity to seek the path of least resistance. As pressure from the State mounted, there would be a privileging of time given to the role/ rôle of Headteacher *qua* executive of the State. As scrutiny was raised as to the school's Catholic identity (in all its metaphysical exigencies) the shift would be to executive of the Church. This reflected the strength of understanding the role/ rôle not as one, two or three dimensional (which continues to entertain the metaphysical locus of being) but rather as rhizomatic. The terrifying freedom of the Stateless.

Reflecting on Grace's work (above) the tension on Catholic schools to 'deliver' *vis à vis* national 'requirements' (Typified by the Pro-secularist school (Leader)) places an extremely significant limitation on the pursuit of justice. Justice in this sense can be seen as a desire to move beyond the bounds of the conditional, the calculable, and the possible – it expresses a concern to move beyond the bounds of the present situation adopting the Boeve-inspired Model 4 (above). It reflects the 'force of *différance*' (ibid: 929; Flint, 2015:89) that is always unconditional, impossible, and incalculable. It keeps open the vitiation of our relationship with the future, and equally is vigilant and alert to the catastrophe of memory in our relationship with the cinders deposited from past events. This play of *différance* is

unconditional in the sense that it is 'what makes the movement of signification possible' in any reading or writing of text (Derrida, 1973:142). In the play of *différance*, 'each element appearing on the scene of the presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of a past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to a future element' (ibid: 143). *Différance* opens spacing awakening us to identities being located outside the metaphysics of presence. 'An interval must separate the present from what it is not', according to Derrida 'in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must, by the same token, divide the present in and of itself thereby also dividing along with the present, everything that is thought on the basis of the present, that is, in our metaphysical language, every being, and in particular the substance or subject (ibid: 143). There is, then, a fissuring and a double play at the heart of any presence.

This fissuring at the heart of perceived 'presence' decentres and renders incalculable and heterogeneous to create the event, manifest in the supplement as a simulacrum. The event is also to come: *à venir* - and alerts one to the temptation to reduce the economy of the event to 'being homogeneous' rather than opening up the heterogeneity. This is a challenge to the extant order of thinking and presented to this Headteacher-Researcher, immersed in a world of data and policy pronouncements expressed as objects of consciousness, a challenge to this thinking. In the event the *événement* -

[‘I]ts absolute alterity does not allow the new realism to ossify in a determinate encyclopaedic definition ready to be catalogued in the annals of philosophy, but necessitates its unfolding as a series of discontinuous beginnings and interim, provisional conjunctures’ (Marder, 2009:135-6).

This Headteacher-Researcher-Employee’s commitment to ‘improvement’ reveals the issues at hand. The Governors and managers continued reiteration of signs concerned with ‘change’ opens connections with the intentional structuring of practice deferred from Husserl and Plato. They, too, are caught up in the drift of signs from ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’ (Derrida, 1981:61-171). Although not mentioned as such, their hospitality welcomes the other only *under certain conditions* identified within their own improvement template, and grounds for interpretation of data. Such data is predicated on measurable outcomes where the outcomes are politicised (English, Mathematics, ‘good’ GCSE grades). The ‘Admissions Criteria’ set by Schools also restrict as much as they ‘entitles’<sup>102</sup>.

In this reading the desire for justice<sup>103</sup> always exceeds the present, a desire to move beyond the identifiable, the calculable, and the determinate. So too this Headteacher-Researcher found, in Derrida’s writing, an opening out in language and

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<sup>102</sup> For example the Admissions Criteria of this author’s school, (Saint John Bosco College, 2014) expresses a clear hierarchy: 1. Looked After Catholic Children 2, Previously Looked After Catholic Children...or Looked After Children in the care of Catholic carers. 2. Baptised Catholic Children of families in the armed forces, Crown Servants and British Council employees... Other Baptised Catholic children... Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches... Children who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England... Children of other faiths... Any other children whose parents wish them to attend Saint John Bosco College. .

<sup>103</sup> This reading is appropriate for the overall thesis. Justice, though not a synonym for *authenticity*, nevertheless conveys a similar resonance, reflecting the Church’s prime concern as being for the one educated as against serving ‘the process’ or ‘outcome indicators’.



meaning from the narrow, reiterative world of the calculable which underpins the school improvement process based on students uncovering the 'hidden treasure' of learning outcomes while remaining fundamentally passive in the process. In the successful Catholic school (Models One to Three) an 'excellent' (in terms of outcome) student could have survived five to seven years without questioning her own role in the learning process, without questioning the ethical underpinnings of learning, without questioning how this learning would equip her to engage with those tectonic plates of late modernity,, without questioning the nature of religious education (other than learning the syllabus), and without questioning the ethical, political and ideological underpinnings at work in the apparatus of education in which she finds herself. For this reason this mattered to this Headteacher-Researcher.

## 6. Deconstruction 'applied'<sup>104</sup> – *aporias* and *The Force of Law*

Before deploying the *aporia* it is important to understand its constitution in Derrida's thinking, specifically in the *epoché of the rule* and the *ghost of the decidable*. The *epoché of the rule* illustrates the *aporia* in the relationship of law and justice and the '*ghost of the decidable*' followed by *The Urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge* takes this to show the similar *aporia* in democracy and in Derrida's famous Abraham-Isaac analysis. Derrida's expositions of the programme of deconstruction foreground the space claimed by this Headteacher-Researcher to challenge the ontotheological structuring in which one finds oneself caught in the delimiting

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<sup>104</sup> Again, caution is needed in articulating Derrida's insight as 'method' to be 'applied'.

economic and so-called ethical practices in the apparatus of education privileging the calculable and the homogeneous. This has been manifest to this Headteacher-Researcher in the pursuit of approbation along narrow metrics expressed in the use of data and the design of the curriculum to privilege a model favoured by the inspectorate (Ofsted). More than any other element facing this Headteacher-Researcher, this constant preparation for inspection – this industry within an industry – has served to drive down creativity and risk-taking and privilege the metric over the student.

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#### 6.1 'The epoché of the rule' (Derrida, 1992:22-23)

Derrida states that the most common axiom in ethical or political thought is that to be just or unjust and to exercise justice, one must be free and responsible for one's actions and decisions. Here Derrida in effect is asking: what is freedom. On the one hand, freedom consists in the possibility of following a rule; but in the case of justice, we would say that a judgment that simply followed the law was only right, not just. For a decision to be 'just' not only must a judge follow a rule but also he or she must 're-institute' it, in a new judgment. Thus a decision aiming at justice (a free decision, a move towards absolute hospitality and away from restricted hospitality) is both regulated and unregulated. The law must be conserved and also destroyed or *suspended*, suspension being the meaning of the word 'epoché'. Each case is different and requires a unique interpretation, which no existing coded rule can guarantee. If a judge simply follows a code, she is a 'calculating machine.' In which such judges 'placidity apply a good rule to a particular case, to a correct subsumed example,

according to a determinate judgment' (ibid: 16, 23). Strict calculation or arbitrariness, one or the other is unjust, but they are both involved. The 're-institution' of the law in a unique decision is a kind of violence since it does not conform perfectly to the instituted codes; the law is always, according to Derrida, founded in violence, constituted in the inclusive exclusion consonant with the structuring of language. The legal decision must 'be both regulated and without regulation: it must conserve the law and also destroy it or suspend it enough to have to reinvent it in each case, rejustify it, or at least reinvented it in their affirmation and the new and free confirmation of its principle' (ibid: 23). The violent re-institution of the law means that justice is impossible.

Within the practice of this Headteacher-Researcher it has been the Admissions Codes, appeals against non-admission and aspects of student disciplinary policy, which have drawn in this interface of law and justice. When, for example, the Catholic school is 'at liberty' to increase the number –and ferocity-of criteria needed to gain admission to the school (the 'law like inscription') the interests of justice (such as in the 'Appeal') may also conserve, destroy or suspend this law. The inclusion of children in their 'first choice' school is, for many of them, a key moment in their own 'self-mattering' and touches on the first research question around the ability of the school *qua* state-Church-human apparatus to operate authentically. This is developed below.

## 6.2 'The Ghost of the Decidable' (ibid: 24-26)

A decision begins, perhaps a decision regarding an admissions appeal in this Headteacher-Researcher's school. But to make such a decision, one must first of all experience what Derrida calls 'undecidability'.<sup>105</sup> One must experience that the case, being unique and singular, does not fit the established codes and therefore a decision about it seems to be impossible. The undecidable, for Derrida, is not mere oscillation between two significations. It is the experience of what, though foreign to the calculable and the rule, is still obligated. We are obligated – this is a kind of duty—to give oneself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of rules and law. As Derrida says, 'A decision that did not go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process' (Derrida, 1992:24). (A 'policy' decision, perhaps, already caught in its own teleological ordering with 'agreed outcomes'.) And once the ordeal is past then the decision has again followed or given itself a rule and is no longer presently just: justice, therefore, is always to come in the future; it is never present. An example is democracy, never *present* but always *deferred*. In its claim to presence ('this is democracy here-and-now') democracy evokes the sovereignty that calls forth its destruction. Democracy is never fully present in the (sovereign) claim that democracy has arrived or been achieved (Derrida, 1994:81). It is in this sense that democracy is always 'to come' where the 'to come' here is not the positing of some horizon of possibility for democracy, as if it were just an *Idea* (in a Platonic or regulative, Kantian, sense) that we must move towards. Instead the 'to come'

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<sup>105</sup> Reflecting Derrida's reading of Kierkegaard's 'leap' (Kierkegaard, 1984:43).

expresses the dislocation that structures the very possibility of democracy from within. Derrida distinguishes between 'the future' — thought of as a future-present, predictable and programmable — and the *à venir* which names an unforeseeable coming of the event (ibid: 81), a rupture or disturbance that is unpredictable and open, without *telos* or knowable destination.<sup>106</sup>

There is apparently no moment during which a decision could be called presently and fully just. It either has not followed a rule, hence it is *unjust*; or it has followed a rule, which has no foundation, which makes it again *unjust*; or if it did follow a rule, it was calculated and again *unjust* since it did not respect the singularity of the case. This relentless injustice is why the ordeal of the undecidable<sup>107</sup> is never past. It keeps coming back like a 'phantom,' which 'deconstructs from the inside every assurance of presence, and thus every criteriology that would assure us of the justice of the decision' (Derrida, 1992:24-25). Although the minuscule difference is virtually unnoticeable in everyday common experience, when we in fact notice it, we *cannot* decide if we are experiencing the past or the present, if we are

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<sup>106</sup> For the notion of authenticity as *mattering* (where *mattering* is fleshed out in ideas of dignity) being developed in this thesis, it too is 'to come'. For example, the 'fact' of the student 'mattering' requires the possibility of the futural (on-going) arrival of respect of her dignity from 'the other' and in this sense never 'arrives' – it is the event of the 'flow' of recognition rather than an object of consciousness.

<sup>107</sup> *Undecidability* can be traced in an interview printed as an afterword to *Limited Inc.*, his playful and intricate response to Searle's negative critique of Derrida's theory of language in general, and his interpretation of J. L. Austin's work on speech acts in particular. In the interview, Derrida carefully rejected all of the superficial readings of his work, deemphasizing the 'liberating' implications of deconstruction while highlighting the inherent gravity of his use of terms such as undecidability. 'I want to recall,' he said first, 'that undecidability is always a determinate oscillation between possibilities (for example of meaning, but also of acts). These possibilities are themselves highly determined in strictly defined situations (for example, discursive . . . but also political, ethical,') (Derrida, 1988a: 148).

experiencing the present or the future. Insofar as the difference is undecidable, it destabilizes the original decision that instituted the hierarchy. After the redefinition of the previously inferior term, Derrida usually changes the term's orthography, for example, writing '*différence*' with an 'a' as '*différance*' in order to indicate the change in its status. Language considered as a system of signs, as Ferdinand de Saussure says, is nothing but differences. Red means what it is by contrast to blue.

'In language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system' (Saussure, 1959:121-122).

The deferral within *différance* exists by virtue of the very constitution of difference which holds that an element functions and signifies, takes on or conveys meaning, only by referring to another past or future element in an economy of traces.<sup>108</sup>

Derrida's insight reminds this Headteacher of the slippage which occurs between policy (law like inscription) and practice (the pursuit of justice) in the Catholic school, rendering the policy at once both *definitive* and yet *non-definitive*. Due

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<sup>108</sup> Trace can be seen as an always contingent term for a 'mark of the absence of a presence, an always-already absent present', of the 'originary lack' that seems to be 'the condition of thought and experience'. Trace is a contingent unit of the critique of language always-already present: 'language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique' (Macsey and Donato, 1970:254).

to this impossibility of pure presence<sup>109</sup> and consequently of intrinsic meaning, any given concept is constituted in reciprocal determination, in terms of its *oppositions*, e.g. perception/reason, speech/writing, mind/body, interior/exterior, marginal/central, sensible/intelligible, intuition/signification, nature/culture, the intelligible and the sensible, the spontaneous and the receptive, autonomy and heteronomy, the empirical and the transcendental, immanent and transcendent, as the interior and exterior, or the founded and the founder, normal and abnormal. However, there continues to be examples of the privileging of certain elements, one over another.

### 6.3 The urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge (Derrida, 1992: 26-28)

Derrida stresses the Greek etymology of the word 'horizon.' 'As its Greek name<sup>110</sup> suggests, a horizon is both the opening and limit that defines an infinite progress or a period of waiting' (Derrida, 1992:26). Justice (to come), however, even though it is un-presentable, does not wait. A just decision is always required immediately. It cannot furnish itself with unlimited knowledge. The moment of decision itself remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation. In the event of authenticity in Catholic education, the instant of decision is then, for Derrida, the

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<sup>109</sup> The impossibility of pure presence is no tired relativism or nihilism but is, in fact, the recognition that meaning, like electricity, exists 'at charge', never a passive 'reservoir'.

<sup>110</sup> ὁρίζων κύκλος best translated as 'separating circle' (Liddell, Scott, 2012)

moment of madness,<sup>111</sup> acting in the night of non-knowledge and non-rule. Once again we have a moment of eruptive violence. This urgency is why justice has no horizon of expectation. As has been said, justice remains an event yet to come.

In the autoethnographic reflection of this Headteacher-Researcher, Derrida's insight reminds this Headteacher of the extent to which school leadership is caught up with the metaphysics of 'leadership', 'policy' and 'delivery'. For example, the array of policies written for the new school purport (in their hubris) to 'cover' all eventualities as if the array of 'outcomes in a school are calculable and decidable. The *aporia* lies in the radical impossibility of such an array applied to the event of this Catholic school understood rhizomatically. 'The absolute *arrivant* does not yet have a name or an identity' (Derrida, 1993:34).

Drawing on Kierkegaard, Derrida argues that a decision requires an undecidable leap beyond all prior preparations for that decision (Derrida, 1995: 77), and according to him, this applies to all decisions and not just those regarding the conversion to religious faith that preoccupies Kierkegaard. To pose the problem in

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<sup>111</sup> This reference is taken in translation by Derrida from Kierkegaard's original 'From this point of view the Moment of decision becomes folly; for if a decision in time is postulated, then (by the preceding) the learner is in Error, which is precisely what makes a beginning in the Moment necessary.' The French translation of *Daarsksab* as *folie* which can also mean madness in French (though without such ambiguity in Danish) -is Derrida's preferred interpretation - (Original text from Kierkegaard, (1984:28). The extent to which Kierkegaard's original is better read as *folly* is suggested when comparing the usage to the Danish bible and 1 Corinthians 1: 23 'But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness'; In Danish we see the word used as folly or foolishness. *vi derimod prædike Kristus som korsfæstet, for Jøder en Forargelse og for Hedninger en Dårskab* (Bible in Danish, 2010).



inverse fashion, it might be suggested that for Derrida, all decisions are a faith and a tenuous faith at that, since were faith and the decision not tenuous, they would cease to be a faith or a decision at all as he comments again in *Gift of Death* (ibid: 80).

In reflecting on Derrida's reading of Abraham's response to God's demand that he kill his son, 'Isaac', (Genesis 22:2-8), Dooley and Kavanagh state that: 'having suspended the authority of the law', Abraham 'finds himself in the *aporia* of the undecidable, at a crossroads whereby he has to negotiate between the conditional law (which commands him not to kill) and the unconditional voice of the other (God) who commands him to sacrifice his son' (Dooley and Kavanagh, 2007:118). The authors show that Derrida's appeal to Abraham is there 'to illustrate his willingness to sacrifice the law in the name of justice'. Just as with Abraham, in the case of reimagining the purpose and nature of the English Catholic school this paper proceeds on the basis that one should be open to negotiation between the conditionality inscribed within the ontotheology of its pre-judicial structuring of laws grounding orthopraxy and the unconditionality of the Other.<sup>112</sup> In short, temporarily sacrificing orthopraxy in the name of justice given to the 'spectral other'.

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<sup>112</sup> The 'other' and 'Othering' reflect the practice of locating elsewhere the other (individual or group), whether geographically (casting out) or by use of language. Brons sees 'othering' operating in one of three ways: (i) the othering of the (excluded) individual; (ii) the othering of a (construction of) the self and (iii) the othering of what Lacan calls the 'Big other' - the symbolic order, namely, the overarching 'objective spirit' of trans-individual socio-linguistic structures configuring the fields of inter-subjective interactions (Brons, 2015:74).

Deconstruction needs to create new terms, not to synthesize the concepts in opposition, but to mark their *différance* and eternal interplay. This explains why Derrida always proposes new terms in his deconstruction, not as a free play but as a pure necessity of analysis, to mark the intervals.

‘I have called undecidables, that is, unities of simulacrum, ‘false’ verbal properties (nominal or semantic) that can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, but which, however, inhabit philosophical oppositions, resisting and disorganizing it, without ever constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics (the *pharmakon* is neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing; the supplement is neither a plus nor a minus, neither an outside nor the complement of an inside, neither accident nor essence, ...’ (Derrida, 1982:42-43).

For Miller, a significant interpreter of Derrida: ‘Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock, but thin air’ (Miller, 1976:34).

Deconstruction as the revealing and uncovering of aspects of the play of *différance*, reveals any text, including that of authenticity as not a discrete whole but rather containing several irreconcilable and contradictory meanings; that any text therefore has more than one interpretation; that the text itself links these interpretations inextricably; that the incompatibility of these interpretations is irreducible; and thus that an interpretative reading cannot go beyond a certain point.

This is precisely the *aporia* in the text. Meaning is made possible by the relations of a word to other words within the network of structures<sup>113</sup> that language is. Ultimately and not entirely satisfactorily, deconstruction is ‘an unclosed, unenclosable, not wholly formalisable ensemble of rules for reading, interpretation and writing’ (Derrida, 2004: 118). As Caputo puts it inimitably:

‘Whenever deconstruction finds a nutshell—a secure axiom or a pithy maxim—the very idea is to crack it open and disturb this tranquillity. Indeed, that is a good rule of thumb in deconstruction. *That* is what deconstruction is all about, its very meaning and mission, if it has any. One might even say that cracking nutshells is what deconstruction *is*. In a nutshell. ...Have we not run up against a paradox and an *aporia* [something contradictory]...the paralysis and impossibility of an *aporia* is just what impels deconstruction, what rouses it out of bed in the morning... (Caputo, 1997:32).

This is never more helpful than in taking on the hubristic devices alive within, for example, a (Catholic) educational discourse such as ‘success for all’. Immediately opening up are questions such as ‘measured by what metric?’; ‘across what timeline?’; at what cost?. Alternatively, ‘Every child to be treated with respect and dignity’ breaks up the question ‘within what utilitarian calculus?’; with what understanding of, and weighting given to respect/rights/freedoms?. ‘Or again: We believe in educating the whole person’ breaks open the question: ‘with what ‘weighting’ given to each ‘aspect’? What understanding of personhood as against

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<sup>113</sup> Contrasting with Heidegger who believed ‘Language is the house of being, which is appropriated by being and pervaded by being.’ (Heidegger, 1998:239). For Heidegger the most important feature of language is its *projectivity*, the idea that language is prior to human speech. This means that when one is ‘thrown’ into the world, one’s existence is characterized from the beginning by a certain pre-comprehension of the world. However, it is only after naming, or ‘articulation of intelligibility’, can one have primary access to *Dasein* and *Being-in-the-World*’ (Heidegger, 1962:203-204).

subject-hood?; with 'education' understood as as 'formation'<sup>114</sup> or as preparing the young to succeed in Governmental metrics (tests)?

## Conclusion

This explanation of Derrida's deconstructive approach and the importance of the *aporia* begins to address research question two more systematically. Its contribution to clarity for this Headteacher- Researcher, caught in the tectonic plates of master narratives, the drama of the role/*rôle* of Headteacher and the hubris of a system predicated on success-judged-by-metrics has been suggested. Again, the *aporia* is no vacuous conundrum, adding nothing other than abstract value. The *aporia* goes *under the hood* of institutional decision-making particularly in the co-extensive events of law-like inscription and the pursuit of justice to come. It challenges the positivistic, definitive 'Policy statement', immediately alerting this Headteacher-Researcher as to how the working (or non-working) of the apparatus of the English Catholic school can contribute to, or diminish the possibility of authenticity-as-mattering among the young people who are *subject* to the law-like inscriptions. It is precisely through facing down the contradiction – the non-way, the *aporia* (see below) not that one 'resolves' the issue (*à la* Hegel) but that one applies a

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<sup>114</sup> Formation understood as equal weight given to: the affective / emotional, education as inquiry, education as the instilling of 'self-mattering' in the context of the view of authenticity being developed in this thesis.

critically reflective Catholic analysis to pluralism; that one re-contextualises in the terms of Model 4 (above).<sup>115</sup>

## **7. Alienation and the Possibility of Authenticity**

Returning to research question one it is worth reprising the place of alienation and authenticity. In practice, too, alienation was no longer an 'object out there' as this Headteacher- Researcher became aware of the impact of his service of an apparatus, which could have the effect of driving out meaning for the young if there experience of living became subservient to that of a race to achieving a specific metric.

Alienation, that sense of non-mattering, particularly experienced by the young (and vulnerable), reflected in the brief empirical sketch at the beginning of this thesis, and experienced in the twenty years practice of secondary school teaching and leadership by this Headteacher-Researcher. Whatever the source of the alienation – familial, psychological, socio-economic – this disconnect, loosely represented as unhappiness, is leading to consequences of national importance. Therefore the focus on authenticity in this thesis has taken the form of the extent to which the apparatus of the English Catholic school, in its contemporary organisation, relationship with the State and coming from its particular history (Document III) can be understood

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<sup>115</sup> It is important to recognize that Boeve is neither 'applied Derrida' nor *vice versa* and many differences exist – not least the theistic underpinning of the (Catholic) Boeve as against the atheist Derrida.

analytically.

The notion of authenticity as *mattering* employed in this thesis is non-standard and reflects the engagement with the practice of Catholic school leadership undertaken by this Headteacher-Researcher over eleven years. In this thesis, the classical stem meaning of authenticity – *genuineness*- *in* what is being *done/said/taught* is a reflexive function of the *dignity* it recognises in the provider (*autos*) and in the receiver of the action, which, in simple terms, is *teaching students*. This is to eschew a utilitarian approach but, equally, also eschews a deontological approach, both of which play a part in the school.<sup>116</sup> Neither the supremacy of the outcome *qua* metrics of national (distant, impersonal) *success*, nor a (metaphysically separate) ‘duty’ are paramount in this rendering but, rather, the individual and collective dignity of student and staff in *their* tangible space – *the* school. The dignity afforded the ‘giver’ (teachers, for instance) is as paramount as that afforded to the ‘receiver’ (students) or else the *authos* – the genuineness of what is *offered* - can never be more than a sham. A sham that is evident in empirical study.

To now the discourse regarding authenticity has been predominantly theoretical with shards of practical examples. What follows is a lived example of how

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<sup>116</sup> As has been indicated above the ‘policy statement/ creates duties (the law-like inscription) on the part of staff and students (contributing to a deontological ethical framework) just as this Headteacher-Researcher’s frequently recurring decisions to permanently exclude a difficult child whose ‘behaviour has become unmanageable with the resources available’ manifests an utilitarian calculus.

this research has affected practice, addressing research questions one and three.

In their 2005 paper, Duncan and Riley pointed to overwhelming evidence of bullying in the Australian and New Zealand Catholic school systems (Duncan, Riley, 2005). Adopting Salin's (2003) definition of bullying as '... repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more individual(s), which involve a persistent power imbalance and create a hostile work environment' the study found that 97.5% of respondents reported such workplace bullying in the Catholic school, principally from Headteachers. A contributory factor was the breadth of responsibilities expected of ANZAC (culturally similar to UK and North American) teachers throwing up ever more zones of performativity:

'The modern teacher has a complex job that incorporates education, parenting, mentoring, research and social work. Teachers are not only expected to teach, ... they are also expected to share responsibility for children's social education, to handle discipline and behaviour problems, and to take on welfare roles .... Add to that the pressures of inadequate funding, inadequate staff and resources, job insecurity, large class sizes, and ever-expanding curriculum, on going skill training, work correction, student reports, parent-teacher interviews and after-school activities, ...' (Richards and Freeman 2002: 4).

The practical implications of this on the practice of this Headteacher-Researcher was, in the setting up of the new school, to place the dignity of each member of the school community as central and subject to frequent review. With the advent of performance-related pay, staff were given specific mentors to help them plan their performance objectives for the year on the basis that 'the school' wanted them to be successful rather than using the system as a weapon to catch people out. In this sense the view of authenticity as mattering, predicated on dignity and

contextualised in the specific school was slowly realised. Dignity itself can, in its composite sentimentality, reflect a metaphysically-laden additional layer of subjectivity which is the reason, in the context of the school, it was understood in practical terms: *inter alia*, Treat others only as you would be treated yourself; Colleagues are never to be treated as a means to an end; We are co-creators of our climate of working.

### 7.1 Differing readings of authenticity/inauthenticity and their application to this Headteacher-Researcher

This, then, is a recontextualising (Boeve) with respect to a localised experience of dignity. Therefore a system placing the efficacy of an assessment regime (with national outcome measures) over the dignity of the people *subject to* it (local – the school, for instance) would be inauthentic in the terms of the use of this word in this thesis. As we will see with Heidegger and his very different notion of the same word, however, there is a similar recognition that inauthenticity and authenticity are both natural features in the landscape of human actions. The issue is not the possibility of inauthenticity – again, like the poor, it is with us always - but the extent to which the Catholic school (leader) is seduced into ever greater inauthenticity within the ontotheologies (Lyotard, Flint) expressed in this thesis through the metaphors of the violent movement of tectonic plates of later modernity.

Inauthenticity can be well-intentioned and associated with excellent



*educational outcomes*, reflected, for the purposes of the simplifications used, in Models 1-3 of the Catholic school (above). However to the extent that actions are taken with respect to the (utilitarian) sovereignty of the national assessment metric *or* to a metaphysical and de-personalised notion of ‘duty’, they remain inauthentic. However, understandings of the other renderings of ‘authentic/inauthentic’ are important.

Gardiner’s reading, for instance, describes the pragmatic, achievable authenticity as ‘everyday utopianism’ (Gardiner, 2006:1) and not ‘an ideal society located in some romanticised past ‘Golden Age’ or in some distant imagined and affected future understood in the ‘blueprint’ or ‘social engineering’ sense, but as a series of forces, tendencies and possibilities that are imminent in the here and now, in the pragmatic activities of daily existence (ibid: 2), calling for *phronesis* (Aristotle, 2014:1144), understood as practical, but by no means second-rate, wisdom. The alternative, perhaps a ‘strong’ authenticity that wishes to ‘liberate’ the individual from the constraints of their socio-historical limitations, allowing them to be free to be whatever they wish, is, for Tubbs, education ‘traduced into a fetishism of authenticity as all possibility’ (Tubbs, 2004:70).

Another, intuitive approach can be to postulate authentic education as concerned with preventing young people becoming ‘passive recipients of trivia’ (Bonnett, 2002:231) in a system that ‘runs the ever present risk of degenerating into a form of curriculum-making where technicalisation and hyper rationalisation

dominate' (Magrini, 2011:133). One can impart and give force to precisely such grand narratives (hyper rationalisation and so on) while endeavouring to offer a critique of them, or at least to be alert to their 'presence'.<sup>117</sup> In other words the debris of inauthenticity present in, for example, the compelling narrative by the Israeli philosopher - educator, Gur Ze'ev's: '...modern education is part of this process of dismantling the possibilities for self constitution of life as unconcealment. Instead life becomes a concern and response to the call of instrumental, calculated thinking and its fabrication' (Gur-Ze'ev, 2002:74). This is a powerful addition to this thesis's concern with authenticity as mattering as it touches on the power of the school to conspire against the proper formation of the young.

According to Adorno, the cult of authenticity is a magical and impoverished form of theological discourse (Adorno, 1973:5). Merely by chanting the term, one is able to make present in its totality the hidden Absolute. It is in effect a secular religion, emptied of all transcendence. It preserves itself in an unreflective manner (ibid: 22) and the jargon of authenticity purports to identify a profound truth whereas it is in fact, only a cover story for arbitrariness (ibid: 58).<sup>118</sup> Authenticity is, for Adorno identical with subjectivity.<sup>119</sup> Subjectivity becomes the judge of

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<sup>117</sup> The very real 'danger' of being as presence will be addressed in reference to Derrida's work (below).

<sup>118</sup> In this sense it can be seen as hegemonic, reflecting Mayr's comment that 'As a practice of power, hegemony operates largely through language' (Mayr, 2009:14).

<sup>119</sup> It is noteworthy that Derrida's work seeks to 'deconstruct' the idea of subjectivity as self-presence via two sets of interrelated arguments. The first involve time: Derrida denies that the temporal structure of experience is accessible from a first person point of view, thus throwing doubt on the metaphysical frameworks of Cartesianism and phenomenology. The second involve meaning or content: Derrida argues that signifying

authenticity. This identity between subject and object is circular, products of metaphysical simulacra. Since authenticity is denied any object if not materially separate from the subject, is circular, is a product of a metaphysical simulacra and becomes a concern and response to itself (ibid: 126). This is an important insight and, for this Headteacher-Researcher, explains the commitment to ensuring that both staff and students regularly articulated their 'evaluation' of the school with respect to dignity reflected in the practical ethical questioning described above. This seemed increasingly to prevent the privileging of performativity outstripping the belief in the inviolable dignity at the heart of the individual, proper to the Catholic institution. It is in the reflexive dialogue of the 'providers' and 'recipients' that the danger to which Adorno alerts us is minimised. Specifically, the Catholic educational model, predicated on a theology of interdependence, places any such discussion in a communal spacing predicated on dignity understood in a practical sense— namely, the school and the theology not of individualised, self-sufficient 'competitor' but, instead as a 'fellow pilgrim'.<sup>120</sup>

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items are characterised by relationships or structures which deprive them of the stability or 'self-identity' that would enable them to be grasped by a reflecting subject. In short, *différance* is so primordial that even Subject must succumb. See Derrida (1982:28-30).

<sup>120</sup> While a thoroughgoing analysis of the significance of interdependence as a condition precedent for maturing, loving and being loved within the Catholic tradition is outside the scope of this thesis, the scriptural and sacramental tradition can be summarised thus: The classic scriptural references are, first in terms of interdependence: *'And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us'* (1 John 3:23) *'Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.'* (1 John 3:10. (All New International Version. Further the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) reminded Catholics that the seven sacraments not only give grace (individually) but also build up the Body of Christ (communally) and are acts of worship. Because sacraments

### 7.1.1 Heidegger and authenticity

Heidegger's reading of authenticity is worthy of its own analysis, not least as it reflects an early insight into the *thrownness* of the students, staff and this Headteacher-Researcher in the world and, in particular, in this professional space. Heidegger provided this Headteacher-Researcher with a challenging and liberating antidote to the hubris of the impartial, objective professional overseeing linear progressions to calculable outcomes and, in this sense, touches directly on research questions one and three.

In Heidegger's work we see the inauthenticity of 'the-they' – Heidegger's notion of *das Man, the They* (Heidegger, 1962:126) who, instead of truly choosing to do something, does it only because 'That is what one does' or 'That is what people do' exists in the same space as the authentic individual. These are not alternates – nor are they binaries – and they are even less value judgements. Instead, they reflect a continuum; mutually dependant forms of self-interpretation, inseparable and indistinguishable (ibid.: 259).

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pertain to the whole Church, the Council stressed, 'whenever rites...make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred.' (Paul VI, 1963:27) In terms of the 'pilgrim' term Paul VI stressed this most poignantly as 'pilgrims in a strange land' (Paul VI, 1964:7).

From the outset, it is important to recognise that Heidegger's authentic and inauthentic are not commensurable in any way with 'good' versus 'bad'<sup>121</sup>, as Heidegger recognised. Heidegger's use of 'authentic' in German is an appropriation of *eigen*, an adjective meaning 'own', 'strange' or 'peculiar' – words which themselves can be seen as 'events', always already variously unfolding in our world and as 'coming' and 'to come'. *Eigen* led to *eigentlich*, meaning 'real', 'actual', 'truly', which is closer to the English use of the term 'authentic'. Therefore this gives us a person who is 'truly' their self.<sup>122</sup> However, 'authenticity' from the Greek '*Autos*' is closer to what Heidegger means in *eigentlich*. *Autos* originally meant 'done by one's own hand' (Inwood, 1999:22-23). So in Heidegger's use, one can be falsely authentic or genuinely inauthentic (Heidegger, 1962: 146). Authenticity is, in this reading, a modification of inauthenticity, it is the 'event' of '*...Authentic Being-ones-Self* does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the 'they'; it is *rather an existentiell modification of the 'they' – of the 'they' as an essential existentielle*' (ibid: 130). In a Heideggerian reading of authenticity, the Catholic Headteacher, as with her student, is part of the 'they-self' and, as such, this reading of authenticity is not the 'opposite' of inauthenticity but comes from it (Large, 2008:90). Furthermore and ironically, to argue that one is free from all constraints is surely to be inauthentic in the extreme.

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<sup>121</sup> Even less is authentic 'versus' inauthentic commensurate with the theological notions of 'good' and 'evil'; one can own or disown one's existence (as lose proxies for authentic versus inauthentic) but this does not make one a 'better' person. However, the young person's disowning of their existence at a fundamental level does, for the (Catholic) Headteacher, offer fertile ground for the possibility of alienation as intimated above.

<sup>122</sup> Rendered problematic in the preceding discussion of autoethnography.

### 7.1.2 The 'meaning maker'

This Headteacher-Researcher, alive through the autoethnographic approach adopted to see his agency as non-trivial and constant, has suggested (above) that the four models of successful (though not all necessarily authentic) Catholic schools can operate with very different criteria of meaning. -Academic outcomes as everything (Model Three); Catholicity (however measured) as everything (Model One); recontextualisation around a locus of authenticity-as-mattering as everything (Model Four). Heidegger's formal consideration of the '*upon which*' (*das Woraufhin*), the 'meaning maker' has been instructive to this Headteacher-Researcher and has contributed to the move towards a version of the Model Four School.

Reflecting again on the 'meaning maker', in *Being and Time*, Heidegger asks, what does meaning signify? '(M)eaning' for him, it turns out, 'is that wherein understandability (*Verstehbarkeit*) of something maintains itself – even that of something that does not come into view explicitly and thematically' (ibid: 324). Thus, one reading can be that 'meaning sustains what is understood' in English Catholic education, 'giving it a pivot around which its understandability can organise itself' (Caputo, 1987:172). Hence, 'meaning signifies the upon-which [*das Woraufhin*] of a primary projection in terms of which something can be conceived in its possibility as that which it is,' (Heidegger, 1962: 324) the meaning of the educational 'principle' to be understood arises from that organizing point – the '*upon which*', or meaning maker in the primary projection. In the context of the educational discourse, such meaning makers include temporality, the principle of reason, the principle of assessment and the principle of the market. Within the English Catholic educational discourse this can

be augmented by: the magisterium of the Church, the role of tradition, revealed theology and the (unstable) interplay of Church and state. Within the school this Headteacher-Researcher leads, the aspiration is that the promotion of dignity can be a meaning maker. However this aspiration must be set against those powerful meaning-makers constituted in those tectonic plates, those ontotheologies, ever present.

There are three planes of engagement in this Heideggerian analysis: [1] the entities [beings] that are there to be understood in Catholic education, [2] the being of those entities that constitutes their horizontal frame, and [3] the meaning of the being of those entities, that is, the meaning maker or upon which that organizes and sustains projected understandings of such entities.<sup>123</sup> The possibility of a variety of possible 'meaning makers' in English Catholic education then becomes non trivial. For example, as the principle of reason from which have spawned other meaning makers such as the marketization of the Catholic school, including the sovereignty of 'choice';<sup>124</sup> or as the quantum of Catholics 'versus' non-Catholics in the school;<sup>125</sup> or as the theological orthodoxy (or otherwise) underpinning the Catholic school; or, (the

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<sup>123</sup> In *Being and Time* the meaning maker was temporality (Heidegger, 1962: H323/370) though Flint argues this has now been displaced by the principle of reason, opening 'the possibility in every form of social interaction of transforming the temporal unfolding of beings, so gathering them into a relationship between subjects and objects of consciousness' (Flint, 2015:35).

<sup>124</sup> The subject of Grace, (2002). He argues, *inter alia* that marketization and the sovereignty of consumer choice, though inevitable, presents a threat to the integrity of the Catholic school.

<sup>125</sup> The subject, *inter alia*, of Arthur, (1995) (Document II). Arthur questions the Catholic identity of schools where the quantity of Catholics (students and staff) and quality of practice has diminished over time.

subject of Document III), the meaning maker as the 'locked in' relationship of English Catholic education and the State since 1944.

## 7.2 Lonergan's theistic authenticity

In returning to Lonergan's work, his reading of authenticity comes out of his understanding of the formulation of judgements, his notion of conversion and the theistic underpinning, which this Jesuit Priest-philosopher posited. Lonergan's significance to this Headteacher-Researcher's autoethnography was his attempt to deploy a practical theology and an integrated worldview as against an inaccessible Thomistic theology appearing to him, writing in the mid twentieth century, to be unwieldy. In this sense he has a commonality with the contemporary challenge laid down by Boeve and both offer the Headteacher-Researcher-Head of and Ecclesial Entity key insights of how such apparatus can contribute to or diminish authenticity-as-mattering.

Authentic existence<sup>126</sup> for Lonergan is itself transcendence, which involves intellectual, moral and religious conversion where 'man achieves authenticity in self transcendence' (Lonergan, 1971:104). 'Besides conversions there are breakdowns. What has been built up so slowly and so laboriously by the individual, the society, the culture, can collapse (ibid: 243). Authenticity is a lifelong commitment, both

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<sup>126</sup> In *Insight* (completed 1953, published 1957, the notion appears somewhat marginally under the guise of genuineness, whereas in the post-*Insight* years, perhaps through the reading of Heidegger and the existentialists, the term authenticity emerges in its own right.



individually and culturally, to the imperatives to be attentive, reasonable, intelligent and responsible; in short, authenticity is a life that is intelligent, moral and religious. This can of course be parodied as mere 1950s Anglo-Saxon/Christian stoicism; a charter for respectability. But this is to misunderstand Lonergan's intention completely. What Lonergan is advocating, as a precursor, we are arguing, for Boeve, is that it is precisely through a critical recontextualisation of the here and now – not some future goal - that authenticity – as -meaning is achieved. As has been said, Lonergan differs not only from Boeve but also especially from Derrida in his foundationalism. Such foundationalism is graphically, if helpfully demonstrated by his system: (Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2014):

*Figure. 1 Lonergan's programme and the place of self-transcendence.<sup>127</sup>*

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<sup>127</sup> The arrows representing the movement through different stages or operations.

<i>Level of Transcendence</i>		<i>Retrieving the Past</i>		<i>Moving into the Future</i>
<i>Being Responsible</i>	↑	<b>Dialectic</b>	↓	<b>Foundations</b>
<i>Being Reasonable</i>	↑	<b>History</b>	↓	<b>Doctrines / Policies</b>
<i>Being Intelligent</i>	↑	<b>Interpretation</b>	↓	<b>Systematics / Plans</b>
<i>Being Attentive</i>	↑	<b>Research</b>	↓	<b>Communications / Implementations</b>

”

Within us, Lonergan suggests, is a dynamism to keep going beyond, to be moving from one level of consciousness to another, from one object or set of objects to what lies beyond. This contrasts with authenticity in this thesis, which, as a move towards justice as mattering, is explicitly named as such. However, Lonergan’s language may well not be too dissimilar in ultimate meaning: ultimately this dynamism is the human being’s reaching for God<sup>128</sup>, whether or not the individual recognises it as such. Indeed this orientation of our conscious intentionality gives us our best definition of God: God as the reality fulfilling that fundamental orientation

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<sup>128</sup> A name generalizable for the non-theist as the quest for the impossible transcendent other.

(Lonergan, 1971:341). This was a programme to be embraced not some time in the future, but now – in the context in which one finds oneself.

Lonergan believes it would be wrong to suppose that the passage from one level to another is always a smooth and unwavering transition. In particular in the passage from understanding to judging, the difference here is that between insight and affirmation, between saying what one thinks something to be and assessing whether in fact it is so.<sup>129</sup> In his system the distinction marks a crucial transition from deductivism to existentialist thought, from rationalism to critical thinking, from essence to existence.

Lonergan brings to this autoethnography our being-in-the-world to a drama (role/*rôle*) where the individual wants to have a sense that there is direction to her living: 'behind palpable activities, there are motives and purposes; and indeed it is not difficult to discern an artistic or more precisely a dramatic component' (Lonergan, 1992:210). This reflects the spirit of inquiry found in the young in this Headteacher-Researcher's school. It is worth bringing Heidegger's understanding to act as counterpoint.

In all three dimensions of this autoethnography most of Dasein's everyday activity in its repetitions and reiterations of practice is on a pragmatic level, driven by

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<sup>129</sup> Lonergan explored this distinction of levels particularly in chapters 9-11 of *Insight*

curiosity, ambiguity and idle talk (*Gerede*) (Heidegger, 1962:167-170).<sup>130</sup> And *Besorgen* – what has been done in the past stands in structural relation with *Fürsorge* – Dasein's solicitous disposition to the future. Structurally it's the interplay of *Besorgen* and *Fürsorge* that helps Dasein to care (*Sorge*<sup>131</sup>) – in the present. But in idle talk and ambiguity and curiosity such dispositions are sometimes blocked, confused, contingent. For Heidegger, the peculiarity of the human ability to use language to communicate is its function of openness to the world. By sharing a natural language, speakers not only share a conventional system of signs, but, much more importantly, they share the same way of speaking about the things in their world that can be shown. Because of this, understanding language is never a question of hearing sounds, but rather of understanding the significant expressions of the world. Knowledge of the world and knowledge of language are two inseparable elements. This explains why speakers, through communication, are able to acquire an understanding about the world, which transcends their own personal experience. However, for the same reason, they can become misinformed, deceived, and manipulated through communication. Therefore it is not illegitimate to see in Lonergan and Heidegger a similar belief with a different focus: Lonergan seeing self-

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<sup>130</sup> Idle talk (*Gerede*) is an inauthentic mode of discourse (*Rede*). Together with ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*) and curiosity (*Neugier*), idle talk constitutes Dasein in its everydayness. Literally, *Gerede* means the whole, as the German collective prefix *Ge-* denotes, of what is said, that is, *Gerede* is the whole of what one says, one thinks, or one discusses in the diffuse context of openness. Therefore, one should avoid interpreting *Gerede* in the pejorative sense of 'gossip'

<sup>131</sup> Creating a transcendental structuring for temporality as the groundless ground for Dasein's projections of understandings: 'Dasein's facticity is such that it is Being-in-the-world has always dispersed itself or even split itself into definite ways of Being-in'. (Heidegger, 1962:56). Heidegger includes producing something, having to do with something, accomplishing and so on (Ibid: 56). All have concern (*Sorge*) in common.

transcendence through what he terms conversion; Heidegger admitting that, in language, there is the possibility of the transcendence of one's own experience – albeit with the allied danger of such language being misleading.<sup>132</sup>

Lonergan's foundationalism demarks his work but the striking contrast with Heidegger (as well as Derrida) to keep in mind is that, whereas Dasein is in constant tension between the authentic and the inauthentic, Lonergan's structure, influenced by the teleo-messianic theology underpinning it, seems more confidently to *tend towards* the authentic.<sup>133</sup> 'From the narrow strip of space-time accessible to immediate experience we move towards the construction of the world-view and towards the exploration of what we ourselves could be and could do' (Lonergan, 1971:104).

Lonergan's constructed world-view, and his teleological language, suggest the 'individual' involving herself in the 'construction' of a world *ex post factum*, in contrast with a Heideggerian view of thrownness, of always already being in the flux

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<sup>132</sup> Language may be (trivially) misleading in its inaccuracy or, in Derrida's terms, more deeply language – the spoken word – may itself convey a metaphysics – a logocentrism – that stands in need of deconstruction. Arguing that the difference in presence can never actually be reduced, as was the logocentric project; instead, the chain of signification becomes the trace of presence-absence (Derrida, 1997:71).

'That the signified is originarily and essentially (and not only for a finite and created spirit) trace, that it is always already in the position of the signifier, is the apparently innocent proposition within which the metaphysics of the logos, of presence and consciousness, must reflect upon writing as its death and its resource' (ibid: 73).

<sup>133</sup> Perhaps unsurprising in that his 'optimism' is supported by a theistic world-view distinctly lacking in Heidegger.

and weave, an understanding favoured by this Headteacher-Researcher. Equally important is the tacit individualism of Lonergan's inquiring 'individual'. Is it not with and through others in the existential of her living that these motives and purposes are uncovered, blur and recede? Nevertheless, Lonergan's debt – intended or otherwise – to Heidegger's core existential phenomenology remains. 'Not only is the person 'capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living' (Lonergan, 1992:210). Human existence is a dramatic enterprise that embraces all aspects of human living – personal, communal, ethical and religious. It is within this temporal unfolding<sup>134</sup> of the dramatic enterprise that our understanding of the ideal of what it is to be a person continues to shift and change. This language certainly chimes with the expressed view of Catholic education in failing to privilege one aspect of life – such as, perhaps, 'skills for employability' and its relationship to education – over another, such as a passion for learning. For the non-theist, too, a reading of Lonergan's view of religion can be usefully morphed into a recognition that any authentic education worth its salt must be concerned with the *meta*-, with the with the appreciation of awe and wonder or the possibility of virtue.<sup>135</sup> In short, Lonergan shows that any authentic education (whether the word is used in his terms or as employed in this thesis) – Catholic or otherwise, must take seriously education

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<sup>134</sup> Lefebvre offers an alternative view. '(A)lways difference' (the way in which the present moment is always, a new moment) and the 'now repetition' (the way in which we see largely the same things in those moments, everywhere and always) are absolutely primary. Time and space, in other words, are in tension: every new, but often still. We pass the same landmarks on different days, in different seasons, in different years; in a way, which makes the space quite different in its various instantiations (which he calls tragic) and yet still very much the same in its fixity (which he calls comic) (Lefebvre, 1991:130ff).

<sup>135</sup> For example the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, discussed above.

as inquiry (reflecting the dignity of the inquirer as much as the teacher) and, as involving informed judgement. For it is only through judgement, underpinned by a belief in their and others self-worth (dignity) that the young will navigate these tectonic plates of late modernity. In the words of Frost:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth...  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference. (Frost, 2012:1)

Frost's poem draws out the meaningfulness of the apparently arbitrary and the supremacy of meaning over specific choices. To this Headteacher-Researcher the ability to distil meaning in and through this autoethnography is what morphs school study to become deep learning and learning-as-mattering, therefore contributing to authenticity as understood in this thesis. At the same time, due to a lack of space in the contemporary timetable, lack of teacher training in this regard and the sovereignty of assessment criteria, such insights can be lost in this practitioner's experience.

Lonergan emphasises that the person is always contextualised<sup>136</sup> and is an engaged and engaging agent<sup>137</sup>, a subject who exists in the space of subjective experience, descriptions, and self-interpretations. *Existenz* is at once 'psychological, sociological, historical, philosophic, theological, religious, ascetic, perhaps for some even mystical but it is all of them because the person is all and involved in all' (Lonergan, 2004b: 314)...where... 'we live and die, love and hate, the choice and suffer, desire, fear, wonder and stress, enquire and doubt,...' (Lonergan, 2001:315). Within this Headteacher-Researcher's experience this reflects the lack of a rigorous experiential and emotional curriculum – or co-curriculum – in the Catholic school. Reflecting the brief empirical sketch of the very real alienation faced by many young in this 'rich' country there appears to be little space for that which could allow for the child's full humanity to be recognised, celebrated and supported. The possibility of play<sup>138</sup> and innovation are surely two such casualties.

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<sup>136</sup> Derrida reflects the volatility of context thus: Every sign ... can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely no saturable fashion. This does not suppose that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any centre of absolute anchoring. This citationality, duplication, or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is not an accident or an anomaly, but is that (normal/abnormal) without which a mark could no longer even have a so-called 'normal' functioning. What would a mark be that one could not cite? And whose origin could not be lost on the way (Derrida 1982a:320-321)?

<sup>137</sup> This possibly reflects the theological reading of Lonergan more than Heidegger's original position where inauthenticity is the default position.

<sup>138</sup> Though outside the scope of this paper, Huizinga identifies five characteristics that play must have:<sup>1</sup>

1. Play is free, is in fact freedom.
2. Play is not "ordinary" or "real" life.
3. Play is distinct from "ordinary" life both as to locality and duration.
4. Play creates order, is order. Play demands order absolute and supreme.
5. Play is connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained from it (Huizinga, 1955: 8-10;13).



Lonergan's inclusion of 'doubt' is significant, not only in underpinning the 'inquiry' approach, but also in highlighting an important feature of the critical approach suggested by Boeve's *interrupting tradition* (see above): An authentic Catholic education is a training in scepticism. It remains problematic how well 'formed' is the young person who absorbs, processes and reproduces 'learning' to satisfy a (highly politicised<sup>139</sup>) assessment mechanism. The pursuit of excellence, for centuries a central theme of Catholic education, has a provenance in clear and critical thinking, albeit, as we have seen, constituted in the ontotheological structuring of a theistic world view.<sup>140</sup> The Catholic education project has one leg in an aspiration for transcendence through the soteriological and eschatological understandings it maintains within its rich metaphysics. Yet, in its imminence and in its engagement with those tectonic plates of late modernity is it not, with Heidegger, richly mindful of of being towards death? Of (at least its) mortal finitude?<sup>141</sup>

Though authenticity-as-mattering is the device employed by this Headteacher-

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<sup>139</sup> Suggesting the politicization of the curriculum is not first and foremost an ideological, but rather an empirical observation. It is a function of the political business cycle in terms of the aspirations of the incumbent Secretary of State for Education. Nevertheless, at the more ideological level, it could be said that the English secondary school curriculum may admit of an academic and vocational offer, but even this allegedly 'inclusive' distinction may, particularly for commentators on the Left, 'share the same conservative orientation: they see education as preparation for future roles in an already existing social order, even though the roles are different' (Wrigley, 2014:17).

<sup>141</sup> Lonergan does not ignore the place of death-as-defining-life on the grounds of his own Christian belief in the resurrection which allows him to 'use' temporality and being-before-death in a similar manner to that of Heidegger.

Researcher as against Lonergan or Heidegger, this section has begun to fill out the authentic-inauthentic plane and suggest that which can contribute to what is becoming not merely *mattering* but *justice in mattering*. The process of decision making, the meaning-makers one adopts, the importance of doubt as against quick resolution, the importance (for children) of developing judgement as both necessary for their engagement with context as well as deeply affirming of their own intrinsic value are all factors which have become deeply manifest to this Headteacher (research question three) in the course of one's practice and in the setting up of a new school around the locus of authenticity.

Nevertheless, the danger of naively – or hubristically – assuming that authenticity is a commodity to be grasped as against an event to be pursued in justice requires an understanding of the threats that exist to such authenticity.

### 7.3 Threats to authenticity: this author caught in the temporality and politicisation of school

We have seen repeatedly above in reflecting on the autoethnographic mode which characterized this research that, with Barthes, the issue of temporality remains foregrounded; 'the subject of the speech-act can never be the same as the one who acted yesterday: the I of the discourse can no longer be the site where a previously stored-up person is innocently restored' (Barthes, 1989:17). So at the most simple level the 'I' who is the Headteacher-Researcher for this thesis changes over time: with 'experience'. However the centrality of the temporal does not end there. The second

temporal dimension comes in the form of the UK political cycle adding a, typically five-year, temporal arc: from the arrival of the new Secretary of State (in what is a middle-ranking Cabinet position) through her/his ambitions, battles with Unions, headlines, struggles and ultimate departure, whether to a promoted – or demoted-position.

The second such arc takes the form of the annual data race to ensure league table position. We recall Grace who, though speaking from the point of view of Catholic education, was offering this reflection more generally:

‘A process of ideological transformation is occurring in English society in which education is regarded as a commodity; the Schools as a value-adding production unit; the Headteacher as a chief executive and managing director; the parents as consumers; and the ultimate aim of the whole enterprise to achieve a maximum value-added product which keeps the School as near to the top of the league table of success as possible.....Contemporary Headteachers are therefore expected to ‘market the School’, ‘deliver the curriculum’, and to ‘satisfy the customers’ (Grace, 1995:21).

Therefore, what emerges from this autoethnography is that this Headteacher-Researcher-(mortgaged) employee must ensure that a disproportionate amount of resource is deployed to ensure that what is measured is prioritized, giving the lie to the notion of autonomy, even less creativity.

The third temporal arch is that imposed through the Ofsted inspection regime. For a school such as that led by this Headteacher-Researcher-Mortgaged Employee, designated ‘Good’ (as against Inadequate, Requiring Improvement or Outstanding) the implication is a three-yearly inspection (Ofsted, 2015). Given the reputational risk in incurring a grade less than ‘Good’ this means that a disproportionate focus will

be given in Year 3 to secure 'Ofsted readiness'. For Cullingford, inspection is auditing rather than developmental. 'The Holy Grail of all inspection is a check-list that provides clear answers; has something been achieved or not? Thus actions are easier to measure than understandings, demonstrating the ability to remember a fact easier to measure than thinking skills' (Cullingford, 1999:2).

Within this autoethnography it is important not to forget the managerial and leadership dimension of the Headteacher's practices. Lowe echoes concerns over the managerialist approach to leadership in contemporary schools and refers to the colonisation of school discourses in which educational institutions and the staff working within them have little time to enter into professional dialogue due to the need to introduce and implement initiative after initiative (Lowe, 1997). For Ferguson and Earley, the link between Ofsted inspection and school improvement is not a clearly established one. They refer to a widespread reluctance amongst Headteachers to regard the pre-inspection period as a spur to action or a chance to inject urgency into school development plans, since staff are 'too anxious and over-burdened for a year or more before an inspection is due' (Ferguson and Earley, 1999:22). Indeed, their research was to lead them to conclude that: 'School improvements were often adversely affected in the aftermath of an inspection to allow staff time to recover' (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler, and Ouston, 2000:142).

While the latter is neither a thoroughgoing critique of the inspection regime to which this Author-Researcher is 'subject', and neither is it an attempt to undermine the necessity of some form of 'quality assurance', it simply captures the unintended (or intended) consequences of the regime on the Headteacher's 'calendar'.

The fourth temporal arc to which the Headteacher of the Catholic maintained school in England and Wales is subject is that provided by the inspection of the school's religious character under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. If a school has a religious character, as determined by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, denominational religious education and the content of collective worship are inspected by inspectors appointed by the school's governing body in consultation with the appropriate religious authority, and are normally drawn from the relevant faith group's section 48 inspectorate (for instance, the Catholic Education Service in the case of Roman Catholic schools, in the case of Islamic schools, this is normally the Founding Body which will identify an appropriate inspector to conduct its section 48), although not all faiths have their own organised inspectors in this way. Where religious education is required to be provided using the locally agreed syllabus relevant to the school, as in the case of voluntary controlled schools for example, religious education would be inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Although section 48 inspectors inspect acts of collective worship, religious education (RE) (in the case of voluntary aided schools) and or those lessons designated as providing denominational RE (in the case of voluntary controlled schools), section 5 inspectors and inspectors conducting monitoring visits under section 8, may attend acts of collective worship, and may observe lessons in which RE is provided. In such cases, the section 5 inspector will not inspect or report on matters that are the responsibility of the section 48 inspector – generally the

denominational content provided. The relationship between section 5 and section 48 inspections is governed by a protocol between Ofsted and signatory faith group inspectorates.

The relevance of this is twofold: first to identify the presence of yet a further temporal arc presencing, with the other three identified, a multiplicity of finitudes to which the Headteacher is 'being towards' (with the possibility of eliciting a range of defensive Pavlovian responses in the Headteacher). The second, subsidiary point, is the extent to which the Church – with its centuries of teaching outlined above – locates its inspection function 'comfortably' within the regime stipulated by the State. Within the extent to which these arc overlay on the school calendar became more and more evident over the time of this research.

Within this autoethnography, this section reflects the challenges experienced by this Headteacher-Researcher in pursuing ever-greater authenticity-in justice-as-mattering. However, prior to developing this locus of authenticity these questions would have gone largely unasked. The 'position' one takes, the meaning makers one privileges can produce radically divergent models of, ostensibly, successful Catholic Schools.

## 8. Questions in practice: *aporia* and the creation of spacing for the exposure of 'mattering'

In the Derridean reading we have taken it is suggested that the apparatus of education exercises its power by the naming force of being as present, a claim which stands in need of deconstruction. In so doing, the event of authenticity radically transforms the possible work of the Headteacher and provides a further and complex supplement to the emerging autoethnography. Each question is an attempt to place this Headteacher-Researcher outside the delimiting effect of the chronometer (spacing) while recognizing that, on a daily basis one is most definitely subject to it. This will then be undertaken in terms of specific examples.

Outside a certain spectral community of those for whom the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850, or the 1944 Education Act funding Catholic schools is seen as ground-breaking, - indeed as vital to those people's being in the world – it would seem bizarre to claim any major historical case for such 'events'. Yet in such an 'event' it is precisely in the 'claiming', the 'making of the case' for something which happened (and which continues to resonate) that the 'event' is, the 'event'.

Derrida invites us to rethink 'event' outside of the opposition of actual and virtual, real and imagined, presence and absence'. Such an event cannot happen or be thought:

'... as long as one relies on the simple (ideal, mechanical, or dialectical) opposition of the real presence of the real present or the living present to its ghostly simulacrum, the opposition of the effective or actual (*wirklich*) to the

non-effective, inactual, which is also to say, as long as one relies on a general temporality or an historical temporality made up of the *successive* linking of presences identical to themselves and contemporary with themselves' (Derrida, 1994:87).

Derrida's rethinking of the structure of an event involves a 'deconstructive thinking of the trace, of iterability, of prosthetic synthesis, of supplementarity...' in order to see that 'the possibility of the reference to the other, and this of radical alterity and heterogeneity, of difference' is always already inscribed 'in the presence of the present that it dis-joins' (ibid: 94).

And within any given 'event', (*événement, à venir*) Derrida explains, is a non-way, emerging from the figures of undecidability, the performative, the constative, the trace, textuality and from our lack of knowledge of aspects of practice (Derrida, 1999:65-83). Within any given event, the *aporia* or non-way of walking is the condition of walking in a particular direction. This impossibility, constituted in the '*aporia*, to find one's way in any given event is the condition of ethical practice' (ibid: 73). In breaking new ground in seeking to address such questions one first recognises and gives expression to the *aporia* that emerge from the discourse constituting such questions.

In addressing research question two, what follows is both specific *aporia* within a selection of specific questioning and, later, the broader issues associated with such *aporia*. The following questioning<sup>142</sup> falls within the daily language and

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<sup>142</sup> There is a danger, of course, in raising such questioning is the move from deconstruction to positivism.



discourse of the English (maintained<sup>143</sup>) Catholic Secondary school Headteacher: the *aporia* in the 'event' of the life of the Catholic Headteacher. Reflecting on contemporary professional practice this is 'inspired' by two elements.

The first element is the *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers: Departmental advice for Headteachers, Governing Bodies and Aspiring Headteachers* (Department for Education, 2015a) setting out its purpose thus:

'The National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (2014) define high standards which are applicable to all Headteacher roles within a self-improving School system. These standards are designed to inspire public confidence in Headteachers, raise aspirations, secure high academic standards in the nation's Schools, and empower the teaching profession' (ibid: 4).

Questioning will focus on the two 'Domains' most concerned with the interface between student and school in its generality, Domains 2 and 3<sup>144</sup>: *Pupils and staff* and *Systems and processes* (ibid: 5). Inevitably any professional discourse naturally implodes into a metaphysical determination reflecting the naming force and gathering powers of being as presence and the inscribed laws and ontotheologies of such a discourse. Therefore it is important to recognise an imperfect and unstable relationship between Derrida's understanding of *aporia* and the professional

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<sup>143</sup> Free at the point of need, funded from the public purse and with a contribution from the Catholic community.

<sup>144</sup> As an interesting aside, Domain 4.3 stipulates that Headteachers: 'Challenge educational orthodoxies in the best interests of achieving excellence, harnessing the findings of well evidenced research to frame self-regulating and self-improving schools.' The play of enframing, regulation, and self-improving 'and' well-evidenced research' could itself be an area for further discussion both as an *apparatus* (Foucault) (Agamben, 2009:8) and the play of *différance*.

discourses, which follow. This is not an attempt to ‘apply’ Derrida to create new ‘policy opportunities’ but, instead, to explore the destabilising of the ‘normal’ apparatus in order to create shards of new insight – the hiding places of oft ignored spacing – ‘space’s becoming temporal and time’s becoming spatial’ (Derrida, 1973:136).

Predicated on the assumption that the Headteacher is able to extricate himself from the apparatus of education which currently reduces an unfolding event down to a measurable object in clock time,, the questioning can begin. In so doing this Headteacher-Researcher was engaging with, *inter alia*^, legislation and policy documents that, in their deontology and utilitarian calculus, do not take as a locus of authenticity the formation and flourishing of the individual student in the local context (which, with Boeve, constantly stands in need of recontextualising). The language below is the language of the delimiting apparatus of education, which focuses not upon the human being but upon their representation as individuals, characters, persons, teachers. Such defined objects of consciousness that can easily become part of a managing economy with its own educationally-based ‘border force’ ensuring those involved – students and teachers alike -follow the extant order within the regimes of truth (Foucault, 2009 :19) cultivated for representations of human beings.

With this in mind, the following three instances of questioning, therefore are inspired by, firstly: Domain 2.2 ‘Secure excellent teaching through an analytical understanding of how pupils learn and of the core features of successful classroom practice and curriculum design, leading to rich curriculum opportunities and pupils’

well-being' (ibid: 5). Secondly, Section 48 of the Education Act 2005: *Inspection of religious education: England (1)* This document stipulates that it is the duty of the governing body of any voluntary or foundation school in England which has been designated under section 69(3) of the school Standards and Framework Act 1998 by the Secretary of State as having a religious character to secure that— (a)any denominational education given to pupils, and (b)the content of the school's collective worship, are inspected under this section (Education Act, 2005).

Therefore the *aporias*, which follow, each of which concerns the English Catholic secondary Headteacher – the 'one' of Heidegger's *das Man* -, are linked to the professional discourse of Curriculum design; Assessment; and Individuating the student 'experience'.

### 8.1 Questioning arising from one's (*das Man*<sup>145</sup>) responsibility for the curriculum:

In the everyday reproduction/repetition of the practices of the school curriculum, how might it be possible to create spacing for what is not yet 'learnt' so as to move outside the delimiting homogeneous structures of the apparatus of education which are always in danger of reducing economics and ethics of practice to the calculable, conditional and possible dimensions of such practice? The hiding places of oft ignored spacing – 'space's becoming temporal and time's becoming spatial' (Derrida, 1973:136); spacing outside of the linearity of clock time.

Curriculum formation and delivery contains within it the *aporia* as a non-way of practice involving being both 'offer' and 'constraint' - invitation to a world of learning and limitation by the 'border control'. Despite such obvious border controls within the apparatus of education, the non-way of such practice becomes obvious in the representations of a politicised, delimited packaging of data to be assessed within this apparatus. In embarking on choices one (*das Man*) embarks on a process of delimitation, where the limitations of 'subjects' – works in two ways: first, in their delimiting in the form of specifications set by the examination boards; second, in terms of there being hermetically sealed from each other not only in the courses foregone but also in the rules of the game stipulated to denote 'success' or otherwise

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<sup>145</sup> Heidegger refers to this concept of *the One* in explaining inauthentic modes of existence, in which Dasein, instead of truly choosing to do something, does it only because "That is what one does" or "That is what people do". Thus, *das Man* is not a proper or measurable entity, but rather an amorphous part of social reality that functions effectively in the manner that it does through this intangibility. *Das Man* constitutes a possibility of Dasein's Being, and so *das Man* cannot be said to be any particular someone (Heidegger, 1962: 113, 129, 253)

in that 'choice'. Foucault, for example, sees knowledge systems as shifting according to the dominant 'episteme' or regime of knowledge as he illustrates using the example of language.<sup>146</sup> The idea of the curriculum as the organisation of knowledge into separate subject areas has developed in state education systems (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). According to Deming, parameters and expectations for educators as members of an organization are established by the aims and structure of the organization itself. Thus, educators tend to assume roles shaped by the organizational design in place. To be effective, within this dominant discourse, all educators must first understand the aims of the organisation before they can organize their work, therefore immediately calibrating the process to the policy maker's preferred 'settings' (Deming, 1994).

So within this autoethnography, this *aporia* as a non-way (at the heart of research question 2) has alerted us on the one hand to the delimitations imposed by the homogeneous economy, and on the other to the possibilities opened within a heterogeneous economic and ethic of practice that is entirely consonant with the ethos of the Catholic school: The curriculum at the service of the individual student – not the reverse. In terms of authenticity, deconstruction opens moves towards justice in spacing, which is never closed; being cultivated within a heterogeneous ethic and economy of practice. As such therefore, this spacing open the possibility of the authentic experience in the work of the Headteacher in the curriculum. The authentic curriculum, the curriculum as 'event' is, therefore, the curriculum that proclaims its

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<sup>146</sup> Here he describes the 'great upheaval that occurred in the Western *episteme*' epitomized with the study of language moving as its specific 'historicity' took it from its broader cultural usage to become a subject (Foucault, 2005:401).

incompleteness. It 'holds back' just as much as it offers. It is dynamically insufficient and an authentic education, concerned with dignity and humanity, is concerned with the unfolding works of human beings we call students.

8.2 Questioning arising from one's (*das Man*) responsibility as a working Headteacher for/to the principle of assessment:

\_\_\_\_\_ In the everyday reproduction by students of their undiscovered lives, how could the unfolding event, (*événement*) of education challenge new thinking to come (*à venir*) regarding assessment policy?

The limitation of school assessment lies in the inadequacy of much assessment to stimulate learning, leaving the student's role as uncovering the predetermined packages of 'knowledge'<sup>147</sup> specified by a politicised and increasingly criticised <sup>148</sup>examinations industry and subject to the political business cycle of the incumbent Government and the incumbent Secretary of State for Education<sup>149</sup>. For this Headteacher-Researcher the *aporia* is experienced as the *cul-de-sac* – the impasse – between contributing to (indeed constituting) the apparatus within the event

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<sup>147</sup> 'High-stakes tests often result in a great deal of time being spent on practice tests, the valuing of test performance and undervaluing of other student achievements, with teachers' own assessment becoming summative in function rather than formative' (Harlen and Crick 2002:6).

<sup>148</sup> For example, the Office for Standards in Qualifications (Ofqual) issued a catalogue of criticisms of one of the foremost examination boards, OCR (Ofqual, 2015).

<sup>149</sup> The Cambridge Primary Review argued: 'The politicisation of primary education has also gone too far. Discussion has been blocked by derision, truth has been supplanted by myth and spin, and alternatives to current arrangements have been reduced to crude dichotomy ... a process which has concentrated so much power at the centre, and over the course of two decades has so decisively re-configured the relationship between government and teachers, cannot be instantly unpicked. Centrally-determined versions of teaching ... are all that many younger teachers know' (Alexander, 2010:501; 514).

(*événement*) of education where what is valuable must be measurable on the basis of a simulacrum of objects in represented to be located in the learning of children. But, as we noted earlier, such objects and measures are already supplements. Rather than reiterating - as another docile body - the mantra of the apparatus of education, this particular *aporia* alerts this Headteacher to the delimiting effects of such measurement aligned to assessment. The non-way of practicing emerging from the metaphysical cul-de-sac identified within this *aporia*, challenging this Headteacher to re-examine and explore what is valuable, what matters, in terms of the children's learning: namely, understandings of learning, of young people's agency, constituted in *différance*; that is, constituted in the heterogeneous economy that ordinarily is excluded in discourses located within the apparatus of education.

Standardized testing, law-like inscription in Derrida's terms, has further institutionalized learning in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. Assessment represented in the apparatus of education remains imprisoned within the metaphysical determination of being as presence. It fails to bring out the 'yet to be discovered' in the world of the ever unfolding of the lives of human beings. When teachers' pay and continued employment are dependent on how students perform on standardized tests, teachers will teach in the way they think is most likely to produce satisfactory scores and managers will manage with the same objective. In the throw of *das Man*, teachers most often see memorization and drill on the basics as the most effective way to teach (Harlen and Crick, 2002:6). As a result, the danger exists that the function of the educational system changes from providing students with a well-rounded education to preparing them to pass the all-important test consonant with the demands imposed by the metaphysical representations of the events of learning,

of assessment. In effect, what were intended to be minimum standards rapidly become maximum standard (Kohn, 2001:349-357). The ontotheological driver of what can be seen as a form of 'credentialism' drives the student and teacher to pursue the 'easily digestible' with clear 'learning propositions' as against embark on inquiry where the outcome is heterogeneous and incalculable.

As Headteacher this *aporia* strokes at the heart of deep, ethical learning as against knowledge transfer. In a system offering exemplar answers to questions, a generation of students in this Headteacher-Researcher's professional experience have grown up asking 'what do I need to know for the exam?'. In practice this has increasingly felt ever-further distanced from the development of wisdom and the formation of character and, instead, become an increasingly industrialised and utilitarian approach. For this reason in the process of designing a new school the decision was made to 'celebrate being stuck' – to seek opportunities for the posing of impossible questions and to see in this as much merit – if not more – as in seeking answers. The conundrum has, as its theological counterpart, the mystery.

The existence of theological mysteries is a doctrine of Catholic faith defined by the Vatican Council, which declares: "If any one say that in Divine Revelation there are contained no mysteries properly so called (*vera et proprie dicta mysteria*), but that through reason rightly developed (*per rationem rite excultam*) all the dogmas of faith can be understood and demonstrated from natural principles: let him be anathema' (Pius IX, 1869: Canon IV). Rationalists object that mysteries are degrading to reason. Their favourite argument is based on the principle that no medium exists between the reasonable and the unreasonable, from which they



conclude that the mysterious is opposed to reason.<sup>150</sup> This argumentation is, however, fallacious, since it conflates incomprehensibility with inconceivableness, superiority to reason with contradiction. The mind cannot grasp the inner nature of the mysterious truth, but it can express that truth by analogies; it cannot fully understand the coherence and agreement of all that is contained in a mystery of faith, but it can refute successfully the objections which would make a mystery consist of mutually repugnant elements. Much scientific explanation, for example, is itself explained by analogy (Gentner and Jeziorski, 1990: 2). A cell may, indeed, be 'like a factory' and yet the extent to which analogy is a simulacrum goes unspoken, unchecked. The limitations of the dominant epistemology <sup>151</sup>, whose dominance is assured in the apparatus of education and the exigencies of the managerialism of assessment are as important for students to undrrstands as are its hubristic claims and this has increasingly proved a rich seam in this Headteacher-Researcher's practice.

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<sup>150</sup> Bayle, P. cited in Van der Lugt, M. (2016:194)

<sup>151</sup> The possibility of different epistemologies is evident. Jeannie Kerr, for example, in her examination of Western epistemic dominance seeks those 'silenced epistemologies', crowded out by dominant colonial models (Kerr, 2014:87).

### 8.3 Questioning and spacing arising from the Headteacher's responsibility for

learning within economies of the apparatus of education that purport to measure aspects of what is learned by students.

In this role/ *rôle* where one (*das Man*) performs one's role within the apparatus the needs of the economies of the system and the individual unfolding which constitutes learning are in tension. At the heart of the teacher-student relationship, enshrined within the curriculum, is an age-related 'programme' where the teacher/curriculum dictates 'progress'. This model holds together two opposing views: that children learn at individual pace and that children learn in a manner commensurate with the apparatus of the 'year group'.

In seeking to pursue authenticity-as-mattering this research has led this Headteacher-Researcher, conscious of his role, to consider subverting the effects of this tension in the interests of authenticity-as-mattering. How far would a destabilising of this power relationship where the individual student's personal learning generated both spacing and challenge to the 'given' curriculum? An example is to train students to undertake their own challenging readings of a particular topic rather than the *outcome* being 'managed' by the educator.<sup>152</sup> This thinking reflects Craft's observation that there are two different Latin roots of the English word 'education' (Craft, 1984:5-26). They are '*educare*,' which means to train or to mould,

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<sup>152</sup> Snow alerts us to the separation-into-disciplines inherent in academic discourses, describing, for example, the separation of technology and ethics as 'two cultures' (Snow, 1969:ix-x) 'the rigid divisions between disciplines, the lack of mutual comprehension, the miss placed feelings of superiority or disdain in different professional groups-these should be seen as *problems*, not fatalistically accepted as part of the immutable order of things'.

and '*educere*', meaning to lead out. While the two meanings are quite different, they are both represented in the word 'education.' One can use education to mean the preservation and passing down of knowledge and the shaping of youths in the image of their parents. This first reading returns us to the measurable and quantifiable events as being as presence which constitute the apparatus of education subject to the ontotheological drivers such as 'credentialism', 'the preservation of law and order', 'socialisation in British values'. In terms of school practice it favours a relentless focus on preparation for the test. Yet empirically, as Harlen and Crick (2002:4) noted, such focussing on tests produces significant negative outcomes: Inter alia they noted the following: When passing tests is high stakes, teachers adopt a teaching style which emphasises transmission teaching of knowledge, thereby favouring those students who prefer to learn in this way and disadvantaging and lowering the self-esteem of those who prefer more active and creative learning experiences. Repeated practice tests reinforce the low self-image of the lower achieving students.. Tests can influence teachers' classroom assessment and may be interpreted by students as purely summative, regardless of the teacher's intentions, possibly as a result of teachers' over-concern with performance rather than process. Students are aware of a performance ethos in the classroom and that the tests give only a narrow view of what they can do (ibid: 4).

This research shows the effects of a largely self-serving apparatus, focussed on the measurable at the expense of the 'mattering' of the student in her humanity and in her unfolding in understanding.

An alternative view sees education as preparing a new generation for the changes that are to come--readying them to create solutions to problems yet unknown. One calls for rote memorization and becoming good workers. The other requires questioning, thinking, and creating. This alerts one not only to the forces vis a tergo (Gadamer, 1989:354) at work in the name of the ontotheological structuring of the apparatus of education but also the hidden meaning makers at work in practice – the *upon which* of the principle of reason, the principle of assessment, the principle of the market, along with the heterogeneous structuring of the ethic of any event in terms of the calculable and incalculable.<sup>153</sup>

#### 8.4 Questioning and spacing arising from one's (*das Man*) interplay with tradition (custodian, contributor, iconoclast.)

This *aporia* arises from 'tradition' as the naming force and gathering powers of being as presence and its maligned metaphysical determinations of practice within the apparatus of education. The Headteacher, in moving towards justice seeks a way out of this cul-de-sac through deconstruction and so opening space for the possibility of authentic practice with human beings rather than alienated objects of economies in the apparatus of education.

Taking as an example the Admissions policy of this Headteacher-Researcher's

<sup>153</sup> '(T)he *condition of possibility* of the event is also its *condition of impossibility*' (Derrida, 1994:82).

school which is informed by the multiple (metaphysical) traditions of: (i) the English Catholic Church's education function, itself subject to the (metaphysical) exigencies of the (ii) English Catholic Church in its local manifestation (iii) (the Archdiocese of Southwark).<sup>154</sup> This then operates within the metaphysical tradition of the requirements of the national and local instruments of the State and so on. Within these zones – these tectonic plates, these ontotheological forces, this English Catholic Headteacher, recognises the *aporia* generated by the interplay of these metaphysical monoliths.<sup>155</sup> One's quest for justice is set against the restricted hospitality in Derrida's sense.

A key operational issue during the course of this research was that on sibling entry: should non-Catholic siblings take precedence over Catholic applicants. In following the 'tradition' – that set by the Church, the answer was that the Catholic child would 'take precedence' given the fact that the Catholic community (recalling Document III) had 'paid for' the school<sup>156</sup>. However, when the school had been less

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<sup>154</sup> The specific historical characteristics of the English Catholic Church's teaching project were the subject of Document III.

<sup>155</sup> The varying *apparatus* by which children's 'suitability' and/or their family's Catholic 'credentials' are measured are part of a longstanding landscape in the Admissions Codes of at least some English Catholic schools. To the extent that, using the metaphor of 'tectonic plates', such 'codes' frequently grind and warp against those of the State, this is illustrative. For example, the Schools' Ombudsman, charged with, *inter alia* ensuring 'fair admissions' specifically sites a tension between the 'sovereignty' of the school to use discretion in accepting, for example, non-Catholic siblings, with the sovereignty of the state in regarding such discretion as in a state of exception. Local Government Ombudsman's Report (Local Government Ombudsman, 2014).

<sup>156</sup> The State pays per pupil, the Church own the buildings and pays 10% towards capital spending. This remains controversial, as it did from the time of the 1902 Education Act when non-Catholic/anti-Catholic outcries against the (generous) funding of Church schools – particularly Catholic schools – generated the derogatory cry that England was getting 'Rome on the Rates' (Gates, 2005:19).

popular, it had 'welcomed' children from other Christian traditions, over faiths and none. Therefore there were now such students in their teens with families who now wished to send their younger siblings to join them. This was not and is not allowed and reflects perfectly the restrictive hospitality. More curiously it reflects an 'otherness' within the English Catholic mind set towards non-Catholics reminiscent of the sentiment within Christ's response to the question as to whether payments should be made to the (hated) Roman empire: '....give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's' (Matthew 22:21 (NIV,2012)). What, then would an absolute view of hospitality 'look like'? Would this require courageous/foolhardy acts of subversion not only against the State but also against one's Church? .<sup>157</sup>

In reflecting on this *aporia* and at a simple, practical level, the English Catholic Headteacher pursuing the possibility of authenticity as constituted thus far is mindful not only of the 'power' of tradition to delimit (as well as to enhance) but also the interplay of sovereign powers, not only those of the State but of the Church, and the moral imperative to ensure the child is not lost in the sometimes volatile interplay of such tectonic plates. This can be challenging when the law-like inscription to 'do one's job', to pursue restricted hospitality, conflicts with the pursuit of justice, the seeking

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<sup>157</sup> The language reflecting the relationship of the conscience of the Catholic (Headteacher) and her responsibility to be obedient to the teachings of the Church were declared in 1965: 'In the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. (35) For the Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth. It is her duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origins in human nature itself ' (Paul VI, 1965b:14). While the 'punch-line' is clear, this does admit the possibility of an intelligent, well-informed discussion.

of the best and the movement towards – though never arriving – at absolute hospitality.

In reflecting on the autoethnographic placement of this Headteacher-Researcher at the intersection of Church, State, child, family...the impossibility of acting with Christ-like hospitality becomes evident. At every Admissions Appeal hearing, where one hears a plea from a family for their child to benefit from an education at one's school, this Headteacher-Researcher must perform an essentially utilitarian calculus: what will be the (consequentialist) effect of this child's inclusion? Too many in the year group and an inability to meet the child's needs are two reasons for exclusion, both of which challenge the *aporia* of the Catholic school's absolute commitment to the intrinsic dignity of each child.

8.5 Questioning and spacing arising from one's multiple commitments as the Headteacher: to State, Church, students, families, authenticity and inauthenticity as a possibility of love.<sup>158</sup>

In selecting one of Derrida's most sublime pieces of writing discussing the impossibility of perfect, unconditional love before death this may at first glance have little to say to this Headteacher-Researcher. However, to crudely paraphrase one aspect of Derrida's argument, it is impossible to give one's all to one (person,

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<sup>158</sup> Community service models are common but often extra-curricular – Curricular and extra-curricular is a false binary.

institution, ideology) and then be substantially available to the other. This has a bearing on this Headteacher-Researcher as he attempts to service these various loyalties while keeping authenticity-as-mattering as the locus around which the school identifies itself and its relationship with others.

For Derrida, the paradox of responsible behaviour means that there is always a question of being responsible before a singular other (e.g., a loved one, God, etc.), and yet we are also always referred to our responsibility towards others generally and to what we share with them. It is perhaps surprising that it is Derrida, rooted in the anti-metaphysical and anti-theistic, whose deconstructive philosophy is deployed in a manner as beautiful as it is insightful: in the place of love. In *Memoires: for Paul de Man*, Derrida begins to discuss love as the deconstructed breakdown of the living present. Indeed, Derrida reports, the thought of death is a gift from a loved one, for when the necessary possibility of mourning Paul de Man becomes an actual duty, the working through of his mourning touches – first in word and then in experience:

‘What is love, friendship, memory, from the moment two impossible promises are involved with them, sublimely, without any possible exchange, indifference and dissymmetry, in the incommensurable? What are we, who are we, to what and whom are we, and to what and to whom are we *destined* in the experience of this impossible promise?’ (Derrida, 1988b: 149).

He goes on:

‘What should we think of all of this, of love, of memory, of promise, destination, of experience, since a promise, from the first moment that it pledges and however impossible it appears, pledges beyond death, beyond what we call, without knowing of what or of whom we speak, death. It involves, in reverse, the other dead *in us*, from the first moment, even if no one is *there* to respond to the promise or speak for the promise’ (ibid:149).



Derrida's understanding of love as a love that is unconditional (as in never fully reciprocated – even fully 'possible'), always tempered with the reality of death (both as an end and as an authentication of the promise) and is no measured transaction of equal halves – no 'social contract' – is strangely appropriate to this Headteacher-Researcher as he recognises the multiplicity of commitments – of fidelities – he owes in the English Catholic school. To the Governing Body, the local Church (Diocese), to parents, to the Local Authority, to the Department for Education, to his family (Headteacher as mortgagee). The *aporia*, therefore, is the impasse existing between 'leadership' as a linear, teleological exercise, clashing with the rhizomatic, decentred heterogeneity of the event (*événement*) of Catholic school leadership. Planning for improvement, for example, involves a gross simplification: of aims (who can tell? The *monstrous arrivant*), of impact (on whom,), and towards or away from justice?

'A promise cannot be kept; it cannot even be made in all its purity. As if it were always linked to the departed other, as if it were therefore not linked. ... This is because a promise pledges only to what is mortal. A promise has meaning and gravity only on the condition of death, when the living person is one day all alone with his promise. A promise has meaning and gravity only with the death of the other.... An impossible act, therefore the only one worthy of its name, or rather which, in order to be worthy of its name, must be worthy of the name of the other, made in the name of the other' (ibid: 150).

Being in love does exclude 'the other': 'I am responsible to anyone (that is to say, to any other) only by failing in my responsibility to all the others, to the ethical or political generality. And I can never justify this sacrifice; I must always hold my peace about it... What binds me to this one or that one, remains finally unjustifiable (Derrida, 1995:70).

Derrida hence implies that responsibility to any particular individual is only possible by being irresponsible to the 'other others', that is, to the other people and possibilities that haunt any and every existence. The madness and folly – the *aporia* – which Derrida illustrates- provides an insightful illustration of the impossibility of equally powerful commitments made by the Headteacher in the authenticity of the Catholic school.

In terms of research question 2 and the *aporia*, this offers a critical reappraisal of the metaphysically-laden language of 'commitments', 'policy', 'tradition', 'mission' not by suggesting a cynicism with respect to motivation but rather a pragmatism with respect to achievability. So much of what is required in leadership is unattainable, either thorough the exigencies of time, the limitations of capacity or the conflicting demands which frustrate such attainment.

The autoethnographic approach adopted has kept to the fore the following. First, in eschewing the observer-observed approach, with its hubris and disconnection, the view of this Headteacher-Researcher in the various *aporia* in which he finds himself is one where outcomes are reflexively connected to the agent himself – in this case the Headteacher- and are always in the process of being constituted (Davies and Gannon, 2006 op. cit.). Derrida has alerted us to the need to avoid the 'subject' 'object' position as it constitutes a fractured position – indeed there is no subject in the Cartesian sense. Further, this Headteacher-Researcher has become more aware of his multiple Janus-like relationship to Church, State, Parents, Home, Faith. This rhizomatic approach, however, avoids the hubris of the view of

school leadership based on the belief in a linear power relationship between the leader and the lead predicated upon the calculable, the objective and the homogeneous.

Whereas the *aporia* destabilises the dominant metaphysical language of managerial discourse predicated as being as presence, the autoethnographic approach destabilises the perceived centeredness of the leadership role/rôle where the drama of agency creates 'others'. This Headteacher-Researcher has become increasingly aware in practice of how such a drama can contribute to the possibility of a, inauthentic managerial approach rendering *the other* as not mattering. In contrast, the impact of this approach on practice has been to privilege the voices of others (in the setting up of the new school) (Marcus and Fischer, 1996:124) as necessary, if insufficient in challenging the dominant managerialism.

## **9. Shards of authenticity in English Catholic education**

This thesis set out to address three core research questions. First, what is meant by authenticity and why is this '*mattering*' important to the English Catholic school Headteacher. The second, how can the *aporia* offer a fresh approach to questioning the basis for the apparatus and philosophy of the English Catholic school. The third was how this Headteacher-Researcher's understanding of his role has

changes within the process of research and reflection.

To the first question this thesis began by contrasting authenticity-as-meaning with the empirical evidence suggesting a dislocation and non-mattering among many children and young people in the United Kingdom. The sense of being material rich, yet affectively, or emotionally, poor. Of (in some cases) knowing *the price of everything and the value of nothing*<sup>159</sup> where that lack of value includes the child themselves, with potentially calamitous results. Without embarking on a positivistic 'remedy', the focus then shifted to the extent to which the Catholic school's preoccupation with the service of its own apparatus in the context of its Client-Master history and contemporary preoccupations could, inadvertently or otherwise, contribute to the child's experience of school being yet further one of *being done to*; being *processed*. This was then centred more squarely on this Headteacher-Researcher where the shift towards the metaphysics of being as presence, the ontotheological powers constituting the 'tectonic plate' metaphor and the privileging of the apparatus over the child was considered. To this task was brought the contributions of Lonergan, Heidegger, Derrida and Boeve to develop further the possibility – the necessity- of the Catholic Headteacher focussing on the promotion of authenticity-in-justice-as-mattering.

The author's own involvement in the apparatus was clear throughout: a reflexive, intentionally volatile *play* between one's 'identities' as both Researcher and Headteacher (together with subordinate identities such as, *inter alia*, 'English',

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<sup>159</sup> The words of Lord Darlington in Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

'Catholic', a 'employee') the various readings of autoethnography were considered. Following Derrida's notion of 'circumfession', this author increasingly became aware that, as a convert to Roman Catholicism, he was caught in the play of, at once wanting the system ('Church', 'Catholic school') to 'deliver' - looking for the happy ending - and also being increasingly uneasy at the oft unspoken significance of the interface of (maintained) English Catholic school and British State. This was in part the basis for choosing a critical, philosophical and non-empirical approach, recognising the ontotheologies and the metaphysical underpinnings to which Derrida alerts us.

To the second question, the *aporia*, this was introduced in the work of Derrida with reference to notions including democracy and justice to provide space from the dominance of being as presence with its crowding out of the incalculable and the heterogeneous in favour of the measured, the codified and the iterative. The years of relentless 'action plans', 'success criteria' and 'solutions' that are never definitive all constituted drivers to encourage this Headteacher-Researcher to consider the incalculable, the non-way, as powerfully insightful. Examples of *aporia* were given from the corpus of this Headteacher-Researcher's (autoethnographic) experience.

To the third question

Through this radical examination of this Headteacher-Researcher's engagement with eighteen years of school leadership and eleven years of Headship, formative changes to one's practice took place and have been detailed throughout this thesis. This was particularly poignant as, coextensive with the writing of this

thesis, the author closed two failing Catholic schools, opened a new school on a temporary site and then built an entirely new entity (Saint John Bosco College, Battersea). Therefore the author was reflexively and critically engaged with practice and philosophical inquiry with the possibility of making an immediate impact in practice. In all of this the contributions of the four theorists whose names are included in this thesis title remained critically important.

Heidegger reminded this Headteacher that he is thrown into life – and practice - rather than enjoying a privileged *meta* position which further validated the autoethnography and critical approach. In so being thrown his professional experience of the alienation of young people experienced in eleven years of Headship so often reflected a lack of ‘mattering’. Their dignity eroded by neglect, poor parenting, and – critical for this thesis – the possibility of their dignity being eroded through the apparatus of (Catholic) education, especially in its pact with Government and its relentless focus on ‘delivering’ defined by the metric of assessment.

In Derrida, the extent to which the metaphysical is ever present – not least in his deconstructive reading of Heidegger – led to a critical approach to the *events* of ‘assessment’, ‘curriculum’, ‘standards’ and ‘achievement’. In the pursuit of the event of justice, Derrida’s work was shown to be no mere nihilistic hatchet job but, rather, a creative enterprise. Derrida reminded us that, in ethical terms there is a danger that the positivistic and Cartesian focus in the apparatus of education (Foucault, 1980:84) upon the calculable, possible and conditional dimensions of events on the basis of assessment, the market and so on may currently completely blind the apparatus of education to the *aporia* and to the heterogeneous structuring of an ethic of the event

which is of necessity, heterogeneously structured, involving the unconditional/conditional, incalculable/calculable, impossible/possible dimensions of practice without which there could be no authentic generation of new possibilities in such practice. Derrida's deconstructive approach/non-method was introduced to reveal spacing within the ontotheology of English Catholic educational discourse, acknowledging that the author's *thrownness* within this discourse contributed to an autoethnographic style of writing which contributed both a richness and a drawback. In the tradition as event (*événement*, as something 'coming' [venir], and as something to come (*à-venir*) whereby the multiple centring/non centring of the event, lends itself, through the metaphysics of presence, it was demonstrated that this language creates a centre of gravity around which other 'operations' 'cohere'. But at what cost to depth and possibility? This, it was argued, is particularly important when facing the self-positioning of managerialism<sup>160</sup> and accountability as the fundamentally baseless fulcrum of educational practice.

Lonergan, however caught in his foundationalism, reminded this Headteacher-Researcher of the rich heritage of Catholic theology offering a practical approach to authentic living, in this thesis, were applied to schooling. That the very practice of education – its systems and constraints – itself reflects a moral discourse alerted this Headteacher-Researcher of the need to question the 'given' constantly - whether the *Pharmakon* of curriculum (which offers and precludes), or of admissions arrangements (which exclude and include).

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<sup>160</sup> Managerialism being a catch-all for a variety of differing 'managerialism'. See, for example, Clarke and Newman, (1997:34).

In Boeve, his work allowed this Headteacher-Researcher to reimagine the purpose not only of the Catholic school but also of his job in particular. Recognising that the contemporary pronouncements by the Bishops of England and Wales summarising a core philosophy of education are necessary but inadequate to the task, the movement towards recontextualisation was taken. Such a movement was set against alternative extant models – drawn as caricatures – of Catholic schools which, in themselves, can be both ‘popular’ and ‘successful’.





SECTION BREAK

**Simon Uttley**  
**Document VI**

*Sisyphus reimaged?* – From ‘finding’ authentic Catholic education *as object* to creating spacing for the possibility of the event of authentic Catholic education: Personal and professional challenge and transformation in, and beyond the substantive thesis, Document V.<sup>1</sup>

**Preface**

1. **The metaphor of the ‘Tectonic Plates’ as the drivers and retardants in the professional and personal persona of the Headteacher of the English Catholic School and this author specifically.**
  - 1.1 the changing persona within the play of the Headteacher-Researcher
2. **Intra-Catholic forces driving the ‘2011 self’:** the varying privileging in literature of ‘Catholic culture and practice’ as against the ‘place of the young amidst the tectonic plates of late modernity’ in terms of any metric of ‘authenticity’. The play of Headteacher-Researcher, alive to the teleo-messianic ‘meaning-making’ associated with (school) leadership caught in a narrative of Government performatives and Church traditions.
  - 2.1 Authenticity located within the ‘object’ of the school’s ‘Catholicity’:  
(Grace and Arthur).
3. **Rendering the usual unusual: drawing out the focus on ‘numbers and Catholicity’ within its recent history**

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<sup>1</sup> This paper focuses predominantly but not exclusively on work undertaken in Document V. As the whole study from Document One onwards is relevant, reference is made where appropriate.

3.1 the autoethnographic self – caught in the pragmatic ‘hypocrisy’ of the ‘managerial’.

#### **4. New horizons, new space, new retrospectives**

4.1 New Horizons

4.2 New Space

4.3 New wine, old wineskins: The Catholic educator as a product (prisoner?) of intellectual culture

4.4 A new retrospective for the Catholic Headteacher *in* the history of English

Catholic education: The ‘growth’ of the English Catholic ‘community’ as Rhizome

#### **Conclusion & Bibliography**

## Preface

In reflecting on Document V, 'The Thesis', and mindful of the autoethnographic identities of Headteacher-Researcher (as well as *Father-Husband-Catholic-Englishman...*) a reflexive approach will be taken, recognising the interplay of identities: variously, *the English Catholic Secondary school Headteacher*, the identity of *this particular Headteacher* and finally the *Researcher-person*, as it were standing *behind* such identities.

Just as the history of the English Catholic school is non-linear, multifaceted and incalculable, so too is the experience of four and a half years of research, especially when set against professional practice which included building an entirely new school. The 'uncovering' of oneself as Researcher became coextensive with the 'uncovering' of the possibility of movement towards authenticity and, in terms of professional practice, offered a further 'uncovering' of the possibility of the movement towards greater authenticity in Headship.

The troubled person<sup>2</sup> of this Catholic Headteacher – troubled only to the extent of being rightfully disturbed from his metaphysical slumbers - haunts Document V and, in 'its'/his questioning of the metanarrative of both Catholic education and, more generally, English education, stands apart from its sociological

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<sup>2</sup> Caputo reminds us of 'an old word . . . that has the advantage of being coined before the advent of the metaphysics of subjectivity and that is not as 'logo-centric' as it seems: the old word is *per-sona*, *per-sonare*, the person as sounding-through, resonating. For the radical *bricolage*, it opens possibilities for keeping play at *play* in all identities. As Caputo explains, 'this pre-Cartesian word does not name a seat of self-identity and has nothing to do with ego-logical metaphysics. On the contrary it means to name a difference, to pick up the interplay of mask and voice, face and speech, look and language . . . .' (Caputo, 1987:289).

role as determined by the hegemony of the apparatus. This uncomfortable, yet compelling disjunction would not have been apparent at the start of headship in 2005, quite simply because the circularity of the road finally chosen (Frost, Document V. Section 7.2) needs a degree of retrospect. Such retrospectives are always already constituted in the play of *différance*, set against the delimiting space cultivated for the figure of the Headteacher in the apparatus.

# **1. The metaphor of the ‘Tectonic Plates’ as the drivers and retardants in the professional and personal persona of the Headteacher of the English Catholic school and this author specifically**

A recurrent theme throughout Document V has been the geological metaphor of tectonic plates,<sup>3</sup> employed to reflect the often-volatile interplay of composite and constantly moving ‘forces’ *vis a tergo* (Gadamer, 1989:354) that variously work from time past and so structure and delimit in the present moment the various notions such as freedom, progress, choice and the sovereignty of reason. The metaphor also hints at ‘subterranean’ activity: those forces *vis a tergo* which, though subliminal – even sub-conscious (Doc. V, 2.1), are always already moulding and conditioning. Document V, in one sense reflects the growing awareness on the part of this author, as it were, reflexively standing behind his role as Headteacher, of the dominance of the various ontotheological forces and the possibility of moving towards the

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<sup>3</sup> See Abstract and Introduction (Document V, ‘The Thesis’).

authentic Catholic education in the 'event' of *the* role – and *my* role as a Catholic school leader. Understanding the role of the Headteacher and its interplay with the person 'inhabiting' that role is to understand such a combination as, at heart, 'teleoaffective' (Shatzki, 2002:80)<sup>4</sup> in the sense that it brings together a range of normatively structured and hierarchically ordered ends, projects and tasks which, to varying degrees, are allied to the cultivation of emotions within such hegemony. The heady mix of 'goals' and 'passions' embodied within the acceptance, in Headship, of a commanding role in a school community, reflects the constant inter play of, *inter alia*, assessment and benchmarking,' care and individual sensitivity; curricula for employability; curricula for human flourishing (the latter not necessarily coextensive with the former).

In terms of this 'Researcher-Headteacher', his teleoaffective structuring within the apparatus of the English Catholic secondary school registered a clear draw to the *affective* within practice. This was manifest, over the course of this research period and with regard to the play of Headteacher-Researcher, in terms of a recognition of the scandal of alienation affecting the young, and the sense that the school could, unwittingly, either conspire to exacerbate, or to challenge, this tendency through an ignoring, or re-focussing, on the 'mattering' of the young. As such the research created space for a qualitatively 'different' teleoaffective construct of Headship to emerge, not least through a radicalised philosophy of Catholic education which (after Boeve, Lonergan, Heidegger and Derrida) recognises the ubiquitous forces vis at ergo which stand in need of challenge, including deconstruction (being one mode of such

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<sup>4</sup> Importantly the teleoaffective, for Shatzky, is not a property of actors, but of practice (ibid.).

challenge). What Document V and the preceding papers had enfolded for this Headteacher was the need for self-criticism, challenge of traditions (Boeve) and deconstruction:

a) in the practice of the Headteacher as, at once, 'head' of a Government agency (maintained school) and an ecclesial, canonically constituted agency (Church school);

b) in the practice of Church leaders caught in the play of

(i) the Catholic tradition

(ii) the English Catholic tradition

(iii) the English anti-Catholic tradition (see Document III);

c) in the practice of all involved in education where a concern is expressed

(i) as to the ignorance, or passivity, with which due account is given by educators to the forces vis a tergo (political, social, gendered, economic) underpinning (allegedly) neutral and (arbitrarily) distinctive (Lonergan) 'academic subjects';

(ii) as to the lack of formation in school systems and processes, predicated on a culture driven by assessment, to prepare the young for critical engagement (Lonergan) and, where necessary, challenge and iconoclasm (Boeve/Derrida) within a Catholic-Christian anthropology (Boeve/Lonergan).

That forces of alienation may have a malevolent impact on the lives of the young in the form of alienation is apparent, to the fore and is a cause of national concern. Alienation can, of course have many root causes: political, psychological,



socio-economic, but the striking, everyday manifestation arising from the professional practice of working with adolescent children knows no socio-economic bounds, and can go quietly ignored. That the student's sense of not mattering can be tacitly engendered in the Catholic school (as anywhere else) was very much a driver for this Headteacher-Researcher to awaken him from his *dogmatic slumbers*. This was not, of course, unknown to the Church. For example at the close of the twentieth century, Cardinal Laghi could write:

‘The School is undoubtedly a sensitive meeting-point for the problems which besiege this restless end of the millennium. The Catholic School is thus confronted with children and young people who experience the difficulties of the present time. Pupils who shun effort, are incapable of self-sacrifice and perseverance and who lack authentic models to guide them, often even in their own families. ...what is in fact required of the Catholic School is a certificate of studies or, at the most, quality instruction and training for employment. The atmosphere we have described produces a certain degree of pedagogical tiredness, which intensifies the ever increasing difficulty of conciliating the role of the teacher with that of the educator in today's context’ (Laghi, 1997:6).

It was with this intellectual and emotional driver that the research began to take on an interest in two ways: first, where English Catholic education appeared to locate its locus of authenticity in terms of ‘what makes a Catholic school’; second, adopting (Doc V) a ‘weak’ form of authenticity, a view of authenticity as ‘mattering’, as acknowledging one’s own existence. The title of this paper, *Sisyphus Reimagined*, is an explicit acknowledgement that this research has not been suggesting revolution or revolt – richly metaphysically and ontotheologically –laden that such ‘objects’ are anyway – but, rather, recognising that, while, as Catholic educators *we are where we are* in terms of the forces vis a tergo which mark the apparatus of education, we have

an opportunity – even a requirement – to engage the at the heart of the event of Catholic education which means, in the school, a) to develop a genuine understanding of Catholic anthropology which is applied across all functions b) to strike out into deeper waters and ‘teach philosophy to children’ – or, at least, to affirm and celebrate the critical reflective discourse which, though not necessarily assessed, requires the total involvement of the student intellectual, ethical, spiritual, affective. In so doing the young person is valued in their identity as *student-as-fully-human-individual-in-community*.

### 1.1 The changing persona in the play of this Headteacher-Researcher

A core assumption in the early stages of this research had been recovering a radical element in Catholic education, somehow equivalent to, or coterminous with, its authentic ‘core’ however this was to be understood. This approach was, of course, predicated on the assumed identity of a once-radical Catholic educational paradigm, contrasting with, presumably, a now *inadequately radical* Catholic educational *paradigm*. But this became increasingly a mirage, an unattainable treasure lying at the end of the perfectly formed, if non-existent, linearity of an English Catholic educational rainbow.

The ‘2011 self’, then locked into the metaphysics of ‘finding’ the ‘positive’ in Catholic school ‘ethos’, had a primitive notion of the extent to which he is always already caught up in various ontotheologies. Janus-like, to work as Headteacher in an

English Catholic school is at once to be working within an educational system which, in its Britishness, is an essentially Victorian,<sup>5</sup> industrial and post-Enlightenment: (therefore 'modern') construct. Coextensively, the figure of the Catholic, operating within the tectonic plates of forces vis-a-tergo (Gadamer, 1989:354) and the ontotheological structuring, is also operating within a theology, which spans the pre-modern, pre-industrial and scholastic in its philosophical underpinning. To 'the modern', the 'traditional' may well come to represent the oppressive nature of an external authority restricting freedom of thought and action. 'And, yet the modern, in its triumphal claims to be 'moving ever forward', this appeared to the '2011 self' as offering an alternative (and unfortunately deeply metaphysical?) version of salvation - a secular soteriology<sup>6</sup>, a world of 'happy endings'<sup>7</sup>. This was challenging less for what it said about the tradition-laden role of Catholic education in England but more in its secular form, deifying progress, with breezy self-confidence in a manner this Headteacher-Researcher would come to view as a teleo-messianic in its own right. Further, that such 'happy endings' or arcs of progress appeared, whether gleaned from the Hollywood film, the love story, the TV 'soap' or the Catholic school mission statement, to be setting a standard by which the young would see themselves as having succeeded or failed.

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<sup>5</sup> 'By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, universal schooling was the key instrument in this transformation... The child is an abstraction, a spectral figure taking different forms' (Flint and Peim, 2012:69-70).

<sup>6</sup> See for example (Midgley, 1992:1).

<sup>7</sup> See Berleant's disturbing assessment of 'Disneyworld' where 'Everything is converted into matter for consumption: national and ethnic traditions, science, technology, education, the family history. This is an environment in which nothing is as it appears to be. Spectacular in scale and brilliant in execution, Disney World is a 'masterpiece of falsification, a mega monument to the commodification of culture.' The aesthetic analysis of Disney's worlds, by showing how realities are created and subverted, confronts us with the pervasiveness of the normative and the inseparability of the moral and the aesthetic (Berleant, 1994:171-180).

Therefore, what distinguished *this* Headteacher-Researcher towards the third quartile of the research can be reflected in this, perhaps, oddly inelegant note taken in the last year and a half of the research: *English Catholic educational identity as it turned out to become and is becoming*. This language began to signal the shift in thinking away from the *seduction* of metaphysically laden *gerunds*- such as ‘forging’, ‘emerging’, ‘evolving’, in favour of the ‘event’.

## **2. Intra-Catholic forces driving the ‘2011 self’: the varying privileging in literature of ‘Catholic culture and practice’ as against the ‘place of the young amidst the tectonic plates of late modernity’ in terms of any metric of ‘authenticity’**

Two of the influential works *within* the Catholic narrative that stimulated this research at the outset were those of Gerald Grace, and James Arthur, very much operating within and along the ‘tradition’ contrasting with Boeve’s (Boeve, 2003; 2007) approach. The question to be faced in 2011-12 was this: Wither *authentic* Catholic education? In this earlier reading of authenticity, unlike the more mature Researcher, the issue of *what* was meant by the word, ‘authentic’ (Adorno, 1973) was more elaborate, (specifically, the ‘2011 self’ still at that point understood authenticity as some form of desirable ‘object’). In the later writing after Derrida, the importance of the ‘event’, and, specifically, the possibility of a move towards authenticity through justice as an ‘event’ (*événement*) (Doc V, Abstract) would lead to a view of authenticity as ‘mattering’. The ‘2011 self’ was immersed in the metaphysics of being

as presence, allegorically wishing to catch the crashing tide of authenticity, preserve it in aspic and then wonder, at leisure, why it no longer bore any similarity with what I understood to be a wave.

The literature (Document II and III) within the specifically English and Welsh Catholic educational discourse could be seen to be of two types which are here rather arbitrarily summarised by, or conflated with, the differing works of Grace and Arthur (Document III) and cross-referred to the four models of Catholic school presented in 3.5.3 to 3.5.6 (Document V).

### 2.1 . Authenticity located within the ‘object’ of the school’s ‘Catholicity’: Grace and Arthur

Gerald Grace, (See Document V section iv and 1.3) in his empirical, sociological study of some 60 Catholic Headteachers in England in the late 1990s, had argued in favour of the continuation of Catholic schools in the post-1944 dual model *but* he was increasingly concerned as to the difficulties it would face. Challenges included, in this author’s terms, the tectonic plates of marketization, the sovereignty of choice and the decrease in theological knowledge and commitment (spiritual capital) of both staff and students at many schools (Grace, 2002)). In short, Grace, broadly positively, identified the locus of authenticity<sup>8</sup> as coterminous with the (ontological) Catholicity of the school. Realistic with respect to the necessary interface of the Catholic school with late modernity, Grace’s work, still essentially

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<sup>8</sup> Note that Grace does not write of authenticity per se.

working along the grain of 'the tradition' was reflective of the pro-confessional (Model Two) school.

James Arthur, (Document III) posited three 'models' of Catholic school. The first he termed *holistic*:

'The Catholicity of the School depends on their being a body of people whose lives are deeply imbued by the Catholic faith, and who are therefore able to bring the light of Christ into every aspect of School life. On this model the Catholic School together with the family and the parish, may be seen as one of the principal constitutive elements of the Church's life. Such a School would explicitly share the aims of the Church' (Arthur, 1995: 231).

Of such a Catholic *Shangri-La*, Arthur brought sombre news. 'The years which have passed since Vatican II have shown how easy it is for Catholic schools, which were virtually all founded on the holistic model, to become 'dualistic' or 'pluralistic'. Gradually, indeed imperceptibly, without conscious decisions on the part of the diocesan authority and without change in the trust deed, a 'Catholic' school can be transformed into something very different'.<sup>9</sup> This model, it appears, is postulated by Arthur is as a (lost) ideal. That it is 'lost' is one thing, that it is necessarily an 'ideal' is also questionable, not least in that it seems to locate its *authenticity* in the 'being' of its Catholicity, from its structural coherence and purity, as against the extent to which it is developing the tools to interface with the very incoherent, non linear, ever-moving tectonic plates of wider societal living.

This second 'model' is dualistic. A dualistic Catholic school is one which

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‘separates the secular and religious aims...Religious education, school assemblies, school liturgy and religious events in general are seen as having no relevance to, for example, the teaching of science [dividing education and religion] conceptually and practically’ (ibid: 227). In the non-existence of any nexus between faith and culture this too lacks any authenticity whatsoever, where such authenticity is in the form it appears in Document V: ‘as mattering’. Arthur too sees it as essentially collapsing into the third, pluralistic model (ibid: 228).

The third of Arthur’s models of Catholic school, the pluralistic model, discusses an open admissions policy and its implications for the Catholic nature of the school. Arthur suggests that this means Catholic schools would cease to be confessional but instead would attend to the ‘full diversity of religious faith and commitment within a school’ (ibid. 229). Arthur’s suggestion is that admitting the wider community rejects the possibility of evangelisation and catechetic. Arthur views this as a pluralistic school, ‘simply opening its doors to the local community’ (ibid. 230), suggesting that this approach would reject evangelisation.

Certainly in the form Arthur offers, this too lacks any distinctive Catholic authenticity and risks offering a model which collapses into the myriad of school mission statements: ‘respecting one another’ and ‘achieving through hard work and good manners’. In short, therefore, Arthur, albeit broadly *negatively* identifies the locus of authenticity as coterminous with the ‘Catholicity’ of the school and, in the terms of this thesis, that which most resembles Arthur’s ‘standard’ is Model One – the confessional school. This led seamlessly to the question: To what extent is the English

Catholic educational metanarrative and the ontotheologies that emanate from this a function of its particular history?

### **3. Rendering the usual unusual: drawing out the focus on ‘numbers and Catholicity’ within its recent history**

*‘History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities.’ (T.S. Elliot, ‘Gerontion’) (Elliot, 1995:21).*

As a result of a wide reading of the literature, the first substantive research (2011-12, Doc III) took the form of an investigation into the English Catholic Church and its teaching function as a direct function of its mid nineteenth century re-founding, its client-master relationship with the state, its internal forces a tergo (clerical, Irish poor, gentry) and the eventual, 1944 settlement which embedded it firmly within the state machine through its funding arrangements. As summarised in Document V, this reading led to the conclusion that a focus on the quantum of ‘Catholicity’, whether in terms of the number of Catholic staff or students, (Doc V section 2.3) reflected the specific dynamics of what was termed the *client-master*, embedded model. Therefore, more than ever, the research sought to refocus on what could be termed a Christocentric view:<sup>10</sup> how would the Christ of Matthew 21:12<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The theological focusing on the person of Christ.



wish to hold to account the monolith of the English Catholic school with reference to the lived realities of those the schools are meant to serve? Would part of the answer to this semi-rhetorical question be along the lines of ensuring that structures are not routinely privileged over children? That what 'matters' is 'not quantum' and coherence of practice over and above the 'mattering' of the young? It was this questioning in 2012 which led to the 'weak' rendering of authenticity to be adopted (i) as an intentionally simple counterpoint to alienation in the young and (ii) to describe a (Catholic) education which could be formative, critically reflective and reflexively affirming of the dignity discussed in Document V.

But there is more. Within the Derridean reading of Document V the metaphor of the tectonic plates reflects the heterogeneous ethical aporetic structuring of the event of Catholic education constituted within the play of *différance*. Authenticity, therefore, if it is to be 'found' anywhere it is precisely in such heterogeneous and aporetic structuring, within the *play of différence* and in such play authenticity in writing Document V came to be understood as an event. It was the impasse, the non-way (Derrida) and the interruption (Boeve) of tradition, within a Catholic anthropology predicated on dignity as the hallmark of authenticity-understood-as-mattering, which was emerging. In terms of models of school, it was the (Document V 3.5.6) recontextualizing school which was emerging as more genuinely reflective of a Catholic anthropology and more resilient in the face of (Document III) what had been

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<sup>11</sup> Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.<sup>13</sup>"It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer' but you are making it 'a den of robbers'" (NIV op. cit.).

provocatively termed the 'Faustian Pact' arrangement of English maintained Catholic education.

### 3.1 The autoethnographic self – caught in the pragmatic 'hypocrisy' of the 'managerial'

In setting out on this research in 2011 the *personal* tectonic plates were manifold: family, work, moving jobs, speaking commitments and a myriad of projects, deemed 'proper' to the role of secondary school Headteacher in the English Catholic (maintained) school. The move to the new position would involve the physical building of a new school, staffing reductions, navigating the 'platelets' of a multiplicity of Government changes to assessment, inspection and 'standards', all of which, while challenging, provided the intellectual impetus for a longstanding desire to research 'Catholic School ethos' in some manner. In short, facing an immersion in ever-positivistic, managerialism predicated on risk aversion – who will be the first to say that the Emperor has no clothes? – it became necessary to question the horizon in which this particular Headteacher was at once both *free* (to exercise a degree of creativity) and *constrained* (by, to chose an example, the violent interface of governmental managerialism and the desire to celebrate the dignity of every child). Reflexively, 'standing behind' one's role one became increasingly aware of the 'risk' of authenticity: surely doing the 'right thing' by children (absolute hospitality) would have to come second to the more pressing need to 'fulfil one's duty' in the restrictive

hospitality of the of the laws inscribed within the apparatus of education defining and delimiting the role of Headteacher? <sup>12</sup>

The question remains, too, how moves towards justice in Catholic education may be understood. This picks up, in this Researcher's view, a pressing need, but also challenge, for future research – empirical or otherwise -into English Catholic education *which begins with* a Catholic-Christian anthropology of the young (as retrofitting such an anthropology onto a factory-model School immersed within a complex regime of Government assessment and inspection), and which takes seriously their navigation of the tectonic plates of late modernity. An empirical starting point, reflecting on the discussion of the curriculum<sup>13</sup> could be to make available – and affordable not only to rich schools - a curriculum whose borders and limitations were centred more on the interests of the student rather than the (Government regulated) examinations industry.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Document V Hospitality after Derrida.

<sup>13</sup> In the everyday reproduction/repetition of the practices of the school curriculum, how might it be possible to create spacing for what is not yet 'learnt' so as to inculcate a sense of the dynamic relationship between the potential and the actual?

<sup>14</sup> Jamison's paper explaining the extent to which the International Baccalaureate offers a more integrated education to the English Catholic school, predicated on interdependence as well as developing the unique vocation of the child, is an example (Jamison, 2013).

## 4. New horizons, new space

### 4.1 New Horizons

This research, in seeking to reimagine the possibility of a movement towards authenticity understood as ‘mattering’, and manifest, within a Catholic anthropology, in radical dignity (Paul VI, John XXIII) – and in ‘Schooling’ with a move towards ‘Model Four’-Recontextualisation (Boeve, Lonergan) – has approached such a challenges with reference to the *aporia* (Derrida) to go beyond the calculable, the teleological and the myth of being as presence. The autoethnographic approach, locating the play of Headteacher-Researcher sought to identify *this* English Catholic Headteacher in particular, as located within the apparatus of education. Therefore an identity largely in the throw of a positivistic and metaphysically driven ethic which in its overarching conditionality and its continual moves to improvement predicated most solely with the calculable, the possible.

The calculable, the possible are no mere theoretical notions but directly reflect the prescribed and conditionally structured horizons into which the Headteacher is locked. Lonergan recognised the extent to which one can be ‘locked in’ to a horizon: ‘For the most part people merely drift into some contemporary horizon. They do not avert to the multiplicity of horizons’ (Lonergan, 1972: 269). This was clear to this Researcher, standing reflexively ‘behind’ his role as Catholic Headteacher, and locked into an iterative discourse predicated on the status quo as the given: the ‘present’ horizon as the *only* horizon. Its manifestation would be felt most explicitly in the

design and build of a new school, Saint John Bosco College<sup>15</sup>, an 'event' running coextensively with this research.

## 4.2 New Space

In *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, 1991) and in *Space World*, (Lefebvre, 2009) Lefebvre makes a critical departure from the neo-Kantian and neo-Cartesian conceptions of space. Focusing on social space, Lefebvre argues that space is not an inert, neutral, and a pre-existing given, but rather, an on-going production of spatial relations. '[T]he family, the school, the workplace, the church, and so on - each possesses an 'appropriate' space...for a use specified within the social division of labour and supporting political domination' (Lefebvre, 2009:225). Within such social spaces 'a system of 'adapted' expectations and responses - rarely articulated as such because they seem obvious - acquire a quasi-natural self-evidence in everyday life and common sense': thus everybody consensually 'knows what he is talking about when he refers to the town hall, the post office, the police station, the grocery store, the bus and the train, train stations, and bistros' - all underlying aspects of 'a *social space* as such an (artificial) edifice of hierarchically ordered institutions, of laws and conventions' (ibid: 224-225). This analysis very much reflects the tension operating on this Researcher throughout the course of the research, not least in the powerfully hierarchically and peer-driven accountability regime operating within the 'space'

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<sup>15</sup> Three and a half years work, co-extensive with this research, has been expended to date on the design of the new school, which will open on 28<sup>th</sup> September. Its design, curriculum arrangements and use of (humanizing) space in what is a very tight urban pocket owes much to the pursuit of authenticity within the event of Catholic education and to the Catholic Christian anthropology in which it finds its 'practical' application in 'mattering'.

constituted within the apparatus of education for the figure of the Headteacher. An example, in the context of exploring authenticity as ‘mattering’, was the operating hierarchy of ‘standards’ (academic results in national tests) *over* ‘pastoral care’ (loosely summarised by ‘every child known by name, every child unique’). This hierarchy appeared to be a direct result of the accountability regime facing schools throughout the time of this research given the changes in accountability regimes (2011-15).<sup>16</sup> The adapted expectations were, therefore reflected in, for example, the critical identification of what the school is ‘like’ as being coterminous with their most recent public examinations results together with their most recent Government (Ofsted) inspection.<sup>17</sup> The danger of such a dislocated ‘corporate’ identity leading to the education of children where their *value* (‘mattering’) too was unreflectively ‘off-shored’ to national benchmarking data – the calculable, the homogeneous, the managed - was increasingly powerful in stimulating further reflection.

If the early research involved an intuitive, if ill-defined understanding of the space of educational discourse impacting the Headteacher, the midpoint of this research, predicated on a deconstructive and critical approach, was associated with a new horizon eschewing the false dichotomy of *practical* and *theoretical* thinking in

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<sup>16</sup> Both the title and the key elements of the National Association of Headteachers (2014) manifesto are instructive in terms of what they suggest is *not* right included the following headings: 1) ‘Restoring the pride in teaching’ 2) ‘Accountability that drives the right decisions’ 3) ‘Rebuilding Damaged Relationships’ 4) ‘Strengthening bonds between schools’ The sense of ‘ownership’, ‘mattering’ and ‘mutualism’ is striking.

<sup>17</sup> The experience of leading the new school through two such inspections, albeit ‘successfully’, added further granularity to the question of ‘*what really matters?*’ For example, inspection report (Ofsted, 2013).

favour of Feuerbach's principle of *Entwicklungsfähigkeit*<sup>18</sup> - that is, thinking drawing from a philosophical style of writing that has the capacity to be developed. This Headteacher-Researcher sought to open spacing for research of Catholic education, mindful that it is an event (*événement*), as something, therefore, *coming* (*venir*), something to come (*a-venir*).<sup>19</sup> This Derridean reading, challenging both the ontotheological structuring of Catholic education predicated on being as presence and a 'grasping' at the ever-calculable, first involved a recognition that Heidegger's (particularly early) work, both an influence on Lonergan and an influence in terms of authenticity) on this writer, was caught up in the metaphysics of being as presence (see section 5 below). As such this alerts us to a view of Catholic education which recognises that, notwithstanding its traditions and 'certainties', as an 'institution', it too, contains a future which is unpredictable and uncontainable. Therefore Boeve's theologically-inspired insight in terms of the interruption of tradition became more and more attractive in understanding how a faithful Catholic anthropology was, of itself, critical not only of 'the world out there' but of the 'tradition' through which it understands itself.

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<sup>18</sup> Cited by Agamben, (2009:13).

<sup>19</sup> In the language, drawn from Derrida, of Caputo (2013), 'In general, I try and distinguish between what one calls the Future and 'l'avenir' [the 'to come'. The future is that which - tomorrow, later, next century - will be. There is a future, which is predictable, programmed, scheduled, and foreseeable. But there is a future, l'avenir (to come) which refers to someone who comes'..(and in Derrida's reading, this coming is a function of signs and contexts - never pure presence)...'whose arrival is totally unexpected. For me, that is the real future. That which is totally unpredictable. The Other who comes without my being able to anticipate his/her arrival. So if there is a real future, beyond the other known future, it is l'avenir in that it is the coming of the Other when I am completely unable to foresee their arrival.' (Derrida (film) 2002: opening address).

#### 4.3 New wine, old wineskins: The Catholic educator as a product (prisoner?) of intellectual culture

It will be apparent that a critical development in the thinking of the Researcher 'identity' as well as the Headteacher is the awareness and competence to 'name' the forces vis a tergo affecting and shaping the educational paradigm – Catholic and otherwise – in which practice is taking place. Jay Griffiths' work in her anthropological reading of cultures in the Amazon and Alaska was instructive. She argues that:

'Literacy is an epistemology of the built world, physically in libraries in towns, but metaphorically too, the constructed artifice of our written culture, book-bound, which encourages our philosophies and values to move ever father away from nature – to say nothing of the constructs of deconstructionism and post de-constructionism' (Griffiths, 2006: 489).

In alerting us to the very different epistemology of, for example, the indigenous of the Amazon, (ibid: 1329).<sup>20</sup> Griffiths suggests that European domination with its 'intellectual apartheid,' (ibid: 1329) in privileging a Western epistemology contributed to a decrease rather than increase in 'knowledge'. In Derridean and Heideggerian terms, the *age of discovery* can be seen as a privileging of certain hierarchies of thinking, as a machine that inscribes, is based in repetition: 'It is destined, that is, to reproduce impassively, imperceptibly<sup>21</sup>, without organ or

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<sup>20</sup> Later, 'knowledge gained through dream and song and shape-shifting': 1707

<sup>21</sup> The adoption in this thesis of the *aporia* is precisely to awaken from slumber the 'usual readings' of truth statements.



organicity, the received commands. In a state of anaesthesia, it would obey or command a calculable program without affect or auto-affection, like an indifferent automaton' (Derrida, 2002a: 73).

#### 4.4 A new retrospective for the Catholic Headteacher *in* the history of English Catholic education: The 'growth' of the English Catholic 'community' as Rhizome.

Document III had argued that the English Church's specific history had produced a dominant model of Catholic educational 'authenticity' located in 'Catholicity', itself: a function of the number of Catholics 'in School' and the 'metric' of their practice. It was impossible to understand this without recognising the state of exception experienced by the English Catholic population in penal times and the opportunity for 'acceptance' that the mid nineteenth century settlement offered them.

<sup>22</sup> However, the danger of any retrospective is that it tends to enframe, impose (bogus) meaning and, critically, manifest itself in a linearity: x happened, causing y, then z...and so on. (In the school, for example, the mantra 'work hard, be good and you will do well' can only ever be seen to be 'true' in the sense of 'positive correlation').

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<sup>22</sup> The Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850 following three hundred years of persecution represents a recent and significant phenomenon and one proper to a country that had witnessed the Reformation. However, as Document III elucidated, the arrival of the Irish mid century was crucial both in bolstering numbers and in galvanizing support for the Restoration.

In reflecting on the process of the research and writings over nearly five years, the work of Deleuze and Guattari has proved helpful to free up thinking from the shackles of the neat and tidy (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:4; 21). As a metaphor for knowledge development, Deleuze and Guattari note that, unlike trees or their roots, it is the rhizome that connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even non-sign states. The rhizome is reducible to neither the one nor the multiple. It is not the one that becomes two or even directly three, four, five etc. It is not a multiple derived from the one, or to which one is added ( $n+1$ ). It is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle, from which it grows, and which it overflows. When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoing a metamorphosis. Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions (reflecting the naming force and gathering powers of being as presence the rhizome is made only of lines; lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions (akin to the 'event'), and the line of flight or deterritorialisation as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. From this, simple analyses followed whereby the 'centre' remained understood not as hierarchy but as power or 'propeller'. Such an approach can yield creative de-centring such as this:

- the 'middle' of 1850 – **Catholic education understood as focussing on** the (strong) hierarchy of the Church propelled (enabled) by a benign British State
- the 'middle' of 1950 – **Catholic education understood as focussing on** the hierarchy of the Church impelled propelled by a strong clergy

-the 'middle' of 2014 – **Catholic education understood as focussing on** a weak hierarchy, weak clergy but propelled (enabled) by a strong, consumer-preference<sup>23</sup> model of parental demand.

The advantage of this analysis is that it departs from a simplistic linearity and expresses Church history as an imperfect, mix of tensions and interdependence where the apparent centres and the real impellers are rarely one and the same. In Derridean terms, within the constitution of *différance* the tensions within the *aporia* of any event arise from the necessary heterogeneous structuring of such practice which in the apparatus of education most often remains completely dissimulated. The significance to the figure of the Catholic Headteacher is significant: this challenges traditional understandings and the foundational standpoint of the figure of the Headteacher who, in the tradition is concerned with the calculation of possibilities that are always conditional and largely located within a Cartesian and positivistic world. This is precisely why the *aporia* is developed in Document V – a non-way, outside the conditional, the calculable and the iterative- as an attempt for *this* Headteacher to acknowledge and challenge the extent to which he had, through iterative professional conditioning, lost his identity to that of the role. Had lost a pursuit of the possibility of justice in favour of the comfort of the inscribed law.

*'So when you look at me  
You better look hard and look twice  
Is that me baby?*

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<sup>23</sup> A landmark development being the 'Greenwich Ruling' which declared it unlawful for authorities to give priority in schools' admissions to their own residents, and which effectively rendered authorities powerless to prevent cross-border movement (R. v. Greenwich London Borough Council, ex parte John Ball Primary School, 1989).

*Or just a brilliant disguise'* (Springsteen, 1987).

For Deleuze and Guattari, the real is reality itself in its process of self-making. The schizophrenic is a sick person in need of help, but schizophrenia is an avenue into the unconscious, the unconscious not of an individual, but the 'transcendental unconscious,' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004:120) an unconscious that is social, historical, and natural all at once. In undertaking this research, this Headteacher-Researcher was aware of the depth and texture of identities at work: the Researcher 'mode'; the 'English (State) Headteacher' mode; the 'English Catholic Headteacher' mode. Not to mention father, son, husband.

## **Conclusion**

This research, took place contemporaneously with the 'building of a new school' – physically and in terms of the understanding of what constitutes a good maintained Catholic school – serving the poorest 7% of children – in 2015. The Headteacher is rightly charged with the process of discernment as to curriculum, timetable, 'mission statements', staffing, budgets and a myriad of requirements – of technologies – which, following Deleuze and Guattari as well as Boeve, Lonergan and Derrida, constantly warp, reconfigure and, ultimately, show the lie to the linear orthopraxy of *plan-build-manage-achieve*. Therefore at the most basic level this research had moved this Headteacher-Researcher away from 'success criteria' to look more deeply at the outcomes of policy 'instruments' which are, of their nature,

multifaceted: for every 'achievement' there is a compromise – perhaps many. A potential 'loser.'

The quest for the authentic in Catholic education *as object* (predicated on the metaphysics of being as presence which Derrida's deconstructive reading challenged) marked the early research. Through the course of the research, however, in a process of decentring, abandoning certainty and rejecting the orthopraxy so central to the apparatus of education, authenticity as 'mattering', and as an 'event' has come to the fore. A move towards authenticity through justice as an 'event' (*événement*) in Catholic education means that the thing always exceeds calculation and prediction, it is something we cannot see coming. It is the impossible arrival of something that cannot be recognized as the arrivant it is, which demands absolute 'hospitality', the unconditional 'yes'. This calls into question, *inter alia*, how to respond to very practical questions such as the exclusion of the non-Catholic sibling in favour of the Catholic applicant (Document V); what this says about the Church's presentation of the Catholic school as both aspirationally inclusive (a view supported empirically in terms of the large numbers of poor, recent arrivals and those requiring special support – see Document V) and yet formally 'exclusive' (in terms of admissions criteria). However, the latter is not meant as a poorly hidden criticism of Church policy but rather a requirement that the church reviews the archaeology of tradition to establish the extent to which its impact is more –or less- supportive of the absolute hospitality reflected in Christ.

A further implication of this research has been to develop a critical reflective approach to the management and leadership of the (Catholic) school. The

transparency, performativity and policing of obedience to the state's requirements, predicated on an extensive, frequently changing and highly politicised assessment regime, is compounded by that operating within the Church's education function. The pursuit of ethics as the acknowledgement – indeed the welcoming – of the non-way, has offered a 'worm hole' through which it is possible to venture to other horizons.' This has already had impact in practice,<sup>24</sup> not least in the 'mechanics' of policy design and implementation which, (and keeping the astronomical metaphor in play), although it remains in danger of disappearing in the ever-present 'black hole' of positivism, does at least challenge the iterative, self-preserving linearity of thought which can imperceptibly smother the Headteacher.

In adopting a 'weaker' notion of the event of authenticity as 'mattering', as the *claimed life* (though without the Cartesian separation) this thesis has tried to offer a counterpoint to the apparent dis-owned, non-mattering (dis-functioning?) characteristics of young people finding themselves *alienated*. The *Myth of Sisyphus* (Document V) spoke to the violence of the banal, the broken, the empty, which has always resonated within this author's professional experience of what can be a particularly toxic state for the young and vulnerable. Managerialism in education generating the sovereignty of assessment as a definer of value/non value and standing as a gatekeeper into a neoclassical economic framework fundamentally predicated on *winner takes all*, offers a disproportionately *risky* landscape for children drawn from (in the case of this author's school) the highest quintile of social

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<sup>24</sup> At a very practical level, this was manifest in a student-led re-drafting of 'what a successful SJBC (Saint John Bosco College) student is 'like'. Interestingly, the students chose to celebrate the attributes of the person with more rigour than the meeting of performative measures.

depravation. But depravation need not be a matter of economic resources. Percy's 'homelessness'<sup>25</sup> of the person not necessarily economically disenfranchised but perhaps emotionally, spiritually?, alerts us to the contrast between the façade of the economically 'comfortable' hiding the reality of the emotionally alienated. In Auden's beautifully desolate words in *The Ascent of F6*, he returns us to the banality of the ossified-yet-superficially-respectable:

'The eight o'clock train, the customary place,  
Holding the paper in front of your face...  
The public stairs, the last swing door,  
The paper for your hat, the linoleum floor...  
Then the journey home again  
In the hot suburban train  
To the tawdry new estate' (Auden, 1937:16).

And elsewhere in *The Unknown Citizen*,

'He was found by the Bureaus of Statistics to be  
One against whom there was no official complaint,  
And all the reports on his conduct agree  
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint.' (Auden, 1940).

This research, particularly drawing on Boeve, has led this Headteacher-Researcher to recognise in the core 'offer' of the school a paucity of formation. Within the Catholic school's teaching tradition in particular, it appears to this author that there are elements so often missing from the menu of 'education and training' offered by the State. First, a critical reflective approach (in virtue of the Catholic Church being an institution that 'thinks' in centuries as against weeks/months/political business cycles.) Second, a 'Catholic anthropology' which places the dignity (and possibility of

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<sup>25</sup> Document V, Introduction

*love-able-ness*<sup>26</sup>) of the child beyond the (utilitarian) functionalism inferred by labels such as *learner* or analytical designations such as *unit of economic productivity*. Third, a profound openness to the *meta-*, yes, enmeshed in metaphysics of presence, yet ready to challenge the teleo-messianic narrative of totems such as *progress, assessment, citizenship and 'worthwhile life'*, those ontotheologies so beloved of the State.<sup>27</sup> Fourth, as outlined in 2.8 of Document V, the importance given that education should 'matter', just as Heidegger's authentic Dasein is one for whom things 'matter'. From the point of view of the Headteacher, immersed in the world of (in this case) adolescents, there are no more chilling 'disclosures' from a young person than, in equal measure, 'I don't matter' and/or 'nothing matters'. For these reasons if not others, there appears to be both a space and an imperative for *all* who are wary of the power of dominant narratives, of the ontotheology of the metaphysical being as presence, notwithstanding the (inevitable) metaphysics of their own various identities,<sup>28</sup> to seek commonality.

Of course there will always remain clear differences in the thinking of one steeped in the both Catholic theology and its educational project as against the atheistic worldview of a Derrida and a Heidegger. Indeed the employment of these two theorists is a perfect example of the *Pharmakon* - at once the medicine and the

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<sup>26</sup> Reflected in the defining 'motto' of this author's school, 'Young people need to know that they are loved': O'Malley, D., (2007:38) *Christian Leadership* Bolton: Don Bosco Publications

<sup>27</sup> It is worth recalling that, rather as the authors of *Magna Carta* were the Churchmen of their time (including Langton, Poer and de Briouze), speaking against (at least aspects of) the ontotheology of (unfettered) absolute sovereignty, so too was one of the most significant documented treatises recognizing the disjunction of unfettered economic growth and universal 'happiness'. (See Leo XIII, Pope 1891 op. cit.).



deadly poison; the *and/or* logic. Yet thanks to the Catholic priest Lonergan's openness to the possibility of Heidegger's insights, this Researcher-Headteacher has dared to charge his glass with the hemlock of existentialism to 'destroy faith' but rather to take on dominant ontotheologies.

To equip the student to navigate the tectonic plates of late modernity, not merely looking for the *telos* in the eschatological,<sup>29</sup> the salvation narrative, requires the school to better help the young to be alive to the teleo-messianic narratives placed on them by the 'powerful'<sup>30</sup> – predominantly the adults, dominant culture and ideas of achievement and success privileging neo-classical economic wealth, the mastery over and, in recent decades, publicity for the sake of publicity. Such navigation requires not social media, but social *meaning. Mattering.* In eschewing narratives purporting to show –and deify- *progress*,<sup>31</sup> instead a renewed recognition of the extent to which modernity unfolds, decentres and re-centres in a manner better understood as an open and creative space constituted in a rhizomatic complex world rather than the delimiting machinery of space constituted by linear geometries of the world. This is a function of continually decentred and re-centred power relationships and which throws up 'just' and 'unjust' outcomes in equal measure.,

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<sup>29</sup> Which is not to deny the eschatological but rather to emphasise that the work is at hand and requires the utmost attention. Reflecting Christ's words in the Parable of the talents –on what is expected of those to whom much has been given (education? The economic advantage of an English childhood?) 'His master replied: 'well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness.' Matthew 5: 23 *New International Version*

<sup>30</sup> Such power arising from within the capillaries of social relationships, enhanced further through the apparatus of schooling.

<sup>31</sup> Evolution being problematized as teleologically based, privileging 'the new' (including people) over 'the old' and, equally, trying to explain the new' based on extrapolations from the past.

questionable in the style adopted in Document V.<sup>32</sup> The centre is a function of the structurality of the structure rather than an *arche or telos*, manifest by the fact that it can be decentred and substituted infinitely by supplements that extend the play of signification infinitely (Derrida, 1978:354).

The *aporia* from research question two has offered a very different approach to viewing the apparatus of the English Catholic secondary school. Its attraction has partly reflected the torrent of policy, action planning and solution-finding that dominates the managerial culture of leadership, assessment, performance management and curriculum design. At the level of pedagogy, too, it represents a profound addition to (antidote for?) utilitarian, question-answer based 'learning' by affirming and celebrating 'stuckness'. The cul-de-sac offers the young person the chance to grasp wisdom, whether in formal learning or in service to others in the so-called co-curricular programme offered in this Headteacher-Researcher's school.

The autoethnographic approach has rendered the headteacher-Researcher as central to the drama, the role/ rôle of leadership. Yet any idea of self is always constituting and never constituted, and any idea of global overviews being made by a dispassionate observer have been challenged. The temptation of this Headteacher-Researcher to *tell a good story* has been seen to arise from the teleo-messianic

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<sup>32</sup> Which is not to deny the eschatological but rather to emphasize that the work here and now requires the utmost attention. As Christ says in the Parable of the talents - reflecting on what is expected of those to whom much has been given (education? The means to navigate those tectonic plates?) 'His master replied: 'well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness.' Matthew 5: 23 (NIV).

approach to leadership, accentuated in this case by the additional identity of Headteacher-as-convert-to-Catholicism. Derrida's recognition that, even when speaking of the most intimate thing, there is always 'an exegesis in process' (Derrida, 1995:281) has been critically formative. Equally important is Derrida 'stressing that the dislocation of an author's life from his work and the fragmentation of identity that post-structuralism has provoked 'doesn't mean that one has to dissolve the value of the autobiographical *récit*. Rather, one must restructure it otherwise' (Derrida, 1986a: 45).

The English Catholic school, long caught up in its unique tradition arising from post-Reformation persecution, the client-master relationship of the mid Victorian settlement, the 1944 funding compact with the State and the heavy bind in to government, assessment and managerialism that followed, has, it has been argued, understandably sought validation (or non validation) of its 'Catholic authenticity' in terms of quantum of Catholics and quality of (religious) practice. This thesis has challenged the view that these are the only, or best, loci around which to identify the movement towards (or away from) authenticity. In suggesting the new spacing for the event of authenticity and questioning to which the English Catholic Church should be open, one is minded of 1 Corinthians 13:12 'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known (NIV).

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