

Utopian scenario sketching: An imaginal pedagogy for life giving civilisation

Peter Willis
School of Education
University of South Australia

This paper argues that learning for human flourishing needs a balance between small-scale, convivial experiences, imaginary and creative expression, logical, rational planning and autonomous, purposive practices. It is the second one—imaginary and creative expression—which is particularly of interest in this paper. The focus is on the capacity of playful stories around relevant learning themes to promote informal adult learning and capacity building in community settings. Informal and non-formal learning programs in community settings can often engage reluctant and wounded people for whom the learning projects—language, health care, childcare and the like—are as necessary as they are difficult. People in community settings are often embarrassed, hesitant and nervous about being singled out and shamed. In these contexts, stories of learners—even fictional ones—seem at least sometimes to be able to create a kind of softening and optimistic experience,

engaging educator and learner in a playful yet insightful experience relevant to some of the actual learning projects in which people are attempting to engage.

Introduction

Utopia was an imaginary place of human flourishing described in the book of the same name by Thomas More in 1516. The word continues in the meaning given here to refer to ideal human personal, social and biological circumstances which some adult and community educators have been concerned to promote, particularly in lean times of national obsession to promote learning exclusively for vocational purposes. I have been involved in designing learning projects promoting what has been called life giving civilisation against powerful entropic forces such as excessive competition, consumerism and philistinism.

In this paper, I want to explore the pedagogic leverage of *utopian scenario sketching* as one useful way to promote life giving civilisation as something satisfying and exciting to which people may aspire. This paper is linked to the educational project mentioned, entitled *Learning for a life giving civilisation*. It is an eclectic, aspirational and essentially unfinished project which seeks to identify and promote ways to promote learning for a compassionate and humanistic civilisation. This humanistic quality is referred to here as 'life giving', following and considerably modifying an idea from Kenneth Clarke (1969) in his TV series on Civilisation.

In a previous paper (Willis 2010), I spoke of how a form of narrative pedagogy could be useful in evoking human compassion and justice. I spoke of prophetic confronting stories, here referred to as *compunction narratives*, and their capacity to precipitate critical and compassionate self-reflection. This time the narrative approach concerns *scenario sketching* in the context of promoting a life giving

civilisation. It is more upbeat, more concerned with beneficial possibilities. It seeks to complement the need for struggle in the face of weakness and wrong doing.

According to John Armstrong (2010: 4), the many meanings of civilization can be clustered around four general characteristics of a society: firstly, its common values and manners; secondly, its economic, political and technological systems; thirdly, the way it cultivates refinement in aesthetic and sensual pursuits; and finally, its intellectual and artistic excellence. A humanistic version of these four elements of civilisation, promoted by Armstrong but not directly articulated as such, emerges as: *inclusive belonging, life giving material progress, artful and courteous living and spiritual prosperity*. The life giving version of civilisation proposed here seeks largely to promote John Armstrong's humanistic ideal, but modifying a possible tendency to aesthetic coolness and detachment by compassionate practices built around empathy and the golden rule as developed by Karen Armstrong (2009) and grounded in creative action as explained by David Gauntlett (2011) in his book, *Making is connecting*.

In his recent review of Niall Ferguson's book and TV series, *Civilisation—the West and the Rest*, William Charles (2011: 26) cites Ferguson's suggestion that six factors gave Western civilisation a competitive advantage over other civilisations: *dynamic competition, science, property rights and the rule of law, medicine, the consumer society and the work ethic*. The life giving civilisation project pursued here wants to infuse the achievement concerns embedded in these elements with courtesy, collaboration, kindness and 'soul' while seeking to avoid too much sentimentality and insularity.

The life giving civilisation project seeks to inform all elements of human living, which can be seen to have seven general areas of human action that often overlap in practice. They are: clarification of ideas and ideals; communication; production and distribution;

power and authority; technology and making; ecology and wellbeing; and expressive and aesthetic activities. Each of these activities can be informed by all kinds of agendas depending on the dispositions of those involved. The cultivation of a disposition towards life giving civilisation is the agenda of this project using a form of imaginal pedagogy called *scenario sketching*. Imaginal pedagogy and its link to mythopoetic knowing is discussed below.

The educational processes evolving in the life giving civilisation project seek to involve the whole gamut of human personal and social life. Building on an interpretation of Heron's (1992) fourfold notion of the knowing process, educators are invited to develop processes which acknowledge, evoke and balance four modes of knowing and learning which are envisaged as following each other in human personal and social life: awakesness, image awareness, analysis and praxis. Building on these four modes the educational processes of life giving civilisation need to evoke four voices:

- The voice of awakesness and connection: *mindful knowing*, listening, tasting and feeling. It invites learners to ask the questions: What is it like? How does it make you feel?
- The voice of image awareness and gut reaction: *imaginal knowing*, dwelling on. It invites learners to ask the questions: What does it remind you of? What images come into your heart and mind at this time?
- The voice of critical inquiry: *logical, rational knowing*, logic, classifying. It invites learners to ask the questions: What kind of thing is it? What caused it? What laws govern its activities?
- The voice of deliberate reflective action: *empirical, action knowing*, science, or groundedness. It invites learners to ask the questions: What happened when I did what I decided to do? How will I proceed if I choose to act to achieve a similar outcome again?

In direct application to the required learning implicit in the life giving civilisation project, the fourfold pedagogy of this project begins with *evoked awokeness*, around foundational acts of life giving civilisation that can be felt in greeting, cooking, eating, making, playing, dancing and so on, and the many bodily and physical acts of civilised life. The second, which is of direct interest in this paper, is *imaginal pedagogy* implemented in invited mythopoetic contemplation and creative expression through rituals and stories of life giving civilisation. The third, the critical pedagogic approach, invites *analytical and logical reflection and dialogue* around ways of examining, classifying and regulating the necessary choices and interactions of a life giving civilisation. The fourth is *empirical pedagogy*. It involves inviting learners to take compassionate and courteous action required to build a life giving civilisation.

Imaginal pedagogy, the second approach, can be seen as highlighting the existential foundation of choices for a life giving civilisation since it is understood to be the hidden seat of human visions and desires, the imaginal arena discussed below. Narrative approaches are seen here as a useful pedagogic strategy to arouse this part of the human heart and mind. It underpins the *scenario sketching* pedagogy which is implicit in the stories about ‘messing about in boats’ and ‘banging about in sheds’ which are discussed later in this paper. The following section develops ideas from my earlier writings (Willis 2010, 2011).

Imaginal pedagogies

Imaginal pedagogy in images, confrontations and scenarios avoids attempting directly to instruct learners or even to make a case for some desirable policy or practice. Imaginal pedagogy focuses on ‘evocation’, creating resonances in the imagination. One of its major vehicles is stories. Frank (2000: 354) suggests that narrative is a more abstract term for the structure of a story rather than its full

reality which is contained in the idea of story. According to Rappaport (1995: 803),

Stories [in everyday language use] are descriptions of events over time. They usually have a beginning, a middle and an end. They usually have main and secondary characters. They usually have a point.

Bochner (2002: 80), following Rappaport, suggests that stories have a number of common elements: people are represented as *characters* in the action, there is some kind of *plot*, things and events are placed in temporal order and there is some kind of *point*. Baumeister and Newman (1994: 679) focus on this last element—the point. They distinguished two general categories of agenda: firstly, *affecting* listeners in some way and, secondly, *making sense* of experiences.

Imaginal stories

Stories used in narrative imaginal pedagogy tend to have features of both agendas: affecting and making meaning but, as will be pointed out briefly below, with a strong mythopoetic character in the kinds of affect and meaning being evoked. This is the first element. The stories of narrative imaginal pedagogy need to resonate with great ‘mythic’ themes in human life like birth and love, forgiveness and death. In doing this, they contribute to the mythopoetic agenda by which people become aware of the myths that they are living by and their links to the great myths of their culture. Stories in narrative imaginal pedagogy need to carry a certain *gravitas* as contributing to mythopoetic life, and such imaginal stories, when used in mythopoetic pedagogy, need to be told with great unction and credibility, seeking a deep heartfelt response.

A second element is *appropriate literary artistry*. The audience has to feel and be caught up in the invitational undertones of different kinds of imagery and media. (cf. Willis 2005).

A third element is *dramatic form*. The imaginal pedagogic narrative with its tacit contradictions is given aesthetic strength by music and poetry and drama. Dramatised stories were used by August Boal (1992, 1995) and collaborators in his work on the ‘drama of the oppressed’ which were highly mythopoetic and challenging.

A related fourth element is *delayed and dramatic denouement*. Narrative imaginal pedagogy seeks to create dramatic tension and delayed resolution of the themes and plots at play in the story being told. As Hamlet (Hamlet Act 2, Scene 2) said, in an aside to the audience before the performance of a play to be performed for the royal court which he had modified for his imaginal agenda: ‘The play’s the thing wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King’.

Imaginal stories: Compunction engaging & scenario sketching

Imaginal pedagogy draws on the work of James Hillman (1981), James Macdonald (1995) and Jamie Bradbeer (1998). It uses images and stories by which learners are invited to put themselves in various ways into an imagined world. While some of these are full of playful fantasy, others can have an important task when learners are invited to become part of the story and open to its discoveries and feelings.

Some of these can be linked to *compunction*, when people are invited to dwell with focused imagination on the feelings and fears of others. This is one of the generators of empathy and is of considerable interest in building compassion. In an earlier paper (Willis 2010), I recalled how in the Bible, the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 11) used his imaginal talent to tell a story of cruelty to touch the heart of the kindly, passionate and wayward King David and bring him to acknowledge and repent of his wrong-doing. Nathan’s pedagogic strategy is referred to here as a *compunction narrative*.

Another way that narrative can be used is to sketch interesting scenarios which engage the imagination of the learners, not so much

with empathetic feelings for the characters in the story, but rather in the set of social and ecological arrangements that respond to longings for a particular way of life. The narrative pedagogy using this approach can be called *scenario sketching*.

Over a few years during and after the Second World War, Thomas Merton, the poetic monk, wrote in his autobiography, *Elected silence* (Merton 1948), of his attraction to the monastic life. What he described so evocatively was his mythopoetic feelings and ‘gut’ reactions to the social and architectural environment of the monastery, its ceremonies and rhythmic activities. Many young men, particularly returned soldiers, were caught up in the scenario of peace and deep meaning he sketched and entered the monastery enchanted by the imaginal scenario created in their minds and hearts. In the following years, other forms of reflection came up against the imaginal scenario that had precipitated their desire to join the monastery. This was the ‘awareness knowing’, the first and most elemental level of Heron’s four modes. Some monks began to notice what the monastic life was like for them as an actual lived experience and as an environment for their actual personalities and style. Some discovered at that level that they were not suited for a permanent monastic life and returned to other life pursuits. Others, like Merton, stayed and contributed to the monastic life in its adjustments to and dialogue with the modern world.

The point being made here is that, without scenario building, not much happens to people for whom the imagination with all its power is one of the main sources of human enthusiasm. The other three forms of knowing, awakesness knowing, critical reflection and empirical action, provide three significant cautionary frames which protect people from too many wild goose-chases, but so much human action and enterprise seems to begin in the second form, mythopoetic imagining. It seems to be the raw engine room of human action in feelings of desire, love, hatred and compassion so often generated

by different kinds of scenario building, as the advertising and public relations industry amply demonstrates.

The suggestion of this paper is that educational projects inviting action for a life giving civilisation can be enriched by evocative scenario sketches of the creation and recreating of elements of a desirable civilisation. Examples of this are the forward scenario sketches, called here *Messing about in boats* and *Banging about in sheds*.

Messing about in boats concerns the adventures of social living in natural environments with the tacit interest in the convivial dimension of life giving civilisation. *Banging about in sheds* tells stories of the adventures of making useful and decorative things from physical materials like wood, stone, metal and plastic. This is highlighted as a key factor in the embodied and grounded ‘making’ side of a life giving civilisation.

Scenario sketching for a life giving civilisation

Messing about in boats

‘Messing about in boats’ is a phrase spoken with satisfaction by the urbane and worldly Rat the water rat, to the similarly eponymous Mole. Mole and Rat are significant players in *The wind in the willows*, Kenneth Grahame’s classic fantasy (1908) of the life of a group of anthropomorphic animals in rural England. This springtime story, which is half parable and half fantasy, tells of an informal learning journey (almost an informal pilgrimage) that the ordered and solitary Mole pursues when fed up with his predictable and comfortable life. Lured by the smells and sights of the new life of spring, he leaves the comfort of his snug burrow in search of adventure. He is prepared to have a go at new activities and take on the related physical skills required like rowing and roughhousing with the cunning stoats. He is also very good at maintaining his friendships in kindness and service

and is not afraid to seek advice and explanation for mysterious life events hitherto unknown to him.

Besides creating a kindly and interesting world, elements of adult learning, the fear of being laughed at or excluded can all be seen in this endearing, playful story and can perhaps indirectly encourage reluctant learners. In inviting learning, educators can assist with such encouraging 'readings' of Mole and Rat and their companions.

Messing about in boats in the story is about people learning to get along, while living very simply and not really setting goals or being concerned much about achieving things. The point is appreciating, getting along, rejoicing and appreciating the moment. The rhythm seems to be that one protagonist, usually the flamboyant and erratic Toad, has an adventure in which he needs to be rescued; he is joined by collaborators who enter into the critical moment with support and friendly critique. There is some kind of resolution, followed by the return to companionability: eating and chatting together in the warmth of home.

The general style of *The wind in the willows* has people living together and fitting into a somewhat cultivated 'nature' distinct from the 'wild wood'. There is an ecological accepting and celebrating of what is in the present moment. It is about playing and letting go. It foregrounds the value, importance and challenges of a courteous and kindly human social culture. All the elements of such compassionate and civilised social interaction are given an airing in the whimsy and elegance of these tales. Mole, the key character, is by far the least pushy. He is the one who benefits from and enriches the friendship and comradeship of his fellows in his capacity to share and to listen, to appreciate and to rejoice. He is the respectful appreciator, with an endearing sense of unworthiness, who is agreeably surprised when he is accepted and welcomed into the group initially as a friend of Ratty and later in his own right as his courtesy and forbearance, his accepting and open character and his dogged courage is revealed.

A few years ago, I attended a conference in England in July and visited a friend on my way back to Australia. I was invited to a picnic with a group of friends near a river in Sussex. I was unaware of the finesse that shaped and ordered the waterways in southern England and was enchanted to find that our picnic site was near a weir with a side channel to cater for potential overflow and to channel off water to surrounding fields. The greenery, the dappled light around our picnic site and the different sounds of falling water from the weir and overflow channel created a gentle framing for our conviviality. It is the imaginal leverage of revealed beauty and conviviality to encourage emulation. I remember looking about the reeds at the bank of the river in case Mole or Rat were nearby in their boat. Here were images and messages of the infectious joy of a simple coming together in a beautiful spot that could be dwelt on and promoted with the right kind of pedagogy. I realised that, in the spirit of Rat and Mole and their friends close and less close, we were reproducing a few evocative moments of life giving civilisation in the company of our friends and acquaintances in much the same way.

Banging about in sheds

‘Banging about in sheds’ is a term I have coined to refer to stories written about people who make things alone or together with others of like interest. Most of the people in this narrative are older men and most of the action takes place in sheds. One of the main storytellers around this agenda is South Australian, Mark Thomson, Research Director of the ‘Institute for Backyard Studies’, author of *The complete blokes and sheds* (2002), *Rare trades* (2002), *Makers, Breakers and Fixers* (2007) as well as a couple of books concerning the shadowy figure of Henry Hoke (2007). Besides his own storytelling gift, which could be called a modern version of the Australian Bush Yarn popularly linked to Henry Lawson, he also has the enviable talent of the adventure writer. He is ‘onto something’ and takes the reader with him on his narrative quest for shed understanding and illumination.

‘Banging about in sheds’ is about making things: different materials, functional tools, shapes and beautiful things. It is about a very fundamental notion of instrumental culture—of making and shaping the world. The general theme of Thomson’s stories is the human value of making and improvising, and the importance of human creativity. He tells the story of his journeys into the world of men’s sheds where enthusiastic amateurs and craftspeople had found places where they could ply their trade, indulge their human desire to make things, to understand how things worked, to fix things, to invent things. Thomson’s books are full of black and white pictures of gnarled men and their friends and family, the textures of their ‘making spaces’, their tools, their improvisation from wire and left over parts of other things pressed into a new life, their endless ‘works in progress’ and their occasional gleaming finished items.

There is in these scenario sketches, a respectful and joyful attention to human potential and actuality—what people can do with the resources at their disposal: creating, making, improvising using tools, skills, precision, style, design. Thomson’s stories speak of shed work as solitary and then as a kind of freemasonry of makers and their designated sheds where they work on their projects, meet friends, eat and drink and converse and laugh. His text is straightforward, often with the cadence of the many conversations with shed people he meets and illuminated with powerful photographs of the people, their sheds, friends and activities. The photo story books bring the richness and attraction of shed culture to life. It seemed to me that these books could act as a kind of evocative scenario sketches—ways of creating the convivial ‘making’ elements of a life giving civilisation.

The final question is to explore ways in which the evocative potential of these scenario building narratives can be realised and so build up interest in and commitment to the ideal of life giving civilisation. Allowing for their structure as scenario sketches aimed at creating imaginal learning, the reading and presentation of these stories needs

an attentive mythopoetic attention. This can be called 'listening reading', where the tendency to de-construct is resisted, the story is asked to speak for itself and the listeners are present and ready to be taken into the story-teller's world.

Listening reading: Dwelling in the story

The imaginal pedagogy in story-telling involves the story-teller and their story and, significantly, the attentive listening readers. Joel Magarey, author of the journey narrative *Exposure*, felt his words had not been rendered alive until affirmed by the reading and response of Penny his lover and muse. He writes (2009: 183):

As I imagine myself saying the words to Penny, they seem to gain the significance I want them to have, as if only when I tell her of these solitary experiences will they come to truly exist.

Such 'listening' reading allows the author to speak to the imagination and the heart. It is not a substitute for a cool and more critical reading, but it can be an aesthetic source of precious enrichment. It can be the warm flesh on the bones of the human search for wisdom and truth, making the quest more desirable as well as more convincing.

In her recent book on the reading she pursued while living with illness and its disruptive treatment, Brenda Walker (2010) remembers a special kind of reading she did at university with her kindly tutor when she was nineteen. When they were reading Beckett, her tutor encouraged her to be attuned to his voice and the story he was telling to avoid too early analytical and deconstructive critical 'readings'. Such variations in reading were highlighted nearly half a century ago by Georges Poulet, who suggested in his book *The phenomenology of reading* (1969: 54) that, in reading, he was

... aware of a rational being, of a consciousness; the consciousness of another, no different from the one I automatically assume in every human being I encounter, except that in this case the

consciousness is open to me, welcomes me, lets me look deep inside itself, and even allows me, with unheard of licence, to think what it thinks and feel what it feels.

As readers connect with the ideas and images contained in imagistic scenario writing, they can surrender to the parallel possible and inviting world opening up before them, dwelling in this world and allowing themselves to become imaginally present to its narrative and images.

Mythopoetic reading was pursued in the so-called 'lectio divina' of the Christian monks who spent time each day slowly reading the bible and other sacred texts seeking to become what could be called 'mythopoetically attuned' to the sacred images and their link with the heart. The logical rational mode of knowing was deliberately avoided in this 'listening' reading.

This imaginal mode can have a light or deep version. In the light version which can be called diversionary reading (or even airport reading), readers allow themselves to enter light-heartedly into an imaginary world without dwelling too much on the significance of the images being evoked. Crime novels and some sentimental romance writing have often been read in this way, where there is a suspension of disbelief and the enjoyment of a kind of light and undemanding pleasure. In a deeper and more mythopoetic reading, readers seek not to be diverted but mythically awakened. The word 'myth' here does not mean 'untrue', but rather 'resonative with significant and archetypal images' in the deep part of the psyche linked to powerful longings, fears and desires. This can be the reading of the attentive heart, or 'listening reading', by which the reader is *heart-struck* by being led into self-confrontation or *enchanted* by an evocative scenario, such as in *The wind in the willows* and *The complete blokes and sheds*, which has been under consideration in this paper. To get from enchantment back to the ground of real life and its demands is another challenge and the enchanted reader, in this holistic pedagogy, can be invited to create a story in reply, a so-called back story.

Back stories: The listener's reflective story of reception

Not all writers are concerned with the texture and intrinsic meaning of stories. Nor are they concerned only with the evocative ways stories that might impact powerfully on listeners/readers. McKillop (2005) is interested in them as what he calls a reflective tool. In this case, the story telling process is used by people to reflect on aspects of their life, to shape and modify future action. In the life giving civilisation project, reflective story telling emerges as a key process as a way for citizens, who are surrounded by media encouraging them to consume passively, to become back story tellers, to tell their own stories. Some back stories appear on internet sites where consumers of a product or service tell the story of their experience of this product. This has significant relevance to the civilisation project, since the learning project involves people adopting a particular life stance beginning with the dreams and ideals of their imagination and moving into the more critical and grounded modes of applied thinking. Back stories can begin with enchantment but need to integrate a whole array of learning since, while the original story can get earth-bound listeners to take flight in enchantment, the back story carries a narrative of grounding when the excitement of enchanted possibility is brought down to earth. In a world saturated by imaginal agendas in advertising and public relations' spin, the back story becomes a key role in validating the imaginal curriculum in scenario sketching and providing a useful link in the pedagogy for a life giving civilisation.

Conclusion

In seeking to promote life giving civilisation, there can be many educational approaches. This paper has been an attempt to reflect on the pedagogic power of *scenario sketching* aimed specifically at the second, or mythopoetic part, of Heron's fourfold matrix of human knowing and learning. The strategy, which is hardly new, is to use such evocative scenario narratives to create a mood of interest and aspiration. This evoked enthusiasm is envisaged as a foundation for

developing other necessary dimensions of learning for life giving civilisation. Its almost feral power (after all, imaginal reflection deals directly with images, desires and passions rather than commonsense) needs to be directed by rational critique and measured deliberate action, hopefully retaining some of the power of its enchantment. As a learning reflection, 'back stories' are a useful way to complete the pedagogic cycle when the learners in the life giving civilisation project write their own learning and action story which hopefully finds its way into the working annals of the life giving civilisation project.

The universal appeal in many countries of narrative approaches to reflection and pedagogic action may well give the approach some validity in cross-cultural and cross-national settings. With so many narrative inputs shaping Australian culture from America, Europe and England, it will be good if the thoughts and imaginal processes in this paper might see some uptake in other countries. I suspect this will already have occurred, perhaps under different processes and names. Story telling in its *compunction precipitation* and *scenario building* versions seems as old as human culture, and it is good to re-visit its power and majesty and of course its limits in the work of holistic pedagogy for a life giving civilisation.

References

- Armstrong J. (2010). *In search of civilisation: Remaking a tarnished idea*, London: Penguin.
- Armstrong K. (2009). *Twelve steps to a compassionate life*, New York: Albert Knopf.
- Baumeister, R.F. & Newman, L.S. (1994). 'How stories make sense of personal experience: Motives that shape autobiographical narratives', *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, 20, 676–690.
- Bible. The second book of Samuel.
- Boal, A. (1992, [2002, 2nd ed.]). *Games for actors and non-actors*, London: Routledge.
- Boal, A. (1995). *The rainbow of desire: The Boal method of theatre and therapy*, London: Routledge.

- Bochner, A. (2002). *Ethnographically speaking: autoethnography, literature and aesthetics*, Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Bradbeer, J. (1998). *Imagining curriculum: Practical intelligence in teaching*, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Charles, W. (2011). 'Civilisation: The West and the rest', *The Adelaide Review*, Adelaide: The Adelaide Review Pty. Ltd.
- Clark, K. (1969). 'Civilisation: A personal view', BBC TV series.
- Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004). *Narratives in social science research*, London: Sage.
- Dirkx, J.M (1998). 'Knowing the self through fantasy: Toward a mytho-poetic view of transformative learning' in J.C. Kimmel (ed.), *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Researcher Education Research Conference*, University of Incarnate Word and Texas A&M University, San Antonio, TX, 137–142.
- Dirkx, J.M (2000). 'Transformative learning and the journey of individuation', *ERIC Digest*, 223, 1–2.
- Frank, A. (2000). 'The standpoint of story teller', *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3), 354–365.
- Gauntlett, D. (2011). *Making is connecting*, London: Polity Press.
- Grahame, K. (1908). *The wind in the willows*, London: Methuen.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts and social change*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interests* (tr. J. Shapiro), London: Heinemann.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *Theory of communicative action*, Volume 1 (tr. T. McCarthy), Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Shakespeare, W. *Hamlet*.
- Heron, J. (1992). *Feeling and personhood: Psychology in another key*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hillman, J (1981). *The thought of the heart*, Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.
- Hillman, J. (2000). 'Peaks and vales', in Sells, B. (ed.), *Working with images*, Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications.
- Illeris, K. (2007). *How we learn: Learning and non-learning in school and beyond*, London: Routledge.
- Macdonald, J.B. (1995). 'Theory, practice and the hermeneutic circle', in Macdonald, B.J. (ed.), *Theory as a prayerful act: The collected essays of James B. Macdonald*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 173–186.

- Magarey, J. (2009). *Exposure: A journey*, Adelaide: Wakefield Press.
- McKillop, C. (2005). *Storytelling grows up: Using storytelling as a reflexive tool in higher education*, paper presented at the Scottish Educational Research Association Conference, 24–26 November, Perth, Scotland.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception* (trans. C. Smith), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Merton, T. (1948). *Elected silence*, London: Sheed & Ward.
- Poulet, G. (1969). 'Phenomenology of reading', in *New Literary History*, 1(1), *New and Old History*, The John Hopkins University Press, 53–68.
- Rappaport, J. (1995). 'Empowerment meets narrative: Listening to stories and creating settings', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23(5), 795–807.
- Reissman, C.K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Shakespeare, W. (1599). *Hamlet*.
- Thomson, M. (2007). *Henry Hoke's guide to the misguided: An inventor's thwarted genius*, Sydney: ABC Books.
- Thomson, M. (2007). *Makers, breakers and fixers*, Sydney: Harper Collins.
- Thomson, M. (2002). *The complete blokes and sheds*, Sydney: Harper Collins.
- Thomson, M. (2002). *Rare trades*. Sydney: Harper Collins.
- Todres, L. (2007). *Embodied enquiry: Phenomenological touchstones for research, psychotherapy and spirituality*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*, New York: SUNY Press.
- Walker, B. (2010). *Reading by moonlight: How books saved a life*, Melbourne: Hamish Hamilton (Penguin).

About the author

***Dr Peter Willis** is senior lecturer in education at the University of South Australia specialising in the education and training of adults. His main research areas at present concern transformative and 'second chance' learning among adults, and the relationship between religion, spirituality and civil society. He supervises doctoral and masters students who use narrative and autobiographic approaches to research relating to forms of adult learning and social action programs. Peter has published a recent collection, edited with Leonard, entitled *Pedagogies of the imagination: Mythopoetic curriculum in educational practice*. He is currently involved in three adult and lifelong learning projects: *Reading life in life with illness stories*, *Learning for a humane civilisation*, and *Reading Fosco: Migrant voices of a blended life*.*

Contact details

School of Education, University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes Boulevard, Mawson Lakes, South Australia 5095

Tel: +61 8 8302 6553

Fax: +61 8 8302 5422

Email: peter.willis@unisa.edu.au