

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

**RESTOR(Y)ING POWER, INTIMACY AND DESIRE IN ACADEMIC
WORK: RELATIONAL ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING
DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE**

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award of the degree

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By

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP

I Adrian Peter KELLY certify that the work in this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Education in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney, has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

September 2012

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I thank my mother Joan Kelly, who fed, clothed and tirelessly took care of the household of nine or so people I grew up in. Throughout our school years she coached my siblings and me in our 'lessons' around the kitchen table while she cooked and tended to a multitude of domestic duties. I have a vivid memory of an occasion when my mother withdrew services and proclaimed 'I'm on strike' and I hope spent a happy hour doing something she wanted to do; I salute her all too infrequent militancy. I also remember her enjoyment at enrolling in university studies in her 50s having, in her words, 'put six children through university.' Words cannot express my gratitude for her undying love for me. Another member of this household of nine was Alice Drake (b.1886-d.1979) my maternal grandmother who in 1898 aged 12 had left school to work in the mills in Halifax, Yorkshire. In 1909 she set sail from Liverpool to New Zealand to marry her fiancé, my grandfather John McCabe, whom she had not seen for two years. Accompanying my grandmother on this journey was a wooden chest containing, among other possessions, a bone china tea set and a very large tapestry. My grandmother and I *mashed* endless pots of Ceylon tea for one another and anyone else who cared to join us. We talked a lot about all manner of things and sometimes she would get me to read to her. I loved her very dearly; if I have any strength and courage perhaps I have her to thank.

Noel Cameron Kelly (b.1922-d.2012), my father, died during my doctoral candidature. He was a learned man and both an idealist and a pragmatist. He completed a master's degree in Trust Law at a time when access to postgraduate study was more highly restricted than it is today. He authored several editions of Butterworth's (later LexisNexis) *Garrow & Kelly Law of Trusts and Trustees* and was described on the flyleaf of one edition as 'the country's greatest living trust expert' - I was very proud of him. He told long repetitive stories and I now wish I had been more patient with him. One of his reminiscences was of his own father Ernest Francis Kelly (b.1883-d.1941) who had probably had limited educational opportunities himself but who exhorted my father to 'get all the education you can, for it will never be a burden to carry around with you.' I never met my grandfather but I hope he would be as pleased with my achievements as my father was.

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ABSTRACT

In academic work, the discourses of academic development and learning development tend to focus on technical and transactional dimensions at the expense of the affective. This study presents the work experiences of one academic as instantiations of the operation of these discourses within the cultural context of contemporary Australian higher education. Autoethnographic techniques are utilised to present personal narratives as realisations of cultural-historical and sociocultural possibilities. In addition, restorying, a technique borrowed from White and Epston's (1990) Narrative Therapy, is appropriated to non-therapeutic ends in this thesis to open up discursive space for subjugated narratives that challenge dominant, canonical accounts of academic work.

The foundation chapters of the thesis locate academic work within a set of contextualising relations that provide the meaning making potential for the events and encounters that are described. Key among these contextualising relations are the Australian higher education ecosystem, the echoes of the Humboltian ideal and the impacts of neoliberalisation on the resource arrangements and governance of globalising higher education. Ethical, aesthetical and critical dimensions are explored to denaturalise a number of taken-for-granted aspects of higher education.

Three key affective dimensions in academic work are identified to encompass taken-for-granted dimensions of academic work: power, intimacy and desire. The first, power, is explored in relation to an academic development encounter focused on constructive alignment and criterion-referenced assessment. The journal entry presents the *lines of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari 1983 & 1987) taken by a disciplinary-based lecturer to resist the power dimensions of the academic development encounter. The chapter concludes by restorying this academic development encounter and to recount an encounter with a student to suggest a *pedagogy of ambivalence*.

The second affective dimension, intimacy, is explored in relation to the attenuated bodily logics of modernity. Journal entries recount a disciplinary-based

colleague's, and a student's, bodily excess in terms of tears, bodily tremors and personal disclosure in academic development and learning development encounters. Resisting the therapeutisation of these encounters and a liberal-humanist account of disabled others, restorying techniques are utilised to propose *a pedagogy of intimacy* in which bodily excess and personal disclosure become the plain of emergence in which academic development and learning development operate as educational endeavours.

The third affective dimension, desire, is not understood in the Freudian-psychoanalytic sense of lack, but in the Spinozan and Deleuzo-Guattarian sense of production. Curriculum and generic graduate attributes are analysed as desiring discourses that operate within the arborescent assumptions of structuralism. A more nuanced account of curriculum and educational outcomes is advocated through *a pedagogy of desire* (Zembylas 2007).

The study concludes with an outline of a relational academic practice arguing for discursive space for the emergence of a relational academic developer and learning developer subjectivity.

Between the experience of living a normal life at the moment on the planet and the public narratives being offered to give a sense of that life, the empty space, the gap, is enormous... In such gaps, people get lost, and in such gaps, people go mad. (Berger, 2001, p. 176)