The constructed authentic self at work and other acts of fiction.

A narrative approach.

Kate Burt,
Submitted as part of the completion of Doctor of Philosophy
Submitted: 2021

UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney, Ultimo, NSW 2007, Australia

---

Certificate of Original Authorship

Required wording for the certificate of original authorship

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, *Kate Burt* declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Business School at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution. **If applicable, the above statement must be replaced with the collaborative doctoral degree statement (see below).*

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

Signature: Production Note: Signature removed prior to publication.

Date: 18/7/2021

Collaborative doctoral research degree statement

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree at any other academic institution except as fully acknowledged within the text.

Format of thesis:

Thesis by artefact, exhibition, portfolio or creative work. This thesis comprises of an exegesis and creative artefact in the form of a children's novel.

Statement of published work:

The creative artefact enclosed here tilted THE DANGEROUS BUSINESS OF BEING TRILBY MOFFAT, is an original work by Kate Burt. It will be published by Hachette Australia in October 2022 under the author name Kate Temple.

The illustration included on page 97 is credited to Christopher Cooper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Some years ago, I took a series of lectures by Professor Carl Rhodes in a neo-brutalist building that was set to be demolished. It was both the end of the road and a beginning. From this ominous start, I have been fortunate to benefit from the wisdom and guidance of Professor Rhodes who has championed this work and who's encouragement allowed me to develop exciting ways of approaching my research. This thesis would not have been possible without his support. I am also fortunate to have had Professor Peter Fleming supervising this research. His writing on authenticity and control have had a great impact on me even prior to beginning this thesis. His insights and contributions to the literature on constructed authenticity have been invaluable and to have direct access to his oversight and direction has been wonderfully beneficial.

I would also like to thank Dr Lan Snell, who insisted that I embark on a PhD and helped facilitate the pathway. This support was vital as it came at a time when I had small children and felt an exhaustion about the fog of my future, to have her faith and energy on my side was deeply motivating. My gratitude also to Natalia Nikolova for our meetings and discussions over the years. My deepest thanks to Judy Johnston for leanding me her eyes on the final draft.

On a personal note I am grateful to two of the best read people I've ever met, my friend Charles Wood, for his encouragement and conversation and to Sarah Nelms for handing me a crumpled copy of The Managed Heart some 20 years ago.

Finally, I would like to thank Arlo Temple and Clancy Temple for living with my academic pursuits as well as my fictional writing and collision of the two. I would also like to thank Dianne Hassett for her constant and unwavering support of me always.

This work was created on Gadigal Country.

Pre-text: On writing fictions and exposing the beams.

Hello and welcome to what some might (and have) called a risky thesis. This is an arts-based approach situated in the UTS Business School, in which I am investigating the paradox of constructed authenticity at work, through the narrative method of writing a children's book. For good measure, I've also thrown in a Ricoeurian lens of narrative identity to steady me along the way. But before I take you with me along the tightrope I have strung up between the pillars of organisational studies and the world of children's literature, I would like to introduce you to the narrator. Me. After all I will be the one holding the balancing stick. My name is Kate Burt, as you have read on the title page of this document. I hold a Bachelor of Arts, and Masters of Business Administration and at the time of writing I am a PhD candidate with an interest in the constructed authentic self at work. So, what's all this about children's books? In my other, and quite separate life, I go by another name, Kate Temple. As Kate Temple, I have written over 16 books for children, some picture books, some novels. My work has been translated into 22 different languages and my books have won awards both here in Australia and internationally. Until undertaking this PhD these two Kates had almost nothing to do with each other, except a shared calendar. I doubt they would even talk to each other at party, in fact they wouldn't even go to the same party. Yet here we are, a reluctant and yet obvious collaboration. The above, slightly odd introduction is not intended as an exercise in narcissism. It's important context of the reading of this research. As you move through this work you will meet this narrative voice, as embodied and subjective. I have made the decision to write in this way because it best serves the subject I am investigating: the constructed authentic self at work. It is an attempt to allow myself to be present in the work and to experience what I can as I engage with this research and for you as the reader to experience me. This voice however, is not the only voice you will encounter. There is something of a distant, academic and more expected tone to some of the sections. It can be jarring. It is jarring. Instead of attempting to smooth the two voices (both my own) into one seamless 'authentic' narrator, I have elected to expose the beams – allow the new to meet the old. What I mean by this, is the architectural contrast between the voices within this work are both written with an intent to be authentic and rigorous, they are trying to create a good and true work, but they are at odds. There is a tension. This tension is real, it is one that I as the author experienced throughout the entire thesis, and it is one that I am also probing as I look to better understand the constructed self at work. It is further complicated by a third voice, that of the author. As this thesis comprises of both an exegesis and creative work, the compete novel is embedded within this document, chapter 5 to be exact. Here you will meet new voices, also produced at my hand. The tension between these voices reflects the many voices that we as individuals create for ourselves at work and beyond. How I navigate them and how you, as the reader, navigate the contradiction of a multi-faceted self is at the heart of how we experience a constructed authentic self.

Abstract

This work interrogates the changing meaning of employee authenticity and argues that it has become an aesthetic and paradoxical construct with implications for the politics of work. Using a unique arts-based narrative method this work aims to better understand the human experience of a constructed self within organisations – in this way the contribution is both to the field and methodological. This original arts-based approach involved the creation of two children's novels developed as thought experiments to investigate the subjective experience of a constructed self at work. The selection of this method brought together my field of study and drew on my separate experience as a professional children's author. Using a Ricoeurian lens, Narrative Identity Theory is then used to examine the intersection of the constructed self and the implications on that self at work. This work finds that the current definitions of authenticity within organisational studies are narrow and lack the ability to account for a multiple of selves that are ultimately authentic in their own execution and yet contradictory. It also concludes that the future of authenticity is in the broadening of this definition to the contradictions of self and the continuity of a conflicted self which relies on dismantling and demystifying of authenticity as a tool for organisational homogeneity.

This research is timely and required given the unchecked rise in authenticity as a desirable and cultivated employee attribute. It sits within a landscape of overwhelmingly positive literature which endorses authenticity as a benefit and one that offers the employee a liberation from the binds of conventional management practices. Despite this, an emerging critical view suggests authenticity may instead be a Trojan horse designed to exert control and influence over the employee in personal and insidious ways. Current gaps in the literature have been identified in this critical space as well as gaps in the methods used to research it. This work aims to address both those gaps and demonstrate new and innovative ways of expanding ideas around the self at work. It looks at what we can glean from the proliferation of authenticity and finds that a future for authenticity at work may exist if the notion of what it means to be authentic is readdressed and the impact of constructing authentic selves is dismantled in its current form.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction:

'Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse.
'It's a thing that happens to you…' – Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Authenticity within organisations is on quite the journey. From its popularity as a leadership approach to a customer facing attribute and finally to a personal trait that employees are encouraged to embody as a function of work. Just "being yourself" has never been more desirable. But what exactly that means, or how one should go about constructing that authentic self, is less clear. And why does it matter? This research looks at how the increase in demand for personal displays of authenticity at work has produced a construct of authenticity that has largely gone unchecked. This work examines how this construct has hijacked authenticity as we traditionally understand it and explores the impact of constructed authenticity by investigating the subjective experience.

This research considers the proliferation of authenticity literature within organisational studies – an explosion that largely begins with a focus on authenticity leadership (Avolio & Gardner 2005, Gardner, Cogliser, Davis & Dickens 2011) now has expanded in a number of directions (Cha, Hewlin, Roberts, Buckman, Leroy, Steckler, Ostermeier & Cooper 2019). But instead of making a contribution to the established literature, I am responding to identified and significant gaps created by a tendency for literature to iterate in the same space. This narrowness is largely due to research building on the same assumptions about what authenticity is, without being open to the possibility that what we are dealing with is no longer authenticity, at least not as we know it. Instead, I argue that we are now dealing with a construct of authenticity and one that can be represented for the purpose of work. My research asserts that constructed authenticity is an oxymoron, but one that has very real implications for the self and the politics of work.

Despite the complications a paradox of constructed authenticity presents, current research on authenticity tends to be binary. On one hand, literature on authenticity is overwhelmingly positive and identifies freedoms and personal benefits to 'being yourself at work'. This is then offset by a smaller group of critical theorists who see authenticity as a tool for control and power (Fleming 2009). A need for more work in this critical space has been identified and a call has gone out for more creative methods that draw authenticity to the surface (Cha et al. 2019). My research responds to both those gaps by critically investigating the nature of constructed authenticity through an original arts-based method that lures the subjective experience to the surface.

It's complicated work that sits somewhere beyond the polarized arguments surrounding authenticity at work. It questions what we have left to gain from the commercialisation of authenticity and examines the nature of constructed authenticity by bringing a subjective and experimental thread to the research. My research finds that the current narrow definitions we use to understand authenticity are pegged to the idea that authenticity is one true thing instead of many conflicting true things. This singular assumption as a starting point then often leads authenticity research towards a methodological sameness. A fondness for Lickert style instruments aiming to capture a subject's sense of their own authenticity, rather than stepping beyond to test the construction of authenticity itself. It is astonishing that whilst so many efforts have been made to measure the level of authenticity present in an individual there is so little that investigates the credibility of that authenticity itself, but then, this is messy work.

To engage in this messy work, I have developed an original narrative methodology that builds on the strong traditions of narrative methods used in organisational studies. To substantiate this method, a review of narrative methodologies has been necessary. This methodological research highlights the role fiction has to play in organisational research and the exiting possibilities it presents in bringing a subjective lens to what is a constructed yet ultimately a very human world. I posit that fictional and experimental methods like my own offer useful ways of handling the fragile and intangible nature of authenticity, which can frequently be out of reach to the organisational scholar. My specific method has brought together my academic skills with my professional skills as a children's author and the result is a novel, as thought experiment, that examines the nature of commercialised authenticity at work. I'd like to say it was a success, that they novel I wrote was a triumph. The truth is, it was a failure. The good news is, in failure, there is truth.

Due to the unexcepted failure of my thought experiment, my research took an unexpected turn and ultimately yielded a second and superior novel. Using a Ricoeurian lens of Narrative Identity Theory I have been able to draw my own subjective experience of constructed authenticity to the surface and examine how current definitions of authenticity in the organised world fail to serve a multitude of conflicting and yet authentic selves. My work critically assesses the changing nature of corporatised authenticity and interrogates whether a construct of authenticity is being created through a "formalised informality" (Liu 2004) and highlights the aesthetic dimension of this construct as it is experienced. The embodied nature of this work, through a lens of Narrative Identity Theory allows me to unpick whether authenticity can be understood as a representation of self and what its impacts are through a lived experience.

The rise of authenticity at work

'A little nonsense now and then is cherished by the wisest men.' – Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*

This seems like an incongruous place as any to start a review of constructed authenticity at work. After all, when Roald Dahl penned these words is it unlikely he had the modern corporation in mind. Expressions of our most human characteristics: fun, humour, love, sexuality, have not been traditionally linked to the modern workplace (Fleming 2009). Yet Dahl's words clearly point to the potency of human authenticity, perhaps he knew that within these expressions of self lies an energy that unlocks the spirit, boosts creativity and promotes invention. It's here in the *nonsense* that people can truly be themselves, feel alive and be *authentic*. Today, human authenticity as it relates to work has undergone quite a shift. It has moved from being an individual state where one is 'true to themselves' (Avolio & Gardner 2005) to an organisational attribute, a human resource. It is now less about the self and more a source of capital in search for a market (Edwards 2010). Many modern managers now recognise authenticity as a dynamic resource and aim to extract it from employees by infusing the workplace with fun, playfulness and displayed individuality (Cha et al. 2019, Fleming 2009, Fleming & Sturdy 2011, Plester et al. 2015, Sørensen & Villadsen 2018).

This drive to connect personal authenticity to the goals of the corporation has often been linked to creative industries or start-up culture (Xu, Xia, Zhoa & Pang 2021), but today it has moved beyond this to total ubiquity. A simple keyword search of any job site will offer *authentic opportunity* to join an *authentic company* with an *authentic culture* and deliver *authentic customer experiences* but only to an *authentic applicant* with *authentic values*. A buzz word, certainly, but behind this prêt-à-porter personal attribute is a real organisational appetite for displays of self at work that benefit the organisation and have largely unexplored implications for the politics of work. This demand for employee authenticity at work has manifested in the rise of the "Just be yourself" managerial approach where employees are encouraged to display their real selves at work though outward expressions of self (Fleming 2009). These superficial displays of fun, playfulness and diversity embrace the individual and stand in contrast to the uniformed conformity of more traditional and bureaucratic management approaches of the past (Ross 2004, Fleming & Sturdy 2011).

This review considers the metamorphosis of authenticity as it is funnelled from the personal and private sphere onto the office floor. It traces the antecedents to the culture management approaches of the 1980s and 90s – where organisations aimed to ignite the spirit through "emotionally rich" activities like poetry creation and river rafting (Mirvis 1994). Programs that aimed to influence the growth of the employee to the company's benefit through cultural nourishment. They sort out elements of the employee's personal sphere, once out of reach of the organisation and targeted them as a human resource that could be harnessed by seeking access to the 'complete person' (Ross 2004, Fleming 2009). This review examines how these culture management practices have evolved from the more overt assimilation methods into today's more subtle but no less intrusive "Just be yourself" approach. It's a shift from unifying corporate values within the organisation (Kunda 2006) to an aesthetic construct of authenticity that is practiced through displays of self (Fleming & Sturdy 2011).

In the wake of this organisational fascination with authenticity, authenticity literature has blossomed, but critical research remains sparse. There are notable exceptions, in particular a number of key studies into authenticity as a neo-normative instrument of control (Fleming 2009, Fleming and Sturdy 2011, Plester Cooper-Thomas & Winquist. 2015). Complementing this critical work looking at authenticity as a tool of control, is the field of emotional labour built on the seminal work of Hochschild. *The Managed Heart* (Hochschild 1983) was the first to recognise the emotional labour involved in displayed acts of authentic and practiced emotion at work. This work and much that followed (Ashforth & Humphry 1993, Hopfl 2002, Korczynski 2003) looked at emotional labour from a service perspective. But as the demand for displays of authenticity has now permeated many aspects of organisational life (Ross 2004, Bolton & Houlihan 2009, Fleming 2009) this has given way to a new wave of literature on emotional labour which sees the employee as a resource that can be moulded to display organisational aesthetics (Humphry et al. 2015, Nickson et al. 2017).

This review further strengthens links made between the fragmented authenticity literature (Cha et al, 2019, Hewlin 2020) but with a particular focus on critical work that broadens our understanding of authenticity. To take into more critical perspectives, frequently over looked in reviews of authenticity, I have included literature into employee level authenticity, authentic followership, evolutions of emotional labour and emergent research on displayed authenticity at work. In doing so I have created a cohesive picture of what authenticity means today from a subjective employee perspective and questioned the definition of authenticity as it stands within organisational studies.

Overview of authenticity

To begin this review, a definition of authenticity is required. It's not as easy to pin down as I would like. Authenticity means different things to different fields of study but there is common agreement that it pertains to something that is true, real or genuine (Cha et al 2019, Lehman et al. 2019) or "the unobstructed operation of one's true – or core – self in one's daily enterprise" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006 p. 294). Definitions of this sort are not new, they can be traced back as far as the Ancient Greek's Delphic maxim "Know thy self". It's a lineage which was first inscribed on the temple of Apollo and still anchors our understanding of authenticity today (Gardner et al. 2011).

Where organisational scholars are keen to define authenticity in singular terms of being real or true psychologists move towards a more multi-dimensional view of authenticity based on the central themes: self-awareness, unbiased processing, actions based on the individual's own values and achieving truthfulness within relationships with others (Kernis & Goldman 2006). Guignon identifies that authenticity is widely understood to mean 'being true to what someone truly is' (2008, p. 277). Guignon definition is frequently referenced by organisational theorists working in the field today (Ross 2004, Fleming 2009, Gardner et al. 2011). Although Guignon also asserts that this common understanding of authenticity is not what Martin Heidegger meant by authenticity, instead authenticity then in a philosophical sense is defined as the 'human capactiy to be fully human, not to being true to one's own unique inner nature' (Guignon 2008, p. 277).

Building on the more populist understanding of authenticity, organisational scholars researching authentic leadership have expanded the concept of being true to yourself and self-referential in nature (Avolio 2005, Gardner et al. 2011, Shamir & Eilam 2018). Here, the subjective characteristic of authenticity is considered important to organisational theory as it allows the individual to know if his or her values have been upheld (Erickson 1995, Harter 2002) and can therefore be read in the context of the organisation. Recent developments have accepted that while self-reference authenticity is valid (Cha et al. 2019, Randolf-Seng & Gardner 2013), some scholars assert that authenticity is best identified by others. This is to avoid individuals with low self-awareness deceiving themselves into believing they are authentic (Fields 2007). A disconnection that forms an integral part of my research and will be explored further in the following chapter. It bears mentioning that despite the rich philosophical roots of authenticity, organisational scholars are frequently content with the established parameters of what authenticity is as defined by other scholars. There is little reference to those philosophers that have probed the blurred lines and inherent ambiguity created by defining self. It is understandable, it is messy and perhaps a reason that the same neat definitions of authenticity arise again and again in authenticity research within organisational studies. Fleming is an exception. In *Authenticity and the Cultural Politics of Work* Fleming refers to Sartre's (1943) writings on the meaning of authenticity which link authenticity with a severe responsibility to reject capitalist values as they foster an extreme form of hegemony (Fleming 2009). In reaching beyond the flat definitions of authenticity Fleming allows for greater understanding of how the self is used as a resource at work. Another exception can be found in Mallet and Wapshot (2006) who employ Ricoeur's theory of Narrative Identity to gain greater understanding of how we organise our identity at work. Using this basis their research is able to offer insight into a self at work that is evolving and iterating, this allows for contradictions in the self that are both complex and conflicting (Mallet & Wapshot 2006).

Despite these exceptions, on the main, authenticity literature uses a definition of self that is repeated again and again. This shared starting point puts research in the field on a similar footing and fosters a lack of diversity which may confine the research to a predetermined space. This points to the need for researchers to move beyond the copy/paste approach of defining authenticity and instead broaden their outlook by turning to the philosophers such as Sartre and Ricoeur whose writing on the self encourages scholars to consider the nature of authenticity rather than commodify it.

Until recently, comprehensive reviews of the authenticity literature were non-existent and research existed in fragmented silos ranging from positive psychology to authentic leadership as well as emotional labour (Lehman et al. 2019, Cha et al. 2019). To build definition around the various ways organisational scholars consider authenticity Lehman et al. (2019) undertook a significant review of the management literature that also extended to related work in positive psychology. Lehman's review aimed to create clarity around the construct of authenticity and did so by identifying three separate meanings of authenticity. The first category aligned with the Ancient Greek maxim and viewed *authenticity as consistency*. Research that takes this perspective focuses on the gap between internally held beliefs and external expression and is the cornerstone consideration for most scholars exploring the impact of authenticity on work (Hochschild 1983, Kernis & Goldman 2006, Fleming 2009, Humphrey, Ashforth & Diefendorff 2015).

The next two categories are conceptually interesting but the work within them is less related to the management and organisational research that influences this research. The second category interprets *authenticity as conformity* and takes roots from cognitive science. Research within this category leans towards psychological discipline and examines issues relating to category membership such as how modernisation is impacting perceptions of traditional wine making (Negro, & Rao, 2011). The third looks at *authenticity as connection*. Research in this space often focuses on issues of provenance to establish a sense of the genuine or the role of original objects. In part it is informed by the study of semiotics and papers in this space relate to authenticity in art objects (Dutton 2003) or the iconography to influence the perception of authenticity in product packaging (Grayson & Shulman 2000) and the marketing of authenticity to the consumer (Leigh, Peters, & 2006).

Building on Lehman's comprehensive review of authenticity, Cha et al. (2019) narrowed the focus by integrating the management research on authenticity in organisations. This review identifies the difficulties authenticity scholars face with siloed authenticity research and aims to create links for management scholars to build on. They identify that many of the researchers studying authenticity "emphasise alignment between a person's internal sense of self and outward behaviour (Caza, Moss & Vough 2017, Harter 2002). This position is in line with Lehman's review. Unlike Lehman, Cha et al. identify that whilst this is the common definition of authenticity it does not take into consideration the emerging concept of 'perceived authenticity'– that is, the evaluation of the self or another person's authenticity (Sagiv, Simons & Drori 2020). To allow for this distinction this review separates authenticity into experienced authenticity and externally-perceived authenticity.

I argue that literature that focuses on authenticity a curated aesthetic curated by the individual needs expansion, it is in its infancy and opaque. In the special section on Authenticity at Work, Hewlin, Karelaia, Kouchaki & Sedikides (2020) point out that whilst literature on the beneficial aspects of authenticity are being explored 'less is known about what makes individuals feel authentic specifically in the organisational context" (p. 80). Dutton (2003) makes in roads defining *expressive authenticity* as the 'true expression of an individual or societies beliefs' (p. 259). Dutton also notes that this typology of authenticity is very difficult to define as it is dependant on the perception of the audience. This complexity makes expressive authenticity difficult for researchers to adequately categorise as it pertains to people (Newman & Smith 2016) and perhaps for this reason it is often overlooked. But as the commercial appetite for displayed authenticity grows the understanding of how it is manipulated is deeply necessary prompting the need for more investigation and understanding. Interestingly and logically the study of creative arts organisations is proving to be relevant to this nascent area of displayed authenticity. A recent paper by Sagiv et al. (2020) targeted the concept of curated authenticity through their study of contemporary dance organisations. They note that little is known about perceived authenticity of the creative process and the link between the individuals engaged in its creation. No doubt it is the performative aspect of contemporary dance work that has caused these researchers to use it as a lens to probe constructed authenticity. But these same issues of display relate perhaps more insidiously to all work settings where individuals are engaged in the creation of self and performance is not limited to the stage. Although the notion of performative authenticity is touched on it continues to be looked at for its useful attributes, ie, how does authenticity help me in a job interview or business pitch (Cabel, Gino & Staats. 2013)? In this study Cabel and colleagues found that authenticity was useful to harness in such performative situations as it decreased the anxiety that is created when anticipating others' feelings or responses. Whilst this acknowledges the performative aspect of authenticity, the overwhelming majority of literature (with the exception of Fleming) does not take a critical lens to authenticity. There is little probing the way performative aspects can be exploited by the employee or the organisation or the ramifications of this manipulation.

The breadth of the fragmented literature points to the necessity for my research to remain pointed and direct. With this need for focus in mind I position this work firmly within Lehman's first category as authenticity as concept of consistency. Here it sits amongst other researches considering topics such as authentic leadership, authentic followership, authenticity management and emotional labour. This organisational understanding of authenticity aligns the notion of “being true to one’s self” also aligns with the inherent individual quality of modern authenticity. It suggests something pre-existing within the person (Ferrara 1998, Cha et al 2019). Something to be realised and drawn to the surface. It is not built or created, it is intrinsic. As the employee looks inward considering and judging if they are “being true to themselves” they are engaged in a personal authenticity that focuses on what makes us different from each other, not similar (Taylor 1992). It is this focus through the narcissism on difference and diversity that gives modern workplace authenticity such a visual characteristic – “selfhood becomes a marker of difference compared to others” (Fleming 2009, p. 26). Fleming builds this view from Ferrara who notes “uniqueness is here the result of a metaphorical subtraction – uniqueness equals the sum total of our being minus what is shared in common with others” (1998 p58). It is this subjective difference, built on unique experience that is then expressed through the aesthetic medium of identity, that reflects authenticity at work today (Fleming 2009).

It is important to note that the scope of this research is contained to organisations practicing this “Just be yourself” managerial approach and I do not intend to suggest that all organisations promote this practice. Organisations that do span a myriad of corporatised industries from tech, finance and call centres (Fleming 2009) to creative industries such as advertising, design and film production (Sørensen & Villersen 2018). The appetite for authenticity management broadly into the corporate sphere can be seen widely in the range of papers concerned with authenticity leadership and followership and the impacts experienced authenticity has on well-being and performance. (Mehta 2020, Cha et al. (2019). Whilst the demand for authenticity at work and its popularity is certainly on the rise (Cha et al. 2019) I need to make clear at the outset of this thesis that there are many organisations which do not want the employee to bring their 'whole self' to work. Consider the armed forces, law enforcement, agricultural work not to mention the traditions of work beyond the Western corporate culture. This research and review is limited to the corporate sphere and those organisations promoting authenticity at an intra-organisational level. It is skewed towards Western corporate practices by my own background and by the fact that most of the literature on authenticity has been done in the West with the vast majority of authenticity literature being generated from North America (Cha et al. 2019). This is a natural limitation of the field of study, but for the purposes of my work it has little impact. As I am taking a critical lens to the rise and practice of authenticity as a management practice and its impact on the employee, I will be building on literature that investigates authenticity within work or critiques it. There is little that examines the nature of practiced authenticity and most literature examines it in relations to its positive outcomes following the traditions of positive psychology. It is also considered that whilst authenticity at work is now popular, it is also relatively new and the nature of intra-organisational authenticity is evolving. The mutation of authenticity and the subversive aspects of it are highly underreached (Cha et al 2019.) with few exceptions (Fleming 2009, Fleming and Sturdy 2011).

A review of organisational authenticity

To further understand how authenticity or "being true to one's self" is evolving, the antecedents of this management practice must be examined. The personal development management theory of the 1980s and 90s offers insight into the function of authenticity within organisations. The cultural management movement aimed to strengthen the corporation through greater commitment and flexibility from employees. It delivered greater competitive advantage to the organisation by utilising the individual and empowering their self-determination (Waterman 1988, Peters & Waterman 1982). Key to this management practice was the creation of a singular corporate culture that aligned the true self of the employee with the values of the firm (Willmott 1993). In practice this took the form of orchestrated culture building exercises which demanded expressions of the once private self through intensely experiential activities, followed by self-reflection. Employees bore witness to their colleague's engagement and offered disclosure of their own, unified in a state of communal self-enhancement, career planning and work improvement (Willmott 1993, Mirvis 1994). Through these experiential activities the organisation aimed to mould real attitudes and true beliefs that were in alignment with its strategy and profit goal.

This focus on building culture through targeting the employee self was seen purely from the managerial perspective with the aim of aligning employee goals with that of the corporation, an aim that was not always shared (Chan & Clegg 2002). Researchers studying this management approach at the time observed that despite the efforts of the organisation to create a unified culture through personal engagement it evoked a sense of cynicism in some employees who shielded their "authentic" selves from the group (Kunda 1992). Kunda's empirical studies of Tech Companies in the US are a good example of this normative control, where managers saw their role as spreading the culture as "religion" and its aim was to create the right "mindset" (Kunda 2009). It was a moral contradiction of sorts and one that often resulted in a suspicion of the organisations motives (Fleming 2009).

Despite the moral incongruity of culture management (Willmott 1993, Mirvas 1994, Kunda 2009, Chan & Clegg 2002) proponents considered it not just morally benign but even liberating (Peters & Waterman 1982). Employees were seen to benefit from cultural management – as it was considered that the objectives of the company were shared or could be engineered to become mutual (Willmott 1993). By aligning values with the organisation, the individual became a part of a system that respected and fostered their self-determination. It was a liberation provided by adherence to predetermined belief system of the firm. This strict code of belief that the employee needed to comply with was not considered to constrict the employee's freedom – the opposite. As these values were the employee's own, they were expected to be exercising their own beliefs – beliefs strengthened through personal development and human resource management (Fleming 2009). Those who did not offer alignment of their values should exercise their freedom to leave or as Peters and Waterman put it "you buy into their norms or you get out" (1982, p72).

Organisations with strong corporate culture required more from the individual than the function of their work. Interestingly more traditional models of management with an emphasis on bureaucratic controls were less concerned with what the employee thought, provided they were technically compliant (Willmott 1993). This highlights one of the main differences between normative cultural management approaches and what Fleming terms neo-normative 'individualised conformism' (2009) or application of authenticity today. Organisations that call for displays of authenticity do not ask for employees to conform to the company's values, instead they are encouraged to bring and display their own.

Model of displayed actions and internal beliefs

	Display actions	**Internal beliefs**
Bureaucratic controls	Corporate	Self
Culture Management	Corporate	Corporate
Authenticity Management	Self	Corporate

Normative controls are obvious – team building, rock climbing all clearly designed to creating a culture and a "right mindset" (Mirvas 1994). The employee can identify the author of these activities. Organisations that promote authenticity at work tread a more ambiguous line, blurring the line between the private and corporate, where the individual is the architect of their destiny (Fleming 2009). Here you don't have a "right mindset" the right mind set is your own authentic mindset. In this way a collective agreement on the "right mindset" has been replaced by a right self. This signals an evolution of authenticity from 'self-empowerment' though unifying values and beliefs to an expression of identity – one in synch with corporate goals albeit through an aesthetic of authenticity. Welcoming authenticity navigates the resistance and failures that more overbearing culture management practices have encountered in their push to imbue a shared belief system. It further links the self to the capital accumulation aims of the organisation (Fleming 2009)

Yet this promotion of employee difference, individuality and diversity still seems to yield undeniable corporate normalness. Satre's vision of authenticity as singularity is certainly not evident in corporations of today. Some theorists put this down to a level of market rationality that is eroding an authentic self (Fleming 2009 citing Sennett 1998). This market rationalism favours certain personality traits and in this way is self-selecting perhaps a root cause of promoting a construct of authenticity. As Fleming puts it, "*a cherry-picked form of authenticity that may be influenced by market rationalism (Fleming 2009)*. Hochschild also identified the threat to self by performed emotions and argued that deep acting had worrying consequences for the individual's identity (Hochschild 1984).

Drivers of authentic leadership

‘A person who has good thoughts cannot ever be ugly. You can have a wonky nose and a crooked mouth and a double chin and stick-out teeth, but if you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely.’ – *Roald Dahl, The Twits*

Following on from the culture management practice antecedents, authenticity was given an additional boost by the climate of unethical corporate behaviour that led up to the GFC. The impact socially and economically of well-publicized corporate inauthenticity has been undeniable (Liu, Cutcher & Grant 2017). This inauthenticity is apparent in the daily corporate scandals, the excessive pay packets of CEOs, unfair dismissal, political backflips and of course catapulted to prominence post the GFC – but vitally, it is in the potentially profit crippling distrust of consumers. This corporate malfeasance has resulted in a demand for more ethical ways of doing business. (Lloyd-Walker & Walker 2011, Gardner et al. 2011). One such way is the demand for authenticity in our business leaders. This style of leadership promises great benefit to the organisation and has direct bearing on the employee (Gardner et al. 2011, Avolio & Gardner 2005, Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs 2006). Authenticity in leadership is argued to elicit positive values, high moral standards and transparency (Luthans et al. 2006). Further benefits include improved teamwork (Hannah et al. 2011) and increased employee wellbeing and engagement (Toor & Ofori 2009). With considerably more literature in the field of authentic leadership available than in the area of intra-organisational authenticity, a more defined picture of what authenticity looks like emerges. Similarities in both fields exist, in particular the genuine characteristic of authenticity (Gardner et al. 2011) and the shared premise of being “true to one’s self, (Gardner et al. 2011, Avolio & Gardner 2005). Importantly, what leadership authenticity looks like is considerably different to that of intra-organisational authenticity.

Authenticity at a leadership level is defined by humility and awareness (Gardner et al. 2011), building and fostering trust (Whitehead 2009). Authentic leaders have an internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, Shamir & Eilan 2018). They are genuine and develop genuine connections with others (Gardner et al. 2011). As they grow they are more concerned about serving others then they are with their own personal gain (George & Sims 2007). Unlike the literature relating to the ‘Just be yourself’ management approach there are no calls for authenticity to be expressed through displays of fun, sexual diversity, play or by bringing your dog to work. Authenticity for a leader is a deep, reflective and often unwitnessed affair (Gardner et al. 2011). Fleming argues that leaders are not called on to be authentic as frequently as a middle level employee, “Those who are most tightly controlled at work are more likely to be targeted by the just be yourself discourse” (2009 p29). This argument highlights the control aspects of authenticity management and the characteristic difference between authenticity as it is understood as a leadership model and its application by employees within the organisation. The authenticity disparity also highlights the importance for further work in this area.

Unlike authenticity as subjective experience, authentic leadership is a relative concept and must be understood in tandem with authentic followership (Leroy Palanski & Simons 2012). This nascent area of research is related and relevant to an organisational understanding of authenticity. It is not however, the same. Authentic Followership can only be understood within the relational construct (Leroy et al. 2012) where as a “just be yourself” managerial approach is one that demands authenticity be generated from the individual and not imbued from another source (Fleming 2009). Studies into follower authenticity strengthen the suggested symbiosis by finding that perceived authenticity of a leader has cascading effects that lead to follower felt authenticity (Oc, Daniels, Diefendorff, Bashshur, & Greguras, 2020). In this study of over 800 participants, it was found that when a leader displays humility that is deemed authentic, employees then *feel* more authentic. What is then interesting to this research is the social aspect of authenticity, this idea that social constructs play a part in how authentic a person feels that they are (Sedikides, Slabu, Lenton & Thomaes 2017) and the contagious nature of authenticity. Again, the gaps in this research lie in the lack of a critical lens towards the performative aspects of authenticity. If it is something that can be harnesses and turned on and off, is this authenticity or a new breed of aesthetic authenticity that is beneficial to the organisation and perhaps those operating within in? If so, how does one turn it on and off? What are the markers of a good performance?

To further understand employee authenticity this review takes into consideration the literature relating to authentic followership. Although authentic followership does offer insight into the meaning of employee level authenticity as a relational construct it is commonly understood from a leadership perspective (Gardner et al. 2011). Studies looking at the paradigm though the lens of followership is largely under researched (Leroy et al. 2012, Yagil & Medler-Liraz 2013). Two studies

aim to address this gap in the knowledge (Leroy et al. 2012, Hsiung 2012). Both these studies found a positive relationship between authentic leadership and authentic followership. In Hsiung's case the connection was made by investigating how authentic leadership affects employee voice behaviours.
In Leroy's case (2012) by using Self-Determination Theory as a framework, the authors found authentic leadership improved follower's performances by strengthening the relationship between a follower's basic needs satisfaction and personal authenticity (Yagil & Medler-Liraz 2013). This was attributed to authentic followers being 'growth-oriented' individuals 'non-defensive' attitudes to work tasks and less 'fragile egos'. Followers were found to be internalizing role demands and incorporating them into their own self-identity to enacting their true selves in the task. In doing so the study found an improved employee performance (Leroy et al. 2012). As this study looked at the employee's authenticity through a leadership lens it did not question the nature of the produced authenticity. Instead it found high levels of adaptability are consistent with being an authentic follower (Leroy et al. 2012). This adds to the paradox that "being true to yourself" is a state that can be achieved through adaptability or openness to influence.

Taking into consideration Leroy's contribution there is little research to explain how a transference of values from authentic leaders to followers might work (Yagil & Medler-Liraz 2013). Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) contend that authenticity cannot be transferred from leader to follower. This is because as a leader cannot induce or create authentic values in followers. Authenticity is a self-referential state in which individuals must create their own meaning through unbiased processing and actions based on the individual's own values (Kernis &

Goldman 2006). The identification of influence from the leader to the follower in relation to personal authenticity raises questions of an authenticity paradox. It may suggest that authentic followers have a predisposition to be authentic followers at the outset. Gardner (2011) argues that further research needs to focus on authentic followership in its own right beyond the relationship between authentic leadership and authentic followership. A call for further study of authentic followership – once removed from the relational construct – would be relevant to my own area of research as it looks at the subjective experience of authenticity on the worker.

Gaps in the literature

Already, I have demonstrated that when it comes to authenticity, we do not have our shop in order. The literature is fragmented and siloed and yet it does not account for the idea of a constructed authenticity that is increasingly demanded by organisations. Within organisational studies individual authenticity is fractured into areas of emotional labour (Grandey & Gabriel 2015), authentic leadership (Garder et al. 2011), followership (Leroy et al. 2012, Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, & Luthans 2004), critical management studies (Fleming 2009), all of it based on the idea of 'one true self' as the measure of authenticity, rather than a multitude of conflicting true selves.

In Cha et al. 2019 review of the fragmentation of authenticity literature, they point out that the existing organisational research either evaluates an individual's authenticity using the self as a measure or another person as the measure. This binary distinction found in the authenticity literature causes authenticity to therefore be seen as either, *experienced* or *externally perceived*. There is not one clear indicator which of these is considered more valid. Criticisms are found on both sides with self-referential authenticity criticized for individual's potential inability to gauge their own authenticity or even deceive themselves (Fields 2007). On the other hand, those proponents of self-assessed authenticity suggest others can be fooled by a performance of authenticity and so the self is therefore the more reliable judge (Harter 2002). This binary approach puts the focus and judgement on the individual and not on the construct of authenticity itself. It does not take into account that it is not the individual that is fake or not fake, but perhaps the authenticity itself. If authenticity within organisations has become an aesthetic and a genre unto itself, then an individual can be inauthentically authentic. This paradox suggests that while we are busy interrogating the validity of the individual, we may have taken our eye off the ball. Can we really gauge how authentic a person is, if authenticity is no longer authentic? This may sound like semantics, but even Cha et al. (2019) acknowledge that few studies "examine the relationship between experienced and externally perceived authenticity" (p. 653) The two studies that do examine this gap (Drach-Zahavy et al. 2017, Groth et al. 2009) found that the correlation between experienced and externally perceived authenticity was weak to moderate. This suggested that observers do not always judge the authenticity of others well. Organisational scholars already studying emotions at work know this too well, pointing out this is what makes studying emotions at work so difficult (Czarniawska 2018).

Other gaps in the literature also appear in the critical space. Cha et al. (2019) point out that more needs to be done to build on Fleming and Sturdy's (2011) work highlighting the dangers present when the individual feels pressured to reveal parts of themselves in an effort to appear more authentic. The call is there for more work to fill this space and explore these tensions between what is asked of us and what we wish to provide. But scholars that identify this need to examine tensions between the organisation and self, fail to connect this with an overreach of the organisation for the purposes of profit motive, as Fleming was intending. Further to this, while the need to examine authenticity as it relates to power has been identified (Cha et al. 2019) it is in the context of personal affirmation and transformation. This positive psychology lens is so frequently found in the authenticity literature and whilst the gaps identified by others hint at the vacancies they rarely consider the benefits authenticity at work plays in relation to the control and power dynamic between the employee and the organisation. This only further hints at the need for more critical research to be done when it comes to authenticity at work.

Constructed authenticity at work

Following on from the gaps discussed above, we arrive at the crux of this paradox. If authenticity is something that can be approximated and demanded by employers, then it is a construct and a commodity. I am interested in what this means for the individual and what it feels like. In what ways is constructed authenticity distinct from the authenticity that is defined in all the organisational research? While definitions of authenticity within management literature offer an appealing picture for managers, they do little to explore the changing construct of authenticity as we demand it from employees. This is in part due to the invisibility of personal authenticity and its roots in the private element of life. Critical theorists have commonly identified this private aspect of authenticity as essential to its existence arguing that, "It is outside the sphere of work or the "rhythms of paid employment" (Fleming 2009 p10) that people are traditionally authentic or true to themselves. Hochschild also acknowledges this, stating that displaying emotions at work "was once a private act of emotion management sold now as labor" (Hochschild & Machung 2012 p.125). Despite this private element to authenticity, organisations have a more aesthetic appreciation of authenticity – in the workplace markers of authenticity can be found in displays of diversity, fun (Fleming & Sturdy 2011) and individual dress sense (Ross 2004, Fleming 2009) and visual humour such as posters (Plester 2015). Once syphoned from the private to the workplace, these displays of lifestyle take on a superficial quality and turn manifestations of authenticity into a commodity (Fleming 2009).

Corporatized displays of self "paradoxically rely on a kind of mimesis" (Fleming 2009 p 27). They are highly visual and/or expressive and give an individual's authenticity a decidedly aesthetic dimension and like aesthetic, it can be subjectively experienced. This aesthetic quality of workplace authenticity found in the "Just be yourself" workplace may on the surface appear to be a sign of inferiority – superficial, inferior, fragile. However, organisation theory provides another lens for viewing *aesthetic authenticity* that hints towards a more useful function of display. It offers that through a rational and structural paradigm "aesthetics add value to organisational output" (Strati 1996, p 210). Considering personal authenticity as an aesthetic allows us to better understand the organisation through its organisational symbolism (Turner 1990). The focus on aesthetics here is relevant to this authenticity research because organisational aesthetics can be read as organisational knowledge, they reveal much about the organisation and the utility of authenticity itself (Harding 2003). This reading of aesthetics aims to narrow and pinpoint its usage in my work and is drawn from the collection of papers in *The Aesthetics of Organisation* (Linstead & Hopfl 2000). Here aesthetics are aggregated into four categories:

- Artworks within the physical environments of organisations
- The study of organisations involved in the deployment of aesthetic objects
- A research method
- A form of knowledge based on senses

It is this definition of aesthetics as 'a form of knowledge based on sense' that my exegesis follows and this is in keeping with both Strati (2000) and Harding (2003) who identify a specific aspect of this where aesthetics are possessed by the individual rather than an external stimulus. Considering the visual and aesthetic nature of authenticity sheds light on how a construct of authenticity, which is separate from authenticity, could be constructed. This genre of authenticity relies on a highly visual and expressed dimension that is generated from the individual and reacts to the social environment. It is a way of gaining knowledge from tacit sensory cues which impact the actions of the individual. This impact is passed on through a mimeses where employees are drawn to replicate this expression of authenticity. It's an act that is almost entirely subconscious (Harding 2003) and one that makes authenticity management insidious and difficult to detect or consent to.

While the concept of constructed authenticity is at odds with the definitions of authenticity provided in the leadership literature, it is better understood by communication scholars. In the communication literature, the value of constructed authenticity is more in line with Fleming's ideas of displayed authenticity (Edwards 2010). Marketing and advertising agencies have long known that brand authenticity leads to authentic engagement (Edwards 2009) and that companies considered authentic by consumers are more trusted by their intended audience (Fatchet 2009, cited in Edwards 2010). In the modern age of globalization and social media this has led to a greater emphasis on authenticity as consumers look beyond the façade of brands. While the desired effect of authenticity for organisations may be clear, organisation have been opaque about how they achieve it. A number of scholars have identified that brand authenticity is more about performing appropriately and constructing the appearance of authenticity to manipulate the situation to your own ends (Edwards 2010, Elderman 2008). The notion that authenticity can be a performance for brands bares relevance for individuals. Early marketing scholars were the first to acknowledge that marketing principles could be transferable to individuals and that "persons could be marketed much like products" (Khedher 2015 p120). The astronomical rise of the personal brand is testament to the accuracy of their prediction. Personal branding can be defined as the "marketing efforts that a person adopts in order to promote one's self to the market" (Khedher 2015). The marketing of brand authenticity is totally reliant on amplification through displays of authenticity and draws interesting parallels with Fleming's study into displayed authenticity at a personal level.

Aesthetic authenticity

'I like people who make me like them. Saves me so much trouble of forcing myself to like them.' – Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

Organisational theorist studying the changing social conditions within organisations have long hinted towards this construct of authenticity. Hopfl posits that 'professional competence' may be considered a behavioural display that is attached to the performance of an individual's work roles (2002). This idea that an employee holds an element of self back from the employee to perform is what Hochschild meant in her definition of "surface acting" (Hochschild 1983). Surface acting to date has made the assumption that there is a division between one's own authentic feelings and the required display of emotions or "the difference between feeling and feigning" (Hochschild 1983, p. 90). This emotion-display dissonance is resolved by the employee engaging in surface acting and has negative effects on the employees wellbeing (Hülsheger & Schewe 2011). What is not known is whether an individual can engage in surface acting their own identity, whether they can perform the role of their authentic self and still retain an authentic self. On the surface this may seem counter intuitive. If you are acting yourself, are you not yourself? Recent literature expanding on Hochschild's work on emotional labour begins to engage with these questions, suggesting it may not simply be a question of a conceptual nature. Instead, recent studies (Dahling and Perez 2010, Humphrey et al. 2015) suggest a new form of emotional labour known as genuine and spontaneous emotional labour.

“Spontaneous and Genuine” emotional labour bears remarkable similarity to the construct of authenticity. It is defined as the “expression of naturally felt emotions” and occurs when emotions naturally comply with role expectations (Ashforth & Humphry 2015). The display of emotion which aligns with the role and expectation is drawn from the self without having to manage or conjore a specific emotion. Glom and Tews were amongst the first to identify this new form of emotional labour. Their extensive study of a wide range of industries using five different samples showed a distinction between surface acting, deep acting and genuine displays of emotions (Glom & Tews 2004). Importantly they found that these genuine emotions matched the required displays for the role. Studies by Diefendorff et al. (2015) found that some employees use spontaneous and genuine emotions when meeting organisation expectations. Ashforth & Humphry’s (2015) empirical study of 911 workers identified emotional labour as one of the most positive aspects of the job. Despite the hard and sometimes stressful aspects of creating a prescribed emotional state for the job, the emotional labour was both rewarding and spontaneous and genuine. Given the “unprecedented” value society now places on spontaneous and natural feelings (Hochschild 2012, p.128) it is interesting to note that studies of emotional labour are now concerned with behaviours that appear authentic.

Today being authentic within an organisation is as much about the display of authenticity as it is about the substance of that authenticity – some would argue more (Fleming 2009). The display of what is unique and individual in the corporate setting allows the organisation to harness the whole person to better attain their corporate goals (Fleming & Sturdy 2011). In doing so, organisations that engage a "just be yourself" management approach are entering a transaction with the individual that blurs the lines of personal and work and draws directly on what defines the individual by calling for 'self-investment' (Van Maanen & Kunda cited by Humphery et al. 2015). In the "just be yourself" reading of authenticity, professionalism is considered antiquated as expressions of self make room for the self.

There are benefits to both; the individual is able to express themselves albeit a visual representation of self, whilst the organisation harnesses what was once an unpurchaseable human resource and puts it to work. Whether this trade is equitable or fully understood is unknown. The impact of the utility of authenticity on itself is also unknown. Early indications (Fleming 2009, Fleming and Sturdy 2011) point to a reinvention of its meaning or a schism resulting in the creation of a separate aesthetic authenticity. Such a reality would have direct implications on the individual, as Hochchild argued in 1983: when emotions are utilised to meet corporate goals, individuals "*may find their identities hijacked for commercial purpose*". A corporatized construct of authenticity presents a paradox between the authentic self and the construct of an authentic self for work. It's a delicate matter where the attributes that create a state of authenticity are potentially corrupted by a management campaign for authenticity in the employee. The result – a forced and sanitized authenticity that is neither authentic nor beneficial to the individual's self-schema (Fleming 2009).

The ambiguity created by promoting authenticity within the organisation presents unique implications for the employee both at work and in their private life – raising questions as to the cost to the individual and the gain for the firm. These questions warrant investigation, but the inherently private aspect of authenticity creates issues and barriers relating to research. This makes the task of studying an authenticity, let alone an aesthetic of authenticity challenging. It is little wonder then, that research continues to iterate in the same space, and that a need for more creative methodologies has been identified (Cha et al. 2019). I concur. It is my view that creativity and innovation are required to create methodologies that draw the subjective experience to the surface. The subjective experience is key to unearthing the embodied and practiced authenticity an individual experiences at work. As nice as it would be to keep the powder dry and establish clean lines between the researcher and the subject, things are about to get messy.

CHAPTER TWO

Exploring narrative methods for studying authenticity and constructed authenticity at work

'And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.' – Antonie de Saint-Exupery*, The Little Prince,*

Introduction

Having provided a review of the field I hope to have demonstrated that the fractured array of authenticity literature, as it stands, is insufficient when it comes to investigating a construct of authenticity. As I read through the existing research, created largely over the past 15 years, I find myself wondering why more people weren't pained by the infringement of being asked to be yourself at work! Why so many in the field, simply accept that one true self is the guiding authentic self and if we simply unveil it we will be in equilibrium, with ourselves and our work. It leads me to reflect on why I started this research in the first place. Why I felt it was so important that we were honest about authenticity and the contradictions it presents, rather than seeing it as a silver bullet.

I first became interested in studying authenticity at work when employed in a creative department within an advertising agency. My work required me to understand what made a target audience prefer one commercial over another. What made them laugh? How did the ad make them feel? Would they buy the product? Why? I would sit on the other side of the one-way glass watching, taking notes as a sample group dissected the words I had written. I was on the hunt for any clue they unwittingly dropped – a crumb of authenticity that would shine a light on what triggered them to act. But perhaps the glass should have been reversed. If I were being scrutinised in the same way, do I believe they would know something about my true self? Would my soundbites tell the researcher something hidden and valuable about my private experience? I don't believe so. This must have been realised by the organisation I worked for, because one day, they decided to do things differently. Instead of asking participants to come to a sterile office tucked away in a city tower they borrowed a family home in the suburbs and invited the participants to share their views there. The thinking was, that a relaxed and familiar environment would coax the authenticity out of them, like a timid kitten to a bowl of milk. Of course, the room was prepped with hidden cameras poised to capture the possible presence of truth. I share this experience now, because it provided me with the first-hand knowledge of two things:

1. Authenticity is a valuable and tradeable commodity.
2. Authenticity can take the form of a show, a pretence, a performance.

Later, I would understand this performance of self to be 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983). This is not to say the participants were inauthentic, perhaps they were authentic. They had come to share their views and collect $80 in return. They were authentic in this goal. But how can I know what they really felt? Or the intensity of which they experienced it? There was hard evidence that I was right to be critical of manufactured authenticity, because whilst they were earning their $80 I was engaged in some 'deep acting' of my own. I loathed that job, but it didn't pay to show it.

This reflection serves to demonstrate the inherent challenges of studying authenticity at work and also to illustrate the multifaceted nature of self, which has led me to look to Narrative Identity Theory to provide a more open starting point than 'one true self.' It's an uncomfortable fact that authenticity, along with other veiled attributes of self, simply eludes the organisational researcher. Authenticity can crumble and morph under the spotlight of the microscope, until it is no longer the thing we first set out to observe. As mentioned earlier, those researching authenticity are largely divided on whether to measure authenticity based on self-judgement or the judgement of others. Organisational researchers studying emotions have been aware of these challenges for some time. Czarniawska (2018) points out that there is no assurance that people will ever describe their emotions correctly and that deducing emotions from observed behaviour is fraught with uncertainty and peril. Hopfl and Linstead concur, stating that "emotions are difficult to investigate and define" (1993, p. 80). Whilst Salmela laments the normative aspect of authenticity by asking, "how can we distinguish such counterfeit emotions from real articles?" (2011, p. 9). This normative authenticity can then be expressed in what Czarniawska describes as the *rhetoric of emotions* (2015) – a style of communication about emotions that is considered legitimate within a particular setting and between particular people at a particular time. The study of the *rhetoric of emotions* as it pertains to authenticity highlights a gap between the espoused and the experienced and the culture that facilitates it, but it does not tell us about the subject's experience. These observations around the conflict of misrepresentation also indicate to me that a lens of Narrative Identity Theory, that allows for the contradictions of self, may be deeply useful in unpicking the rhetoric of self. It's a theory that at its core has been developed to allow the self to hang together as a narrative without seeing the jarring nature of our self as a conflict that is represented by our own rhetoric. How else are we to look behind the words that represent the self?

Fleming's formative research makes important advances in the meaning behind the rhetoric of authenticity. His study of an Australian call centre relied on qualitative data collection methods in keeping with other research of this nature (Casey 2002, Fleming 2009). He employed observation, document analysis and interviews with individuals and focus groups within the organisations. The call centre was selected for its emphasis on employee authenticity and a '*just be yourself*' management policy which focused on employees "bringing themselves to work" (Fleming & Spicer 2013). His observations of fun based work practices that aim to draw out the 'real self' and connect it to the commercial sphere offer insight into understanding normative control at work in a post culture-management climate. They make an important contribution in understanding how authenticity can be leveraged as a management tool as an insidious new form of culture management (Fleming 2009, Fleming & Sturdy 2011).

Similarly, Plester (2015) also sought to critically analyse the rhetoric of authenticity and fun by understanding them as tools of power manipulation through toxic masculine humour. Her work relies on in-depth ethnographic methodology combined with interview. It yields important insights into how humour and exposure of authentic self can be used at an intra-organisational level to control others. Both these studies rely on employee's descriptions of their own experiences and the observations of an outsider. They are particularly useful in reflecting the rhetoric at play and the emerging normative practices, but are less useful in understanding what lies beneath and the impact on the self at a subjective level.

This issue of what really lies beneath is one that challenges organisational researchers who sit at the cross-roads of human experience and critical theory. Humphrey's (2015) study into spontaneous and genuine emotional labour acknowledges the potential incongruity between the espoused and experienced. Instead of examining the nature of the gap he encourages researchers to accept the espoused views of subjects regardless of organisational rhetoric and warns "one person's poison may well be another person's passion, such that scholars need to tread carefully in pronouncing certain identifications objectionable" (p. 757). This position is readily criticized by authenticity researchers who suggest that subjects could be deceiving themselves or simply lacking in self-awareness (Harter 2002). I do not take a position on whether the self or the other is a better judge of character, (except to say that it does appear to suggest a level of superiority on the part of the researcher that may not be helpful). What I do take from this debate about who is best placed to identify authenticity is that none of this allows for the presence of a performed and constructed authenticity. This is distinct from *faking* *it,* instead I am suggesting a tacit and unspoken agreement between individual and organisation that results in a genre of authenticity.

By overlooking the possibility that authenticity can be constructed as a function of work, Humphrey's meta-analysis is able to find that deep acting (summoning the appropriate emotions as a function of work) can be beneficial when the false emotions are aligned with the authentic subjective emotions. It leaves little room for what Rhodes refers to as "problematic relationship between expressed words and experience" (Rhodes 2014, p. 37). It does not critically investigate the implications of this precarious narrow ledge, it simply accepts that when it comes to authenticity, near enough is good enough. Humphrey's perspective though is understandable – scepticism of a subject's ability to accurately represent their experience certainly takes on an edge of academic condescension. But in organisations actively encouraging self-mimesis where authenticity is used as a tool of control (Fleming 2009, Fleming & Sturdy 2011, Plester 2015), the lines between authenticity and constructed authenticity are blurred and rhetoric and experience must be examined. My concerns regarding Humphrey's approach are not a matter of divergent views; they are rooted in the methodology taken to arrive at these conclusions. His analysis relies on understanding authenticity through data created by a range of mixed methods, from interviews and observations to quantitative methods of using survey instruments which correlate data to emotional intelligence to self-described surface acting (Wang, Seibert & Boles 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller, Rubenstein, Long, Odio, Buckman, Zhang 2013). This is standard. Researchers commonly measure authenticity using Likert-type survey methods (Cha et al. 2019). The aim is to capture the amount the espoused true-self is present at work. But displays of expressed authenticity can be fragile, take humour for example, context and nuance are vital. Questionnaires and other instruments of this type fail to grasp the fleeting nature of authenticity whilst observational methods observe it only from the exterior. Czarniawska agrees. When it comes to authenticity and emotions selecting methodologies that stare directly at it are 'fraught with peril' (Czarniawska 2018) and leave us with little understanding of the nature of our authenticity at work. This leaves authenticity researchers actively calling for new methodological ways to reveal authenticity at work. After reviewing over 100 articles on authenticity, Cha et el. concluded methodologies for researching authenticity needed improvement if we are to glean more from our investigations of authenticity "…we need a deeper understanding of more nuanced or creative approaches that may enable individuals to be authentic, even in the face of contextual constraints." (Cha et al. 2019, p. 656).

It is this call for more creative approaches that draw the subjective experience of authenticity to the surface that have led me to think quite differently about how I could approach my own work. Keen to avoid adding to the sameness I found myself wondering what methodological choices could offer me in my pursuit to look beneath the surface. It seems so obvious now, but it took many months to realise, that the answer lay in my own skill set as an author. Initially I had not considered my own profession as a children's author relevant, but as I deepened my research I discovered rich traditions of narrative methods that were already at work in the critical organisational space. Understanding how narrative methods have developed and what they can offer the organisational scholar has allowed me to develop my own original method designed specifically to help me investigate the nature of our constructed authenticity at work.

The evolution of narrative approaches

In Phillips seminal article *Telling Organizational Tales,* he argues for the use of narrative fiction as a research method (1995). He posits that strict divisions between traditional methods and narrative fiction are overdrawn and he offers clarity by breaking the methodologies used to study organisations into four quadrants. Each of these typologies acting as "a conceptual lens, providing an additional view of the field and highlighting aspects of the many theories of organisation that have been developed" (p. 630). It is not a matter of ranking but a delineation that allows for a different way of representing organisations and hypothesis. It is also the case that frequently these methods may work in tandem and compliment to each other to create a more holistic picture or framework.

	Non-Narrative	**Narrative**
Non-Fiction	Survey Data Laboratory Data Content Analysis	Biographies Case Studies Ethnographies
Fiction	Theories Mathematical Models Typologies	?

Typologies, like those used by Fleming to study authenticity in a call centre relied on observation, interview as methods for data collection and would fall in the Narrative Non-Fiction quadrant. Others who have studied organisational authenticity using this typology would include Plester (2015) and more recently SØrensen and Villersen's study, hilariously titled: Penis whirling and pie throwing: Norm defying and norm setting drama in the creative industries (2018). This study drew on multiple data sources, selected texts and a case study visit to build a framework for understanding norm-transgressive management – an approach which in part required staff to perform their 'authentic selves' at work. Empirical studies like the ones mentioned here are concerned with understanding the "symbolic world of the organisation" (Philips 1995) and perceiving the hidden meanings within the construct of organisation.

The Non-Narrative/Non-fiction quadrant is reserved for organisational researchers using quantitative methods such as survey instruments and experiments as is common in the field of authenticity research (Chat et al 2019). This quadrant then intersects with the adjacent quadrant Non-narrative/Fiction which are theories and models created and conjured by the mind. One typology supporting the other in symbiosis. The Non-narrative/Fiction quadrant provides a lens for the Non-Narrative/Non-fiction to support with data which can be measured and compared. The appeal of these approaches is the sense that phenomena can be controlled, measured, tested and repeated. But when considering something as intangible, changeable, fragile and human as authenticity within the context of work, these typologies leave gaping holes in their effort to be exact and precise. That is not to say, these methods have been abandoned by organisational researches working in the space of authenticity or related areas of emotion, spontaneity and emotional labour, far from it. Wang et al. (2011) performed a meta-analysis of 30 years of emotional labour. Vogelgesang et al. (2013) performed a 3-month longitudinal study of authenticity and integrity generating and collecting data from survey cadets. While Ménard & Brunet (2011) developed an instrument for measuring authenticity at work and Humphrey (2015) as mentioned above performed a meta-analysis to detect spontaneous and genuine emotional labour.

The concern I have with the above typologies as they pertain to the study of authenticity at work is that they do not account for the possibility of *aesthetic authenticity*. This aesthetic authenticity may not be disclosed due to the subject's inability to identify it. Or it may remain out of view due to an unwillingness to disclose, or an inability to accurately describe it or a researcher's inability to detect it. Or more concerning still, *aesthetic authenticity* may have become the identified self. Whatever the reason, this study is concerned less with uncovering an employee true self and more with the phenomenon of constructed authenticity itself and implications of the memesis and commercialisation of self. How does this phenomenon impact the politics of work? How does constructed authenticity impact authenticity as we understand it?

With these concerns in mind, I look to the black quadrant: narrative fiction, as typology for my research. Phillips argues for the use of narrative fiction including novels, short story, poetry, plays, poems and films as justifiable methods to study organisation. He reasons that narrative fiction offers an "indispensable approach to strengthening the connection between organisational analysis as an academic discipline and the subjective experience of organisational membership" (p. 625). Beyond this he points further into the creative arts wondering what we might learn by extending our scope to a range of representational practices such as dance, sculpture and something he calls computerized hypertexts (and for which we will forgive him, given it's 1995, and take instead to mean digital arts). But even as far back as 1995 Philips was examining the possibilities for understanding generated by the connections between narrative fiction and organisation. He draws parallels between the fictions we write as organisational researchers and the fictions created as literature – both test ideas against evidence, examine and model a social world.

Philips attributes the separation between the author and the academic not by practicalities but by norms and that distances between scholars within the same discipline may be far greater. He argues that the benefits of adopting fiction as a legitimate method of research will allow for the subjective experience to be better understood and creates room for the reader to inhabit ideas. He predicts that a post-positivist academic climate could open the doors for more widespread adoption of narrative fiction as methodology. He was right. While in 1995 the quadrant was blank. Today, the quadrant has been coloured in with a vivid array of representational practices.

Only a year after Philip's article, Latour (1996) created a fictionalization of a research report: a study into an unsuccessful introduction of an automated train system. Latour presented the research as a work of fiction in the genre of a mystery and merged field work with a fictionalized voice of the failed technology. Czarniawska (2008) decisively points out that this was no exercise in experimental fancy. Instead, it is an example, of a combination of the heart and the head to give the full picture. I would go further. It is not a marrying of the two, but a reattaching of the head to the heart. Latour agrees:

‘Was I obliged to leave reality behind in order to inject a bit of emotion and poetry into austere subjects? On the contrary, I wanted to come close enough to reality so that scientific worlds could become once again what they had been: possible worlds in conflict that move and shape one another.’ (1996, p.11)

Sociologist, Richardson adds to the canon by presenting her empirical research in the form of a poem drawing on a common narrative methodology (Richardson 2003). Rhodes followed in similar footsteps when he tested the influence of narrative by presenting his research into representations and control at work in differing genres including a fictionalize story (2001). Van Maanen (2006) supports this approach arguing that traditional ethnographic writing can gain textural sophistication from being blended and combined with other genres. Whilst inventive and non-traditional uses of diaries as narrative reporting has led to diary archives aimed at preserving the knowledge held in the subjecting experience (Czarniawska 2008).

Beyond the ethnographic use of narrative, fiction has been widely used as a metaphoric or figurative source for understanding organisations. Rhodes and Westwood (2016) examined ethics and reciprocity through Kafka’s

Metamorphosis. Knowles, Hindley & Ruth (2017) turned to Joyce's Ulysses to investigate the use of fiction in management research. Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux's work (1994, 2005) on the department store refers to Zola, Strindberg, William Dean Howell, Musil as well as 19th century Italian and Spanish literature. Later Czarniawska (2018) uses fiction as field material to analyse descriptions of emotion in literature to gain insight into anxiety in organisation. Selecting two Polish writers that use a workplace setting related to anxiety, Czarniawska reports that analysis of narrative describing emotional states imagined can provide a "more instructive result" from the point of view of exploring connections.

In many cases narrative fiction and sociological research share a common purpose. Phillips raises Orwell's Animal Farm as an example of a hypothesis on power and social structure as is the work of Max Weber or Stewart Clegg. And consider Kafka's, Metamorphosis as offering insights into organisational ethics (Rhodes & Westwood 2016). In both cases the fiction writer and the organisational researcher share a common goal: understanding organisations and the politics of work though creating a body of 'knowledge' about the workings of the organisation and our role within it (Kundera 1988, Phillips 1995). These above examples demonstrate the use of fiction as methodology – where fiction is used to, test and examine theory by inhabiting an organisation on multiple levels.

It is important to note that the use of fiction or representational practices is not limited to the classics. Rhodes' study of popular culture and management calls on SpongeBob SquarePants (2016), The Simpsons (2001). While Pullen and Rhodes

(2013) use Futurama to explore issues of gender performativity at work. More than that, fiction need not be utilised as simply a source of reflection or metaphor (Philips 1995, Czarniawska 2008, Savage, Cornelissen & Franck 2017). Short & Reeves (2009) offer an example of a contemporary use of narrative fiction arguing the efficacy of the graphic novel to explain business concepts. The use of narrative fiction to explain business concepts using literature has been further developed by Grafstrom and Jonsson (2018). They argue that integrating a novel into a textbook is one way of understanding management as lived experience and over-coming habitual blind spots.

But for all these examples, there are few that dare to write. Kiriakos & Tienari (2018) are an exception. They take Philips up on the challenge that if we are "very brave we can make up stories ourselves" (p. 636). They draw attention to how writing can be experienced as sensual, emotional and social activity which has the potential to help the author learn more about themselves as organisational writers. This may seem narcissistic to some, but as organisations are social constructs understanding ourselves better aids empathy and promotes deeper understanding of what we seek to know. In 'writing differently' the author is also able to step outside the constraints of dense academic writing to close the gap between author and reader and build meaning. Bates (1997) supports the necessity to enter the organisation, arguing, that to study an organisation a researcher needs to enter it. Fiction offers another door to entering the organisation, of building empathy (Leavy 2016) and gaining greater understanding of the subjective experience as it pertains to work (Rhodes 2001, Caulley 2008, Grafstrom and Jonsson 2018). For the authenticity researcher it provides an appropriate and innovative way to inhabit the organisation and examine theory at its intersection with lived experience. By avoiding the overload of dense cold text with academic writing an opportunity presents itself to make management research relevant, poignant and impactful (Nair, Fatien Diochon, Lassu & Tilleman 2018), in contrast to the impenetrable language and style of academic texts (Hughes, Bence, Grisoni, O'regan & Wornham 2011).

Writing Differently. Where are we *right* now?

Narrative fiction as methodology has moved from the scattered and Avant Garde origins to a defined groundswell amongst organisation scholars looking to experiment with the potency of writing and resist scientific norms in academic writing that inhibit knowledge (Beigi, Callahan & Michaelson 2019, Gilmore et al. 2019, Knowles et al. 2017, Rhodes 2015, Grey & Sinclair 2006, Rhodes & Brown 2005). In the field of organisational scholars, there are now rich traditions of narrative as a means of inquiry (Sliwa & Cairns 2007, Rhodes & Brown 2005, Beigi et al. 2019). Many scholars argue for its merit as a critical tool of gaining greater understanding of organisations, our experience within them (Czarniawska 2018, Gilmore et al. 2019) and its ability to provide analysis as an "additional point of contact" to the everyday world (Phillips 1995 p. 945). All these examples are a challenge, a test of the norm. They tease the edges of what can be done and offer new ways of thinking. They employ diverse narrative methods with the purpose of uncovering knowledge previously out of reach.

This groundswell of organisational and management scholars identify their writing as '*Writing Differently*'. The 2018 special issue of *Management Learning* which focused on papers aimed at disrupting and exploring new forms of writing within organisational studies, also carried this name.

Scholars practicing and testing the potency of writing do so in a variety of different ways and for a variety of different reasons. Page (2014) highlights the potential writing has for processing emotion and Harris (2016) points to writing's capacity to stimulate transformation. Weatherall (2019) posits those doctoral students breaking norms and writing differently contribute to their own learning as emerging researches. Whilst, others examine the possibility of challenging and changing management conventions (Gilmore 2019, Grey & Sinclair 2006) and making organisational writing more impactful and pleasurable for the author and reader (Gilmore 2019, Kiriakos & Tienari 2018, Grey & Sinclair 2006, Phillps 1995). The diversity of knowledge and intent in writing differently is certainly varied, but all share a common goal. They aim to resist the 'suffocating scientific norms' of academic writing motivated by a desire to "demonstrate one's cleverness, or to accrue publications as an end to themselves" (Grey & Sinclair 2006, p.443). These scholars argue such stale writing extracts the humanity from learning and research and inhibits our ability to make more creative and interesting contributions (Gilmore et al. 2019, Weatherall 2018, Pullen & Rhodes 2013, Grey & Sinclair 2006).

These scholars posit that if we value and employ a variety of methodologies to our research, then we should similarly value and employ a more expansive and varied approach to our writing. In doing so we broaden our understanding of what different approaches to writing can offer our work (Gilmore et al. 2019). They aim to avoid the "deadening" effects of formulaic writing in favour of imaginative, experimental, and reflective learning (Gilmore et al. 2019). This is not to avoid the rigour of academic work or to replace it – instead the intention is to augment and enhance. At its heart, they 'write differently' in order to develop radically new insights about working life.

But whilst all this transformative and resistive writing is taking place, one question bangs around the scholar's mind like a fly trapped in a bottle. *What does all this talk of writing have to do with management?* Shouldn't these concerns of writing be more appropriately suited to an arts faculty? And while Philips (1995) vigorously defends his call for narrative fiction as a methodology that evolves our knowledge and deepens our study of organisations, we're still not sure. And while Gilmore et al. (2019), point to the importance of questioning and breaking scientific norms perpetuated through writing styles so that we might develop new ideas, still we are not sure. Still there is doubt that something as fluffy as writing can have any bearing on the confident unyielding and definable scientific norms of organisational study. And yet, it does. For all thoughtful critical arguments that surround this issue of writing in organisations one common truth binds them. We are what we write. For managers, this is of vital importance. Gilmore et al. (2019) observe the link between how we write and who we become:

‘…we literally write out the vast hinterlands that are our lives, then we constitute ourselves in the image of the disembodied scientist whose goal is a scientific knowledge bereft of ethics, care and understanding.’

This reinvention made in the reflection of normative scientific writing allows the scholar to disseminate information and teach to future managers based off an organisational view that falsely claims to be objective. In this way, the writing is not just a conduit for perpetrating norms but complicit and integral. The ‘facts’ and ‘science’ act as a barrier for the manager to hide behind during uncomfortable decisions. By allowing the subjective and the human back into the classroom perhaps the managers who walk out will utilise their humanity in the decisions they make at work. Understanding the connection between the words we write as organisational scholars and how we behave and think as managers is critical to understanding the relevance and purpose of this research. It is in this space between academic rigour and the possibility arts-based practices have to offer, that my research lies.

CHAPTER THREE

Children’s literature as narrative method

‘I shall find out thousands and thousands of things!’ – Frances Hodson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

The aim of this research is to examine the commercialisation of personal authenticity, investigate this construct of authenticity to understand better what it means for the self when we perform ourselves at work. Are those performed selves also authentic selves? The above review of the evolution of narrative methods helps to clarify how narrative methods have been generally useful in gaining insight into authenticity, emotions and subjective experience that lives beneath the surface. What then strongly drives me to employ my own skills as a children’s author as a method of investigation is the way in which this method intersects with Narrative Identity Theory. Ricoeurian Narrative Identity Theory allows for us to understand the self as multifaceted, conflicted and yet authentic. It does this by accepting self as hanging together on a narrative thread. It’s a concept that sits well with my reading of authenticity and after having outlined the rich narrative traditions in organisational studies, I am excited to offer my own original method to this canon.

Having outlined my position, I’ll now own up and declare that I have taken the unorthodox step of choosing to examine constructed authenticity through the conventions of a middle grade children’s book. The method aims to construct a vehicle for the insights, experimentation, theories and implications to uncover truths about constructed authenticity. Here, I will unpack the genre and highlight connections and opportunities it presents with narrative fiction as a research methodology.

Firstly, some of the basics. Middle fiction itself is not a genre and not contained by any specific conventions in the same way that traditional literary genres may be. Instead, it denotes an intended age group of the reader which is broadly 8 -12. This age group is at a competent reading stage and language use many not be dissimilar to that of much adult literary fiction. Despite the more advanced use of language than other categories of children's fiction such as picture book, early reader and junior fiction, the category of middle fiction still remains fiercely children's fiction. This genre of children's fiction is wide and its conventions are varied. Part of the difficulty in narrowing the borders of children's literature are that it can fall into both or either the categories of pleasurable and/or pedagogical. But there are some peculiarities about the genre that separate it from others. Children's literature has a ubiquitous interest in being appropriate for children. That is not to say it is inappropriate for adults. The opposite is largely the case as it is a genre that often directly relates to adults through their interaction with children. This concern for appropriateness is less a hindrance than it is an opportunity. It offers a level of thoughtfulness as the author considers the use of irony, mechanisms of parody and how to use and subvert stereotypes.

This tradition of pedagogy and pleasure in children's literature is one that aligns neatly with the call for '*writing differently*' amongst organisational scholars.

Whilst academics are attempting to overcome traditions of laborious dense text by embracing writing as “embodied, sensuous, emotional, social and identity related” (Kirakos & Tienari 2018) children’s authors are already doing it. Rhodes asks “What are the possibilities for writing about organisations that allow the heart’s instincts to be followed, the vast possibilities of expression to be explored and enjoyed?” (2014, p. 289). And McGillies (1995) opines that “without pleasure academic reading will fail to attract new readers”. Phillips argues for writing that offers an “indispensable approach to strengthening the connection” between the organisational analysis and subjective experience.

This thinking is already well understood in the world of children’s literature where pleasure is a necessity for delivering original content and new ideas. With unabashed adoption and investigation of social or political themes, children’s literature provides an illustration of social issues that relate directly to the world of the organisational researcher. Consider Shel Sliverstiene’s, *The Giving Tree* as a study of generosity and reciprocity or R.J. Paliacio’s *Wonder* as an exploration of isolation, diversity and disability within organisation and Roald Dahl’s, *The Witches* as a bleak meditation on control, power autocratic leadership within organisations. No one who has read any of these books would be the slightest bit confused at their presence as examples of investigating organisational issues. Through a fundamental design to give pleasure to the reader, they are able to probe and explore complex issues and most importantly create a desire in the reader to absorb that information.

Despite the diversity of emerging narrative work there are no examples known to this author of children's fiction being used to explore the concepts and theories of organisations. Why not? A number of emergent papers have turned to genres of literature, some more or less linked to organisation, Aroles, Clegg & Granter (2018) use Kurkov's surrealist, *Death and The Penguin* to investigate organised modularity through the lens of literary representations of organised crime. The opportunity that removed literary landscapes provide to test organisational also applies to children's literature. There is certainly no doubt that children inhabit organisations, some from as young as the age of three. Our contemporary world, and theirs, is dominated by formal institutions (Parker 2016). They are managed, organised and encouraged to conform to the ideas of a pre-existing institution. Their identity is often marked by the wearing of organisational uniforms. They are expected to engage with the cultures of their institutions and imbibe their belief systems. These worlds are made up of many stories and social exchanges occurring simultaneously – markers of the modern organisation (Boje 2011, Rhodes & Brown 2005). Their organisational experience is then reinforced by a range of external influences including parents, TV, films, computer games (Griffin et al. 2018). It would therefore be reasonable to say children are no strangers to organisational life. But unlike adults, they have less conditioning to the organisation than the hypothetical 40 year-old bank employee. Perhaps they are closer to their authentic self and perhaps more likely to expose it, if that is possible. Yet, as narcissistic adults, concerned with our own experience, we do not look to children to explore ideas we seek answers to when it comes to organisations. Yet, we have so much in common, not to mention, we were once children.

Creative practice as research

‘Think left and think right. Think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up if you only try.’ – Dr Seuss, O*h, The Places You’ll Go*

So, with such a clear precedent for the use of narrative, why then do we sense a resistance to creating a children’s book within a business school? Instinctively, we know it’s an endeavour that lies somewhere between risky and ludicrous. It certainly requires justification in a way that other methods would not. Why?

As both a professional writer of children’s books and an organisational scholar this resistance of conventional writing and storytelling calls to me. The ‘scientific’ extraction of the humanity from the organisation seems a response to the mess that comes with subjectivity. But for an author, the mess is where the truth lies. Without the mess of subjectivity, the writer is left with a clinical palette that limits the options for furthering knowledge and furthering the story. Finding value and knowledge only in positivist methodologies denies organisational scholars their positions as scholars not just of the organisation but of the human experience that created the organisation.

It is this ability of fiction and narrative methods to reach beyond and offer better ways of critiquing the subjective human experience that eludes scientific method (Beigi et al. 2019). Many aspects of work life are out of reach of empirical studies and our ability to critique them is compromised by their hidden human nature. Where scientific attempts to force the invisible into the light somehow flatten and weaken its authenticity making it unreliable to study (Czarniawska 2015). At its heart, alternative narrative methods help us to find a way in, to critique what is not seen on the surface. These narrative methods are employed in order to develop radically new insights about working life to reach beyond what is available on the surface. They offer powerful modes of critique through their merging of consideration for the audience and the effect writing has on the author at work.

I posit that whilst narrative methods have found a foothold in organisational studies, they are more widely accepted as "surrogate cases" (Sliwa & Cairns 2007) which can be understood as employing narrative in a realistic sense to gain insight examples that can be directly applied to organisational studies (Short & Reeves 2009, Grafstrom & Jonsson 2018). Also accepted are methods that use narrative as "stories of organising" which allow for meaning through the extraction of analogy or interpretation (Rhodes 2016, Czarniawska 2018, Knowles et al. 2017). Despite the groundswell of daring, insightful and imaginative uses of narrative in organisational studies, when it comes to creation of fiction, the business school is particularly wary. It is not the use of narrative that is questioned, it is inventing things. Masking this unease is a display of concern for the validity of creative work – perhaps the true source of this unease comes from a combination of an insecurity within the business school based in its own relevance and the destabilising possibilities of opening the door widely to creativity.

Who might walk in, if business schools are flourishing hubs of fictions? And more worryingly, what might walk out…

The issue with business school is one I have experience myself completing an MBA. Jammed classes, case studies glorifying masculine power structures and neo-liberalist jargon filled the syllabus. There was no storytelling, save that storytelling that reinforces the existing capitalist ideals. It did not feel dangerous. This 'outmoded' curriculum (Denning 2018) has been linked with a preoccupation with maintaining an appearance for the sake of relationships with the corporate world (Gioia 2002) and its ability to generate profit from students (Parker 2016). It reinforces hierarchies that rely on inequalities and it presents little alterative to a capitalist paradigm (Davis & Starkey 2020) despite the constant cry for critical thinking. Some go further suggesting that business schools have committed a moral failure (McDonald 2017) and would be better razed to the ground (Parker 2016).

The concern that a peristalsis of hegemonic norms is by business schools is a criticism levelled from *within* business schools themselves (Parker 2016, Philips et al. 2014, McDonald 2017). This is not new news to most, but to an early career scholar, it was to me. I recall at the outset of my own research, discovering subversive writing from organisational scholars (not on the syllabus!) that questioned and argued against normative conventions in business schools. It felt dangerous and exciting to read critical work that questioned paradigms that had shaped my own working life (Gilmore et al. 2019. Fleming 2009, Pullen & Rhodes 2013). I naively wondered 'What was this writing doing in a business school? And how could it co-exist within the structure it was reacting to?' I was sure that with such dangerous writing there must be seismic cultural shifts afoot. What followed was instead an acquired understanding that rather than a wrecking ball, this subversive writing is chipping away from the inside. This is not to suggest a weakness or smallness, the wrecking ball fantasy is a pretention of "masculine self-heroization" (Phillips et al. 2014) that had imbedded itself within me. What allows for the existence of subversive narratives with the business school is not a desire to reflect or test one's own mettle but a voracious appetite for academic publication (Butler & Spoestra 2014) or as Parker puts it "that I publish is more important that what I publish" (2018, p.1). This dichotomy is both alarming and beneficial in that it ignores the disruptive banging from within but has also allowed for experimental narrative to flourish and take on new and exciting creative new directions, ripe for advancement.

So instead of a resistance to arts-based methods, fictions should be warmly welcomed by the establishment as they may be a lifebuoy to an institution suffering a crisis of relevance. Even organisational scholars who would rather see business schools bulldozed, assert that our imaginations are where we need to start to create better worlds (Parker 2016). Additional ways of improving the business school model include broadening of the curriculum (Godfrey 2005) while (Patriotta & Starkey 2008) advocates for moral imagination and even engaging in organisational experiments and broadening to include new disciplines (Parker 2016). Creativity, it seems, is key. The presence of more arts-based methods would reimagine what it means to be a business school and open a door to a diversity of perspectives and students. I acknowledge that entering this territory creates unease in an establishment bound by academic conventions and well-trodden methodologies and to this end engaging in arts-based methods it aligns with other narrative work referenced that has aimed to push boundaries of what is possible methodologically in the field.

The use of narrative methods has now well outgrown its origins of storytelling as a means of simply reinforcing convention. It is an established and expanding tool of critical enquiry. A review of 165 papers on organisational storytelling found only 7 of those papers published before 2005 had a critical lens. There was an additional 32 papers identified as using a critical lens published between 2005 – 2015 (Beigi et al. 2019). Beige's review amplifies the assertion of Rhodes & Brown (2005) that beyond story's ability to reinforce the dominant management narrative is a potent means of disrupting convention and debunking assumptions. Like all forms of creative expression, it allows us to dive deeper into the subjective by embracing emotion and (Czarniawska 2008, Gilmore et al. 2019) a textural humanity in a field that is inextricably linked to people and their lived experience. The emergence of critical storytelling and its acceptance as a methodology can be credited to those organisational scholars who have long wrestled with the stifling constraints of normative academic convention. In Phillips seminal article 'Telling organizational tales: On the role of narrative fiction in the study of organizations' (1995) he argues for the use of narrative fiction as a research method. He posits that strict divisions between traditional methods and narrative fiction are overdrawn. This cleft between truth as fact and art as fiction is becoming increasing difficult to defend. Instead of doing so, scholars exploring this tension suggest it offers exciting opportunity to learn more about organizations (Philips 1995, Gilmore et al. 2019, Czarniawska 2008). Narrative methods and story creation are ideal tools for such excavation.

Whilst the management scholars work hard to shift the norms constraining writing and expose the value of different forms of writing to our research, the arts have long understood the role of writing as a method of research. Creative led research is becoming increasingly common (Rolling 2010) and can be either a stand-alone work or complimentary to more traditional forms (Nair et al. 2018, Czarniawska 2008, Phillips 1995). As a research form, it makes a number of significant and unique contributions. The first is as a form of research itself which 'combines creative and critical modes of thought, resulting in distinctive contributions to knowledge and practice' (Sempert, Sawtell, Murray, Langley, & Batty 2017). Creative work and the process involved in creative work produce detectable research outputs (Smith 2009) and embrace playfulness and experimentation underpinned by academic rigour (Sempert et al. 2017). For an organisational researcher this is an opportunity to improve impact through an innovative research form – one that may navigate obstacles posed by expected forms of research representation (Gilmore et al. 2019, Nair et al. 2018, Bartunek, Rynes, & Ireland 2006, Phillips 1995).

Creating a work of fiction to explore and test ideas of organisation can also yield knowledge through the process of creation and unearth knowledge inaccessible to quantitative methods alone (Kroll & Harper 2012, p. 3) This potential is further enhanced when combined with critical processes that I have employed in my literature review. Beyond this, as both an organisational scholar and children's author I am in a unique position to use this methodology to its fullest. The "training and specialised knowledge that creative practitioners have and the process they engage in when making art – can lead to specialised insights which can be generalised and written up as research” (Smith 2009, p. 5). Meaning that both the process and product of creative practice create a knowledge that is unique but complementary with other more traditional styles of research (Phillips 1995, Smith 2009.) Beyond this, the practice and theory when explored through creative methods become entwined and symbiotic (Scrivener 2000). Competent researchers utilising this approach can represent ideas in an evocative and redolent way that builds on form and transfers meaning (Nair et al. 2018, Eaves 2014). Research candidates working with a creative led approach vacillate between thinking and making, allowing their work to be informed and innovative (Batty & Berry 2015). They draw on a vast body of literature and traditional research but also engage in a practice that in itself becomes the methodology. There is required fluidity in analysing the literature and building a piece of work. This ambiguity is intentional, expected and built into the process.

The process – a constructivist approach

‘Sometimes you have to lie, but to yourself you must always tell the truth.’ – Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy*.

In much organisational writing, there is a drive to sound scholarly and legitimate. Grey and Sinclair (2006, p. 445) explain this adoption of an “abstract vocabulary” as a rejection of positivism that leads to an overcompensation. My research also rejects positivism but aims to embrace the ‘irrelevant distractions’ of human life as stories holding value and meaning that can help explore organisational issues.

As scholars, writing often begins with a plot built on theory. This skeleton of theory then provides a framework for building argument through academic language but in the process cleanses the story of any unnecessary human elements (Grafstom and Jonsson 2018). This approach is vastly removed from that of the novelist. Writers of fiction know that *god is in the detail*. Fiction at its best distils the small and seemingly incidental and allows us to see more of ourselves. Fiction pursues the human story over the didactic. This approach reflects the complexity of humans, the contradictions and mirrors our societies more closely than a rational sanitised textbook (Philips 1995, Rhodes 2015, Grafstom and Jonsson 2018).

My research is a study into the commercialisation of authenticity as it impactst he individual and uses narrative-fiction as a method of enquiry. It aims to explore the politics of authenticity at work through the creation of a work of fiction. It's a constructive approach and one that will use a narrative fiction methods and a creative practice approach to guide the writing style. This means that whilst an in-depth academic study of authenticity needs to be present in an accompanying exegesis to the work of fiction, the work of fiction is not a slave to the theory. It is intended that the theory influence the work in unexpected and creative ways, not overbearing ways that bear the mark of a shoehorn. Such an approach would not only constrain the subtle possibilities of the work but also run the risk of writing inauthentically.

This view is both based on my experience as a writer of fiction and further cemented by organisational scholars Grafstom and Jonsson (2018) who used similar methods of enquiry by employing a novelist to write a work of fiction to test organisational theory. They found that whilst the temptation to dictate the theory to the author was strong, by not doing so the "novel functioned as an eye-opener in organisational analysis," and forced the researchers to "look beyond more static and rational perspectives on organisations as well as stereotypes" (2018, p.1). In Grafstom and Jonsson's study they selected a professional novelist with no prior academic knowledge of organisations and discussed the organisational themes prior to her writing the work of fiction. They did this to harness the power of fiction and experiment with how fiction could explore and test ideas, they did not provide instruction about what she should write. In this way, their research made a methodological contribution as well as furthering organisational knowledge.

I am in a unique situation as I am both the professional novelist and the academic scholar. Unlike Grafstom and Jonsson's novelist I am already imbued with a critical understanding of organisation and the literature relating to authenticity. This may be an advantage, or a disadvantage. In the act of writing will I be pulled one way more than the other? What issues will arise when balancing creativity with academic theory? What insights about constructed authenticity will arise from merging both disiplines? These are unknowns. What is becoming clear is that like Grafstom and Jonsson's research this is an act of "blurring and bridging genres" in the pursuit of bringing meaning to organisational phenomenon. Such methods of genre blurring have been attempted by few scholars willing to take up Grey and Sinclair (2006) and Philips (1995) on their call to 'write differently'

(Gilmore et al. 2019, Kirakos & Tienari 2018, Rhodes 2015) and move beyond a sanitised and rationalized narrative of organisation.

Building worlds

As discussed, the output of this research will be both an exegesis and a work of children's fiction exploring themes of authenticity at work. It is useful to think of this novel and the process of creating it as a thought experiment where I, as the author and scholar, engage in world-building to test the concept of commercialized authenticity. World building is the process an author undertakes to create a context for actors to operate in. It takes into account the physical nature and limitations of that world as well as the influences of the characters that colour this fictional place. As I write these words 'fictional place' I can't help but draw a connection to organisations. Often described and understood as collections of stories (Boje 2011, Rhodes 2001) and fictions in and of themselves (Savage et al. 2017). Savage et al. argue that fiction is "a core process through which organisations are imagined and made sense of" (2017, p. 4) and this means fiction should be a central concern for understanding organisations. By suggesting that fiction is the essence of organisation in an ontological sense, it is acknowledged for having a 'world building quality' (Goodman 1978, Savage et al. 2017). This world building loops back to my creation of a fantasy genre work of fiction aimed and understanding authenticity at work.

To undertake an act of world building you need a quiet room, a charged computer and a mess of ideas banging around in your head. For me, the ideas are contained in the literature I have critically analysed in my literature review and my own reflections and experiences of organisation as well as a third element that is difficult to define. The third element could be considered the ability to link the concepts and ideas with fictional and storytelling skill. The first stage of my process is to first build a notebook that shapes characters that will live in the world I am creating. Each character getting their own series of pages that may include descriptions, imagery, cut-outs of references. These pages will not be exhaustive. They will grow with notes as the book is written, charting character changes, speech patterns and other small details that build rich continuity. It may seem strange that the world is not built before the characters, and on reflection this happens because in some way the creation of these characters informs the world that they need to enter. Or in other words, they as actors influence the fictions they inhabit. This thinking is aligned with a constructivist view of organisation which recognises the organisation as not having its own causal powers and the influence the actors, including the researcher have on the social phenomenon (Rhodes & Brown 2004).

This book will also chart plot development. In keeping with the influence the actors have on environment I will not create riged plots for the characters to navigate. The world and the rules that define it, will be relatively riged once set but the plots are more elastic. I will define a rough outline through a handwritten process of mapping and notation that will give a basic direction but how the characters get from one point to the other will become clear during the act of writing. This feels an appropriate method to employ when writing organisations as it mirrors the experience the employee has within an organisation, they exercise a free will but within the boundaries of a fiction they are partly responsible for creating.

The artefact creation, a work of children's fiction, and an accompanying exegesis will be entered into simultaneously as multi-layered discourse of theory and practice that are inextricably linked and mutually dependent (Cosgrove and Scrivener 2017, Scrivener 2000). This approach is in keeping with advances in exegesis writing that view it as a plaited text and that influences the work as the work influences it (Cosgrove and Scrivener 2017, Batty and Brien 2017). The writing of this significant work of fiction (the conventions for middle fiction suggest a work should be between 50,000 and 60,000 words) will take place in concert with the exegesis. Three journals will be kept charting, tracking and recording the process. The first is described above, it is purely concerned with the world-building, plot development and continuity issues of writing fiction. The second is a notebook that charts my academic research into the subject material of authenticity. The third is for field notes, a hybrid of the first two books. This third book is to be used to note the points where the scholarly ideas impact the fiction, where the organisational research enters the creative process and the impact it has on the work. It will document expected unexpected surface collision.

This approach aims to test Philips argument that narrative fiction offers an "indispensable approach to strengthening the connection between organisational analysis as an academic discipline and the subjective experience of organisational membership" (p. 625). It is the intention of this study not to see the human element as an obstacle to investigating theory, but a pathway. I intend to approach the work of fiction as a work of fiction not a thinly veiled vehicle for organisational theory. I will pursue the narrative concerned with plot, character and story. The themes of the work are threads to be pulled on to unravel, not designed to trip or tangle. The aim is that it tests ideas through narrative fiction and potential gives rise to a deeper understanding of authenticity whilst pushing the boundaries of methods of enquiry.

Narrative Identity

'The human brings himself to the stage. He considers himself a stage.'

Paul Ricoeur, *One Self as Another*

At this point, whilst I am building and clarifying my justification for my methodology and outlining the steps that I will need to take, it occurs to me that a blending of worlds is being foreshadowed. What I mean is that the above granular descriptions indicate a looseness by design. I am leaving room for an organic development of narrative and I suggest that this is because the characters in my book will have an impact on the world that I have no knowledge of prior to writing. It makes sense. It's an approach, although certainly not the only approach, some writers map every detail out before beginning their journey. I don't. I've never thought about why I don't, I just don't. Writing a story as research has pressed me to consider why, and the answer appears to be in the agency of characters and their ability to change the setting. Interestingly for me, I hear an echo here. It's Ricoeur. Whilst I have introduced Ricoeur briefly already as a voice who asks us to consider the nature of authenticity rather than define it, his work on narrative identity and self also provide a useful lens not just for probing authenticity but also the nature of narrative and the agency and impact of the actors on their set.

The inherent constructivist approach in creating narrative embraces the idea that writing is not passive. In writing an organisation and a narrative fiction I am not simply observing – I am modifying. Observing is modifying, writing is construction that affects. As the author, I am not simply pulling things from my imagination with no relation to the past or without impact on the present. I am instilling meaning through the act of my writing and this writing is a form of 'staging' in which I am ordering my story (Richardson 1992, Rhodes 2007). If I come to the creation of story aware that this methodology is inherently impactful then this thought experiment is one that carries a moral dimension. In Paul Ricoeur's seminal work Oneself as Another, he states "The thought experiments we conduct in the great laboratory of the imaginary are also explorations in the realm of good and evil (Ricoeur 1992, p. 164).

This moral angle as it relates to authenticity is important to leave open for interpretation. As demonstrated in the literature review, the current research in authenticity rarely takes a critical lens. This has been attributed to the overwhelming results linking authenticity at work with improvements in well-being and productivity and its relationship to positive psychology (Cha et al. 2019). My work seeks not to challenge the derived benefits but to better understand the nature of the authenticity that is practiced. What is it we are doing when we act as ourselves at work? What are the ramifications for the politics of self and work? While there is little call for a critical probe of the construct of authenticity itself, there is a call for more research to be done on the dark side of authenticity although this call is focused on toxic behaviours becoming normative through a promotion of authenticity (Cha et al. 2019, Sørensen & Villadsen 2015, Plester 2015). To answer this call and learn more about the dark side of authenticity it is not enough to simply look at the effect of authenticity management. It is the construct of authenticity that requires the microscope. This has been resoundingly overlooked with the exception of Fleming (2009, 2014). The lack of work on authenticity as a construct at work, leaves critical research into its known toxic affects (Cha et al. 2019, Plester 2015) weak. It's examining the lesion without peering at the virus. Other fields of study are less reluctant to make conceptual investigations into authenticity. But, I hypothesise that by leaving the critical considerations to other fields such as philosophy we as organisational scholars are outsourcing what is intrinsically *our* work. By locating authenticity within the office walls we are providing it a contextual element that *makes* it our business. When organisations promote, subvert and utilise the benefits of authenticity the obligation to better understand the conceptual nature of authenticity is left at our door like a baby in a basket. Organisational scholars need to make attempts at unpicking the meaning and nature of authenticity at work, not just understanding the benefits or effects. To assist in this endeavour, this I anticipate that narrative identity theory will therefore become useful in the analysis and the writings of Paul Ricoeur in his book Oneself as Another.

This work has multiple connections to my specific field research. Oneself as Another is a study and philosophy of self through a theory and application of narrative – an almost perfect fit for an analysis of authenticity through a methodology of narrative fiction. Ricoeur posits that the character is created through the stories we construct of ourselves, and that each of us has her own stories. It is a contradiction that is diverse and yet unified and one that is constructed by the narrative. In the context of organisational studies where organisations can be understood as hives of storytelling (Rhodes 2001) it takes on a useful dimension. In the same way we make sense of an organisation through its multidimensional narratives created by those within and around it, Ricoeur makes sense of the players within an organisation through their own multi-dimensional narratives.

'The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character.' Ricoeur (1992, p. 147)

Importantly, the individual is projecting this in a world which is imposed upon them. The rules and tacit agreements are not of their making, this is true of many facets of our lives, but it is certainly true of our lives in organisations. This positions the organisation as narrator and provides a moral responsibility that requires analysis. In relation to self, Ricoeur's work also makes important allowances for the subjective experience. As discussed earlier, subjectivity is an issue that the organisational scholar wrestles with those calling for its inclusion to better understand organisations as human constructs (Philips 1995, Gilmore 2019). Whilst some scholars studying authenticity have preferred to rely on the judgement of others in establishing what authenticity is (Fields 2007) more accept that the subjective experience is preferred in ascertaining the presence of authenticity (Harter 2002). Employing Ricoeur's One Self as Another as a tool for analysis provides a philosophical framework that embraces the subjective and allows me to understand it more. Ricoeur understands the self as a subjective experience not as a spectrum of authenticity but as a contradiction that is unified.

Whilst I will unpack this further in my analysis, I will say now that this idea of the contradicted self parallels the authentic self and performed authentic self co-existing at work. It is a tension that needs further explanation and Ricoeur offers some framework for this by accepting *the other* as a form of self that exists as does the self we know. For Ricoeur, the other, is not *other* people in a literal sense, but the other selves within our own selfhood as created in the impressions of others, "otherness is at the heart of selfhood" (Ricoeur 1992, p. 318). It points to a split self and embraces the paradox. Many philosophers struggle with this as it seems to fly in the face of authenticity being a state of knowing oneself, but a narrative identity theory allows for it. In the temporal sense, through different points of time and within our own woven stories, those selves either the *same* self or the *other* are able to hang together. I look to use the connection between self and narrative in Ricoeur's work when providing analysis and reflexion following the completion of the writing of my book.

The exegesis: an arts-based method for the business school

To be clear, the output of this research is an artefact in the form of a children's novel and exegesis. While this creative arts-based approach may be common place in faculties ranging from fine arts to creative writing it was only as recently as 2004 that Australian universities arrived comfortably at this position (Brien et al. 2017). Along the carpeted floors and lengthy board room tables of Australian business schools this is a position yet to be so contentedly reached. The notion that a management scholar can offer up a work of fiction as research, let alone a work of children's fiction is fighting talk. I only need to look as far as my own Stage 2 presentation to see evidence of the identity crisis work like mine provokes.

"I know a management scholar who's also a concert pianist! Should he be allowed to present his research as a concerto?"

This question was put to me by an esteemed academic during my methodology presentation. It is fair to say there was a detectable degree of scepticism. My knees silently quaking. My tired brain quickly sifting through the middens of research that are created in your mind when preparing for a PhD presentation. *"Yes,"* I replied. After all, you learn more than how to hit the keys when you learn the piano. You learn history through a musical canon, musicology through experience, language through sheet music, communication through tutorial and musical expression, creativity and collaboration through composition and performance. Issues of power and control though followership, discipline, work ethic. The fine relationship between talent and drive. You learn how to learn the piano and much more.

But who was this inexperienced student with her ridiculous plan, piano analogies and her apparent lack of awareness or respect of everything that ever happened before? Not to mention an inability to actually play the piano. That would be me. But not only me. In the field of organisational scholars, as discussed in depth within the methodology, there is a growing movement towards narrative as a tool of inquiry (Gilmore et al. 2019, Nair et al. 2018, Knowles et al. 2017, Grey & Sinclair 2006, Philips 1995). The role that narrative can play and what it offers as an alternative form of critical enquiry is relevant to business schools and beyond. Even in academic fields far more concerned with the rigour of scientific research boundaries are tested through alternative methods of enquiry, representation and narrative. Consider physicist Phramodh Senarath Yapa who presented his research on singleton electrons wandering through superconducting material through the medium of dance (Bohannon 2019). Think of Bruno Latour's seminal sociological research into a dysfunctional ticketing system as a work of fiction (Latour 1993) or even Professor Catrina McNeil's oncology poem *The Promise* exploring the dialogue of trust between cancer patients and their physicians (McNeil 2019) and published in one of the world's most respected, cited and influential medical journals. This is not a grab-bag of examples but an indicator of the extraordinary range of disciplines in which narrative is being used to test limits and provide a means for critical enquiry. And test it, it does. A recent conversation with Professor Catrina McNeil revealed that she had submitted multiple poems to medical and oncology journals, only one had ever been accepted. She lamented her lack of success when it came to publication of her narrative work, “Perhaps I’m just not a very good writer”. Having read her sparse, heart-breaking prose about a man heading into theatre to have his leg amputated, I knew this not to be the case.

> The left leg. Today they are amputating my left leg. They've written on my shin in purple marker so they don't get confused. Then they'll chop my leg off below the knee…
> …They park me in a little room. They like to keep it cold while you wait. There are sliding doors and fluorescent lights. Paper hats and masks all round. It's quite a Christmas party, really. (McNeil 2019, p. 219)

“It’s too political.” I replied. “It’s just a poem,” she said. And whilst we can never be sure, I surmise, *that*, is exactly the hurdle that obscures further publication. A little, seemingly innocuous poem can be a dangerous thing. It can expose the vulnerability of the doctor and in doing so, the profession and the institution in which it operates. In displaying humanity, fear appears within organisations, a fear that echoes a threat of fracture between the individual and their skills, training and fine reputation. It allows us to witness what is not seen but known and to pull at the threads of an otherwise off-limits world. A little poem can be a dangerous thing – the oncologists know it and so it would seem, do business schools.

Still here I am, creating (in the headwind) a novel and an accompanying exegesis. Some differences early on begin to emerge. My work sets out along the path of the normative doctoral thesis: Literature review, methodology, findings, discussion to be pulled together in conclusion (Piantanida & Garman 2010). I aim to shoehorn this familiar structure into an exegesis approximating the creative arts. But something is wrong. The shoehorn. The artefact. How does it intersect? What exactly IS an exegesis today? Certainly, I have researched what it is supposed to be. I know that whilst the creative work provides a platform for thought experimentation, it exists in symbiosis with the exegesis (Finlayson, Kroll, & Murph 2017). I know that the exegesis should not be considered an accompaniment to the main contribution, instead the exegesis is an integral part of the critical analysis (Cosgrove & Scrivenor 2017, p.3). This is thinking I adhere to – the two entities are independent of each other but symbiotic. It's an approach that's consistent with scholars engaged in arts based creative practice-led research who define it as "a document that grounds the creative work, gives evidence of critical engagement and makes a persuasive argument that the work has something new to offer" (Cosgrove & Scrivenor 2017, p. 3). But the literature regarding the modern exegesis also goes further. It talks of a renaissance and transformation in the writing of the exegesis that has seen the exegesis become an experimental document on a liberating journey where it may manifest in many different forms (Batty & Brien 2017, Krauth 2011). I tell myself that as I am an *organisational* scholar, a proper scholar, a serious scholar, a business scholar. I will be very rigorous. Very academic. My creative practice is based in a firm grounding of the literature of organisational authenticity. I will not be mincing around with creativity when it comes to writing my exegesis like those flippant characters over at the faculty of creative writing. I will be able to detach my writerly brain from my academic body in an act of impossible contortion that will prove my inherent academic worth. Straddling the very best of both fields and in doing so, be the very best of both… clearly I have imbibed some of the organisational insecurity that I'm critiquing. I am doomed. I am embarrassed.

The truth is, the relationship between exegesis and work is an interesting one and one that is dynamic and intentionally open to influence. Whilst both tackling the same subject matter, the exegesis offers a way of critical engaging with the topic and the creative "offers another by storying those same ideas into narrative" (Cosgrove and Scrivenor 2017, p. 3) this allows for the two to influence each other in surprising and unexpected ways. This is in keeping with new expectations of the exegesis that have moved it from a critical and journal approach to 'plaited text' (Krauth 2011) a medium for reflection, exploration, planning and drawing conclusions (Hamilton 2014, Batty & Brien 2017). It is an approach that acknowledges writing as integral to the research process.

It is this idea that the creative work can influence the exegesis that becomes interesting and relevant to my own work here. My original assumptions that the exegesis is simply a normative thesis format – the serious text – that will validate the creative artefact are ill-informed and belie the insecurity that come from my origins as a business scholar. These insecurities are highlighted by organisational scholars like Gilmore and Pullen who advocate for narrative as a powerful method of enquiry and warn us of the underlying impact of conforming to academic norms. 'We understand that by putting ourselves in the transcendental position of deracinated, disembodied and unemotional beings, as required by contemporary academic norms of what classifies an academic in a business school, what counts in terms of research performance, that these indicators mark who we can become in this space, and what we can say.' (Gilmore et al. 2019, p. 4)

Echoing these concerns, the modern exegesis does not aim to corset the creative and critical thinking back into academic bondage. Research by Brien, Pittaway, Owen and Waters found that the exegesis could be many things from a ‘reflective and critical text’ accompanying a creative work to a ‘demonstrative’ text which illuminates the process of the creating of work (Brien et al. 2017, Mann & Fletcher 2004). Whilst the responses of what an exegesis is vary along this theme, there is much less divergence when it comes to what an exegesis is not. The exegesis is not understood to be an explanatory text. It is not intended to explain the creative work nor to offer commentary on its quality. It should not simply be an anecdotal journal of commentary (Bourke & Nielson 2004). There is flexibility in the creative arts exegesis that is evolving (Bacon 2017, Brien et al. 2017) as a form of writing itself and a component of a doctoral thesis. It is changeable and dynamic and aims to respond appropriately to the artefact and generate and communicate new knowledge through both its format and tone.

Interestingly, the research around the creative arts exegesis intersects in many ways with proponents of writing differently within organisational studies. Both advocate for the importance of the way we write in uncovering and exploring knowledge and the critical possibilities it presents to the researcher and the opportunity for reflexivity (Gilmore et al. 2019, Brien et al. 2017, Grey & Sinclair 2006). There is a focus on unique, embodied or *authentic* writing to release inherent critical power that moves beyond the stylistic or technical and speaks to the quality of research (Gilmore et al. 2019, Cosgrove & Scrivnor 2017). Experimentation is welcome. This is something that links the evolving model of the creative exegesis with the thinking of management scholars looking to break the masculine and insecure normative conventions of business writing. And whilst the discussions around the value of management scholars writing differently gathers momentum (Grey & Sinclair 2006, Gilmore et al. 2019, Pullen & Rhodes 2008) this has barely affected the research or opinion in business schools relating to the writing of the doctoral thesis.

This is not the case in the creative arts faculties which continue to refine, critique, question and evolve the exegesis through ideas of writing, (Batty and Brien 2017, Bacon 2017, Brien et al. 2017). Conversly within business schools there is less experimental writing and writing methods when it comes to the exegesis or thesis of a management scholar. There are few exceptions within organisational literature, with only one known scholar noting the vacancy of experimentation within doctoral writing, "The doctoral thesis as a form of writing has, however, received scant attention in organisational studies" (Weatherall 2019, p. 100). Weatherall goes further, asking us to consider why at such a formative time of the researcher's development is the researcher expected to be as conservative as possible. It is as if experimentation within organisational studies is better left to the experts. Weatherall disagrees, arguing that reconsidering the conventional approach to writing may contribute to learning.

Weatherall came to this view though her own experience. Her doctoral thesis took an unlikely turn, having set out along the conventional lines she suddenly became stuck. Her ethnographic work involved volunteering with victims of domestic violence. Heart-wrenching work. Messy. Emotional. Following convention, this work needed to be condensed into neat, riged and formulaic chapters. She struggled with the prospect and ultimately came to the realisation that she wanted to write her doctoral thesis differently. She describes breaking it into three sections, removing the literature review and methodology and embedding them within the three segments she had created. In addition to these structural considerations, her writing style is also more human – a careful attempt to draw more from the material and circumvent the constraints of normative academic styles. Altering the conventional format and style of a thesis to best communicate and explore the findings is not an easy path, but one that offers deeper, richer learning.

My approach takes lessons from Weatherall's experience as a thoughtful maverick scholar who considers the way we write an important part of what we write and what we learn. My work aims to build an exegesis that communicates, experiments, and explores through narrative research. My exegesis follows in the footstepts of those, like Weatherall, that have written the doctoral thesis differently, not for the sake of difference but for the critical and creative opportunities writing differently presents. These benefits include processing emotions into conceptual understanding (Kara 2013, Page 2014) and unsettling organisational conventions (Grey & Sinclair 2006, Gilmore et al. 2019, Weatherall 2019) which presents methodological commitment. All of these aims are central to my work exploring constructed authenticity through narrative methods.

In addition to taking on an embodied writing style, which is unconventional for a business school, this research goes further by taking the form of an exegesis and accompanying artefact in the traditions of the creative arts. As this is an uncommon approach within the organsiational studies, here I will unpack the model and how I have applied it. Traditionally, the format for for artefact and exegesis will usually find the creative work inserted between background and introduction or introduction and literature review (Brien et al. 2017).

thesis structure 1
Background/Preface
Creative work
Introduction, including statement of research question
Literature review
Methodology
Results
Findings/Discussion
Conclusion

thesis structure 2
Background/Preface
Introduction, including statement of research question
Creative work
Literature review
Methodology
Results
Findings/Discussion
Conclusion

However, it is understood that that despite the above models, the strength of the exegesis resides in its 'mutability and responsiveness to the needs of individual research projects' (Ings 2015, p. 1287). Meaning each individual project has it's own reasons for deviating which may draw more from the work by presenting it in a unique but considered ways. It is certainly the case that today an exegesis can be many things including a 'plaited text' which is entwined with the artefact (Cosgrove & Scrivener 2017, Batty & Brien 2017, Krauth 2011) This approach of plaiting narrative is one that appeals to me and has been used well by organisational scholars testing the ideas of writing differently (Weatherall 2019, Czarniawska 2018, Grafström & Jonsson 2018).

The approach this exegesis takes is one that embraces some normative elements of the doctoral thesis with elements of a more experimental creative arts exegesis.

Firstly, there is the issue of writing. As already demonstrated, I have chosen a writing style that is embodied, human and in places eschews the constraints of expected academic writing. This both reflects the research that writing differently offers extended opportunity for learning and critique, but it is also an issue of appropriateness. The subject matter is one of authenticity. The research questions aim to prod this idea of constructed authenticity. It seems counter-intuitive to apply an inauthentic genre of inhibited academic writing to such exploration. At times I realise this aspiration of writing authentically better than others. At other times, no doubt normative institutional discourse will creep in, like it did just then! My intention is not to sanitise and create a perfectly uniformed tonality of constructed authenticity. To do so would create a bind that would make the investigation of authenticity all the more difficult. These textural differences between embodied writing and the hard edge of dominant academic writing which aims to 'write up' knowledge rather than to explore (Yoo 2017) are to be left exposed. This approach leaves evidence of the tension and relationship between the two styles and what they represent. In doing so, it is hypothesised that new knowledge will emerge both in relation to authenticity but also the methodological contribution.

In terms of format, this exegesis follows the normative with Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology to precede the findings and discussion. My findings however reflect the development of the creative exegesis as 'plaited text' using the artefact as the thread to pull on and link the subject with research. While this is a common approach in the creative arts, there are also examples of this being used successfully in organisational studies with a noted example being

Czarniawska which used Polish literature as a lens for unpacking issues of anxiety in organisation (2008). Her work sees the translated Polish text woven through the findings at various points of analysis. The chapters within the findings also focus on central themes of writing such as genre, structure, character and plot. These chapters use the narrative methodology to explore issues of genre as it relates to authenticity in the workplace.

Like Czarniawska the use of narrative methods can be further enrichened by employing narrative theory within the analysis. As stated in my literature review there is a need for organisational scholars working in the area of authenticity to look further than set definitions of authenticity and this theoretical framework offers a way of expanding the field of understanding. The insights Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity (1994) provide can be used to explore questions of complex identity and are particularly useful in relation to the paradox of authenticity with its conflicting selves. As I am setting out to engage in storytelling and the construction of a story for the purpose of examining authenticity, the parallels of self-construction through narrative emerge as relevant. Ricoeur's theories of narrative identity posit that the self comes into being through the telling of stories, the characters and the setting actors from our lives. This intersection of storytelling and self presents a valuable framework for organisational study. Using it to explore findings may allow me to draw connections between the individual as a sense making creatures who build this self through narrative and organisations who can similarly be understood as storytelling systems (Rhodes & Brown 2005). In this intersection narrative theory provides a construct for analysis that will be considered within this exegesis following the writing of the novel.

The outlined narrative approach provides a way forward for exploring the work not as a piece of writing but as a conduit for the study and examination of authenticity. This takes the exegesis to the heart of the research question; can authenticity be understood as a representation of authenticity? Is a construct of authenticity separate from the authentic self? Through the lens of narrative identity in concert with artefact creation I can explore the construct of authenticity as a genre taking into account the role of character and plot. It is expected and welcomed that the writing of the exegesis is an experiment and exploration in itself and not an exercise in 'writing up'. I am open to the unexpected, you have to be. When writing a novel many things happen to the writer and the process, I don't approach the creation of the book with riged ideas of where the insights will come from. In holding this thought experiment gently I am allowing it to unfold in unusual ways that offer insights that I have not predetermined.

CHAPTER FOUR

Blaming the tools

The uncomfortable truth of creative writing as organisational research.

‘A writer is a person for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people.’ – Thomas Mann

Before I reveal my work, and tease out the findings, it is necessary for me to take a moment to clarify aspects of the methodology. Traditionally, this chapter is not necessary, but the process of writing, and in my case engaging with the methodology needs some explaining before I can display the work. To do this, I must write freely, shake off some of the organised thinking that has been more apparent in previous chapters in favour for a reflective voice. Change gears. Change voices. Change selves. Here in this chapter, I would like to expose a little of my subjective experience grappling with my methodology so that I can highlight how it impacted the work and the findings. It begins with an uncomfortable truth.

For a writer, writing is never easy. Rewarding. Necessary. Vital. Confronting. Not easy. So, the words I am about to commit to this page are not easy to write. It is not an easy admission to make… wait give me a moment. I’m not ready to be honest. First, I must explain, because on the surface everything looks fine. The structure of this exegesis gives the false impression of a smooth ride. Introduction followed by literature review, chased diligently by methodology and a promise to create an artefact probing the nature of displayed authenticity at work. It all seems so well thought out, so controlled, so possible. But here we are, standing at the intersection, waiting for *the work*. This is the moment where the story is revealed – an artefact imbued with meaning and layers, carefully hemmed theory dovetailing with character and plot. What a gently ambitious project! And who better to execute it than me, the acrobat effortlessly poised to impress the audience with my ability to flip between the worlds of author and scholar. I have plotted my path and laid down my plans. This is the chapter where this book should be. This is where you eat popcorn. But where is this artefact? It's not here. In its place, an admission, a prelude to an uncomfortable truth.

I need to start again.

It hits me like a saucepan. It's true. There's no getting around it. Now that I've thought it, now that I've written it – it cannot be *unthunk*. It bothers me at night… it taps on the windows. It scratches at the doors when no one is there. It sends text messages with *no content*. At first, I pretend not to hear it. I stay focused. I will be delivering on my intended output of an exegesis and accompanying artefact. I do not need to be woken at night with doubt. But I have been. There is a problem, an unexpected plot twist to this story.

I need to start again.

The novel that I set out to write is finished. It sits complete on my desktop. The last year of my life distilled into 67,000 words. Characters, plots, worlds, words, ideas. It is a significant work. Piles of Spirex notebooks filled with thoughts, fragments of ideas, drawings and cut out pictures glued on lined pages. These 67,000 words that you cannot see presented here are the distillation of my labour. They are work. They represent time, effort, a presentation of professional skills and they present *me* as a writer. But there is something more important. At the completion of the novel there is one identifiable, and inescapable thing defining it:

It's terrible.

It is the worst thing I have ever written. The. Worst. Thing. Ever. This is not hyperbole. I know it's terrible. How do I know? It's not the experience of previously publishing 16 books. It's not the degrees and formal education I've accumulated. It's something far simpler than that. I know it's terrible because the sense of joy and freedom that I suddenly experience in admitting its failure.

It's overwhelming. It's fresh air. It's true.

The book I have written is terrible.

The characters are cliché Frankensteins patched together from conventions that have compacted the fertile earth of fiction. The plot is overworked and yet uninspired. The gender roles are expected. The dialogue is a pastiche of a million other books and movies. The themes and ideas I have intended to expose within the pages of the book are trite and conspicuous. The tone is painfully earnest and yet underpinned with intent and ambition that is off-putting at best. As if a cruel joke I have set upon myself, the only important thing about this work is that it reeks of *inauthenticity*.

The realisation of this truth caused a sense of dread. At the time, it was difficult to know what to do with this new knowledge. The situation certainly appeared dire, but as some time has passed since this reckoning I can now look back and see some structure to the awakening that ultimately led to a greater knowledge and a path out of this darkness. Before I continue with where the realisation took me, I need to pause and reflect on the internal process of grief that I moved through after completing the artefact. This is not an act of navel gazing, it directly relates to the unintended path this thesis took and my subjective experience of displayed authenticity at work. Allow me to go back a step:

Denial

Upon finishing the final words of the book I set out to write, I was not aware that it was terrible – this is of course a lie. On some level I was aware. I had written the characters, I had spoken their words, I had formed and described their worlds. As I did this, I vacillated between a self-congratulatory state and a low niggling sense that something was not right. I consoled myself with the belief that the project was worthy and that these doubts would be ironed out in the writing. This self-aggrandizing delusion is a gritty and uncomfortable thing to admit to and I make no excuses for it – except to say that perhaps these contradictions need to be present in a writer for them to even be mad enough to embark on writing anything at all. When I finished the final paragraph, I quashed that niggling doubt with a final full stop. The following is the final sentence to which I refer:

The sail might be torn, the deck might need sweeping, but finally they were headed in the right direction. Headed back to a place where people told stories, drew pictures, changed from one day to the next and grew older and wiser. And time began to tick again.

To fish this passage out and look at in in the light like this, is agony for the writer. The dripping saccharin cliché of it all! And yet I was trying so hard to write something good, honest and meaningful. At the time of this final full stop I was not ready to face the reality of my failure, so instead I told myself, *This was a good piece of work*. It has meaning. There are lots of moments of '*nice writing'* in here. Unfortunately, the grumbling continued and gave way to what can only be described as dread. The dreed at first was not in relation to the quality of the work as a children's text. At this point I still believed, with hubris, that it was a solid work of merit. The dreed was born from the thought that the book was not sufficiently meaningful as to provide any basis for my research. It was thin. I had struggled too much playing both the author and the researcher and not provided an interesting insight into authenticity as it relates to work. The struggle to please two masters had left me with a work insufficient for academic purposes and also yielded a work of fiction that was sub-standard. I had failed on two fronts. My first though was denial. It would be okay. I could make it work. I could *fluff it*. What an outrageous thing to think looking back! As if my supervisors and assessors would not see through this fakery. As if I could suspend my own disbelief a moment longer. I couldn't. If I could see through it, surely everyone else would too. I imagined continuing on as if it were a sound piece of work, a conman, knee deep in her own lies. It was unbearable and day by day it became more so. This was a bad, very bad. What made the situation truly diabolically was that it was not simply a poor piece of writing, it was lacking in academic value – the output, the research and the experiment from which I needed to glen my insight was thin and offered little for me to dissect and interrogate. Looking at the work, it became clear the situation was impossible. I could not answer my research question and contribute to the knowledge on constructed authenticity at work if my research artefact was entirely inauthentic. I had been inauthentic as an author and as a researcher. It had not been my intention, but I was complicit. It was a house built on sand. It was a catastrophic realisation and the only thing for it was denial. It was fine. Everything would be fine.

Anger

Everything was not fine. After the denial – that sat like a corpse in the boot of a car – could no longer be tolerated. A new emotion filled the void. I was cross. I was cross at myself, I was cross at the work. I blamed the work as if it could do something about itself. I spoke of it like an estranged family member and one I did not want to spend a second longer with. I shut the file on my desktop and I did not open it for quite some time. I gave my own work, the cold shoulder. Even when the disappointment in myself had subsided, the irritation with the work remained. I had to live with myself, I did not have to live with the work. To remain productive and avoid the frightening reality of the failed work, I turned my attention to the exegesis and iterations of my literature review. A safe space. A clinical space. The work was interesting and tapped into another part of my brain that could not fail me. This writing and research was reliable work, academic work with set conventions and language that provided structure and shelter for a charlatan like myself. Why had I written all this stuff decrying normative conventions of writing in organisational studies? Scientific norms and traditions had a place, sure they were gendered, but this mess I was in was exactly why we need them. I returned to the rigor of more established academic elements – my literature review needed up dating, my methodology needed more citations. This was a better use of my time. Here I could learn and create, weave the threads of authenticity literature together with a sense of safety and distance. My supervisors asked how the story was taking shape and I told them I had completed what I called 'a first draft'. This was technically true, but in my heart I knew it was not just a first draft. It was a last draft. It was a dead end. I was not yet ready to share it with them. Soon. It just needed some work. In reality, I couldn't look at it. I hated it. I felt tired at the thought of opening the file. Exhausted at the idea of fixing it. It had let me down and not lived up to my expectations. It was to blame. It was not me.

Bargaining

With deadlines ticking away and timelines to be met, it would not be possible to bury the artefact and deny its existence. It was also not possible to pretend any longer that it would be a sufficient work capable of delivering on its purpose. Despite hating the book I had written and not wanting to look at it ever again, I needed a solution. Usually, the answer to this sort of problem in the world of fiction is found in the drafting process. Perhaps it could be redrafted? Perhaps I was being catastrophic and dramatic? It's just a book, I know books. I can fix this. This is productive thinking, action oriented, solution focused. I could solve this! I began thinking about what was wrong with it. I considered the lengthy and totally unnecessary opening in which a girl sinks on the Titanic… that could go! What about the issue of gender? Why was my main character male? It was only a thoughtless response to convention and surely there were issues relating to authenticity at work that would be unearthed by reconsidering this element. Yes. This was fixable. I just needed to do the work. It's just a process. Go back through the text and begin the process of redrafting. Something stopped me. The churning feeling in my gut. You cannot redraft a car crash. This book was a car crash.

Perhaps a car crash is not the right analogy. The thing that was wrong with the book was not dramatic, obvious or alarming, it was invasive and insidious. It was a tone and the mindset of the author that had stained the pages. The fault line was deep – I had written it inauthentically, unsure of who I was as the author and it showed. I had not as many of the organisational scholars studying authenticity suggest, been *true to myself* (Avolio 2005, Gardner et al. 2011, Shamir & Eilam 2018). I had certainly not engaged in the "unobstructed operation of one's true- of core-self in one's daily enterprise." (Kernis & Golman 2006, p. 294). Quite the opposite. I had literally served two masters as scholar and author and to do this, I had completely denied myself in the work. To deny myself, I had not simply locked myself away, I had produced another self for the purpose of work and whilst now I stood in judgement of that, at the time, I believed what I was writing was good and that the person writing it was me. It was, as Hochschild would have it 'deep acting' a far more transformative and invasive performance that the ‘surface acting’ that whilst exhausting, leaves the actor still aware of who they believe themselves to be (Hochschild 1983). This kind of mess is toxic to writing fiction, it contaminates everything. It certainly made beginning a drafting process fraught. Some issues with the work could be addressed with a redraft, for example structural or plot based changes, but the real problem was between the lines, it was invisible. The real problem with the work lay in the author’s intent, to fix this with drafting would mean tweezering out displays of inauthenticity in the writing, a process that would be laborious and futile. To fix it would only make it worse. A tug-of-war began between the solution-oriented idea of redrafting and the truth that it was beyond repair. My heart was absolutely against redrafting. I knew it was a hopeless task. Whist this sounds like a dramatic position to take, it was in fact, rational. The only reason to redraft the work would be to create a work that would adequately serve the exegesis. It would not be to create a work that set out to achieve the things I have outlined in my methodology. It would be to create a *passable* work. In some instances, this may be a perfectly valid course of action. But when your area of investigation is authenticity and specifically subjective authenticity and the manufacture of displayed authenticity for the purpose of work, this situation should and did, present an insurmountable road block. To complete this thesis, I needed to believe in the work. That was not an optional element, it was a requirement. I had not anticipated the importance of the work aligning to my own values. It was not something I had ever considered before – as an author, I took it for granted that my work was authentic and a connected self-representation of my values, beliefs and motivations (Cha et al 2019, Erikson 1995). More than that, as a children’s author my books didn’t just represent my values they intentionally amplified them. Creating fiction was a way in which to affect the world and balance the scales. I had failed to anticipate the necessity to believe in the work, I had taken it for granted.

Devastatingly, this meant that fixing and repairing the work as it stood would be an act of deception and a futile one. It would mean intentionally creating an artefact with the objective that this work would play its role convincingly (although not honestly) in its relationship with the exegesis. This was the tail wagging the dog. I was poised to execute the very thing I was studying. I was on the precipice of reworking a book with the intention of cosmetically enhancing its appearance of authenticity and my own in the process. My gut churned. I had a decision to make. I stood at a crossroads and both paths led to dark places.

Depression

After the dread, the fear and the bargaining, I was sunk. I could not unknow what I knew. The book was false and this was a completely untenable position. In truth, I experienced a great sense of loss and hopelessness. A sense of guarded vulnerability took over. I had lost much more than time; I had lost my idea and my aim. The only path that I could see out of this was to manufacture a thesis built on a work I knew to be inauthentic. I couldn't do it and I did not want to do it. I didn't want to use my professional skills to manufacture the appearance of authenticity in my work. I had spent so much of my educational and professional life cajoled into manufacturing authenticity as a function of work. It was what had led to my interest in studying authenticity in the first place. In my working life I had observed that one of the most valuable skills a person could have was the ability to give people what they wanted regardless of the integrity of the task. They even had a name for this self-manipulation in business, they called it soft skills. As a student, I'd had first-hand experience producing essays that didn't reflect me as a person but were designed to meet criteria and get the right mark. In my working life I was also familiar with the gap between espoused values and performance. As an employee it seemed work was all too frequently an act of executing briefs polluted by second-hand ideas only then to be required to present these ideas with what passed as my 'real self' as a show of belief in the work. There's a word for all this – integrity – and inauthenticity compromises it. As an author I had never compromised my integrity. I had always strived to work authentically. It was the one true space I has created in my life. It felt honest and a decent enough reflection of me. I didn't want to sully that all now with inauthentic work. I didn't want to commit three years of my life to building a passable artefact that I knew was of no real value and then engage in the mining of that artefact, dredging up fools gold. I felt trapped by the impossible job I set for myself. I began to realise it was not possible to create a great work of children's fiction that also served as a study and an investigation into displayed authenticity at work. It was insane! The academic who had criticized me earlier rhetorically asking if a pianist should be allowed to write his organisational thesis as a concerto was correct… he should not. I'd gone to a lot of trouble to prove him right. I felt guilty. People had put their trust in me. I had convinced them this was a viable project and it was a lie. I'd written the lie and it was proof that it was an unachievable and ridiculous goal. I googled: How to quit a PhD

Acceptance

This was a wicked problem, but just as I had the creeping knowledge that the work was terminally flawed, I also knew what I had to do. Now, this might sound like a good thing. A way out. No. The answer was a heartbreaking truth. Perhaps I had known it for longer than I cared to acknowledge, but I had to face it now. There was only one thing to do. I needed to start again. Not a draft. Not a reworking. A complete rewriting. A new book. A blank page and a first sentence. Accepting this reality was not a joyful experience, acceptance is rarely a happy stage of grief (Barone & Ivy 2004). I became aware that this was the only option for my work to have any meaning at all. This was an essential progression. This was a mighty task. It meant throwing out 67,000 words, and the hundreds and hundreds of hours spent creating them. It meant tossing them in the dust bin or appendix, which is exactly where you can find my own Dorian Grey. It meant starting again and going in a completely different direction.

This thought grew and solidified and gained momentum in me. It moved from a whisper to a shout. So, one day, I simply opened a new blank document and I resumed work. I began at the beginning taking with me all that I had learned creating Book 1 but also leaving it all behind. I didn't read back over the first book. Despite the failure in that book, I had deeply laboured over each page, it had not been written in haste and it had not been written without thought. If anything, it had been written with too much thought. I left all the overthinking and baggage behind. I did not refer to it as a base text, I said a quiet goodbye and left silently. I started afresh and wrote the opening sentence of my new book, a sentence that came from somewhere unknown within me and captured how I felt in that moment with my work in taters and no idea what lay ahead. And as the words materialised on the page I knew this was exactly the right place to start:

'Every situation is worse when your room is on fire.'

And with this first sentence now transcribed I had taken the first step of thousands and I began writing a second book, from scratch. I took a fresh approach. Having written a first book full of inauthenticity, I knew exactly what I was avoiding and what I was aiming for. I was aiming for a work that tested and experimented with ideas of authenticity at work and unlike the first book, I wanted this offset with a levity and tone that made young readers want to turn pages. It needed to be fun. I had avoided the notion of fun in my first book. Fun seemed too flippant for such a serious task as this, but on the writing of book 2 I realised it was vitally important. Fun was one of the tools available to me in constructing the authenticity this book required. It was curious that I'd been so quick to overlook the importance of fun in building authenticity. It had been used very successfully in organisations that engaged in authenticity management, it was a highly effective tool for reaching into the private sphere and drawing out the authentic self at work (Fleming 2009, Plester, 2016, Sørensen & Villadsen 2018). Beyond the calculated use of fun, I also focused on my use of writing craft as a way to create a convincing authenticity in the work. Where I had once adhered to conventions of the genre I now wanted to break these bonds and find my own way, much in the way that those involved in 'writing differently' have sought to escape the conventions of tired gendered academic writing.

45,201 words later, I had a new book. I’m relieved to say, it’s good.

Very good.

I don’t want to give the impression that the first book was *bad* because I was *bad*, the second *good* because I was *good*. That’s too simplistic. My heart had always been in the right place, I had always wanted to reflect my authenticity as both an author and scholar. I had only ever wanted to create a decent and good work. I had set out to achieve this in writing my first version of the book, and I had failed. Why? I hadn’t suddenly become a good writer in the space of a few months, so what then?

It is engaging with this question that has provided me with a pathway to my research intentions. The experience of writing two books and the space between them was a subjective experience directly resulting from the methodology. One that provided a richness to explore when it came to authenticity at work.

I identify that the initiall failure of the first work was in part due to succumbing to the traditions and normative conventions of the genre. I had imitated a person writing a book, instead of writing the actual book. Ironically though, in some ways the second attempt was considerably more manufactured and considered than the first. I had simply believed in myself the first time and not questioned the impact of convention, and look where that had got me!

Now through this unintended process I am able to flip the coin on authenticity at work in a way I had not expected. I am able to better understand the subjective experience of contrived authenticity at work, through having my own experience with it. I had engaged directly with my own self mimesis and came through the facsimile of self with at first a substandard book and finally with one I felt proud of, one that has achieved a convincing level of authenticity. Whilst both books are concerned with the subject of corporatizing the self and the intrusion of the organised world, iIt is not the themes of the books that have offered insights that help me answer my research question, it has been the process. It had provided me with more material with which to investigate the subjective experience of displayed authenticity at work, than I had intended. Instead of being the wizard behind the curtain pulling the levers I had found myself, quite unexpectedly inside my own research. I had set out to get beneath the skin, to turn over the coin and see the hidden side. I wanted to experience and explore through narrative methods insights about authenticity at work and the manufacture of our authenticity. Here in an almost Kafkaesque narrative, I had entered my own work and the nightmare was my own.

What this all means in tangible terms is that the output of this research is not a single novel as I set out to create, but two. The first of the two novels now servers no real purpose as a stand-alone work but it is vital in understanding the artefact that is presented within this exegesis. The process of creating this first novel has provided insights into authenticity at work that moved beyond the thought experiment and reached into the private sphere, my own. It also serves as a counterpoint to the second novel – a work which was created with an awareness of the inauthenticity of the first and a calculated intention to build a work that displayed authenticity as well as explore it in within the story.

Enjoy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Creative Artefact:

The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat

By Kate Temple

[Production note: NO FULL TEXT OF THIS CREATIVE WORK AVAILABLE. Access is restricted indefinitely.]

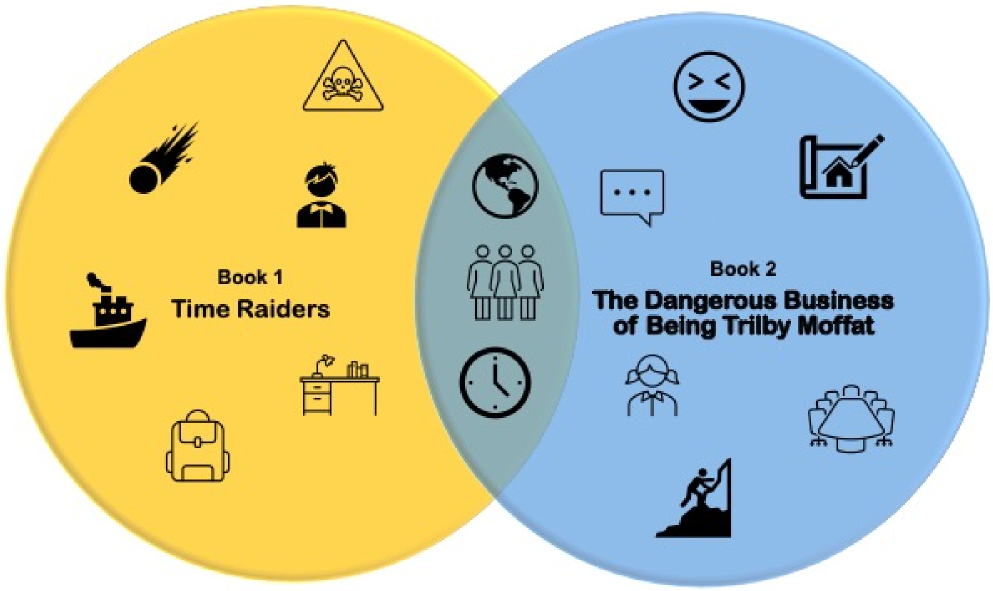
CHAPTER SIX

Findings of sameness and self

Welcome back. From Trilby's world beyond time to our measured world and the resumption of this voice. Through the creation of the fiction you have just read I set out to capture the subjective experience of constructing self. Initially, it was intended that this snaring would occur in a more metaphoric sense, that in the weaving of this fiction insights would emerge about constructed authenticity, and certainly they can be found there. What I had not expected was that the subjective experience of authenticity would also be very much in the experience of being the author and engaging in the creation of the work. In this next chapter I will investigate insights that were gleaned from engaging with this process. This chapter contains findings and reflections of an autoethnographic nature that shed light on the approximation of self at work using my subjective experience as writer, author, scholar and subject.

What's the difference? What's the same?

Before diving into the what the artefact creation process unearthed, it is necessary to highlight some of the obvious differences between the book you have just read and the first attempt. It is also equally important, perhaps more so, to point out what they held in common. I will begin with a literary focus on elements within the author's control.



The first book was entitled *Time Raiders*. I wasn't happy with that title so then I tried, *The Time Mariners Treasure* followed by *Time Pirates* and also *Edward Elms and the Lost Children of Time*. I was not happy with any of them and I have lists upon lists of other equally expected and mediocre titles. In the end, I returned to using *Time Raiders* but decided to employ it only as a 'working title'. Like any substandard arrangement that doesn't cause too much trouble – I learned to live with it. I got used to it, and then it stuck. I'd conjured all these epic titles because I was looking for something with a bit of magnitude that also described a labour of sorts as well as a fantastical environment. *Time Raiders* did this to a sufficient extent for me to stick with it, although it always felt uninspired and at the same time overly ambitious. Despite the dreary name, Book 1 contained some interesting and unique central themes as well as world building elements which it shared with Book 2.

Book 2 went by the far more intriguing title, *The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat*. Unlike Book 1, I began writing this book without a title. I never even sat down and brainstormed the title. I never went looking for it. It came looking for me. The words hit the screen organically in chapter three as part of the narrative, and the second I wrote them, I knew it was the perfect title. I could almost hear it click into place. The feeling was joyous. They set an entirely different tone and one I felt reflected the work I was setting out to create and reflected me as a writer. I am describing a sense that the title felt true to the book but also to me. The origins of the title reflects this too, it came from the book. It was not bolted on or contrived, it was 'true' to the work. It's an observation that goes beyond the words in a title and speaks to something unseen that I felt as the author was apparent in the work. This difference in titles as it related to the authenticity contained within was better summated by one of my favourite authors, John Steinbeck.

"Names are a great mystery. I've never known whether the name is moulded by the child or the child changed to fit the name. But you can be sure of this- whenever a human has a nickname it is a proof that the name given him was wrong."
John Steinbeck, East of Eden

The name being 'wrong' points to a moral mutation that affects the true nature of the creation or this case the work. It isn't just that it is ill-fitting but the incorrect name in some way compromises and weakens the authenticity of the artifact. As the work unfolds it is always constrained by this handicap, unable to live up to its title, unable to escape it. The work is undermined, the author is compromised. Having the name 'right' from the outset, in this instance was a guiding force for the creation of the work. A true north. In the same way that a research question acts as a lighthouse to the exegesis, this title, *The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat,* orientated the narrative and purpose of the book. It assisted the tone of the writing by suggesting a dark whimsy, imagination and fun. The reference to 'business' acted as a connection to the thought experiment I was undertaking in my scholarly work and also propelled and developed the themes of the book further than I had done in Book 1.

The shared themes in both books were centred around authenticity, both at a subtextual level and a conceptual narrative level. To be specific, I had developed the idea of making authenticity a tangible physical thing. To do this at a fictional level I had imagined a world where intangible human treasures were tradable. That's a big idea, so I'll just take a moment to break it down. It occurred to me that the purest form of our human authenticity could more often be found in the intangible. It was in the way we spoke and the interactions and rituals with others. Fleming talks about the intangibility of authenticity going through a transformation in which it becomes displayed in the clothes we wear, the way we speak. This can be seen in the authentic workplace in the 'designer resistance' which Fleming (2009) described as a way of displaying the unseen resistance in the employee in such a way that it can be harnessed for the corporate profit motive. It's the private sphere all on show. But these attempts to force the invisible to be visible somehow flatten and weaken its authenticity. Authenticity once forced into a physical form is like an element simply unable to remain stable, it crumbles. In this way authenticity is at its purest when invisible. It was this subjective and intangible aspect to authenticity that was exactly what made it difficult to study at work (Czarniawska 2015). It made it no less prized however, and the reason organisations sought to draw it out and commodify it could be to reframe authenticity as a resource in search of a market (Edwards 2010). If only emotions and authenticity were something you could reliably measure! I had not come to this project attempting to measure displayed authenticity, I was here to poke it, watch it move, understand its nature. As my approach was fictional, I had options available to me that were unavailable to those with sophisticated Likert style instruments, I had the means to explore the subjective and test ideas through narrative (Phillips 1995, Grafström & Jonsson 2018). So, I decided to solidify this intangible authenticity for the purpose of exploring it further through fiction. This idea of creating a tangible form of authenticity was a concept central to both Book 1 and Book 2.

To build this idea of creating a tangible authenticity, I considered where our human authenticity is most concentrated. I looked to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This is a list filled with treasures that cannot be held and cannot be owned. Things like: the knowledge of collecting dates from Bahrain, the Syrian traditional art of shadow play, the picking of Ivory Grass in Bosnia and an ancient language of whistles from Turkey. These wonderous, magical things seemed to me the purist distillation and display of human authenticity; they are hewn through time, they are the result of circumstance meeting human nuance and creativity. I then began to imagine what would happen if we could trade these things. What if you could trade a dance, or an ancient language or a tradition or a moment in time? What if these things could be objects that you show off at cocktail parties or a bid on, like a Picasso? What if they were a commodity that spawned a market and an industry, much in the same way that displayed authenticity at work has become a materialisation of an intangible human trait or characteristic that has a value and market (Edwards 2010, Fleming 2013). This fantasy gave me a springboard for my book and one that I could use to dovetail into issues of displayed authenticity at work. What would an industry that traded authenticity look like? How would the employee present themselves? It was a solid conceptual base but the way I interacted with this idea of traded authenticity was significantly different from Book 1 to Book 2.

In addition to this central theme, there were also two other narrative elements that carried across, the first being elements of world building and also some of the characters that inhabited this world. Again, there were significant differences in the way in which they were explored but there were also things they held in common. When it came to the characters the strongest continuity came from a central figure that embodied a corporate greed and a managerial enthusiasm. In the first book he is called Captain Hellville (a play on Herman Melville and the Australian bushranger Captain Melville) an exciting and interesting name, however in the second book he is reimagined as Mr Colin. This is the reader's introduction to Mr Colin:

There, stood a man in a black suit and a black top hat, whistling... The man was very tall. His eyebrows were arched. His eyes were grey and steely like a shark. He wore a lanyard around his neck with a photo of himself and the words Mr Colin, NIGHT MANAGER. For those of you fortunate enough NOT to know what a lanyard is, let me enlighten you. A lanyard is a strange fashion accessory worn *by people who work in offices or take holidays on cruise ships. (Excerpt from The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat)*

Unlike the children in this book who wear individualised clothing representational of their character and the times they come from, Mr Colin wears a uniform. This example of the uniform harked back to the aesthetics of displayed authenticity. Here was a character that shunned informal authenticity management and the anti-establishment boss. His managerial appearance was rationalised in the uniform. The uniform permeated the skin, it was his body, the character was conceived of as uniform and as such, "when the body becomes invested in management, we observe tensions, tactics of domination and unpredictability" (Sorensen & Villadsen 2015, p. 251). This was indeed his character, he was controlling and difficult to anticipate, his body was the uniform. He represented a deep entrenchment in traditional management but unlike Taylorism that allows the employee to clock off, Mr Colin also embodies the new authenticity management as he overreaches into the private sphere of others (Fleming 2009). The children in both books did not wear uniforms, although they were the workers and acted under the control of Mr Colin, their clothing was their own. As the children came from different time periods this clothing represented their origins. The character Werner came from 1937 Germany and wore pleated trousers, a collared shirt and a jumper as you would expect. Claudia, a girl from 79AD Pompeii wore a toga, and the main character who was different in both books but from the current time, wore clothes you would expect on a child of today. These various fashions, whilst different, are uniforms in their own way, in the same way that casual footwear and a hoodie is no less a uniform to the start-up industry. Organisations that promote displayed authenticity encourage expressions of individuality in appearance (Fleming 2009) and this results, on the surface, to a visual difference in workers. The appearance of children in both books reflects this idea of the aesthetics of authenticity. The children appear as individuals but they are hemmed into the same work and controlled by the same overarching managerial force that seeks to possess more of them than they have on offer. In both Book 1 and Book 2 the children and their adversary appear the same way, with their individuality both enhanced and muted by their fashion and circumstance.

In addition to the tension between the central theme of commodified authenticity there was also a shared element of world building between the two books. There are vast differences in the locations found in both stories but they have one important setting in common. The children that inhabit both stories live on an island known as The Island Between Time. Here, the children work in an ancient guild restoring the authentic objects.

*"What is this place?" asked Trilby in amazement. What she really wanted to know was "**Where** is this place?" Fortunately, the answer was the same.*
"This is The Island Between Time," said Koji.
"That's a strange name, why is it called that?"
"Because that's where it is!"
*"What do you mean by **between**?"*
"How can I explain it… between means like not here and not there, but sort of in the middle?" replied Koji.

“I know what ***between*** *means!” said Trilby. “Amongst, in the middle of, separating two objects, flanked by…”*

“Exactly! Well done Trilby,”

“A place can’t be ***between*** *time. Time is time. It’s just, here.”*

“No, time is not ***here****. Time is back* ***there****,” said Koji. He pointed towards the dark lake behind them.*

“But how can a place be ***between time****?” said Trilby. The boys looked at each other, confused.*

“It just is! Some things are just ***between****. Like ham in a sandwich.”*

“Yes, but HAM is still in the sandwich. It’s not outside the sandwich.”

“It’s outside the bread. Just like the island. It’s near time, but not in it.”

Trilby couldn’t make sense of that sandwich.

(Excerpt from The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat)

Although the Island Between Time shares the same name and some visual elements in both books it was completely reimagined in the writing of Book 2. I recall only on one occasion opening the original book with the intention of lifting the description of the island and finding it totally unusable. This came as a surprise. In my mind the island from a distance was similar. I genuinely thought that as a descriptive element it would be simple enough to save myself the work and transpose the text from one book to another. It was not. The tone of the writing, the intention of the writing had shifted so dramatically that even a subtle invasion of the previous text threatened to contaminate the authenticity of the book. It was incompatible. This was curious given the island was similar in both books and the text only required me to describe it from a distance. Still, it was not possible. It had to be written from scratch. The following is an expert from the first book:

And there, in the clear horizon, a magnificent city rose from the sea. The city was piled up on a small rocky island like a lemon meringue pie – spires and turrets spearing the sky. The jagged peaks of the towers punctured the sea, busting through the fabric of time. The city itself wasn't large, but every inch of the island was covered in paths and stone walkways spilling down to the port that ringed the city. It was tiered like a wedding cake, with layers of little stone buildings stepping up to one glorious and twisted castle which seemed to grow out of the stone mountain itself. Its glistening windows of stained rainbow glass were bent into shapes that followed the rise and fall of the island. The walls were rocky with arched doors covered in colourful tiles. There were spires topped with balls that reminded him of Christmas and on the tallest of them all, the symbol he'd seen on the sash of every child aboard the Walrus. The Time Guild.
(Excerpt Time Raiders)

The author in me finds the above description overly wordy, weighted down with obvious simile. But this commentary isn't provided as a critique of writing technique, rather I am sharing my critique as a demonstration of the subjective experience of the author at work. Certainly, there had been a tonal shift between the two books which presented technical issues when it came to migrating the written word, more than that, there was a shift in the author. This incompatibility within myself, the need to keep the authentic separate from what I deemed inauthentic was labour intensive. It was detail work. It was one thing to embrace imperfection as authenticity, it was another to let your guard down. The following is an expert from the second book describing the same scene:

The boat slipped between two of these islands and behind them emerged a town on a large island rock. It was piled up on itself, like a lemon meringue pie. Tiers of little houses and shops with a rocky pathway winding around leading up to a strange building. Timber rooms jutting out of the rock. Balconies wrapped around shuttered stained-glass windows. The roof was topped with little spires crowned by coloured balls that poked at the sky. It was a patchwork, a glorious jumble. At the very top of it all was a clock tower. The time read. 3:81

(Excerpt The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat)

A breath of fresh air! It makes more sense. I don't feel so lost and the thread of narrative helps the description along. It's also far more simple. Shorter sentences, less words. It is clearly informed by the previous description, but it has evolved and found itself. Here I can see I have created authenticity in the work through my intent and also the conscious application of craft. The result is a book that resonates as unique and authentic. I have managed to switch on the authenticity where it was once turned off. To some, the difference may be slim, but to me it is not. In the second book I have removed the desperation, the overly effortful language and replaced it with something simpler, humbler resulting in something more authentic. In doing so the seams of self-interest and labour are well hidden leading to an appearance of authenticity (Bai. et al 2020). This correlation between authenticity and a convincing performance of a lack of self-interest is one that can be contagious (Oc et al. 2020). It is more frequently seen in the authenticity literature as a positive tool; performative humility when done well leads to vulnerable followers experiencing an increase in their own sense of authenticity through a sort of organisational osmosis. The links to the author/reader relationship are obvious, by making the conscious decision to step down from my self-perception of a writer, a position I consider to have some status and accept my failings and 'view myself accurately' (Hewlin 2020, p.81) I had offered a better and more convincing performance to both myself and the reader. Whilst the positive outcome of a better book is certainly something for the writer to celebrate, it is the issue of crafted authenticity that requires further examination. It's a gamble. For humility in work to be manufactured in the first place requires inauthenticity, but if the result is sufficiently convincing, then the result is authentic regardless of the means. A paradox. If the player fails, the work is inauthentic, the player too. My own experience here of the role of craft on the success of displays of authenticity indicated that an ability to control your work in ways which is aligned to your goals has a relationship to a sense of authenticity.

In the above, I have attempted to outline what the two books had in common and where they diverged. I have separated these two texts as if written by another hand, but in reality they came from the same person. Reading over this last chapter I notice that I write about them as if they were written by two separate people. It's a reflection of how I feel. It's almost inconceivable that two so different stories could be written by the same hand – but they were. The time between the writing of the two texts was not large and nothing transformative had happened to me during that time that I could attribute to altering me as a writer, and yet these books were so vastly different. The way I viewed them and their inherent meaning was also vastly different. They engaged with the same concepts and themes. They shared some of the same characters and settings and yet, they were immensely different, in both obvious ways and more subtle nuanced ways. The divide between these two texts is deeper than the storytelling elements of character, narration and tone. It's more than icons on a venn diagram. The difference in the books is also in the lived experience of the writer at work, it is a subtextual approach to writing that has created an incompatibility in myself. The manner in which I approached the creation of these books and the tools I employed to do so have affected both the text and have altered me. I am on display in both the books I have created, I have altered myself to write them and the transformational effect of the writing is also written on the body (Gilmore et al. 2019).

Reattaching the heart and the head

I had not set out to do this. I had not set out to alter myself or to dredge my own lived experience as a way of examining displayed authenticity. I had set out to write a book which, at an arms length, would provide a further *point of contact* for my investigation. I was not intending or expecting to enter my research. Having said this, I will make clear that I had intended to adopt an embodied approach to the writing of this exegesis, an approach with organisational precedent in the *writing differently* movement (Glimore et al. 2018). This embodied style of writing that I've employed throughout parts of this exegesis, has allowed me to write more freely and more authentically. In this sense, it has felt appropriate to the subject matter, but when it came to the division between artefact and exegesis, I still expected clean lines. I had expected the embodied writing to exist appropriately and neatly within the exegesis, not to muddy the creative work or vice versa. Despite having understood my narrative fiction methodology on a theoretical level, in practice I had initially withheld myself from my work and created distance between the writing and the author. The result is the numerous voices that inhabit the writing of this exegesis, the author, the academic, the subjective experience of both, all of them real and yet quite incompatible.

As stated earlier, I employed this original narrative fiction methodology as a thought experiment. The aim was to harness the ability of fiction to extract more from the subjective experience. I anticipated I would encounter the unpredictable, or at least, that's what I hoped. I expected to encounter it in the pages of my novel, in the characters, in the worlds they inhabited. I did not expect to encounter it in myself. In the creation of Book 1, I had not encountered myself at all. I had simply laboured over a reasonable work of fiction whilst wearing latex gloves. I had stayed clean. In hindsight, this is obviously what was wrong with the first work. If Book 1 had been good enough, this would be a very different exegesis and I would now be pulling at the narrative threads and unravelling insights from the text – I have a hunch it would have been slim pickings, thin even. The motivation for creating a second book was to write something imbued with more authenticity, to create a book that resonated. It was an act of desperation as all acts of necessity are. I knew I did not have enough of depth in Book 1 and would need to make a calculated and thoughtful restart if I were to create something of value. How did I know? Certainly, there are elements of experience as both writer and scholar but it is nuanced. It did not sit well with who I identified either of those people to be. I needed to impart authenticity into my work, and to do this, I needed to actively write with authenticity. This idea of writing with authenticity can also be understood as writing in a way that reflected who I believed I was. The work needed to sit within my own narrative identity. I set out to draw authenticity to the surface so that it marinated the text. It was an intentional pivot and a calculated attempt to tap into something I knew or hoped to be within me that I could harness onto the page. It was a conscious decision to begin writing in this way. I had identified what was wrong and I knew what needed to change. Looking through my field notes I come across this:

"It's madness to rewrite this book. Madness. I should save myself the headache and leave the first draft as is. I don't want to. I can see a simpler book, an honest book, just ahead. This is one of the most frustrating writing experience of my life. No the most. I have to untangle myself."

A gonzo thesis – searching for an honest book

This pursuit of a *truer* book means that my exegesis has taken a more reflexive approach than I had anticipated. Finding insights into displayed authenticity at work through my own lived experience of writing means sifting through my own journey here as an author and scholar. As I do this, I am aware of the criticisms naval gazing attracts. Those working in autoethnography know it too well, it can be considered the self-indulgent narcissism with its belly exposed (Oshea 2018). As an author and particularly as a children's author, exposing my process and its interception with self is unusual – kids don't care. In this case, it is credible as the story is plausible although unintended (Ellis et al., 2010, Oshea 2018). My experience as the writer and scholar have offered direct insight into displayed authenticity as I found myself intentionally and literally manufacturing authenticity for the purpose of work. As such, my exegesis has moved beyond the plaited text (Cosgrove & Scrivener 2017, Batty & Brien 2017) and became a braid, weaving in my emotional experience with a narrative of this experience to build evidence for the purpose of conceptualising organisational issues (Anderson 2006). In the context of business studies this bears mentioning for clarity's sake. This arts-based method, situated in the Organisational Studies space is irregular but my reflections as an artist/author are an essential part of answering my research question. I have to admit, I didn't expect the reflexive aspect to be so important to my understanding of the creative work and the theory. Perhaps I am taken by surprise by the role of reflection in this work because I have come to this work as an organisational scholar, contaminated by a sense of what constitutes serious work, and what does not. I have been so actively segmenting myself that I think of the reflexivity as more part of the creative analysis and process. Yet the role of reflection is not one that is solely creative, it is a necessary to the research. It is a connection that is both scholarly and creative in nature. When we write organisations, we are also engaging in an act of construction (Rhodes 2007), just as the author is consciously constructing their fiction, the scholar is *ordering* research to create a sense. In doing so the researcher is affecting and creating the organisation they write about though the process of writing. This process of reflexive creation is more obvious to the fictional writer but Rhodes highlights the important role it plays to the organisational researcher generally as they test the tension created between control and representation.

Having explored the necessity for reflexivity on an academic level to the writing of this exegesis I have embraced it. I have given up trying to keep the potatoes from the gravy. The idea that there are three separate writings at work: the artefact, the exegesis and the academic is unfounded. It was all in my head. Certainly to the reader there is a jarring of voices, but the voices that inhabit this exegesis come from the same place. The writer at work attempting to build an authentic work is the writer researching the creation of authenticity at work. If only I had realised this sooner! During the creation of my first book, I had tried to avoid this tension and blurring of lines not by writing *differently*, but by writing *separately*, creating silos. I laboured thinking the writing of scholar and author could be separated, I pushed *writing differently* into an academic space and kept the creative isolated. It was not to the works advantage, and I needed to undo it. It was like extracting the egg from a baked cake.

If I had understood this earlier, I would not have needed to write two books! But in this sense I am also fortunate, because it is in failing and because of my own blind spot that that I have created material to investigate which falls between two worlds. These two worlds manifest in two distinct works that are displays of self and my own constructed authenticity at work. In creating a second book I also created the opportunity not to look just to the artefacts for insight, but the space between them – my own lived experience of manufacturing authenticity through text creation.

In this way, this exegesis demands a reflective and reflexive voice (Kroll & Harper 2012). It is an essential part of reading the theoretical and creative/cultural elements and articulating connection being explored. Whilst this reflexivity is expected along-side a creative artefact, it is also necessary as an organisational scholar observing and investigating work. The result is that I entered my own work and created a kind of gonzo-thesis. I have stepped into the story and found I was already there, running with the bulls.

Same same, but different

'The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her identity, in constructing the story told. It is the identity of the story which makes the identity of the character.' *(Ricoeur 1994, p.147)*

Whilst my writing of the work has blurred genres of the academic, reflexive and creative I initially set out in a much more orderly fashion, and one that did not anticipate a first hand application of narrative identity theory to my own experience. As outlined in my methodology, I went about writing both books with a number of helpful notebooks at my side. As part of my intention to control any flow from the creativity to the academic I had three books with me at all times. I had my fieldnotes for observing the process, my plot book for steering the narrative and a third book for academic observations. These books helped me feel in control and steady what was otherwise quite an organic process. In the writing of Book 2 I had set out a synopsis, but it was loose. The act of writing Book 1 had given me an intimate knowledge of where I wanted to tread and what I wanted to avoid, but I had not locked the work into a tight synopsis. This allowed the ideas to come to me in the act of writing. I had come to both books with the central idea of creating a tangible manifestation of authenticity as a creative device, but the detail was informed by the creative process, pulled from the murky mire of life experience and scholastic research. I had laid the foundation for my area of investigation and experiment through my research of the literature. The connections that began to emerge between the creative process and theoretical were not premeditated. I had simply set the stage. This setting of the stage for my characters in the context of this project was more than a narrative architecture. I was also a setting of the stage for myself and considering myself as stage for my characters to play out on (Ricoeur 1995). My attempt at the first book where I had *tried* to be both a *good* author and a *good* scholar had failed. In writing the first book I had made conscious efforts to serve both masters and hide my handiwork. I did this without considering the role of self in the work. In truth I could not write the work without writing myself. There was no way of keeping my hands clean. By the time I came to write the second book, there had been a shift in intention which had a significant impact on both me as the author and the tone of the work that resulted. In reinventing my work, I was reinventing myself. I was at the same time, the same person performing the same act and yet I was also totally different. A simultaneous discordance and unity. In reimaging my work, I was writing both a new narrative for my characters and for myself. This placed me as both the author and character and created an entangled identity. The insights I have gleaned come from this entanglement of self and it is the space in between two books where insights have emerged. It's is not simply in the differences in the two books or the commonalities. Insights do not come from one book being inauthentic and therefore *bad* or one being *good* – they come from seeing them as one and seeing the self as split and yet the same and embracing the paradox (Ricoeur 1995).

To unpack this further, I will need to briefly revisit the beginning…

In my literature review, I gave an overview of the progression of how authentic self has been largely understood and represented by the organisational theorist working in authenticity. In the main, we see the authenticity self-defined and governed by a definition as an iteration of the Greek Maxim of "being true to one's real self" (Guignon 2004, Ross 2004, Fleming 2009, Gardner et al. 2011). Organisational scholars researching authentic leadership have expanded the concept to a "*self-referential concept that is about being true to one's self*" (Avolio 2005, Gardner et al. 2011, Shamir & Eilam 2018). Whilst I hold this definition as true, it is only part of the story. Certainly, we can agree that authenticity is about being true to one's real self, but which self is that? My own research and subjective experience indicates the answer is not a simple one. Was I not myself when I wrote Book 1? What lay beyond my written text told me clearly that I had not written with authenticity? I had not taken that as distinct from my own self, quite the opposite, Book 1 stood as evidence of my inauthentic self. But why was my response so visceral and unmistakable? And why had I only gleaned this understanding with hindsight? These questions could not be simply answered with a Greek Maxim that felt more like a bumper sticker. Instead, I needed to apply a more nuanced understanding of the authentic self and one that allowed for the contradictions that had presented themselves in both my work and in my own self during the labour of that work.

Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity offers a way of understanding the complexities and conflicts of the self at work and one that I have applied in practice. In his seminal book One's Self as Another (1990), Ricoeur's philosophical work points to a self-reflective concept of self, one that is constantly iterating through a hermeneutic process that sees the self oscillating between sameness and self. What I find particularly relevant to authenticity is the link between a self that is defined by sameness that is separate but linked to another self that is defined by its uniqueness. This idea that we float between these two selves seems to innately mirror the paradox of self-mimesis – in that we are mimicking ourselves and in doing so, mimicking each other to express sameness. It's a definition of self that sits well with my own experience of creating work from a hand that was my own, but also was not. Narrative Identity Theory also offers a way of considering, more broadly, the process involved in managing identity and authenticity at within organisations particularly where a sense of inner conflict is present. Whilst Narrative Identity approaches have not been directly applied to authenticity research they do offer a useful framework of self-reflexion for understanding identity at work where a tension is created with a pre-existing sense of self (Czarniawska-Joeges & Monthoux 2005).

Ricoeur's philosophy allows for these conflicts of self, not by questioning which one is the real self, but by hanging them together through a narrative. Ricoeur posits that each of us is acting their own story. In doing so we are projecting in a world that we did not choose for ourselves and one that has been imposed on us – in this way the narrator is never impartial. They have skin in the game. This idea of the narrator with agency and a will separate to ours, one that is never indifferent is relevant in understanding displays of authenticity. The narrator might be the organisation, the manager or co-workers. In my case, it is the context of my work, the structures of an academic environment, my publishers, my reader. Parts of our life are forced on us with little choice on our part, this is particularly true at work. What begins then to emerge is this tension between when we are the same and when we are distinct. The way we identify our own character is often an act of sameness rather than separation. We are like the others we know with this characteristic, it links us and yet defines us. In organisations that encourage displays of authenticity we are really being asked to display identifiable characteristics. We can understand self in this context then as a set of displays, not a conflicting iterating, constantly moving self. That is too difficult for the organisation to commodify, so displays of character become the proxy. But according to Ricoeur character is not self. Instead, character is a passive element "a persistence which we suffer, which sometimes prevails upon our will and our possibilities and which imposes itself despite us." (Ricouer 1990, p. 121). In this way, it is not a 'constant nucleus' of self instead it's a *sameness* with others and not an indicator of our unique self. It is exactly for these reasons that it is an attractive proxy for the organisation, because it's tangible and consistent, but it is benign. Organisations asking for displays of self are asking for characteristics to play a stand in as a totem of selfhood. So, if our characteristics are not selfhood, where then is selfhood located?

Ricoeur would suggest that the answer to this lies within our narrative identity. Narrative Identity offers a way of thinking of self as selfhood that takes into account the contradictions of the individual a way that simply believing in the existence of a single true self cannot. When it comes to organisations and the production of personal authenticity, the contradictions become clear. Is it even possible to actively 'be yourself?' If it is, then suddenly the authenticity of the construct comes into question, it makes believing in authenticity at work is fraught. How then can we account for the contradictions of self? The answer is in the thread of our narrative identity. Seeing the self as connected. It is how we can create unity within ourselves and others, taking into account exterior manifestations and internal worlds.

My own subjective experience of creating two books and this exegesis provided me with a first hand experience of the internal tensions that can be created when manufacturing a single self. I had worked hard at being distinctly a scholar and an author, I had not created a narrative for these two identities to co-exist. Not at all. Even to the extent that each had a different name and wardrobe. Kate Burt, a PhD student had completed an MBA at UTS, she wore smart clothes and has coffee with smart people who worked in towers. Kate Temple on the other hand, writes children's books, she takes photos of herself doing silly things and puts them on Instagram. She owns a pair of silver glittery high tops and wears them to primary schools to talk to children about books and ideas. It's not just their exterior selves that is different. Kate Burt thinks about writing essays about academic theory, Kate Temple thinks a good idea is putting a baboon that sings like Elvis in a book. They are different. They are both me. So how I failed to anticipate the difficulty of merging these two people in a work of fiction is now surprising. But really it is no different to the mother who spends her day off dancing to Bananas in Pyjamas and her work life presenting a professional front. We all have selves that don't play together nicely. In my case I have forced them to sit together in these two books, but this is really only an experiment that reflects what so many people do with themselves everyday at work.

The books themselves were the evidence of this awkward and uneasy combination that was somehow meant to appear convincing and authentic. Earlier I mentioned the nature of the writing was the issue, but there maybe more to it than a harsh literary critique. The truth is also that book 1 didn't *feel* like me. I had actively tried to merge two selves and I did not have a narrative for them to exist within. It became a tug-of-war and the words on the page were the unwitting victims of this clash. The writing was not in line with my narrative identity as author or my narrative identity scholar. No wonder I couldn't stand to look at it again! This leads me to consider the question, can we understand constructed authenticity as authenticity? I think we can. It's not the tension or the conflict that presents the issue but our understanding of what authenticity is. Perhaps if authenticity can be understood as iterations of self, agency is returned from the organisation to the individual. If authenticity can be understood as neither inherently good or bad, but instead an indicator of the individual engaging with their own selfhood the relevance of authenticity as a construct within organisations can begin to evolve into something meaningful.

So then, if authenticity is not intrinsically good or bad, is its application in organisation benign? Can it be understood as an empty rhetoric that we engage with as a function of our work? Doubtful. The authenticity rhetoric that is espoused in workplaces is one that the individual must adhere to, and it is binding. Even those engaged in 'designer resistance' (Fleming 2009) find themselves caught in the paradox of authenticity – by expressing a cynicism to authenticity we are only conforming by displaying our own authenticity. There is no way out! But Ricoeur would posit that it is the use of rhetoric that fastens these binds and 'predominates upon the I' (Ricoeur 1990). In this way, the displays and language that are used to express a meaningful self at work are constantly reinforcing the constructed self – this impacts upon the self and "speaking and acting become the cardinal experience of conquest of the subject." (Pucci 1992, p. 187). It is the talking about and from the constructed self that in turn creates the self. The act of talking of the self is beyond performative it is illocutionary and given there is no consent that can be afforded because one cannot be given, there is also an ethical dimension to the overreach into the personal sphere. Here, I am using a Riourian lens to understand the impact of authenticity management upon the self to better as it relates to the politics of work, but Fleming (2009) had already pointed to an ethical issue with authenticity management when he argues that authenticity management creates a licence for overreach into our private and internal lives. Despite there now being more than ten years since Fleming's assertion, very little has been done to explore the dark side of authenticity or a multifaceted view of authenticity (Cha et al. 2019)

The writing of the two books and the space between provided a subjective lens for me to experience in a controlled sense the impact of speaking and acting on the self. In doing so, I have considered not just a multifaceted view, but also what alternative understandings of authenticity offer the researcher. My own attempts to write myself in the first book created a suffering and a crisis in my confidence not just in the project but in the self. The artefact became linked to my own sense of identity, as I spoke about that self, as I wrote about that self, I became that self. Ultimately this was a constriction and this skin was shed for a more comfortable version of myself, that I continued to reinforce with my speaking and acting. The transition between the two books was not just a transition between two selves. This would be too singular – it was an expression of selfhood. To focus on a singular identity is to sell ourselves short. Organisations may not like the messiness of all of this, but the expression of an identity cannot be understood as authenticity, nor is selfhood – instead selfhood is the proof that a self exists. If organisations are truly concerned with the authenticity of the worker they may have to settle with seeing its shadow cast upon the desk as true proof that the individual has indeed brought themselves to work.

Conclusion

Sometimes it takes effort to be yourself. There is a widely held belief at the heart of the Be Yourself movement that this is something easily available to the individual. After all, what are you if you are not yourself? My own experiment, demonstrated to me how often or easily we are a self other than the one we identify with. In reality, we spend a great deal of time *not* being ourselves and although these not-selves are, of course, selves too.

They may not be the 'real self' that is being called on. Real-self, in an organisational setting has come to mean a genre of self – and it's a self that is not a resentful, anxious, or confused individual – even if that is who or how you are. Real-self as it is intended by organisations is a projection that is light, at ease, humorous, perhaps imperfect – but open. Open is important. Open to working late. Open to company values. These upbeat manifestation of self are characteristics that are immeasurably easier to manage than the more tricky machinations of the human condition. Real-self as it is intended by the organisation is about constructing a self that can be managed and utilised without true resistance. This is where the notion of 'designer resistance' is particularly helpful to the authenticity manager. It allows for a necessary level of push back so as to provide the individual with the illusion of self governing agency and the organisation the illusion that they are not over reaching.

Organisations take the approach that the self is pre-existing when the employment contract is signed, but making and being a self is an ongoing process. This understanding is rarely reflected by organisations aiming to draw out and manage the real self. If organisations are serious about authenticity, they should expect it to be a contradictory process.

For my own work the narrative view helps to explain the connection between who we are and what we do. In my own case the rewriting of the book was an action that more fully actualised the particular self I am in the process of becoming or align with. This was not the self who creates work that is good-enough or adheres to convention and then passes it off – to do this would be to undertake a set of decisions which would be incompatible with the values and interest that the self I have created holds. The existence of all these different selves is one that narrative theory helps to validate and link. Linking sometimes incongruous selves is experience I have engaged with during the labour of creating the artefact and reflected on during the exegesis. It's an experience my main character engaged with as she moved from helpless daughter of a sick mother to hero of her own story, both selves true and yet contradictory. It is also the experience for the individual at work, in the action of being a self and at the same time another. How then does the organisation manage the self when it is not one thing? Or acknowledged for being not just multi-dimensional but separate entities and yet the same. The onus is then placed onto the individual to maintain continuity. This continuity of self becomes a uniform and one that also shapes the growing self. Protection of the self is discouraged so a self must then be cultivated to be shared, to be performed. Because organisations are keen to avoid the deadening effects that come with emotional labour from inactivation to emotional and physical exhaustion (Hochschild 1983, Grandy 2000) the creation of self for work has become a popular way of supplying organisation with an malleable staff without the drawbacks that come with a fake smile.

Perhaps one of the biggest failings of authenticity management is that it asserts that the self is a prefixed mark. In reality the self is multi faceted and constantly evolving and iterating – the only time it appears stable or fixed is when it is ‘articulated in the temporal of human existence’ (Ricoeur 1992, p. 114) These articulations are lagging markers that can only ever indicate a self that is fleeting. In this sense organisations that ask you to be yourself are constraining the individual by shackling it to a self that has already moved on.

When I set out to study constructed authenticity at work, I did not anticipate the journey I would find myself on. I had identified a clear lack of critical literature on authenticity (Cha et al. 2019) and I set out to build on what was there and to unearth some truth about this construct. I wanted to know if this thing we called authenticity, in an intra-organisational setting, was the same thing we understood it to be outside that setting. I wanted to know what it feels like to construct authenticity and if it was separate and distinct from the self. I wanted to know what, if any, cost there were to the self for engaging in self mimesis. All throughout this explorative process I found myself having to refine and readdress my academic understanding of a constructed authenticity and develop a methodology to investigate it in a new way. The first example of this need for readdressing, begins with the definition of authenticity. How we see it and what we as organisational researchers take it to mean, has been at the heart of this research. I believe, that while current working definitions are correct, we’ve been lazy. In an effort to skip to the research and findings, we have not probed what it means to be an authentic self. We have left that heavy lifting to the philosophy department and run with the agreed soundbite. It's a mistake. In my work here, I have continued to look at how we define authenticity and how we can view it, up until the final chapter.

My literature review on authenticity in organisations attempted to locate the construct by following the evolution of culture management, through to the ethical crises of the GFC and to the rise of the authentic leader and our appetite for authenticity in an organisational setting. I reached beyond the central literature in this space to capture critical research that largely lay on the fringes, emotional labour literature, emotions at work, and research relating to the authentic followership. In line with Cha et al. (2019) significant review integrating the fragmented authenticity research I found the current literature polarizing. On one hand there was a wealth of mostly dated articles that espouse the benefits of authenticity and yet there was also clearly this nefarious underbelly. Research probing this space has to date been limited by *methodological choices* (Cha et al. 2019), mostly due to the difficulty in studying something that cannot be seen. But the gaps in the literature do reveal a chasm between papers that are either aiming to align with the construct of authenticity or critique it. The current momentum appears to be building towards critic, which is little wonder given the largely unquestioned popularity of the construct authenticity at work. So, along with the critical lens that I have taken in my work, I have also asked
if there is anything left in authenticity that can be salvaged? Is there something of worth to authenticity at work?

The truth is, despite the expressed concerns of authenticity as a construct in organisation, there still may be a future for it. My investigation is resoundingly critical of the current use of authenticity as a tool of exploitation that is waved at a part of the person, that should not be available. This may suggest I conclude authenticity has no place at work, but this is not the case. In fact, my work redeems the concept of authenticity by broadening our idea of it as a narrative identity. To arrive at this place, the issue first is how do we account for the growing criticisms of authenticity and still retain notions of authenticity? The central problem with authenticity as it is practiced at work, and as it is widely written about in academic papers is that it has become commodified in itself. The lines around what it is have been clearly drawn and agreed upon and despite this we continue to see contradiction and paradox. At best, authenticity at work provides a moment of freedom, but at worst it is a constraint on the soul. How can authenticity do both things? Throughout this research it has become clear to me that we must reach further for our ideas about authenticity. Ricoeur offers one such way by applying a self-reflexive framework of narrative identity, but are there others? I urge scholars to go in search. My use of narrative identity to unpack my own subjective experience and as a lens to review authenticity at work has opened my own understanding of constructed authenticity. The current authenticity constructs often present a deep denial of freedom and of our own subjective experiences, which is then replaced with unspoken rules and conditions through the rhetoric that we hear and that we speak. The theory of a narrative identity is about identifying and displaying a more human subjectivity and provides us with a way of surmounting the obstacles in the way of our pursuit of freedom.

A multifaceted understanding of authenticity is one that allows the self to be a set of contradictions. It allows for uniqueness, and importantly, it allows for sameness. The objective of authenticity is not to simply be distinct from others, but as we have seen through authenticity management, it's more often, to be the same. The idea that a sameness is useful appears hard to stomach for a culture that prizes authenticity so highly, but sameness might just be what saves us. By allowing for sameness as an essential function of our individuality, we move beyond the casual shoes and hooded jumpers of slick city offices and allow for a continuity of professionalism to exist. This is not to conjure up an army of worker clones, like the ones that inhabit *The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat*. Instead I am arguing that this sameness exists within us and does not need to be eschewed in favour of a two dimensional display of authenticity. If organisations are true in their pursuit of employee authenticity they may need to understand that authenticity may exist beyond the surface and sameness may be all that is available, and vice versa. Picking and choosing the arrangement of self that is to be displayed is a taxing performance and one that asks the individual to release themselves from their own context, whilst still living within it. Instead, the human world is a plural world and has many perspectives and therefore our truth cannot be identified as singular. Constructed displays of authenticity cannot be displays of self but only a set of preferences that are predominated and inflicted upon our self. In this way, authenticity as a corporate management construct is simply evidence of our suffering, one that would be elevated though an acceptance of selfhood and its fluctuating and unsatisfying waves of self and sameness.

THE END

This work has aimed to capture the subjective experience of constructed authenticity by conducting research through an original arts-based method. I set out to look beneath the rhetoric of authenticity and understand what can be drawn from the subjective. I got what I asked for.

One of the things I have observed by examining the literature on authenticity and through conducting my own experiment, is this battle between the authentic self and the inauthentic. It's as if one is good and one is bad. A societal value is placed so heavily on authenticity, we see it as *better* in every sense. This notion is reinforced in many aspects of everyday life, we want authentic art, not the fake. We want authentic produce with a story we can trust, not a lie, not a sham. But perhaps when it comes to the self, it is not the same equation as it is for a product or a holiday destination. Perhaps when it comes to issues of self, inauthenticity is not in itself a problem. The infamous Ted Talk by Associate Professor Amy Cuddy that garnered over 20 million YouTube reviews on power posing to influence confidence, resulted in the phrase *Fake it till You Make it*, becoming an emboldening motivator for job applicants everywhere (Cuddy 2012). I mention this, not because I agree with the idea, that you can *'fake yourself'* but because, the 20 million views speaks to an appetite for how we navigate our inauthenticity which is so frequently read as inadequacy.

Inadequacy is not a synonym for inauthenticity, maybe when you're talking about a bottle of wine, but not when you're talking about the human self. Ricoeur allows us to better understand these inauthenticities as aspects of our self. Not something we need to feel shame about or understand as *fake*, as we are conditioned to do, but to accept as part of our selfhood.

In being inauthentic we are engaging with the constantly fluid nature of selfhood moving through sameness and self. All of it real, even the inauthenticity. None of it is necessarily bad or good. The value judgement assigned to authenticity can be detrimental to the individual engaging outside their comfort zone. It encourages us to experience insecurity as a falseness and a sign that we are not true to ourselves, we have no place being here. This of course can't be true, we are just moving to new places and as we do that the self oscillates between mimicry of sameness and the self. By understanding the self as a *selfhood* we can accept these moments that organisations admonish as inauthenticity as simply the self in motion.

In my own work, my experience of inauthenticity was transformational. It was uncomfortable but ultimately it created a growth in me as a professional writer and a change in me as a person. It impacted my own narrative identity. But what if I had not written a second book? What if I had passed the first one off and managed to successfully create an inauthentic and passable thesis. What then? Its inauthenticity doesn't make it any less real, it becomes just as much part of my narrative identity. I simply would have created a different self to take its place in my selfhood. The decision to start again was not about authenticity or inauthenticity it was about the self I was building as exercised through the purpose of work.

This idea of a positive and superior value placed on authenticity has direct implications for the self at work. It provides nice, malleable levers for the organisation to manipulate when encouraging authenticity as a management practice. If we believe inauthenticity to be bad, we mask it, dress it up as authenticity or hide it in a dark place. If we understand authenticity to be good, we accentuate displays of self that can be read as such. I posit that a future for authenticity in organisations is in opening up our understanding of self. Ditching this reading of "being true to yourself" as meaning being true to a particular predetermined and positive singular version of self, but understanding the trueness of your selfhood as a continuum and making choices within in that. Our characteristics and preference are not selves, as Ricoeur explains, they are something we suffer and endure – therefore, we do not need to be true to them, they just are. If organisations are able to shift their understanding from the binary view of authenticity vs inauthenticity, they may find that the acceptance of one's inauthenticity as a natural function of being a self allows for personal freedom. That may be, but what's in it for the organisation?

As authenticity has been manipulated as a tool of control (Fleming 2009, Fleming and Sturdy 2011) organisations engaged in this management practice may not have any interest in winding back notions of authenticity as good. After all, it serves them well as a conduit into the private sphere of life. How long can this last? Eventually like all management practices, its time will come as more and more employees cynically laugh about being asked to *be themselves*. But if instead the self is permitted to be inauthentic without judgement then there may be a future for authenticity at work. If the embrace of inauthenticity sounds too bizarre, just consider the nature of professionalism. The cloak that the suit and tie or uniform provides is a distinction between selves that can be freeing. Professionalism can be a performative act, one that is neither intrinsically good or bad. Being permitted to decide which self you display at work instead of having to expose a personal underbelly as a sign of loyalty is an act of respect on the part of the organisation and one that allows the individual agency over the personal busines of being a self. Debates over authenticity, and the call for more critical work in this space (Cha et al. 2019) are signalling that the pendulum has swung too far, but if on the swing back, we allow for more diversity in our notion of self, we may find more freedom in our subjective experience of work, that is of benefit to both the self at work and the organisations we work for.

A final note on a methodological contribution of pure fiction

'The thought experiments we create in the great laboratory of the imagination are also explorations of good and evil.' (Ricoeur 1990, p. 161)

I set out to create an exegesis and an accompanying artefact, I ended up creating two novels and a space between. It was a thought experiment that aimed to flip the coin of subjectivity and understand the human experience of constructed authenticity and has achieved this by providing me with a first hand experience of the constructed self at work. I selected this method as it offered a unique way of answering my research questions and brought together two distinct and well developed skill sets of mine, that of the storyteller and researcher. I was fascinated to see what the author and the scholar could unearth through a shared creation, I had not anticipated how the author and the scholar would get along. Certainly, there are examples of scholars who are also novelists, Umberto Eco jumps to mind, but wisely his fiction is not his research. There are also examples within the rich narrative traditions of organisational studies of fictions being created by scholars, but these fictions are not the work of someone whose profession it is to write fictions. In this sense my particular profile meant I could offer something of unique value and a methodological contribution.

Although I set out to write a single book and ended up writing two, I would now suggest that these two books I created and the space between them are better considered as a continuum and can be seen as a single artefact – although the value in the first book is not found in its literary contribution! This collated artefact seen as a single entity is a display of my own authenticity, a fluctuation of sameness and selfhood. My initial intention to create an appropriate piece of work was done with a construct of myself and a loss of my own context. The suffering that came with that process provided a subjective understanding of the inner tension created in siloing the self. Seeing the works and their associated negative space now as one has allowed for multifaceted experience of my own fluctuations of sameness and self. These insights were only possible by adopting this arts-based methods.

By combining my professional skill set as a published children's author with my scholastic organisational research, I found myself pinballing from a set of constructs I that I have created for myself. My sameness and my selfhood created tensions that could be felt on the page. Working out how to correct and deal with them put me in contact with my own concept of authenticity and what the display of that self is at work. Ultimately, the decision to create a second work, whilst satisfactory to me in a literary sense, is not evidence of that – it is the subjective experience in getting there. It gave me a chance to understand not just what a construct of authenticity looks like, but what it feels like. And it matters what it feels like, because the inner tension as I experience, is unbearable. The dissonance needs to be corrected and it is corrected by either *saming the self* or pivoting to a self that accommodates it within its narrative. Without this narrative method, how could I begin to answer whether a construct of authenticity is separate from the authentic self? I would only have a theoretical basis for my assumptions. My method allowed me to combine theory with subjectivity. This subjectivity combined with a Ricourian lens allowed me to see a constructed authenticity as an authentic self, as held within a selfhood. It is not a singular self, but instead we can better see the sameness of constructed authenticity as a point that the self is expressed at. The sameness is still evidence of the self, be it one that is in a fluctuating state of suffering.

The question then, of how we best study authenticity at work, has many answers. If the self, as seen through the lens of narrative identity, is a multi-faceted one, then as scholars, we need a diversity of methods to capture and probe it. The concern in this area of study, is always, how do we know that what we are seeing on the surface is reflective of what is being experienced? Instinctively, we know that it's not. Organisational scholars studying emotions at work know this too well, pointing out this is what makes studying emotions at work so difficult (Czarniawska 2018). In Cha et al's. (2019) comprehensive review integrating the fragmented research on authenticity organisations, all of the papers reviewed were empirical studies, this trend for results to be observable and verifiable is at the very heart of the issue of authenticity research. These empirical papers are an important part of the picture, but for us to better understand what is going on, we need to look beneath the surface – after all this is *where* it is going on. To do this, organisational researchers need to allow for a diversity of methods, including arts-based methods to capture this illusive topic. This will mean, business schools will need to dismantle their prejudice against the frivolity of arts and see themselves instead as a rightful home to such studies. I am personally very lucky that the UTS Business School was brave enough to see the merit in my own projects, and hopefully it provides a precedent for artist, writers and dare I say it, even a piano man, to make contributions to the field of organisational studies and the authenticity research.

The End.

List of illustrations and tables

References

Algera, P.M. and Lips-Wiersma, M., 2012. Radical authentic leadership: Co-creating the conditions under which all members of the organization can be authentic. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *23*(1), pp.118-131.

Anderson L (2006) Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35(4): 373–395.

Ashforth, B.E. and Humphrey, R.H., 1993. Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity. *Academy of Management Review*, *18*(1), pp.88-115

Aroles, J., Clegg, S. and Granter, E., 2018. Death and the Penguin: modularity, alienation and organising. *Culture and Organization*, pp.1-14.

Avolio, W., Gardner, F., Walumbwa, F. & Luthans, D. 2004, 'Unlocking the mask: A look at the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviors', *The Leadership Quarterly* , vol 15, pp 801-823

Avolio, B.J. and Gardner, W.L., 2005. Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), pp.315-338.

Bacon, E., 2017 'The scholarly exegesis as a memoir' *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative* Writing 14 (2), 235–56

Batty, C. and Brien, D.L., 2017. Introduction: The exegesis now: where are we, and where are we going?. *TEXT*, *21*(Special 44), pp.1-9

Batty, C. and Berry, M., 2015. Constellations and connections: the playful space of the creative practice research degree. *Journal of Media Practice*, *16*(3), pp.181-194.

Barone, J.E. and Ivy, M.E., 2004. Resident work hours: the five stages of grief. *Academic Medicine*, *79*(5), pp.379-380.

Bartunek, J. M., Rynes, S. L., & Ireland, R. D., 2006. What makes management research interesting, and why does it matter? *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 9-15.

Beigi, M., Callahan, J. and Michaelson, C., 2019. A critical plot twist: Changing characters and foreshadowing the future of organizational storytelling. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *21*(4), pp.447-465.

Bohannon, J., *Turning Physics into Arts*, viewed 8 November 2019, <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/02/winner-year-s-dance-your-phd-contest-turned-physics-art>

Boje, D.M. ed., 2011. *Storytelling and the future of organizations: An antenarrative handbook*. Routledge, Abbingdon.

Bolton, S.C. and Houlihan, M., 2009. Are we having fun yet? A consideration of workplace fun and engagement. *Employee Relations*, *31*(6), pp.556-568

Bourke, N. and Neilsen, P., 2004. The problem of the exegesis in creative writing higher degrees. *TEXT Special Issue*., *3*.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. 1911. *The Secret Garden*. Virago Press, London.

Brien, D., Pittaway, G., Owen, A. and Waters, I., 2017. Exegetical essentials: a framing structure and template for a comprehensive exegesis in the creative arts. *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*, *21*(2), pp.1-18.

Cable, D. M., Gino, F. and Staats, B. R., 2013. 'Breaking Them in or Eliciting Their Best? Reframing Socialization around Newcomers' Authentic Self-expression', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 58(1), pp. 1–36.

Casey, C., 2002. *Critical analysis of organizations: Theory, practice, revitalization*. Sage, London.

Caulley, D.N., 2008. Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction. *Qualitative inquiry*, *14*(3), pp.424-449.

Caza, B.B., Moss, S. and Vough, H., 2018. From synchronizing to harmonizing: The process of authenticating multiple work identities. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *63*(4), pp.703-745.

Cha, S.E., Hewlin, P.F., Roberts, L.M., Buckman, B.R., Leroy, H., Steckler, E.L., Ostermeier, K. and Cooper, D., 2019. Being your true self at work: Integrating the fragmented research on authenticity in organizations. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(2), pp.633-671.

Chan, A. and Clegg, S., 2002. History, culture and organization studies. *Culture and Organization*, *8*(4), pp.259-273

Cosgrove and Scrivenor, 2017 The fear-less exegesis, *TEXT Special Issue*, October 2017

Czarniawska, B., 2018. Is it possible to study anxiety in organizations? *Culture and Organization*, *24*(2), pp.171-178.

Czarniawska, B., 2015. The rhetoric of emotions. In *Methods of Exploring Emotions* (pp. 87-98). Routledge.

Czarniawska, B., 2008. Organizing: how to study it and how to write about it. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *3*(1), pp.4-20.

Czarniawska-Joerges, B. and De Monthoux, P., 2005. *Good novels, better management: Reading organizational realities in fiction*. Routledge.

Czarniawska-Joerges, B., 1995. Narration or science? Collapsing the division in organization studies. *Organization*, *2*(1), pp.11-33.

Dahl, R., 1972. *Roald Dahl; Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*. Puffin, London.

Dahl, R. and Blake, Q., 1981. *The twits*. Knopf, New York.

Dahling, J.J. and Perez, L.A., 2010. Older worker, different actor? Linking age and emotional labor strategies. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *48*(5), pp.574-578.

Dutton, D., 2003. Authenticity in art. *The Oxford handbook of aesthetics*, pp.258-274.

Drach-Zahavy, A., Yagil, D., & Cohen, I., 2017. Social model of emotional labour and client satisfaction: Exploring inter- and intrapersonal characteristics of the client provider encounter. *Work & Stress,* 31: 1–27.

Edwards, L., 2010. Authenticity in organisational context: fragmentation, contradiction and loss of control. *Journal of Communication Management*, *14*(3), pp.192-205.

Erickson, R. J., 1995. The importance of authenticity for self and society. *Symbolic Interaction*, **18**, 121–144.

Eaves, S., 2014. From art for arts sake to art as means of knowing: A rationale for advancing arts-based methods in research, practice and pedagogy. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 12, 147-159.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. and Bochner, A., 2011. Autoethnography: An Overview. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung. In *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 12, No. 1).

Fletcher, J. and Mann, A., 2004. Illuminating the exegesis, an introduction. *TEXT: The Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*, *3*.

Ferrara, A., 1998. *Reflective authenticity: Rethinking the project of modernity*. Psychology Press, Hove.

Finlayson, K., Kroll, J. and Murphy, A., 2017. The Potential of the Exegesis and the Challenge of Symbiosis. *TEXT, (Special Issue 44)*.

Fitzhugh, L., 2014. *Harriet the spy*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, New York.

Fleming, P., 2009. *Authenticity and the cultural politics of work: New forms of informal control*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Fleming, P. and Spicer, A., 2008. Beyond power and resistance: New approaches to organizational politics. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *21*(3), pp.301-309.

Fleming, P. and Sturdy, A., 2011. 'Being yourself' in the electronic sweatshop: New forms of normative control. *Human Relations*, *64*(2), pp.177-200

Fleming, P., 2013. 'Down with Big Brother!' The end of 'corporate culturalism'?. *Journal of Management Studies*, *50*(3), pp.474-495.

Fleming, P., 2014. Review Article: When 'life itself' goes to work: Reviewing shifts in organizational life through the lens of biopower. *Human Relations*, *67*(7), pp.875-901

Gardner, W.L., Cogliser, C.C., Davis, K.M. and Dickens, M.P., 2011. Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *22*(6), pp.1120-1145

George, B., Sims, P., McLean, A.N. and Mayer, D., 2007. Discovering your authentic leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, *85*(2), p.129

Guignon, C., 2008. Authenticity. *Philosophy Compass*, *3*(2), pp.277-290.

Grandey, A. and Gabriel, A., 2015. Emotional labor at a crossroads: Where do we go from here? *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 2: 323–349.

Grayson, K. and Shulman, D., 2000. Indexicality and the verification function of irreplaceable possessions: A semiotic analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *27*(1), pp.17-30.

Groth, M., Hennig-Thurau, T. and Walsh, G., 2009. Customer reactions to emotional labor: The roles of employee acting strategies and customer detection accuracy. *Academy of Management Journal*, *52*(5), pp.958-974.

Gilmore, S., Harding, N., Helin, J. and Pullen, A., 2019. Writing differently. Special Issue, *Management Learning*

Goodman, N., 1978. *Ways of worldmaking* (Vol. 51). Hackett Publishing, Cambridge.

Grey, C. and Sinclair, A., 2006. Writing differently. *Organization*, *13*(3), pp.443-453.

Grafström, M. and Jonsson, A., 2018. Professional blinders? The novel as an eye-opener in organizational analysis. *Culture and Organization*, pp.1-13.

Griffin, M., Learmonth, M. and Piper, N., 2018. Organizational Readiness: Culturally Mediated Learning Through Disney Animation. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *17*(1), pp.4-23.

Hamilton, J., 2014. The voices of the exegesis: Composing the speech genres of the practitioner-researcher into a connective thesis. *Doctoral writing in the creative and performing arts*, pp.369-388

Harding, N., 2003. On the manager's body as an aesthetics of control. In *Art and aesthetics at work* (pp. 115-132). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Harris, K.L., 2016. Reflexive voicing: A communicative approach to intersectional writing. *Qualitative Research*, *16*(1), pp.111-127

Harter, S., 2002. Authenticity. In C. R. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of positive psychology: 382-394. Oxford University Press, London.

Hewlin, P.F., Karelaia, N., Kouchaki, M. and Sedikides, C., 2020. Authenticity at work: Its shapes, triggers, and consequences.

Hochschild, A.R., 1983. *The Managed Heart*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Hochschild, A. and Machung, A., 2012. *The second shift: Working families and the revolution at home*. Penguin. New York.

Höpfl, H.J. and Linstead, S. eds., 2000. *The aesthetics of organization*. Sage, London.

Hopfl, H., & S, Linstead., 1993. Passion and Performance: Suffering and the Carrying or Organisational Roles. *Emotions in Organisations*, pp. 76-93, Sage, London.

Höpfl, H., 2002. Playing the part: Reflections on aspects of mere pe
customer–client relationship. *Journal of Management Studies*, *39*(2)

Hsiung, H.H., 2012. Authentic leadership and employee voice behavior: A multi-level psychological process. *Journal of business ethics*, *107*(3), pp.349-361

Hughes, T., Bence, D., Grisoni, L., O'regan, N. and Wornham, D., 2011. Scholarship that matters: Academic–practitioner engagement in business and management. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *10*(1), pp.40-57.

Humphrey, R.H., Ashforth, B.E. and Diefendorff, J.M., 2015. The bright side of emotional labor. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *36*(6), pp.749-769.

Hülsheger, U.R. and Schewe, A.F., 2011. On the costs and benefits of emotional labor: a meta-analysis of three decades of research. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *16*(3), p.361.

Ings, W., 2009 Architectures of knowing: new approaches to exegesis design in creative arts PhDs, Viewed: August 2018,< http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Architectures_of_knowing.pdf >

Kiriakos, C.M. and Tienari, J., 2018. Academic writing as love. *Management Learning*, *49*(3), pp.263-277.

Kundera, M., 1988. The Art of the Novel, trans. *Linda Asher (New York, 1988)*, *160*.

Krauth, N., 2011. Evolution of the exegesis: the radical trajectory of the creative writing doctorate in Australia. *TEXT: Journal of writing and writing courses*, *15*(1).

Knowles, D., Hindley, C. and Ruth, D., 2017. The use of Fiction in Management Research: The Journey of Ulysses. In *European Conference on Methodology in Business and Management Studies*.

Kara, S., 2013. Writing Anxiety: A Case study on students' reasons for anxiety in writing. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, *3*(1).

Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., Rubenstein, A. L., Long, D. M., Odio, M. A., Buckman, B. R., Zhang, Y., et al. 2013. A meta-analytic structural model of dispositional affectivity and emotional labor. *Personnel Psychology*, 66, 47–90.

Kernis, M.H. and Goldman, B.M., 2006. A multicomponent conceptualization of authenticity: Theory and research. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, *38*, pp.283-357

Korczynski, M., 2003. Communities of coping: collective emotional labour in service work. *Organization*, *10*(1), pp.55-79

Kunda, G., 2009. *Engineering culture: Control and commitment in a high-tech corporation*. Temple University Press. Philadelphia.

Kunda, G., and Barley, S.R.,1992. Design and devotion: Surges of rational and normative ideologies of control in managerial discourse. *Administrative science quarterly*, pp.363-399.

Kroll, J., and Harper, G., 2012. Research Methods in Creative Writing. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, England.

Latour, B. 1996. *Aramis, or, The Love of Technology*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA.

Leigh, T. W., Peters, C., & Shelton, J. 2006. The consumer quest for authenticity: The multiplicity of meanings within the MG subculture of consumption. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34(4): 481–493.

Lehman, D.W., O'Connor, K., Kovacs, B. and Newman, G.E., 2019. Authenticity. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(1), pp.1-42.

Leroy, H., Palanski, M.E. and Simons, T., 2012. Authentic leadership and behavioral integrity as drivers of follower commitment and performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *107*(3), pp.255-264.

Liu, A., 2004. *The laws of cool: Knowledge work and the Culture of Information*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

Liu, H., Cutcher, L. and Grant, D., 2017. Authentic leadership in context: An analysis of banking CEO narratives during the global financial crisis. *Human Relations*, *70*(6), pp.694-724.

Lloyd-Walker, B. and Walker, D., 2011. Authentic leadership for 21st century project delivery. *International Journal of Project Management*, *29*(4), pp.383-395.

Luthans, F., Avey, J.B., Avolio, B.J., Norman, S.M. and Combs, G.M., 2006. Psychological capital development: toward a micro-intervention. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *27*(3), pp.387-393

Ménard, J. and Brunet, L., 2011. Authenticity and well-being in the workplace: A mediation model. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *26*(4), pp.331-346.

Mehta, M., 2020. Effect of leadership styles on corporate entrepreneurship: a critical literature review. *Organization Development Journal*, *38*(2), pp.65-74.

Mirvis, P.H., 1994. Human development or depersonalization? The company as total community. *A fatal embrace*, pp.127-154.

Montgomery, L. M. 2018. *Anne of Green Gables*. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Leavy, P., 2016. *Fiction as research practice: Short stories, novellas, and novels* (Volume 11). Routledge.

McGillis, R., 1997. Learning to read, reading to learn; or engaging in critical pedagogy. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, *22*(3), pp.126-132.

McNeil, C. 2019, Annals of Internal Medicine, Vol 17,1 no. 3

Nair, L.B., Fatien Diochon, P., Lassu, R.A. and Tilleman, S.G., 2018. Let's Perform and Paint! The Role of Creative Mediums in Enhancing Management Research Representation. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *27*(3), pp.301-308.

Negro, N., Hannan, M. T., & Rao, H. 2011. Category reinterpretation and defection: Modernism and tradition in Italian winemaking. *Organization Science*, 22: 1449-1463.

Newman, G and Smith, R. 2016. *Kinds of Authenticity*. Philosophy Compass, pp 609-618

Nickson, D., Warhurst, C. and Witz, A., 2017. The labour of aesthetics and the aesthetics of organization. In *The Aesthetic Turn in Management* (pp. 89-110). Routledge.

Oc, B., Daniels, M.A., Diefendorff, J.M., Bashshur, M.R. and Greguras, G.J., 2020. Humility breeds authenticity: How authentic leader humility shapes follower vulnerability and felt authenticity. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *158*, pp.112-125.

O'Shea, S.C., 2019. My dysphoria blues: Or why I cannot write an autoethnography. *Management Learning*, *50*(1), pp.38-49.

Page, M., Grisoni, L. and Turner, A., 2014. Dreaming fairness and re-imagining equality and diversity through participative aesthetic inquiry. *Management Learning*, *45*(5), pp.577-592.

Parker, M., 2016. Secret societies: Intimations of organization. *Organization Studies, 37*(1), pp.99-113.

Phillips, N., 1995. Telling organizational tales: On the role of narrative fiction in the study of organizations. *Organization studies*, *16*(4), pp.625-649.

Pucci, E., 1992. Review of Paul Ricoeur's oneself as another: Personal identity, narrative identity and" selfhood" in the thought of Paul Ricoeur. *Philosophy & Social Criticism, 18*(2), pp.185-209.

Pullen, A. and Rhodes, C., 2013. Parody, subversion and the politics of gender at work: The case of Futurama's 'Raging Bender'. *Organization*, *20*(4), pp.512-533.

Pullen, A. and Rhodes, C., 2008. Dirty writing. *Culture and Organization*, *14*(3), pp.241-259.

Peters, T.J., and Waterman, R.H. 1982. *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies* (p. 360). New York: Harper & Row.

Piantanida, M. and Garman, NB., 2010. Writing research. *The Routledge Doctoral Student's Companion: Getting to Grips with Research in Education and the Social Sciences*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 244–255.

Plester, B., Cooper-Thomas, H. and Winquist, J., 2015. The fun paradox. *Employee Relations*, *37*(3), pp.380-398

Plester, B., 2015. 'Take it like a man!': Performing hegemonic masculinity through organizational humour. *Ephemera*, *15*(3), p.537.

Plester, B. and Hutchison, A., 2016. Fun times: the relationship between fun and workplace engagement. *Employee Relations*, *38*(3), pp.332-350.

Ricoeur, P., 1994. *Oneself as another*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Rhodes, C., 2001. D'Oh: The Simpsons, popular culture, and the organizational carnival. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *10*(4), pp.374-383.

Rhodes, C. and Westwood, R., 2016. The limits of generosity: Lessons on ethics, economy, and reciprocity in Kafka's The Metamorphosis. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *133*(2), pp.235-248.

Rhodes, C., 2015. Writing organization/romancing fictocriticism. *Culture and Organization*, *21*(4), pp.289-303.

Rhodes, C., 2001 . *Writing organization. (Re)presentation in narratives in control at work*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam.

Rhodes, C.H., 2016. Popular Culture and Management: The Provocation of Spongebob Squarepants. *A Research Agenda for Management and Organization Studies*.

Rhodes, C. and Brown, A.D., 2005. Narrative, organizations and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *7*(3), pp.167-188.

Richardson, L., 2003. Writing: A method of inquiry. *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief*, *2*, p.379.

Rolling Jr, J.H., 2010. A paradigm analysis of arts-based research and implications for education. *Studies in art education*, *51*(2), pp.102-114.

Ross, A., 2004. *No-collar: The humane workplace and its hidden costs*. Temple University Press. Philadelphia.

de Saint-Exupéry, A., 2018. *The little prince: A new translation by Michael Morpurgo*. Random House, New York.

Sagiv, T., Simons, T. and Drori, I., 2020. The Construction of Authenticity in the Creative Process: Lessons from Choreographers of Contemporary Dance. *Organization Science*, *31*(1), pp.23-46.

Salmela M., 2011, *True Emotions*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam

Siebold, S, 2010. *How Rich People Think*. London House Press, London.

Shamir, B. and Eilam-Shamir, G., 2018. "What's your story?" A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. In *Leadership Now: Reflections on the Legacy of Boas Shamir* (pp. 51-76). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Short, J.C. and Reeves, T.C., 2009. The graphic novel: A "cool" format for communicating to generation Y. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *72*(4), pp.414-430.

Sliwa, M. and Cairns, G., 2007. Exploring narratives and antenarratives of graffiti artists: beyond dichotomies of commitment and detachment. *Culture and Organization*, *13*(1), pp.73-82.

Strati, A., 1996. Organizations viewed through the lens of aesthetics. *Organization*, *3*(2), pp.209-218.

Strati, A., 2000. The aesthetic approach in organisation studies, In S. Linstead & H Hopfl (Eds.), *The Aesthetics of Organisation*. London: Sage

Savage, P., Cornelissen, J.P. and Franck, H., 2017. Fiction and Organization Studies. *Organization Studies*, p.0170840617709309.

Sempert, M., Sawtell, L., Murray, P., Langley, S. and Batty, C., 2017. Methodologically speaking: innovative approaches to knowledge and text in creative writing research. *New Writing*, *14*(2), pp.205-222.

Scrivener, S. 2000 'Reflection in and on action and practice in creative-production doctoral projects in art and design'. *Working Papers in art and design,* Vol. 1.

Sedikides, C., Slabu, L., Lenton, A. and Thomaes, S., 2017. State authenticity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *26*(6), pp.521-525.

Smith, H., and R. T. Dean, eds. 2009. *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh University Press. Edinburgh.

Steinbeck, J. 1952. *East of Eden*. Penguin Books, New York,

Sørensen, B.M. and Villadsen, K., 2018. Penis-whirling and pie-throwing: Norm-defying and norm-setting drama in the creative industries. *Human Relations*, *71*(8), pp.1049-1071.

Sørensen, B.M. and Villadsen, K., 2015. The naked manager: the ethical practice of an anti-establishment boss. *Organization*, *22*(2), pp.251-268.

Seuss. Dr, 2011. *Oh, the places you'll go*. HarperCollins. New York.

Taylor, C., 1992. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge.

Toor, S.U.R. and Ofori, G., 2009. Authenticity and its influence on psychological well-being and contingent self-esteem of leaders in Singapore construction sector. *Construction Management and Economics*, *27*(3), pp.299-313.

Turner, B.A. ed., 1990. *Organizational symbolism* (Vol. 19). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.

Van Maanen, J., 2006. Ethnography then and now. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *1*(1), pp.13-21.

Vogelgesang, G.R., Leroy, H. and Avolio, B.J., 2013. The mediating effects of leader integrity with transparency in communication and work engagement/performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *24*(3), pp.405-413.

Walumbwa, F.O., Avolio, B.J., Gardner, W.L., Wernsing, T.S. and Peterson, S.J., 2008. Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of management*, *34*(1), pp.89-126.

Wang, G., Seibert, S.E. and Boles, T.L., 2011. Synthesizing what we know and looking ahead: A meta-analytical review of 30 years of emotional labor research. In *What have we learned? Ten years on*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Wetherall, R., 2018. Writing the doctoral thesis differently. Special Issue, *Management Learning*

Williams, M., 2007. *The Velveteen Rabbit: Or How Toys Became Real*. Penguin, London.

Willmott, H., 1993. Strength is ignorance; slavery is freedom: managing culture in modern organizations. *Journal of management studies*, *30*(4), pp.515-552.

Whitehead, G., 2009. Adolescent leadership development: Building a case for an authenticity framework. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *37*(6), pp.847-872.

Xu, X., Xia, M., Zhao, J. and Pang, W., 2021. Be real, open, and creative: How openness to experience and to change mediate the authenticity-creativity association. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, p.100857.

Yagil, D. and Medler-Liraz, H., 2013. Moments of truth: Examining transient authenticity and identity in service encounters. *Academy of Management Journal*, *56*(2), pp.473-497.

Yoo, J., 2017. Writing out on a limb: Integrating the creative and academic writing identity. *New Writing*, *14*(3), pp.444-454