The construction
of identities
through narratives of
occupations

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Glossary

(A reference point for words subject to frequent and/or specific usage in this thesis).

Activity	A class of activity which is not associated with the goal-directed behaviour of an individual; it may have a purpose for the individual (though it does not always) but it has no personal meaning.
Agentic	Understanding how actions lead to the attainment of goals. Feeling in control and effective. (Polkinghorne, 1996)
Dialectic	'the existence or action of opposing social forces, concepts, etc' (Pearsall, 2002)
Dimension	'an aspect or feature' (Pearsall, 2002). Here used in relation to a broad aspect of the self.
Epistemology	'the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)' (Guba, 1990, p18)
Event	an action (caused by an agent) or a happening (not caused by an agent). (Prince, 2003)
Facet	'one side of something many-sided' or 'a particular aspect of something' (Pearsall, 2002). Here used in relation to an aspect of the self, a sub-division of a dimension.
Framework	'a basic conceptual structure used to solve or address complex issues' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Framework accessed 13.9.08)
Identity	'the person's location in social life' (Hewitt, 1994, p111). Can be said to be made up of the personal identity, which gives a sense of separateness and differentiation, and social identity, which involves belonging to groups and communities and identifying with them. See Chapter 3.
Leisure	'uncoerced activity undertaken during free time where such activity is something people want to do and, at a personally satisfying level using their abilities and resources, they succeed in doing.' (Stebbins, 2005, p350)
Narrative	The representation of one or more events (real or fictional) told by a narrator to an audience (Prince, 2003)
Narrator	This term here usually refers to a research participant, to indicate his / her role as a producer of narratives, although it can also refer to any person who is a teller of narratives.

Occupation	'An activity or group of activities that engages a person in everyday life, has personal meaning and provides structure to time. Occupations are seen by the individual as part of his / her identity and may be categorised as self care, productivity and / or leisure.' (Creek, 2006, p205)
Occupational form	The physical and socio-cultural aspects of an occupation. The form of an occupation elicits or guides human performance (Nelson, 1988).
Occupational identity	'a composite sense of who one is and wishes to become as an occupational being generated from one's history of occupational participation' (Kielhofner, 2008, p 106)
Occupational performance	The actions or behaviour carried out in the context of the occupational form (Nelson, 1988)
Occupational science	A science, the purpose of which is to generate knowledge about the form, function and the meaning of human occupation (Zemke & Clark, 1996)
Occupational therapy	'An approach to health and social care that focuses on the nature, balance, pattern and context of occupations and activities in the lives of individuals, family groups and communities. Occupational therapy is concerned with the meaning and purpose that people place on occupations and activities and with the impact of illness, disability, social deprivation or economic deprivation on their ability to carry out those occupations and activities. The main aim of occupational therapy is to maintain, restore or create a balance, beneficial to the individual, between the abilities of the person, the demands of her/his occupations in the areas of self care, productivity and leisure and the demands of the environment.' (Creek, 2003, p56)
Ontology	What is considered to be the 'nature of the "knowable"' or the 'nature of reality' (Guba, 1990, p18)
Participants	Those 17 individuals who agreed to participate in the research as sources of data. They are sometimes referred to as narrators, in relation to their production of narratives.
Plot	A literary device, emphasising causality, which pulls together several actions or events into a unified story, making them have meaning (Polkinghorne, 1991)
Protagonist	The main character in a narrative; the main focus of interest (Prince, 2003). The protagonist may or may not be the narrator.

Public narratives	'existing cultural discourses' (Elliot, 2005, p129) which contribute to shaping behaviours and activities in a society.
Self	The qualities, attributes and values that a person assumes to be his or her own. The stable structure of the self-concept is shaped by a process known, sometimes, as 'selfing' (Charmaz, 2002; Hewitt, 1994) The core, reflexive part of identity. A 'private sense of personal continuity' Gover and Gavelek (1996, p1) See Chapter 3 for more.
Social constructionism	A perspective that argues that 'the phenomena of the social and cultural world and their meanings are created in human social interaction.' (Seale, 1998, p329)
Story	The content of narrative as opposed to its expression; the 'what' of a narrative as opposed to its 'how'. The basic material without emphasis on plot. (Prince, 2003) A sequence of events occurring one after the other in time.
Symbolic interactionism	Mead's theory that social relationships and society are governed by the use, by individuals, of mutually understood symbols for communication. The self is constructed by the internalisation of others' feedback on his or her actions. (Filmer et al, 1998)

A note about language

Because there is no pronoun in the English language which satisfactorily indicates both sexes, the words he and she, or his and her, are used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

Abbreviations

Participants

AOP	Amateur operatic performer
A	Artist
BW	Bird-watcher
BP	Bridge-player
C	Canoeist
CS	Choral-singer
DT	Dog-trainer
F	Fisherman
GM	Gym-member
HP	Horn-player
HR	Horse-rider
MB	Mountain-biker
RM	Railwayman
R	Runner
SD	Scuba-diver
SS	Soul-singer
YP	Yoga-practitioner

BW6   Number following abbreviated name of participant signifies the narrative number: Bird-watcher, narrative number 6

JT   interviewer

Abstract

Occupational therapists believe that identity is shaped by engagement in occupations but this relationship has yet to be fully understood. This thesis is an account of a study which aimed to investigate how narratives told about occupations contribute to the construction of identity.

Narratives, extracted from interviews with 17 leisure enthusiasts, were subject to systematic analysis of content, form and interactive elements. This was based on an understanding that identity is expressed in the meanings attributed to the events told in a narrative.

The meanings were used to construct a framework which provides a basis for conceptualising the 'occupied self'. The framework is organised around three dimensions. The dimension of the 'active self' enables people to present themselves in terms of morality, competence and agency. The 'located self' enables them to present a sense of location in time, place, society and the body. The 'changing self' enables the individual to present the self as changing in itself and in relation to occupation. These facets of the self are manifested and foregrounded differently by each individual.

Based on a narrative perspective, the framework provides a unique and useful theoretical development, structuring and enhancing what is currently understood about the relationship between occupation and identity. The findings of the research contribute to the debate about how occupation is defined and how the meanings of occupations are understood. Other implications are also explored in the thesis. The framework offers practitioners a structured way of understanding the ways in which occupation can contribute therapeutically in the reconstruction of damaged identities.

The method of analysing narratives used in this study has much to offer in understanding occupational engagement. Further research is needed to understand the various manifestations of the parts of the framework, and to explore its potential for use as a practice tool.

1 Introduction

> *They actually went to Moab, Utah desert,*
> *and didn't expect to ride through the desert!* ((JT laughs))
> *I don't know what they all had in mind, but . .*
>
> *and then we had one day when it was just so hard,*
> *and I was cycling round like a fly –*
> *the heat was just a killer,*
> *and they were all like drinking 5 litres,*
> *I got back and I still had half a litre of a two litre camel-back, me,*
>
> *and we had to carry it up this really steep rock face,*
> *it was zig-zaggy and like a staircase*
> *and you had to shoulder your bike*
> *and it was really hard,*
>
> *and that was near the end of the day,*
> *and a lot of them were flagging*
> *and I got my bike to the top*
> *before the editor of the magazine.*
>
> The Mountain-biker MB15

The Mountain-biker, above, is telling about one of the many exciting times that he has had pursuing his leisure occupation. It is a core belief of the profession of occupational therapy that, not only do occupations contribute to health and well-being, but they are also fundamental to the construction of identity. In effect, we *are* what we *do*. The story that the Mountain-biker tells, then, presents a problem. If his leisure occupation contributes to his identity, how does it do so? What clues can be taken from what he tells us about his engagement with mountain-biking that can help us to understand the relationship between this occupation and his identity? This thesis is an account of a piece of empirical research which contributes to an answer to these questions.

The representation of one or more events (real or fictional), told by a narrator to an audience or a reader is a narrative (Prince, 2003). The Mountain-biker's account, above, is a narrative. Through narratives, experiences can be re-played to an audience. In this sense a thesis such as this is also a narrative, since it is a representation of a piece of research. By regarding the thesis as a narrative, attention is drawn to the idea that its meaning is shaped not

only by its content, but also by its form, its structure and the roles and interpretations of the narrator/researcher and the audience/reader (Riessman, 1993; Sparkes, 2002).

Based on the idea of 'thesis as narrative' this introductory chapter will give a preview of what is to be told. In the first section the basic parts of a narrative are used as headings to outline the context for the research. In the second section the structure of the thesis will be described. Finally the third section will provide a brief outline of those features that a reader might expect to find in a 'good' narrative account, to make it interesting and meaningful.

1.1 The research as narrative

The basic features of a narrative are the setting, the characters, the goal, the action taken to reach it, the sequence of events and the consequence (Polkinghorne, 1991). In relation to this research, the first four of these are described briefly below, in anticipation of their more detailed discussion in later chapters.

1.1.1 The setting

The setting for the research has been created by a convergence of several contextual factors: personal, professional and philosophical.

A personal context

If I introduce myself to another as someone who lectures for a living, and who gardens in my leisure time, then that person will have a different impression of my identity than if I said that I am an engineer who likes to go para-gliding. What I say about what I do contributes to the construction of my identity. Yet it is more complex than this, because both I and the other person have our own understandings of what these activities are like, and what social symbolism they evoke. The meaning of gardening, for me, may have some shared meanings with the general societal understanding of gardening as a leisure pursuit, but it may have other personal meanings which are less obvious to another, such as an association with previous studies in botany.

As an occupational therapist who is also an academic, I believe that my profession needs to gain a better understanding of the everyday meaningful activities (or occupations) that people engage in. Without this knowledge, our practice and our profession are built on a flimsy foundation. Without this knowledge and without a firmer evidence-base for our claims for the therapeutic value of occupation, the profession will tend to rely on the evidence-bases

of other professions such as medicine and psychology. Whilst these evidence-bases have much to offer, they do not underpin a coherent occupation-focused professional practice.

This thesis is based on my interest in the different meanings that occupations can have for individuals, and how this relates to their therapeutic value. Early reading convinced me that an investigation into the relationship between occupations, their meanings and identity would make a valuable contribution to the knowledge-base of the profession.

A professional context

Occupational therapy bases its therapeutic approach on the understanding that health, well-being and identity are closely related to the individual's engagement with meaningful activities of everyday life. The therapist works with the service-user as a partner, and, following assessment, enables opportunities for occupational engagement. These are designed to have a positive impact on functioning and participation, on the maintenance and restoration of health and on adaptation to disability and traumatic life changes. The relationship between occupation and well-being has been explored by Wilcock (1998a) although as a relatively young profession, occupational therapy has much work to do in establishing a substantial evidence-base. Occupational therapy and occupational science are unique in their study of the complexity of occupations and occupational engagement, but relevant knowledge can also be drawn from a range of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and medicine.

One aspect of well-being which has received attention within and outside of occupational therapy is that of identity, and the way in which it relates to occupation. Several studies have illustrated the important relationship between the occupations that people engage in and the construction, maintenance and rebuilding of a coherent and satisfactory identity (for example, Charmaz, 2002; Haggard & Williams, 1992; Jakobsen, 2001; Kiewa, 2001; Laliberte-Rudman, 2002; Reynolds & Prior, 2006; J. Taylor, 2003; Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2001). As well as the above empirical work, Christiansen (1999) has laid down some theoretical propositions about the relationship between identity with occupation, linking the social and narrative nature of identity, the social meanings of occupations and the relationship between identity and well-being. Other authors, outside of occupational therapy, have also explored the relationship between everyday activities, their contextual embeddedness and the construction of identity (Heller, 1984; Kuentzel, 2000; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

Occupations tend to be categorised according to their purpose, as work, leisure or self-care. Some have argued that certain types of occupation have more potency with regard to their impact on identity. In particular, leisure has been argued to give more opportunities for

identities to be constructed (Green, 1998; Haggard & Williams, 1992) and Stebbins has described the impact on the self of being engaged in 'serious leisure' (Stebbins, 2001).

Although there is a growing evidence-base in occupational therapy, and beyond, that shows that there is a relationship between occupation and identity, there is less evidence regarding the *nature* of that relationship. Occupations have personal and social meanings, and these will have their impact on how occupation contributes to the construction of identity, but a systematic empirical study could contribute evidence regarding how these elements relate.

As Christiansen (1999) suggested, identity can be conceptualised as a narrative, linking the individual's past, present and future. This is a post-modern theory of identity in which a coherent story is constructed out of the events of a life lived in ever-changing contexts, enabling continuity to exist amidst change and adaptation (Ricouer, 1991b; Somers, 1994). Narrative is also a term used to describe a form of discourse, as defined on page 1. A narrative can be the telling of a story about a single event in a life, or it can be the life itself. Narrative as a form of discourse is characterised by having particular features, which enable the meaning of a told event to be conveyed and understood. These features include the content, structure and interactional elements of the narrative (Mishler, 1986b). There is an association between told narratives and narrative identity (Bruner, 1990).

Given the current state of knowledge and given that there is much more to be learned about occupations, their meanings and their contribution to identity, an investigation was formulated that would make use of the narratives that people tell about their leisure occupations. The findings of such an investigation could contribute to the work of the occupational therapist by providing a better understanding of the processes at work in the construction of identity.

A philosophical context

This research assumes a relativist, social constructionist, ontology, in which, within the social world of human beings, objective truths cannot be discovered, but subjectively experienced, multiple realities can be explored and interpreted (Guba, 1990; Sarantakos, 1998). This perspective, plus a focus on local context and discontinuity, reflects the impact of post-modernism on the social sciences (Plummer, 2001) and is apt for understanding identity. Whilst public narratives and grand theories and their influence are acknowledged (Green, 1998), they are viewed here as social constructions. These discourses (such as the oppression of women and ethnic minorities) are significant in their impact on individual lives, perhaps limiting possibilities, but they can be reflected upon, adopted, adapted or rejected (Mishler,

1999) because they are not immutable truths. The individual, as agent, can impact on society, as well as society imposing controls on the individual (Plummer, 2001).

Given that realities are relative and socially constructed, the epistemological position taken here embraces the idea that they can only be accessed through interaction between the researcher and the researched and then made subject to interpretation (Guba, 1990). The social constructionist view is that language is used to construct a representation of a reality (Filmer, Jenks, Seale, & Walsh, 1998). Such a representation is verbalised as subjective, individual experience, comprised of elements which are socially recognised and shared. In this way the personal experiences and meanings of individual activity (or occupation) in a social world can be investigated. In answer to a critique of the social constructionist approach (Silverman, 2001), however, a focus on the process of the interview (the '*how* it was said') will not cause the content (the '*what* was said') to be neglected.

Whilst the occupational therapist has a concern with the lives and everyday occupations of people who have difficulties with functioning, this research is an investigation into the accounts of members of the general public (of course, that does not preclude them from being recipients of health and social care). There is much to learn from the accounts that people give of their everyday experiences that can inform therapy. Much qualitative research focuses on those events that are not considered to be 'everyday' events, for example experiences of life-threatening illness or bereavement, yet there is a lot to be discovered from examining routine happenings and seeing the 'remarkable in the mundane' (Silverman, 2007, p12).

This research is not realist. It does not focus on describing objective realities, either external or internal to the individual, and so as Silverman says *'truth is not the point'* (2000, p122). The personal accounts which people shared about their leisure occupations in this research were transient, situated accounts, specific to the context in which they were produced. On another occasion, or with a different audience, a different account of the same incident might be given because tales are co-constructed, memories are fickle and the telling of a tale the first time round may change the narrator.

1.1.2 The characters

The researcher / author

Given this ontology, it is appropriate that the existence and influence of the researcher is noted and brought to the fore when required (Crepeau, 2000; Holliday, 2007). Interpretive methodologies have benefited from feminist research influences in an increased awareness of

the impact of the researcher on the research process (Stanley & Wise, 1990). In particular, because the research is based on narratives and social construction, the role of the researcher as audience in the interviews, the co-constructer of identity and the interpreter of the narratives must be maintained in the consciousness of the reader. This will be done in a variety of ways throughout, without intention of detracting from the main thrust and content of the research. The first person will be used intermittently to bring my voice to the fore as judged appropriate and some personal reflections will be inserted into the text, using a style adapted from Finlay (2006b), in order to acknowledge particular issues as they arose (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Stanley & Wise, 1990).

Some participants

More important are the voices of the participants. Because the research has focused on narratives as discourse, these have often been quoted in sizeable extracts. This was done in order to preserve the whole, and what it conveys, and also to allow the reader to experience the poetry and impact of the language used, so that, in the end, the participants play a large part in representing their own selves and their experiences (Poindexter, 2002).

The 17 people, all of whom were leisure enthusiasts, who agreed to participate in the research will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4. In later chapters the way in which they were interviewed and the nature of the discourse material collected will be discussed, but it would be a missed opportunity if a preview were not inserted here. This introduction to five of the participants, and some field notes of my reactions following the interviews, will serve to ensure that the narrative material which was later analysed is seen against some contextual background and as the product of an interaction of which I was a part. It should be noted that details which might identify any of the participants have been changed, although issues relating to anonymity and narrative data are discussed later in 5.1.1.

The Artist (A)

The Artist was 30 at the point of interview. She is degree-educated, a healthcare worker and a single mother of three children. She was living in a council house in an urban area. She described herself as Bangladeshi, her parents being first generation immigrants. She has been doing art and attending art classes for about three years. There was a box of paints on the table, but there were no pictures on the walls, apart from a photograph of her children.

> *A short narrative: different cultural backgrounds?*
> *The Artist had not lived in this house long and appeared to be trying to establish a new home. Her living room was sparsely furnished. She laughed as she pointed out her lack of a settee and chairs. Her suite was being delivered next week, she said. She arranged some cushions for us to sit on, and we set the tape-recorder up on the floor. I felt uncomfortable in the early part of the interview. I wondered if this was because she appeared to be struggling to furnish her home, or whether I was anticipating some cultural differences in our discourse.*

The Bird-watcher (BW)

The Bird-watcher was 30 years old, describing himself as white British. He lives with his wife in a council house in a semi-rural area. They have no children. The living room was modern and neat, with no indication of his hobby. The Bird-watcher had been involved in bird-watching for approximately 5 years. He took it up to spend time with his father. He goes out spotting birds, and reports detailed data to the British Trust for Ornithology. Educated to the age of 16, he works as a sales assistant in a local hardware shop.

> *A short narrative: the commitment of amateurs*
> *After the interview the Bird-watcher showed me the garden. This was small and not particularly pretty. It was designed totally for the benefit of wildlife. It contained only native plant species, a small pond, birdfeeders (his wife, a sheet metal worker, had made them out of metal), woodpiles, bushes for shelter and berries, five nesting boxes. I asked if he is successful in getting birds to nest and he said 'come and look at this'. Upstairs in the study there was a computer, and also a web-cam monitor. He was able to flick through three cameras that were positioned in nesting boxes. One was empty, one had a half-built great-tit nest, and the other had a robin's nest with two eggs. He explained that a third egg would probably be laid before the female started to sit on them. His impressive level of knowledge and commitment to his hobby, displayed in the interview, became more real to me in the presence of this evidence.*

The Choral-singer (CS)

The Choral singer was 61 and had been singing since, as a little girl, she had stood on a box in a shop to entertain customers. The Choral-singer sings in a local choral society and her husband is the conductor. She has been involved in choral societies since she left teacher training college as a young woman. She had recently retired from her position as a deputy head-teacher and music teacher. She is educated to Masters level. Her three adult children live elsewhere, and she lives with her husband in a large modern house in a suburb. She described herself as white British.

A short narrative: a passionate involvement in music
When I arrived the Choral-singer took me to the music room. This was just what its name promised, being equipped with a wooden full-sized organ, other instruments, music stands and shelves full of music scores and books. The living room housed a grand piano. I was in awe. The Choral-singer loved music and this came through in the interview. She described performing Britten's Ceremony of Carols, 40 years ago in college, with the choir dressed in white sheets, descending a grand staircase towards a candlelit hallway, accompanied by harpsichord. I found it an emotional and evocative account.

The Dog-trainer (DT)

The Dog-trainer had been involved with dog-training classes for 14 years at the time of the interview, when she was 39. Her involvement ranged from obedience classes to dog-agility classes and displays for the public. The Dog-trainer described herself as white English. She worked as a 'Rights of Way' officer and was completing her Masters degree. She is single, living with her big, rare-breed, pedigree[1] dog. She lived in a small terraced house in a rural town. The interview took place in her living room. There were dog-related artefacts in evidence: framed sketches of her dogs, an impressive trophy on the mantelpiece, a dog statuette on top of the TV, a rare-breed newsletter (of which she is the editor). A big bookshelf covered one wall containing needlework, walking, gardening and dog books.

A short narrative: modesty, expertise and social image
During the interview I asked people how expert they regarded themselves to be, in their field. The Dog-trainer squealed with discomfort at this question and then gave the dog a very high score. When I tried to get her to score herself she couldn't, reverting, always, to talking about the dog's excellent ability. A few days after the interview she telephoned me to make sure that I understood that she was not bragging about herself. Despite winning trophies, she wished to be modest; to be perceived as boastful made her very uncomfortable. She did this, in part, by emphasising the dog's abilities.

The Railwayman (RM)

The Railwayman was 49, married, with three children. He lives in a detached modern house. He describes himself as white British, is educated to degree level and works for the Environment Agency. The Railwayman has been involved with railways since he was a child, his interests developing from train-spotting through to membership of a railway preservation

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[1] The name of the breed is not included to protect anonymity of the owner

society. He lays tracks, services engines, sells tickets and 'works' as a guard, amongst other activities. There was evidence of train enthusiasm around the living room: a model train on the mantelpiece, photos of the Railwayman in period uniforms, including one with a famous fellow-enthusiast, also train lamps and pictures.

> *A short narrative: identity in a sociocultural context*
> *The Railwayman is an accomplished storyteller, who can talk knowledgably about railways (I wondered if he gave talks to audiences). At one point in the interview I became frustrated because his stories were often impersonal, focusing on railway-related history and politics. I kept trying to bring the discourse back to the personal, which I managed eventually. However, during transcription, I realised that for him his identity is tied up in the historical features of his leisure pursuit. This is a 'little' man's tale of a battle, in society, to preserve the old railways. The whole thing feels like one big narrative, some parts more personal than others. The individual's narrative identity must be understood within temporal and societal contexts and alongside public narratives.*

1.1.3 The goal, the action taken and its consequent contribution

Specific research aims

The aim of the research was to investigate how narratives told about occupations contribute to an understanding of identity.

General research aims

There is some debate amongst qualitative researchers regarding whether or not it is important to be able to generalise from research findings. The aim of this research is to put forward, and provide empirical support for, an argument that can be seen to have a wider resonance across all individuals who engage in occupations. Generalisability in the positivist sense of the word will not be claimed for the findings, but a theoretical linkage will be demonstrated from the findings to the wider population (Kuzel, 1992; Mason, 2002). It is the intention that the study will enable these wider theoretical links to be made by recognising commonalities across people, whilst also acknowledging diversity and giving attention to the contextualised, detailed complexity of individual experience.

General approach to the research

To achieve these aims, leisure enthusiasts were interviewed, in order that narratives which they told about their leisure occupations could be analysed. The narratives were the units of

analysis. The analysis was designed to use what people say about their occupations and their meanings to formulate a better understanding of how identity is constructed.

Consequences of the research

This research, focusing on individual accounts of occupational engagement and using a method designed to explore meanings and identity, will contribute to the evidence underpinning the occupational therapy profession's assertion that occupations are fundamental to identity construction.

1.2 The thesis as narrative

This thesis is a narrative account: the telling of a story about the research project. Typically, narratives have a structure consisting of an orientation, a complication (or point of interest), an evaluation of events and a resolution (Labov & Waletzky, 1966). This applies here, in that the thesis must provide a background as orientation for the reader (chapter 1), explain what actions the researcher took (the complication), what the results of the action were (the resolution) and what these results might mean (the evaluation). The structure of the thesis will be as follows:

1.2.1 Orientation and complication (chapters 1-5)

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study and a rationale for this investigation into occupation and identity against a background of a health-care profession, occupational therapy, building its own evidence-base for practice. Chapter 1 also outlines the philosophical assumptions which will guide the approach to the research and the ways in which the findings can be understood. The aims of the research are stated in this chapter, vignettes of some participants included, and a statement made about the 'voice' of the researcher.

Chapter 2 will define and discuss the concept of occupation as it is currently understood within the profession of occupational therapy, exploring its reputed relationship with well-being, and discussing appropriate ways to research this complex phenomenon. Leisure is introduced here as one category of occupations which might serve as a useful exemplar for all occupations.

Chapter 3 will present a discussion about current conceptualisations of self and identity, in particular the symbolic interactionist perspective. Also discussed here are the theoretical bases for the relationship between identity and occupation, particularly leisure occupations.

Chapter 4 will explain the choice of methodology, specifically the selection of narrative discourse to investigate identity. The chapter will also show how a rigorous research design and method were planned and implemented, to gain access to the narratives of leisure enthusiasts.

Chapter 5 will show how the analysis of narratives was carried out, based on detailed and transparent methodological procedures and consistent theoretical assumptions.

1.2.2 Resolution (chapters 6 and 7)

Chapter 6 will describe a framework, constructed from the analytic findings, which offers a structure for organising the meanings that were conveyed in the narratives and for understanding how occupation contributes to the construction of identity.

Chapter 7 will illustrate and substantiate the framework through the discussion of examples from the narratives and their interpretation.

1.2.3 Evaluation and coda (chapters 8 and 9)

Chapter 8 will demonstrate how the framework can be used as a tool to articulate the occupied self, and also its utility in understanding the complexity of occupation as it relates to identity.

Chapter 9 will conclude the thesis by discussing the contribution that the research makes, given the current state of understanding of these phenomena as found in current literature. The implications of the findings for occupational therapy theory and practice will be considered, and suggestions made for further research. The contribution of the study will be assessed in the context of an evaluation of its quality and limitations.

1.3 Features of a 'good' narrative

Describing the thesis as a narrative is a useful mechanism in that attention is drawn to the combined forces of the content, the form and the interface with the audience, in enabling a good understanding of what is described. Pre-empting some of the findings of the research, it was noted when studying the narratives of the participants that certain features made a narrative more effective in getting its meaning across. Those features included giving sufficient detail to be evocative or 'painting a good enough picture', the use of metaphor to enhance meaning, the effective use of flashbacks to significant moments, the use of abstracts or previews to prepare the audience for what is to come, stating the obvious and allowing the

key characters to have their voice. This thesis will attempt to provide these ingredients and tell a convincing and meaningful narrative.

1.4 Conclusion

The key themes introduced in this chapter, essential to the coherence of the thesis, are:

- That occupation, well-being and identity are inter-related in the processes of adaptation to life changes, functioning, participation and establishing good health
- That there is a relationship between the meanings of everyday occupations and identity
- That occupations are complex phenomena. They and their relationship with identity are not fully understood
- That some occupations, such as leisure, may have particular effectiveness in the construction of identity
- That identity can be conceptualised as a narrative
- That narrative is also regarded as a type of discourse which reveals meaning
- That a social constructionist ontology is appropriate for understanding the representations that people make of their realities

This chapter has served to introduce the research, outlining the background and rationale for its inception. A better understanding of the nature of the relationship between engagement in occupation and the identity of the occupied individual is knowledge which would contribute to the evidence base for occupational therapy theory and practice.

The research process and anticipated products have been located in a social constructionist ontology. The position of the author in the process of interpretation and representation has been described, as has the way in which the participants' voices will be represented. Some of the participants have been introduced in this chapter, to begin to give a flavour of what is to come. Having established the background and the characters, the aim of the research was stated, and the structure of the thesis outlined, in order to provide an overview of the whole. The next two chapters will provide a more detailed background to the study.

2 The occupied individual

> *'There is nothing like employment, active, indispensable employment, for relieving sorrow. Employment, even melancholy, may dispel melancholy, and her occupations were hopeful.'*
>
> (Austen, 1814, from Mansfield Park, p333)

The core philosophy of occupational therapy embodies the idea that in order to attain health and well-being, humans must engage in a well-balanced range of activities (known as occupations) that are purposeful and meaningful (Creek, 2003; Kielhofner, 1997; Townsend, 2002; Wilcock, 1998a; Yerxa, 1998). Occupations, from this perspective, can be used as the *process* or the *product* of therapy. Yet histories show that this predominantly female profession, in its search for higher status, has not always prioritised its focus on occupation as a therapeutic tool. The mid-twentieth century saw an increasing alignment with the medical model, and medical authority became the dominant discourse of the profession (Schwartz, 2003; Wilcock, 2001). In parallel, psychological and social models of illness and health were adopted, as the profession increasingly sought respected, but borrowed, theory bases upon which to base its interventions.

In recent years there have been arguments from members of the discipline's international community that occupation should again be understood as it was by the professions' founders (Breines, 1995; Chard, 1999; Fidler, 1981; Kielhofner, 1995; Whiteford, Townsend, & Hocking, 2000; Wilcock, 2001), that occupational, rather than medical outcomes should be central to practice (Hocking, 2003) and that occupation should again be at the core of the curriculum in the education of new therapists (Yerxa, 1998). The reclaiming of occupation as a therapeutic tool by the occupational therapist poses a challenge in that the traditionally accepted premise that occupation contributes to health and well-being is not yet underpinned by a robust body of empirical evidence. Occupation and well-being are both complex and multi-facetted constructs which challenge the task of the researcher who must ask not only *whether* engagement in occupation impacts on health and well-being, but also *how* it does.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept of occupation, leading to consideration of its relationship with well-being and identity and the issues which must be considered when researching in this field. The first two sections of the chapter will discuss the nature and complexity of occupation and its use as a therapeutic tool. The third section will explore the evidence of its relationship with well-being and identity, and the challenges facing the researcher in this field. The fourth section will give some attention to leisure occupations,

as a possible exemplar of all occupations. The content of the chapter is built from literature from occupational therapy, occupational science and other related disciplines.

2.1 The complex concept of occupation

2.1.1 Occupation defined

For the occupational therapist the concept of 'occupation' is of fundamental importance. As a form of human activity, occupations are about the organisation of time and resources, the need to act on the environment and the need to explore and not 'a simple diversion from inactivity' (Yerxa et al., 1989, p7). Occupations are experienced in a very individual way: their meanings and their contexts of experience are specific to the individual (Yerxa et al., 1989). In this seminal paper, introducing a 'science' of occupation, occupations were defined as *'chunks of activity within the ongoing stream of human behaviour which are named in the lexicon of the culture'* (p5). This is a much-quoted, but somewhat vague definition, which appears to be all-inclusive, not excluding, for example, involuntary activity.

Core concepts within any discipline usually offer challenges with regards to finding an agreed definition, and occupation is no exception. In common parlance the term 'occupation' has drifted away from the usage employed by Jane Austen in the quote at the head of this chapter. Now the word is most often used by the public, by sociologists and in government statistics to refer to someone's paid employment (Jarman, 2004). For the occupational therapist, however, an occupation is much more than this. A range of definitions exists, contributed to significantly by various occupational therapy professional associations across the world. The College of Occupational Therapists in Britain has recently commissioned a study which has defined occupation as

> *'An activity or group of activities that engages a person in everyday life, has personal meaning and provides structure to time. Occupations are seen by the individual as part of his / her identity and may be categorised as self care, productivity and / or leisure.'*
> (Creek, 2006, p205).

The definition, arrived at using the Delphi approach to achieve consensual agreement amongst a sample of British occupational therapists, is a definition based on current usage, rather than being theoretically derived. Creek makes clear that she is working with the

assumption that meanings in language are socially constructed, and therefore are subject to change over contexts and over time.

Too many definitions have been generated in the last 10 years (e.g. Christiansen, Clark, Kielhofner, & Rogers, 1995; ENOTHE, 2004; Hinojosa & Kramer, 1997) to include the full range here. An agreed definition has not been reached (Wilcock, 2003), and some would argue that perhaps this is not possible nor desirable as it might impede the discussion and development of ideas (Yerxa, 1999). Understanding that, at present, the definition is still mutable, the following list will act as a reference point in this thesis for the generally accepted characteristics of occupations.

- Occupations are activities both meaningful and purposeful to the individual performing them (e.g. AOTA, 2002; Golledge, 1998; Gray, 1997; Hinojosa & Kramer, 1997)
- They also usually have sociocultural meaning (e.g. Townsend, 2002; Yerxa et al., 1989)
- Occupations fill and structure time (e.g. Creek, 2003; Hinojosa & Kramer, 1997)
- They tend to be grouped according to purpose: self-care, leisure and productivity (or work) (e.g. AOTA, 2002; ENOTHE, 2004)
- They support roles and participation in society (e.g. ENOTHE, 2004; Golledge, 1998)
- Occupations contribute to the individual's sense of identity (e.g. AOTA, 2002; Creek, 2003; Hinojosa & Kramer, 1997)
- Activities are not occupations if they are involuntary, or if they are aimed at a goal which does not involve individual meaning and participation (Gray, 1997).

A contrast to this complex array of features is the suggestion that occupation is 'doing, being and becoming' (Wilcock, 1998b), a simple definition which captures the notion of subjectively meaningful activity which results in some kind of transformation in the 'doer'.

The word 'occupation' has a relatively precise usage in the fields of occupational therapy and occupational science. Yet, since this thesis concerns itself with the everyday meaningful activities of daily life with which humans occupy themselves, literature will be drawn from disciplines such as sociology, psychology and leisure studies, which also have an interest in this subject. In these disciplines similar phenomena are referred to as *activities*. It can be argued that *all* activities are meaningful, given that they are socially situated, symbolic constructs, and so the understanding of an activity as an occupation rests, perhaps on personal meaningfulness. The interesting debate around meaning and occupation will be pursued further at different points in the thesis.

2.1.2 Occupation, therapy and complexity

Occupational therapists, in their work with those who are disabled or recovering from ill health, believe that the individual can be helped by engagement in occupations. At a superficial level, this appears to be a simple strategy for therapeutic intervention which is based on little more than common sense (Creek, 1996). In fact, the process of occupational therapy involves complex approaches to assessment, negotiation with the client as partner and selection of appropriately meaningful and purposeful occupations, which may be subject to adaptation, grading and facilitation. There is a convincing argument that occupational therapy should be regarded and researched as a complex intervention (Creek, Ilott, Cook, & Munday, 2005). The focus of this thesis, however, lies not with the therapeutic process but with the complexity of the therapeutic tool, occupation.

To appreciate its therapeutic value an occupation can neither be considered away from its temporal, spatial and socio-cultural contexts (Yerxa, 2002), nor be broken down to its component parts, in a reductionist way (Gray, 1998). To be therapeutic, the occupation should be meaningful and therefore whole and appropriately contextualised. The complexity of this 'whole' entity, in context, can be conceptualised in a variety of ways, but here attention is given to the idea that occupation is made up of *form* and *performance* (Nelson, 1988). Nelson described form as '*an objective set of circumstances, independent and external to a person*' (Nelson 1988 p633). The form of an occupation has physical and socio-cultural aspects. The form of an occupation, normally understood by at least a section of society, elicits or guides human performance. Occupational *performance* is understood in terms of voluntary movements and postures, facial expressions, vocalisations and emotional and cognitive input as the individual interacts with the occupational form and the relevant environment. These elements make up the 'doing', the meaning and the participation which are essential in transforming an activity to an occupation. Nelson's partition of occupational form from performance gives an entry into the complex task of analyzing and understanding the individual's experience of being occupied. Even making a cup of tea, given the above considerations, becomes a complex phenomenon (Creek, 1996; Hannam, 1997).

2.1.3 Occupation and context

Occupations take place, and are impacted on by factors in the social, cultural and physical environments. Contexts can *constrain* and they can *enable* the pursuit of occupations. In turn occupations have an impact on these environments.

Occupations help the individual to organise and structure their **time** in a way that is personally and socially meaningful. As indicated above, the engagement in occupations over the lifespan, over a stream of time (Yerxa et al., 1989), can be a focus of attention in the study of occupations. This has been described as the individual's occupational career (Russel, 2001) (relating, in this context, to more than paid employment). The temporal context must also focus attention on how *much* of the person's daily routine is occupied with an occupation, how *long* it takes, how *frequently* it is done and in what sequence (Harvey & Pentland, 2004). The time in which an occupation occurs can feel pressurised by other demands, or it can feel excessively available, if the individual is occupationally deprived (Whiteford, 2000).

Occupations take place in **spatial and physical environments** and human performance is shaped by these (Spencer, 1991). Spaces for occupations might be, for example, indoors or outdoors, in water, up a mountain, in an office, a home or a workshop. An occupation can be carried out in various countries and cities, rural or urban, open or confined spaces. The spatial context includes temperature, weather and other aspects of environment, such as available physical resources. Occupations are an action on the environment or a response to its challenges (Yerxa et al., 1989). Some physical spaces, such as beaches or mountains, are natural and people devise occupations to carry out within them (Kielhofner, 1995), whilst some are designed for a specific purpose, for example a kitchen is designed for cooking.

Many aspects of the **social context** impact on occupational performance (Davidson, 1991; Kielhofner, 2008). The societal context for occupational performance is complex, in that it comprises the culture in which one is living, and in which one has been raised. Even before a child is born, the culture has been built which will have some influence on his or her lifestyle and occupations (Agger, 2004). Occupations are fundamental to participation in society (Gray, 2001; WHO, 2002), but as Wilcock has pointed out, socio-economic and class distinctions are a force in determining variability in access to occupations across populations (Wilcock, 2003). Occupations are subject to social forces such as gender and disability, disempowerment and passivity. Culture itself may have an impact on what people understand about being occupied, There are certainly cultural variations regarding how people spend their time, and regarding related concepts such as independence (Whiteford & Wilcock, 2000). There is a dynamic tension between the functioning of the individual and the sociocultural environment (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Whilst it can be argued that individuals have *some* freedom of choice in their selection of occupations, the tools (material and psychological) that are needed to engage in these occupations are born out of a culture and so can facilitate or constrain activity as can more direct social forces.

The socio-cultural context in which an occupation takes place has a variety of manifestations. Whilst it can include the wider society (e.g. Britain), or a more localised culture (e.g. Methodists, Lancastrians, people who work in a certain factory, people who go hunting), it can also include the people who are with the individual during the performance of the occupation. These 'others' may be necessary, as part of the occupational form. They might be fellow performers, or they might be an audience or a temporary visitor; they may have the same values as the individual, or they may not. Emotions, attitudes and interactions all play a part in the performance of an occupation and the construction of identity (Hewitt, 1994; Magnus, 2001; Tajfel, 1978; J. Taylor, 2003).

2.2 Occupations: meanings and purpose

2.2.1 The purposes of occupational engagement

Occupations are usually classified as either work (productivity), leisure or self care (AOTA, 2002; Creek, 2003; ENOTHE, 2004) although other, similar, groups of categories exist. Some authors have indicated, however, that individuals may not classify their occupations in this neat tripartite way. Primeau (1992) for example, has suggested that occupational therapists should be clear that household work *is* work, as in any financially rewarded work, although society classes it as housework, and some therapists might class it as a form of self care. Some feminist writers have indicated that women's experience of leisure may not be the same as men's (Henderson, 1990) and that an assessment of subjective experience might be a better guide to understanding what is regarded as leisure, rather than making assumptions from the name of a given activity. Some occupations normally associated with leisure might, in some circumstances, feel like work to the individual. Shopping, for example, could be categorised as work, self-care or as leisure, in different situations, or by different people. Subjective experience and the personal meaning of an occupation may defy the rigidity of commonly employed categories. Hammell (2004) has argued that a focus on *meaning* would be more beneficial in understanding the potential therapeutic values of occupations than a categorisation of *purpose*.

2.2.2 The meanings of occupations

Human beings engage in occupations throughout each day, throughout their lives. Some of these occupations are necessary for survival, whilst some are not. Some are freely chosen and

some are imposed in some way by the constraints and limitations of society, or of necessity. Each individual engages in a unique constellation of occupations on a daily basis and across their lifespan which helps to build identity (Christiansen, 2004; Clark, 1993).

Psychologists have developed theories of motivation from different theoretical perspectives (Christiansen, 2004; Gross, 1996), but the human urge to engage in a given occupation, being influenced by many subtle factors ranging from childhood experience to financial motives and friendship groupings, is typically too complex to explain simply. *Interest* is one of the factors which motivate engagement in occupations (Yerxa, 2002). But occupations are a compromise between what is *desirable* and what is *practical* (Gallimore & Lopez, 2002). Jonsson et al (2000) show that engagement in occupations is influenced by internal motivations and external demands.

Occupations are considered to be both purposeful (linking to motivation) and meaningful to the individual. A complicating factor is that the word 'meaning' is used several ways in the literature. Occupations can *have* meaning, can *make* meaning (Crabtree, 1998), can *give* meaning to life (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2001; Yerxa et al., 1989) and can *help us find* meaning (Yerxa, 2002). Clearly, the word 'meaning' has a relationship with sense-making and coherence, and, for some, spirituality, in the individual's overall life. It is also understood that any occupation has unique meaning to the individual who is doing it, and that it will also have symbolic meaning within society (Fidler & Velde, 1999).

Few authors, however, have been specific regarding what is meant by meaning and what meanings they have uncovered in empirical research (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2001). Meaning, in relation to occupation, could be regarded as the individual's interpretation of the occupational form (Nelson, 1994). This might include perceptual, symbolic and affective experience. From the symbolic interactionist perspective it is also argued that the meaning of an occupation is socially constructed, created through interaction (Hasselkus, 2002, and see section 3.1.2). Although a differentiation might be made between personal and social meanings, in fact even subjectively experienced meaning will have been developed under social influence. Sharrott has written about the social construction of meaning and is an early author in occupational therapy who makes the link between meaning being associated with ongoing narratives and themes in people's lives (Sharrott, 1983). Bruner asserts that meaning-making has a central place in human action; action and reasoning are organised in a narrative form and must be understood in a socio-cultural context (Bruner, 1990). For therapists this is important as they help their clients to see the meaning of their situation. It is only within the context of meaning that therapeutic intervention can take place (Engelhardt Jr, 1983).

Although Fidler suggested that meanings can be social, cultural or personal and that personal meanings may be symbolic (Fidler, 1981), little further attention has been given to developing a more precise understanding of meaning in relation to human occupation, until recent years, when a taxonomy has been suggested (Persson, Erlandsson, Eklund, & Iwarsson, 2001). In this taxonomy of meaning it has been suggested that there are three main groupings of meanings of occupations: concrete, symbolic or self-reward. Further, these authors argue that occupations have meaning to the individual only if they are an integrated part of the individual's everyday life. In their study, Persson et al argue a link between occupations, their meaning and health-related variables in people experiencing chronic pain. In relation to symbolic value, occupational choices and performances link the person to certain social groups or subgroups through symbolic communication. Identifying with a particular social group or occupation confers identity (Persson et al., 2001).

The definition of an occupation as 'doing, being and becoming' (Wilcock, 1998b) can be used to approach an exploration of the meanings of occupations (Hammell, 2004; Hasselkus, 2002). Some occupations may have more meaning than others, and therefore greater therapeutic value to the individual. A focus on the traditional three categories has led researchers to look for the ideal occupational balance of self-care, productivity and leisure, but a new wave of thinking is suggesting that it is the subjectively experienced value and meaning of an occupation which may be of more importance. This was also suggested by Persson et al (2001) who argued that, although occupational therapists claim that their unique focus is on meaningful occupations, the categorisation systems which have been developed have not supported this approach.

Theoretical and empirical work on the meanings of occupations has suggested that meanings may change over time and context (Yerxa et al., 1989), culture (Bonder, 2001; Hannam, 1997), with disability (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2001) and following transition (Jonsson et al., 2000). The subjective experience of meaning has been captured in research using narratives; it has been argued that meanings are derived not just from occupation but also from the whole plot of one's life narrative (Clark, 1993; Jonsson et al., 2000). A longitudinal narrative-based study of retirement has indicated that there may be a type of occupation which has been called an 'engaging occupation' (Jonsson, Josephsson, & Kielhofner, 2001). The engaging occupation is particularly meaningful, it is infused with positive meaning, engaged in intensely, consists of a coherent set of activities, it often goes beyond personal pleasure, it involves membership of an occupational community and can be analogous to work. This same study, based in Sweden, has recently been subject to further

(constant comparative) analysis, leading Jonsson to propose an experience-based categorisation of occupations, focussing on an aspect of the meaning of occupation (Jonsson, 2008). Seven experience-based categories of occupation were found: engaging, basic, social, relaxing, regular, irregular and time-killing occupations. This exploration of occupational meaning has yet to be subject to critical scrutiny by the academic community but it appears to have valuable potential for making associations between time-usage, commitment and engagement to an occupation, and well-being.

2.3 The relationship between occupation, well-being and identity

2.3.1 Occupation, well-being and identity

Well-being and health

Occupational therapists argue that occupations are fundamental to well-being. It is not within the scope of this study to enter into the debate about the precise nature of subjective well-being and its measurement (Diener, 2000), but it *is* relevant to consider the relationship that appears to be indicated between being occupied, and being 'well'. Against a background of little empirical evidence, a literature review of 22 studies (in which participants had no disabilities) examining the relationship between occupation, health and well-being, was carried out (Law, Steinwender, & LeClair, 1998). The findings showed that there was moderate to strong evidence that occupation has an important influence on health and well-being. This finding was supported by a quantitative study involving 120 participants, in which a positive correlation was found between perceived progress in completing personal projects (meaningful occupations) and well-being (Christiansen, Backman, Little, & Nguyen, 1999).

Well-being and health are not necessarily related to medicine and the absence of disease, when viewed from the perspective of the everyday life of the individual (Hicks, 1997). Well-being is multi-facetted as Wilcock (1998a) has explored at length. Well-being is

> '*a subjective assessment of health which is less concerned with biological function than with feelings such as self-esteem and a sense of belonging through social integration*'
> (Wilcock, 1998a, p98).

Engagement in a good balance of occupations is an indicator of good health (Hasselkus & Murray, 2007) but it is also believed to *create* good health and contribute to other aspects of well-being such as life satisfaction, adaptation, self esteem and the construction of identity.

Studies have shown a relationship between the ability to pursue desired occupations and life-satisfaction in studies on people with disabilities (Reynolds & Prior, 2003a; Wikstrom, Isacsson, & Jacobsson, 2001; Yerxa & Baum, 1986). Other disciplines also contribute to this area of knowledge. Intense involvement in activities are associated with 'flow', itself associated with life-satisfaction and happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), the relationship between leisure and stress has been examined (Iwasaki & Schneider, 2003), and the relationship between activity and depression (Lewinsohn & Graf, 1973).

Participation

The concept of well-being incorporates the extent to which the individual can participate in society. There has been recent acknowledgement from the World Health Organisation (WHO), in the ICIDH-2, that participation through activity is an indicator of health (WHO, 2002). The areas of interest for the practice of, and enquiry into, occupational therapy sit comfortably with the WHO classification system (Gray, 2001). As early as 1991, Yerxa was linking occupational therapy with a view of health as the capacity to participate in life through occupation, not the absence of illness (Yerxa, 1991). Further, one might look beyond the individual when considering the relationship between occupation and participation. The ability of communities to offer and experience a full and satisfying range of occupations has been suggested as a focus for occupational therapy interest (Townsend, 1993; Whiteford, 2000).

Transition and adaptation

Also essential to the work of the occupational therapist is the view that in order to experience subjective well-being the individual must be able to adapt to the changing circumstances of life. Related to adaptation, Blair's work on the dynamics associated with life transitions gives some illustration of how occupations help with this process (Blair, 2000) and this is supported by a study of women with breast cancer (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2001). In this second study the relationship between occupation, meaning, choice and control and the reconstruction of disrupted identity is explored. When someone's life is changed occupations may be changed also, or redefined – they may be re-prioritised, modified, adapted, rescheduled (Vrkljan & Miller-Polgar, 2001). Another earlier study, a single case study, demonstrated how occupation has a constructive role to play in the successful passage through transitions caused by loss of health, particularly in terms of helping to create a new image (Clark, 1993). Similarly, leisure occupations have been shown to help people cope successfully with life events such as

bereavement and disability when they can buffer the impact of such events by being distracting, by generating optimism for the future and by helping in the reconstruction of a life story which is continuous with the past (Kleiber, Hutchison, & Williams, 2002). It has been argued that the larger the range of experiences one has, in terms of occupations, the more readily one will be able to adapt, in the face of trauma and life-change (Fidler, 1981).

Reynolds and Prior (2003a) used an interpretative phenomenological approach to analyse the interviews of 30 women, all of whom had a chronic disability and engaged in textile art. The findings showed that art helped the participants to deal with their illness in a variety of ways, ranging from distraction to social participation. Meaningful activity, the authors suggested, has an impact through these mechanisms, on subjective well-being and a positively experienced identity. The relationship between craft occupations and identity have been further explored in a study using narrative analysis with interviews from six older people (Howie, Coulter, & Feldman, 2004). In this study the themes indicated the importance of relational practices (similar to the social participation in the above study), a changing self-awareness, reflective processes and the existence of enduring qualities of the self.

A sense of well-being appears to be associated with having a satisfactory sense of identity. The occupations that people engage in play a part in the formation of identity. Through what we do, we shape how we present to others in the world. Through our actions we are defined. '*People create who they are through occupations which connect them to their world and culture, enabling them to be in place there.*' (Yerxa, 2002, p105) There is an argument that occupation influences well-being because it fulfils the human need to do, it provides a sense of purpose and a means to organise time and space and it is a medium for the development and expression of identity (Laliberte-Rudman, 2002). This facilitates participation in society and provides a sense of purpose and achievement. By this means identity is constructed and manifested and a coherent and consistent sense of identity contributes to well-being (Giddens, 1991; Laliberte-Rudman, 2002). The self concept may be altered by engagement in the everyday habits and activities of ordinary life (Charmaz, 2002).

There are powerful arguments, then, that engagement in meaningful occupations will contribute to people's sense of well-being, including their ability to participate in society, to adapt to changes and to experience a positive identity. Given sufficient evidence to support these arguments, the occupational therapist has a role to play in promoting well-being in those who are not diagnosed as 'ill', and in helping to rebuild well-being and identity in those whose lives have been disrupted.

2.3.2 Empirical evidence and how it is achieved, in occupational therapy

The paucity of research underpinning the work of the occupational therapist can be explained, in part, by the period of time in the profession's history when there was an alliance with the powerful and positivist medical and psychology professions. This diverted the focus of research from occupation and the whole individual towards reductionist and mechanistic interests, such as the choice of thermoplastics in hand therapy, or the use of relaxation techniques in reducing anxiety scores. The resurgence of interest in occupation as a legitimate approach to therapy and the need for the occupational being to be seen as a complex whole are important reminders of the profession's roots in moral treatment, humanist principles and social concerns. These are not always appropriately researched by positivist methods (Schwartz, 2003).

The practice-based profession of occupational therapy gave rise, in the late 1980s, to an underpinning academic discipline, occupational science, to provide greater focus on the systematic study of occupation and participation in occupations (Clark et al., 1991; Yerxa et al., 1989). Occupational science has its focus on generating knowledge about the form, the function and the meaning of human occupation (Zemke & Clark, 1996). Whilst occupational therapists are interested in the study of occupations as a way of providing an evidence-base for therapeutic intervention, the occupational scientist is interested in a general expansion of knowledge about occupation, which may or may not then be applied in practice. Yerxa et al noted that occupational therapists have been trying to work on *incapacity* and *disability* without sufficient knowledge of *capacity* and *ability* (Yerxa et al., 1989). Now occupational therapy's conceptualisation of the relationship between occupation and health is expanding beyond the role of occupation as a therapeutic tool. The powerful relation between occupation and health (Wilcock, 1998a) offers the profession the potential to develop outside of the health care system, contributing to the well-being of communities and the prevention of physical and mental ill-health, focussing on human beings as occupational beings (Wilcock, 2001).

Occupations are complex. They cannot be studied usefully without an understanding of their contexts, nor would a comprehensive body of research neglect the physical, psychological and social requirements for their performance. The human being is a conscious, active agent, interacting with a range of specific physical environments, within specific socio-cultural and historic contexts (Clark et al., 1991). Some debate has ensued regarding the methodological approaches appropriate for studying such complexity. Some have argued that

only qualitative approaches would enable the researcher to preserve the integrity of the individual and their context (Carlson & Clark, 1991; Yerxa et al., 1989; Zemke & Clark, 1996). Yerxa has argued that the experimental method is incompatible with a focus on people as individual, occupational, whole beings. She suggested that any research method in this field should enable highly individual, complex occupational beings to be studied in their environments, that the focus should be on the level of the person (rather than a body part) and that attention should be given to development over the lifespan (Yerxa, 1991). Wilcock, more recently, has counter-argued that in order to be thorough, any science of occupation should encompass reductionist as well as holistic and exploratory approaches (Wilcock, 2001). The research method should, ideally, be suited to the research question (Hyde, 2004). Positivist approaches may be more appropriate when measurable outcomes are being investigated, but when motives, meanings, complexity and variability are the focus of research, then qualitative approaches are required (Clark, Carlson, & Polkinghorne, 1997). There is, however, an argument that the person-centred, empowering philosophy of occupational therapy requires research methods which are able to investigate complexity and uncertainty, in order to explore meaning in relation to being and doing (Blair & Robertson, 2005).

To investigate the meanings of occupations a subjective perspective must be taken. Barber has warned against occupational scientists focusing on the individual as 'organism-in-relation-to-environment', advocating instead that attention should be given to the perspective of actors who can give a first person account of what it means to engage in activity (Barber, 2006). The term 'actor' here is taken from the sociological perspective of Max Weber. This is in accord with the interpretivist tradition, in which an understanding of experience is taken from the reports of those who have experienced it.

The arguments presented above were influential in the choice of research method used in this study.

2.4 Leisure as occupation

> 'After 33 years of marriage, I feel I am neither single nor properly married
> and I am wondering whether to release myself from my husband. I have to
> share with him his life's passion, playing the viola…
> If he put half as much energy into his job as he puts into his music, we
> might be better off. I feel I have only half a husband. Is this situation better
> than being alone?...'
>
> (Anon, 2005, p12)

The quote above appears to indicate that people's occupations might sometimes impair the well-being of themselves and others. It provokes the question – 'what does viola-playing mean to this man, that he is jeopardising his marriage?' The literature review, at this point, will take a slight diversion, focusing attention on leisure, in order to describe and propose this group of occupations as an exemplar of occupations in general.

2.4.1 Leisure defined, debated and re-defined

With acknowledgement that a counter-argument to this has been introduced above (section 2.2.1), and a further note that this is a Western perspective, leisure is regarded as one of the three areas of occupational performance, along with work and self-care (Christiansen & Baum, 1991; Youngstrom, 2002). A frequently cited definition of leisure is that from Dumazedier:

> *'Leisure is activity – apart from the obligations of work, family and society – to which the individual turns at will for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening of his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity.'*
> (1967, pp. 16-17, cited in Thibodaux & Bundy, 1998)

Three key aspects of leisure have been of interest to social scientists (Thibodaux & Bundy, 1998). First, leisure can be considered to be a kind of time which is free from obligations, when activity is non-essential, when time is without pressure, and the activity is temporary and self-rewarding. Second, leisure as a culturally defined activity is bounded by social norms, provides status, varies according to groups, changes across the lifespan and is organised in patterns. The third aspect focuses on the interior attitude of the individual which, during leisure, is normally pleasurable and relaxing, exploratory and liberating, whilst the activity is freely chosen and the individual is intrinsically motivated to engage with it (Thibodaux & Bundy, 1998). It can be argued then, that leisure, as an area of occupational performance, is distinct from work and self-care, in that it is a way of spending time differently: for pleasure, free from obligation and offering more freedom of choice than other occupations. Yet these arguments have been contested.

The suggestion that leisure is separate from the obligations of work, family and society has been subject to criticism from feminist leisure writers. Women, it has been argued, tend to have a much more fragmented and flexible leisure time than men, often combining leisure with other roles and obligations (e.g. nurturing children) and feeling guilty for snatching time for personal pleasure (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990; Henderson, 1990). Henderson

argued that it is more difficult for a woman to set aside specific time for leisure activities and so she uses different 'containers' for subjectively experienced leisure. To a woman, leisure might be something as simple as having a bath or meeting friends at a children's birthday party (O'Neill, 1993). The distinction between leisure and other types of activity such as child-care or self-care, thus becomes less clear. This viewpoint is supported in a more general way by Bateson, who suggests the idea of 'enfolded' occupations, those which are performed concurrently, or in an interrupted way (Bateson, 1996). These, she suggests, are more frequently seen amongst women. Whilst it might be possible to name, demarcate or quantify leisure-time for some individuals, some of the time, it might not be possible for others (and these may not always be women) at all. Indeed, this may also be true of other areas of occupational performance, such as work and self care. A clear distinction between work and leisure cannot be assumed (Madry & Kirby, 1996; Primeau, 1996; Snir & Harpaz, 2002), and the boundaries between leisure and self-care, or leisure and rest are equally indistinct.

Another controversial element in Dumazedier's definition is the inclusion of the idea that the individual *'...turns at will for ... the free exercise of his creative capacity'.* Leisure is popularly conceptualised as time when individuals are able to freely choose their activity. Freedom of choice, however, is invariably constrained by one's access to resources and one's socio-cultural background (Rojek, 2005; Stebbins, 2005) as well as disability (Reynolds & Prior, 2003b) and gender (Raisborough, 2006). Class, gender, socioeconomic status and race all impact on the availability of leisure choices in actual terms and also in terms of the way in which the individual is socialised to perceive and grasp opportunities. Sailing a yacht can be a leisure activity for those who can access money and stretches of open water and whose socialisation has introduced the possibility of sailing as a leisure pursuit. In a recent paper Stebbins (2005) has argued that there is enough literature now, about the constraints associated with leisure choices, to take the phrase 'freely chosen', or similar, out of any definition of leisure. He does not preclude human agency from leisure pursuit. Instead Stebbins argues that any definition of leisure should include the phrase 'uncoerced behaviour', suggesting voluntary choices within the limitations of socio-cultural constraints (Stebbins, 2005). Stebbins also suggests that leisure researchers give serious consideration to the idea of leisure sometimes imposing *agreeable obligations*, when an individual feels a sense of duty arising from a promise or convention or circumstances. Feelings of obligation can negate feelings of freedom of choice. In order to remove the emphasis from freedom of choice Stebbins proposed the following definition of leisure. Leisure is an

> 'uncoerced *activity undertaken during free time where such activity is*
> *something people want to do and, at a personally satisfying level using*
> *their abilities and resources, they succeed in doing.*'
> (Stebbins, 2005, p350)

It is of note that the subjective assessment of an activity as a leisure activity is fundamental to this definition. The inclusion of the idea that leisure is activity which takes place in 'free time' however, does not address the argument that much subjectively experienced leisure occurs in a fragmented way, or enfolded in other activities (Bateson, 1996; Henderson, 1990).

2.4.2 Leisure as an exemplar of occupation

Despite any shortcomings, Stebbins' definition provides a useful basis for this thesis, which focuses on those experiences which are named as leisure activities by society, and which are most likely to be carried out in time which is put aside for the purpose. The feminist argument about leisure as subjective experience is not ignored. Indeed, this argument highlights the necessity of examining the degree to which *any* activity might be regarded as promoting subjectively experienced pleasure, whether it carries the name of 'leisure' or not. From this perspective then, it would appear to be unnecessary, as Hammell (2004) has argued, to be too concerned about the classification of occupations as leisure, work or self-care. Rather, the above concerns would be addressed if all occupations were regarded as being on several continua for different factors such as freedom of choice, freedom from obligation, separate and distinct time usage and subjective experience of pleasure. Similarly, all occupations can be said (with reference back to the definition from Dumazedier cited earlier) to be on continua in relation to how much they induce relaxation, how much they involve family or other social participation, how much they broaden knowledge or how creative they are. What society calls work can be relaxing, creative and socially participative. Self-care can be relaxing and free from family obligations. Occupations called leisure can carry obligations and be stressful.

This is an argument, then, that suggests that occupations cannot easily be grouped into categories. The idea is thus supported that leisure occupations can have enough in common with other occupations (as suggested by the definitions of occupation offered earlier in this chapter) to be representative of them. For the purposes of this thesis, and acknowledging the issues discussed above, the term leisure will be used for occupations which society names as leisure, which are subjectively experienced as pleasurable (usually), are not primarily motivated by payment and which the participant actively engages with.

Serious leisure

In any leisure activity there is scope for the participant to be engaged to a lesser or a greater degree. One individual might play tennis occasionally whilst another might have weekly practice sessions and competition matches. If one thinks of an individual's involvement with any occupation in terms of a 'career'(Russel, 2001) situated within a lifespan, then the level of intensity of involvement might vary throughout the career. Stebbins has written about 'casual' and 'serious' leisure (Stebbins, 1997). Casual leisure he describes as relatively short-lived, requiring little special training to enjoy it and having no long term 'career'. Casual leisure, according to Stebbins includes such activities as play, relaxation, passive and active entertainment, sociable conversation and sensory stimulation. Conversely, 'serious' leisure (a term coined by Stebbins in 1982) is

> '...the systematic pursuit of an .... activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge and experience.'
>
> (Stebbins, 2001 p3)

Serious leisure has six distinctive qualities (Stebbins, 2001):

1. Participants must occasionally persevere in order to conquer adversity.

2. It is normally found as a 'career', with turning points and various stages of involvement.

3. It demands that participants acquire specific knowledge, training and / or skills and expend significant personal effort in developing and maintaining the leisure career.

4. There are a number of durable benefits or outcomes related to a serious leisure career. These include self-enrichment, self-expression, the renewal of self, the feeling of having achieved, the enhancement of self image, social interaction and self-gratification.

5. Participants tend to strongly identify with their chosen activity, in a way which the casual leisure participant will not. The serious leisure participant might say, for example, 'I am a stamp collector' indicating that this leisure activity has become a role.

6. Each form of serious leisure has its own unique social world (D. R. Unruh, 1980) which might operate at a local level or much wider (up to international level) held together by a range of mediated communication systems (such as meetings, newsletters or the internet). Unruh describes different types of members of a social world. These members might be strangers (who make the activity possible, but do not participate themselves e.g. a stable-hand in the horse-riding world), tourists (who participate in a temporary way, e.g. the

audience at a show), the regulars (who are the regular participants in serious leisure) and the insiders (who devote significant time and other resources into developing and maintaining the leisure activity (e.g. a club organiser, or a newsletter editor).

Stebbins also adds that a social world in serious leisure includes a rich subculture with its own lifestyles, norms and standards, values and moral principles (Stebbins, 2001). It can be argued that the wish to affiliate with an activity's subculture may be as attractive to a participant as the activity itself (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986).

The concept of the engaging occupation (Jonsson et al., 2001), described above in section 2.2.2 has much in common with serious leisure, although the former term was designed to apply to all categories of occupations. Like an engaging occupation, a serious leisure pursuit is infused with positive meaning, is experienced intensely, is a coherent set of activities, sometimes goes beyond personal pleasure (when the participant has to persevere), means belonging to a community (social world) and may be analogous to work. Jonsson et al suggested that the concept of the engaging occupation might not completely meet the criteria for serious leisure, but gave little reasoning for this suggestion (Jonsson et al., 2001). Whilst this thesis has taken serious leisure occupations as its focus, engaging occupations may have served the same purpose. Serious leisure may, arguably, be a sub-set of engaging occupations.

Types of leisure

Leisure activities can be divided into sports, arts, crafts and hobbies (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986) while participants can be classed as either amateurs, hobbyists or volunteers (Stebbins, 2001). In the latter categorisation amateurs engage in activities such as sport, the arts or entertainment, which have professional counterparts and normally have a 'public'. Hobbyists include collectors (for example of stamps), makers (for example patchwork quilts), players of sports and games with no professional counterparts and participants in activities which are non-competitive, but rule-based, such as hill-walking or barbershop singing. The third category described by Stebbins, volunteerism, is focused on helping activity which is not motivated by coercion or financial gain and might include those who help in, for example, education, health, human relationships or the environment. A third approach to categorisation is to class leisure occupations according to their function. Following focus groups with adolescents, Passmore and French (2003) identified three functional groups of leisure occupations: achievement, social and time-out leisure.

The second two of these classification systems focus attention away from the activity itself, and towards what it might mean to the participants, to be thus engaged. That an individual might regard herself as an *amateur* singer or painter has implications with regard to role and identity. That an individual might engage in dog-agility classes in order to socialise, or to achieve, again has implications for identity.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the importance of the concept of occupation to the occupational therapist. The therapeutic value of occupation in promoting, maintaining and recovering health, well-being and identity is supported by some empirical evidence, but this is, as yet, limited. Support was given to the argument that it would be fruitful to focus on the meanings of occupations when trying to understand their therapeutic value. The relationship between occupation, well-being, adaptation, participation and identity were discussed. This was followed by the proposal that qualitative research methods, which can explore complexity and uniqueness, and which focus on meaning, are most appropriate for gaining a better understanding of these aspects of occupation.

The general discussions about occupations were followed by a more specific consideration of the qualities and aspects of leisure occupations. The case was made that leisure occupations can act as exemplars for occupations in general, given those qualities shared by all occupations, albeit to different degrees. Serious leisure (Stebbins, 2001), was described and compared with the idea of the engaging occupation (Jonsson et al., 2001). In both these cases it has been suggested that powerful affiliation with an occupation and its social world has significance in relation to identity. The term identity has been used in this chapter in association with occupation and well-being. The next chapter will consider current conceptualisations of identity and relevant related terms, in order that its relationship with occupation might be more fully explored.

3   The nature of identity

'... we suggest that identity be conceived as a form of action that is first and foremost rhetorical, concerned with persuading others (and oneself) about who one is and what one values to meet different purposes ....'

(Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p91)

'we are known by what we do'

(Christiansen, 2004, p122)

The case has been presented that the development and expression of identity is related to an individual's occupations. Occupation enables participation in socio-cultural environments where identity is constructed. Further, occupation can contribute a sense of continuity to identity in the face of biographical disruption, and, following trauma, can help to reconstruct identity. The two quotations above suggest that identity is about activity, or occupation, socially situated and yet personally experienced with self-consciousness.

In this chapter the concept of identity will be explored in order to better understand its relationship with occupational engagement. Some approaches to understanding identity will be discussed in section 1, particularly with regards to an understanding of the complex individual, functioning in a range of contexts. Crucial to the focus of this study this chapter also explores, in section 2, the impact of action and occupation on the construction of identity, and in section 3 the relevance of identity conceptualised as narrative. Finally, and linking back to the last section of the previous chapter, section 4 will explore the literature which makes an association between leisure and identity. The content of the chapter is built predominantly from literature from sociology, psychology, leisure studies, occupational therapy and occupational science.

3.1   Identity and society

The nature of identity has, in recent times, undergone a shift in the way it is understood. The concept gives much scope for debate which cannot, here, be given a full airing. This section will focus on establishing some basic assumptions which are made in this thesis about identity, assumptions which are in accord with the ontological position of social constructionism, and which lay the foundations for the methodological approach used.

3.1.1 Post-modern perspectives on identity

Early influences on the understanding of identity arose out of the basic precepts of modernism: that objective, neutral, scientific investigation could produce a universal truth which could be applied globally (Filmer et al., 1998; M. Williams & May, 1996). From this perspective identity was regarded as an entity which is rational, measurable, stable and predictable, founded on childhood experience and internal processes (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007). A post-modern view of the world, however, has brought about changes in the way identity has been conceptualised. In relation to identity, the three principles upon which post-modernism rests are, firstly, the decentred and socially constructed self; secondly, a denial of those who would claim to have found 'grand truths'; and thirdly, an acknowledgement of instability in practices of understanding (Filmer et al., 1998). There are several implications which follow from these principles. Identity can be understood as being highly individualised and subject to unique patterns of social influence at an interpersonal and a societal level. The individual is best understood in relation to unstable local contexts, giving due regard to the influence of the predominant discourses of society which are also unstable (Mills, 2003; Plummer, 2001). The identity of the individual is shaped not only by social interaction, but also by social construction based on the influence of societal discourses. In this way, for example, society's discourses about gender, as demonstrated through the media, through literature and through societal expectations can be expected to influence the shaping of identity.

The idea then, of identity having an overall stability, remaining unchanging, is one which is difficult to uphold. Any conceptualisation of identity must be able to reconcile the ideas of continuity alongside change in response to contingencies. The self is conceived of as multiple and permanently under reconstruction (Elliott, 2005). Other viewpoints exist. The modernist, critical theory view would be that identity is shaped and constrained by the powers of oppression, resulting in particular identities associated with, for example, gender or disability, but post-modernists would argue that identity is not '*grounded in history and politics, but is a pastiche, a mosaic, made up of ephemeral fragments that fill the person with content, meaning and values*' (Agger, 2004, p110). The social constructionist view on identity is that it is developed through societal influences (Filmer et al., 1998). The individual, however, is also reflexive and self-conscious, with personal agency (Giddens, 1991). The post-modern view, as opposed to the critical theory or pure social constructionist view, would be that people can be active in the construction of their own identities (Green, 1998; McAdams, 1993). The

construction of identity is impacted on by the culture that the individual lives in, and also by the constant process of construction as the individual tries to reconcile diverse and sometimes contradictory aspects of themselves (McAdams, 1993; Wetherell, 1996). By integrating existing cultural practices and meanings into the self, the individual can exist effectively in the social world, because these meanings are shared and recognised. Given that the individual is also considered to be agentic, some choices can be made by her about whether cultural practices should be adopted, resisted or, perhaps changed. There is, therefore, not only a dialectic relationship *within* the individual, between the personal and social identity, but also *between* the individual and society (Cohen, 1994).

Related to the above, and adding some empirical evidence to this view of identity, Mishler interviewed craft-artists about themselves and their crafts. He used the resulting interviews to access narrative accounts of identity. He identified four problems which challenged the modernist, positivist conceptualisation of identity (Mishler, 1999). First he found that personal life and career trajectories revealed diversity and variability between individuals, not universality in stages of development. Second, he found no predictable continuity in adult identities; he found discontinuity and contingencies. Thirdly, he found lack of coherence and contradictions in the artists' interviews, which could best be explained by taking into account the local context of their production i.e. the social context of the interview itself. Finally he found that identity was formed with much more emphasis on inter-personal dynamics and multiple identities, rather then the intra-personal conflict resolution emphasised by the psychodynamic school of thought (Thomas, 1996).

There is a requirement, given the above perspective, that the process of construction and reconstruction of identity should be accounted for and understood in relation to contingent events and the reflexivity and agency of the individual. A conceptualisation of identity should allow for sameness with one's culture, whilst highlighting uniqueness, and should allow for sameness over time, whilst allowing for mutability in response to events and personal agency.

3.1.2 Symbolic interactionism

A key influence on how identity is understood is the theory of symbolic interaction, developed from the ideas of Mead (Blumer, 1969; Hewitt, 1994). This school of thought understands action and social interaction to be the basis for the development of the 'self' through communication systems which are symbolic (Filmer et al., 1998). As the individual interacts with others in society, using shared symbols (for example, language), the responses of the 'others' (specific others and the 'generalised other') are internalised to contribute a

social element to the sense of 'self'. This can happen because people can be mindful of their own acts, anticipating and reflecting upon them (Hewitt, 1994). Underpinning the symbolic interactionist theory is the idea that human actions and intentions are not only purposeful, but they have meaning, both to the individual and to others. In deciding to move into action, the individual is able to second guess the meaning that the action will have for others, and will be able to imagine how they will react (Hewitt, 1994).

With the above brief summary in mind, attention can be given to a better understanding of two key terms: the self and identity.

The self

Fundamental to symbolic interactionism is the understanding that an individual can regard himself as an object and can therefore reflect on his own actions and feelings. The self is made up of the 'me' which is the core; the self concept, a stable structure; and the 'I', which is a process of 'selfing', the ongoing process of construction of the 'me' (Hewitt, 1994). The 'I' constructs the 'me' on the basis of feedback from others, interpretation of the meanings of actions, and reflection. The self is phenomenologically experienced; there is an awareness of one's own actions, feelings, agency and a sense of continuity. The self exists in a network of relationships and emerges through actions, so although there is continuity, there are also *changes* in response to social interaction, experience, personal agency and reflection (Charmaz, 2002; McAdams, 1997). The self is a reflexive project which aims to maintain a coherent self-narrative amidst the instabilities and contingencies of context (Giddens, 1991).

The self, then, whilst having stability and coherence, is an ever-changing project, in which feedback from others, personal agency and the experience of everyday activity are reflected on and interpreted for meaning. The self is a story that we present to ourselves, about ourselves.

Identity

The internalised, socially and phenomenologically experienced self becomes part of the identity of the individual. Some writers make the distinction between the idea of the personal identity and the social identity. The former, as described by Charmaz (2002), is the inner sense of location, differentiation, continuity and direction of the individual, whilst the latter is associated with community membership and cultural meanings. Personal identity is about a sense of separateness and difference, a '*sense of self built up over time as the person embarks on and pursues projects or goals that are not thought of as those of the community, but as the*

property of the person.' (Hewitt, 1994, p113), whilst social identity is about being with and identifying with others. Essentially, identity, '*the person's location in social life'* (Hewitt, 1994, p111), is experienced in relation to others, through what an individual does, and how they present themselves. According to this viewpoint identity cannot be understood except in the context of the network of social relationships surrounding the individual. The identity is socially constructed; an understanding of the world and the self are gained from a perspective which is embedded in societal values and structures. Because this is the case, the individual, knowing what is valued by others and being reflexive, can engage in impression management, managing the image of the self which is presented in the public arena (Goffman, 1975). Identity is the story we present to others, about ourselves and it incorporates the experientially defined self (Gover & Gavelek, 1996). Like the self, identity is not a fixed entity, it can have multiple forms, often related to context (Hewitt, 1994; McAdams, 1993; Mishler, 1999). It is normal, though, for the individual to strive for a coherent unity in the story of their identity, or their narrative identity (McAdams, 1993).

Thus it can be seen that the internal self and the socially located identity are constructed and can only be fully understood in context, and in relation to activity, which is always symbolically meaningful.

3.1.3 Group membership and identity

Identity is shaped by the very fact of living in society and internalising the effects of encounters with 'others'. These interactions impact on the ongoing construction of the identity at a social and a personal level, largely, argues Jenkins, through comparisons of similarity and difference (Jenkins, 2004, p4). The individual, however, does not just live in a large amorphous society. The individual is a member of various groups, by choice, by birth or by imposition. A group has been defined as a

> *'collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the*
> *same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common*
> *definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus*
> *about the evaluation of their group and of membership of it.'*
> (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p40)

Membership of a group is a form of social categorisation which has consequences for social, and therefore, personal identity. This is social identity theory: an argument that group members tend to identify positively with the perceived shared characteristics of the group and differentiate between these and the perceived less desirable characteristics of other groups

(Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982). Entry into a group's social world (D. R. Unruh, 1980), whether as a stranger, a tourist, a regular or an insider (section 2.4.2) brings with it entry into communication networks, mediated through personal contact, newsletters, notices, emails or telephone calls, which help bind the social world together and make identification stronger. Jenkins makes the important point that, whilst a group's members are brought under the same label because of their similarities, there can be many differences between them also arising from types, hierarchies and roles (Jenkins, 2004). A group does not have a homogenous membership. Engagement in a leisure occupation, and its related group membership, contributes to identity, then, through identification with and differentiation from others.

3.2 Activity and identity

The symbolic interactionist approach, relying primarily on the internalisation of feedback from social interactions, fails to take into account the part played by everyday activities in the development of self and identity (Kuentzel, 2000). Indeed Kuentzel argues that social interaction is a *subset* of human activities and that the project of the self is constituted and reconstituted in everyday activity and routine practices (Kuentzel, 2000). This is an important consideration in developing an understanding of how occupations contribute to identity, for, whilst much occupation *does* involve social interaction, some of it does not (although it can still be argued to have social meaning). Two approaches to the view that human action contributes to identity will be considered below.

3.2.1 Action theory and mediated action

In the first approach the focus is on human action, the 'doing', itself. It is through our acts that we indicate to the world who we are and what our values are (Sarbin, 1989). The acts which occupy daily existence have meanings which are understood by the self and by others. This notion arises from Weber's action theory (Filmer et al., 1998) which has some similarities to symbolic interactionism. Society, from the action theory viewpoint, is made up of individual actors interacting through a series of shared and mutually meaningful systems of interests and values, which are rendered meaningful, not through direct observation, but by interpretation. By acting in the way we do, we are enacting our own identity, shaping it as time goes on (Bruner, 1990). There is self-consciousness and reflexivity in people's actions. Kuentzel articulated this well when he said '...*the routines of everyday activity provide the matrix within which individuals reflexively construct their self-definitions*' (Kuentzel, 2000, p91). In

order to understand identity in this approach it is necessary to investigate the *meanings* that people attach to their actions. By engaging in occupations people are behaving in a way which has meaning to themselves and to others, because they are part of a wider society (Crabtree, 1998) enabling them to function there.

A second approach relating human action to identity is that of mediated action, arising from the work of Vygotsky (Newman & Holzman, 1996; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). In this approach the focus shifts to the tools, instruments and practices which are available within a culture. In order to engage in occupations the human being needs to enlist the tools (physical or psychological) and practices which are pre-requisites for that activity. These tools and practices required for occupational engagement are, necessarily, born *out of* and embedded *in* the individual's cultural background. In effect, personal identity is constructed by using the tools and practices (and these include language, dress, customs, skills, physical artefacts) of the pre-existing culture (Gover & Gavelek, 1996; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). This is a process which allows for a unique individuality with sufficient similarity *to* and development *from* cultural norms for the individual to be a recognised member of society. As Giddens (1991) has argued, in order for their identities to be relevant in society, individuals must strive to maintain and reproduce what already exists.

That society plays a fundamental part in the development of identity is a basic argument of the social constructionist approach. Of particular interest in this thesis, however, is the argument that identity formation can best be understood if regard is given to the interface between the processes of individual functioning with sociocultural processes (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Identity is shaped by, and shapes, forms of action, through the use of culturally derived tools. In other words, identity is shaped by, and shapes, occupational performance and the occupational form. Here is a direct link between occupation and identity, and, indeed, Penuel and Wertsch argue that human action should be the basic unit of analysis in identity research (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

The idea that the individual's activities are enabled by the plethora of tools and practices available within her culture has a counter-side, in that it might be expected that they also serve to constrain. Identity can be made and remade through the daily lifestyle choices that people make (Giddens, 1991). The individual is limited in her actions and identity by what is culturally available, but, given her agentic nature, might well be pro-active in shaping or developing the cultural tools and practices of the future. The cultural practices available to people predate and survive them. For the purposes of activity they are appropriated and perpetuated and can be transformed (Harre & Gillett, 1994).

Action theory and the theory of mediated action, whilst having separate origins, have two things in common. Firstly they enable attention to be given to the part played by action (and therefore occupation) in the construction of identity. Secondly, they bring to the fore a concern with the meanings of occupations, at the interface between the individual and society. While symbolic interactionism emphasises the direct feedback from interaction with others in the shaping of the self, these theories enable an understanding of how occupation can contribute to the shaping of the self *whether it involves social interaction or not*.

3.2.2 Occupation and identity

The relationship between occupation and identity is associated with continuity *in* and adaptation *to* a world which is eventful. The sociological and psychological theories discussed above are congruent with, and enhance, occupational perspectives on this subject. Throughout the lifespan the individual engages in an ever-changing range of occupations, shaping her own identity (Christiansen, 2004). In an earlier, significant, theoretical paper Christiansen summarised the relationship between occupation, identity, meaning, society and well-being (Christiansen, 1999). Identity, he observed, is shaped in interaction with others, and through actions, and the interpretations of actions in our relationships with others. Also, the individual's identity is the central figure in her self-narrative, providing coherence and meaning for everyday events. This life meaning is associated with satisfaction and well-being. Christiansen, in his discussion of identity, went on to emphasise the parts played by reflexive self-consciousness, social interaction and agency. It can be seen that this chapter goes some way towards agreeing with Christiansen's perspective on identity: *'Occupations are more than movements strung together, more than simply doing something. They are opportunities to express the self, to create identity'* (Christiansen, 1999, p552).

Empirical studies of the relationship between occupation and identity have often been carried out with the therapeutic implications in mind. In a secondary analysis of data from three qualitative studies (whose subjects were, respectively, older people in the community, people with schizophrenia and stroke survivors and their carers), Laliberte-Rudman (2002) found evidence of the part played by a range of occupations in the reconstruction and the maintenance of identity. Five themes emerged in this study:

- Occupations appeared to be a means through which people demonstrated their core characteristics to themselves and others.

- Limited opportunity to engage in occupations limits the individual's management of her identity, whilst having opportunities for occupational engagement offers the potential for growth and re-construction.
- Engagement in occupations allows people to be able to maintain identities which are personally satisfying, particularly in terms of continuity of identity.
- Occupation can be used consciously to manage identity in that some occupations might be avoided, for example, to reduce stigmatising eventualities, and other occupations might be engaged in to achieve social recognition, usefulness and approval.
- Feeling in control of one's occupations was considered to be essential and is a mediating force in the above four themes.

Christiansen's ideas about identity (1999) are clearly supported by Laliberte-Rudman's work, including his ideas about reflexive self-consciousness, interaction and agency.

The reconstruction of identity through occupation, following illness, disability or other trauma has been the focus of much investigation in occupational therapy. The routines and habits of everyday life tend to be taken for granted until challenged by a personal disruption such as illness (Charmaz, 2002) or a social catastrophe such as war (Whiteford, 2000). The link between occupation and identity has powerful therapeutic implications and also offers a means by which the disruption of occupational performance by chronic illness and its impact on identity might better be understood (Jakobsen, 2001). Jakobsen focused on employment as a key area where occupational performance links with identity, as did Magnus (2001). In a qualitative study based on interviews with ten Norwegian women who had become disabled, Magnus, working from a symbolic interactionist perspective, found that several strategies were employed using everyday occupations to manage the shaping of identity. The social values of occupations, as well as their personal meaning, make them influential in helping to reconstruct a positive, socially valued identity.

Positive experiences resulting in achievement through occupation can give a stronger sense of agency (Polkinghorne, 1996). Some occupations offer value because they have been part of an individual's life history and have retained significance for well-being over time. In her single-case study, using a narrative approach, Clark was able to trace significant occupations for one woman back to her childhood and, using them in adapted form, help the woman to shape a positive reconstruction of identity, following a debilitating (and, as it turned out, terminal) illness (Clark, 1993). Similar findings emerged from a study of ten women, each experiencing chronic illness, who found some continuity of identity by engaging

in textile arts, which linked back, often, to childhood or family occupations (Reynolds, 2003). In this study textile art was also found to contribute to identity reconfiguration by enabling the growth and development of positive identity, by restoring a sense of expertise and status, and by providing social validation.

Not all studies linking occupation to identity have focused on disrupted lives. An ethnographic study of craft-workers showed that the personal meaning which the individual ascribes to an occupation shapes its contribution to identity (Dickie, 2003), whilst a survey of the general public and leisure participants showed some links between the socially stereotyped images of leisure activities and social and personal identity, (J. Taylor, 2003).

The term *occupational identity* has, in more recent years, been coined as a way of describing the way in which occupation and identity are so closely linked. Occupational identity has been defined as *'... a composite sense of who one is and wishes to become as an occupational being generated from one's history of occupational participation'* (Kielhofner, 2008, p106). This definition conveys the idea of occupational identity as providing continuity from the past, through the present, to the future, as *'... a composite of one's occupations over time'* (A. M. Unruh, 2004, p292). That identity and occupation are inextricably linked, over time, is an argument supported by theory and empirical studies from a range of disciplines. Before going on to consider the particular case of leisure in relation to identity, a perspective on identity which is compatible with this view will be discussed.

3.3 Identity conceptualised as narrative

A conceptualisation of identity which allows for identity to be continually revised, which places human action as central, and which is sensitive to the influence of context, is available in the idea that identity can be construed as narrative. This idea follows naturally from the suggestions above that self is a story that people tell themselves about themselves, and identity is a story that is told about self, to others.

3.3.1 The narrative identity

The idea that identity can best be conceived of as a narrative has been developed in the work of several authors, notably Somers (1994) and Polkinghorne (1991) in the fields of sociology and psychology, respectively. From a psychological perspective Polkinghorne has proposed that the concept of the self is better regarded as taking a narrative form, rather than a structured, finite entity or a cluster of attributes (Polkinghorne, 1991). The self, as seen as a

narrative, enables the individual to make sense, give meaning to temporal events which might otherwise be regarded as chaotic. Sense is made by the emplotment of such events into narrative formulations. The narrative self concept answers the question 'who am I?' In effect, narrative is a cognitive device (Polkinghorne, 1988), organising information about the developing, contextualised self.

Any concept of identity has to take into account the destabilising effects of time, space and relationality, which a narrative conceptualisation can do, as well as enabling an exploration of social action at material, institutional, cultural and macro-structural levels (Somers, 1994). Somers makes a clear link between the narrative construction of identity and social constructionism. She points out that, whereas, previously, narratives have been used as realist representations of the world, newer understandings of narratives would regard them as concepts of social epistemology and social ontology, enabling us to know, understand and make sense of the social world, as well as the individual's identity, which is constructed against this social backdrop. Individuals, as social actors, do not always have control over personal and public narratives and sense cannot always be made (Somers, 1994).

Identity as story

Several key authors have contributed to the idea that identity can be thought of as story, notably Bruner (1990) who suggested that people understand the world through stories and that action is given relevance through its relevance to the story being lived. Narratives help the individual to create a personal sense of unity and purpose in life, or identity, through revision, opening up new possibilities for the future. We *are* the stories we tell (McAdams, 1993) and we are *in* the stories we tell, sometimes several at a time (Polkinghorne, 1991). Such stories about ourselves have the elements of a story generally recognised within our culture – there are characters or actors, settings, a sequence of events or actions, with a beginning, a middle and an end. The protagonist normally attempts to achieve a goal in a narrative, and as the plot unfolds we see how the goal is or is not attained, and what the overall consequences are. In this way we are able to make sense out of diverse, sometimes apparently chaotic events, unifying them as a meaningful whole which is the protagonist's identity (Polkinghorne, 1991; Somers, 1994).

People create meaning through the causal emplotment of the events of their lives. Narratives confer meaning to our actions by relating the actions to other things including events, people and other parts of the overall life narrative (Polkinghorne, 1988). The meanings that are made in our narrative plots are made against the background of our own

culture's stock of meanings. Without appreciating the cultural background against which a narrative is told, the meaning might be lost. Events and actions can be understood to have meanings which are personally, and also culturally understood (Polkinghorne, 1988). For Polkinghorne, *meaning* is very much associated with *doing*, reinforcing the link between identity, activity and narrative.

Identity as project

The narrative identity is not a static, finished product; it is an ongoing project, involving others, open to constant revision and aiming to become someone other than who the individual is at the present time (Mattingly, 1998, citing Williams 1981). Because narrative identity is subject to revision, and because present events are being understood in relation to the past, and sometimes the future, the role of memory becomes important. Memory, over time, cannot be accurate. People remember selectively, and remember with an 'afterwardness', from a point of 'knowing what we know now' which inevitably distorts what is remembered (King, 2000). The concept of the narrative identity, then, is not based on a collection of 'true' and accurate facts, but is based on an individual's recall, construction and interpretation of sequences of events.

The conceptualisation of identity as an ongoing life narrative enables the possibility for the individual, authoring the narrative, to take new experiences and make sense of them within this overall framework. In relation to the future, the narrative can be regarded as revealing the projects which an individual has for becoming (Mattingly, 1998). The ultimate gap in a narrative is that which has not yet occurred, but which is a gateway to imagined possibilities or 'possibility rooms' as Josephsson et al (2006, p88) have called them. One's narrative identity might, however, limit future possibilities (Fullagar & Owler, 1998).

Identity and time

The relationship between narrative and time is a central concern in the conceptualisation of identity (Ricouer, 1980, 1991b). What has happened recently is reflected upon as it relates to what happened before and what might happen in the future, according to the plot of the life story, or the individual episode under review.

> '*Like each episode singly, my life as a whole – that is, my self – is*
> *something temporal that unfolds in time and whose phases I survey*
> *prospectively and retrospectively from within an ever changing present.'*
> (Polkinghorne, 1991, p143).

The narrative view of identity allows for continuity, but with action bringing about transformation, accounted for in the plot of the narrative. Indeed Ricouer had suggested the idea of 'discordant concordance' when the plot of the narrative accommodates change within the ongoing permanence of the narrative identity (Ricouer, 1991b). Events in the past, the present or the future can be made meaningful when incorporated into the narrative whole of one's life.

Identity as relational

The story which unfolds about an individual stands in relation to other people. Meanings are attributed in narratives with mindfulness of cultural and societal meanings. Our actions are interpreted with knowledge of social expectations and the judgements of others. This is consistent with a view of identity as complex, context-related and sometimes inconsistent (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000), rather than a simple, static entity which is observable and measurable. Most people have different roles in life, and are members of a variety of groups, and so may have multiple versions of themselves, creating tension (Mishler, 1999; Ochs & Capps, 1996). How, then, Mishler asked, do people achieve a coherent and unitary sense of self? He suggested the idea of 'conjunct' identities which achieve a balance between conflicting and persistent motives in life. He also tried to capture the complexity of the relational aspect of identity by describing it as 'multiplex' rather than 'simplex' (p121); identity is a 'movie', with sub-plots, rather than a 'snapshot' (p122).

On a wider scale, one's personal narrative identity is created against the backdrop of society's public narratives (Lawler, 2002; Somers, 1994). Any narrative can only be fully understood with this as part of the contextual understanding. If an individual regards herself as being middle-class, then this can only happen because class is an established public narrative. 'Middle-class' as a label accepted as part of the self brings with it a range of generally accepted characteristics and expectations. With this knowledge, the individual can adopt or resist societal expectations.

Narratives themselves are a tool, or a culturally-bound practice, for if they were not part of a culture's traditions, then they would not be understood by the listener (Plummer, 2001). Some have argued that our personal narratives are built on traditional myths which have survived in our culture because they are powerful, having resonance with many people over generations. Such myths help to re-integrate the self identity, in time-honoured ways, following major life events such as birth or death (McAdams, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1991). If

our self-narratives are built from a cultural repertoire then this may have implications in some accordance with critical theory, that some groups build their identities based on previous cultural tales of disempowerment (e.g. women, the disabled or racial minorities).

3.3.2 Narratives to access identity

It is useful at this point to insert a comment about the different ways in which the concept of narrative is used when discussing identity. Hänninen (2004) has made a useful distinction between the lived narrative, the inner narrative and the told narrative. The idea that human life itself has a narrative quality, like a series of connected episodes, each with a beginning, middle and end, organising experience, is the **lived narrative**. The **inner narrative,** is the ongoing story we tell ourselves, trying to formulate a coherent whole through organising and trying to make sense of experiences. It is based on a personal collection of stories, which may or may not be told. The inner narrative influences what is told to others. **Told narratives** are the verbal accounts which the individual gives about their experiences and actions, based on the 'cultural stock of stories' which are available (Hänninen, 2004, p73).

Often, in texts about narratives, these three modes are used interchangeably, but Hänninen's distinction helps to make clear that a life or an identity can be conceptualised as a narrative, but also that narratives, when told, can be a resource in research. Since the told narrative is influenced by the inner narrative, it provides a methodology which allows access to identity, mediated by the narrator's telling and personal interpretation.

3.4 Leisure and identity

Several authors have argued it to be the case that leisure, perhaps because it is uncoerced, has a particular role to play in the construction of identity (Christiansen, 2004; Green, 1998; Haggard & Williams, 1992; Kelly, 1983; Kuentzel, 2000; Shaw, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1995). There is also a range of literature which indicates that there is a positive impact on well-being through the benefits conferred by leisure engagement. An amalgamated list would include those benefits which relate to phenomenological experience (enjoyment, relaxation, self-fulfilment, renewal of self, self-actualisation, self-enrichment, competency development, a sense of control and agency, self-sufficiency, a shift in perspective, and mental clarity) and those which relate to social presentation of self (self-expression, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and group membership). This list, which is certainly not exhaustive, is constructed from writings about female rock climbers (Kiewa, 2001), wilderness experiences

(Gibson, 1979), women and outdoor pursuits (Pohl, Borrie, & Patterson, 2000), barbershop-singers (Stebbins, 1996), leisure amongst adolescents (Passmore & French, 2003) and mixed leisure experiences (Lee, Dalho, & Howard, 1994; Shaw, 1985; Soderback & Hammarlund, 1993). Leisure engagement also contributes to well-being by buffering the effects of negative life-events (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Kleiber et al., 2002).

Setting aside any possible constraints against participation, there are a range of factors from a psychological perspective which might motivate an individual to engage in leisure, including arousal, self-determination, pleasure-seeking, addiction, escaping boredom or stress (Iso-Ahola, 1989). The concept of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), where the individual's skills are challenged by the demands of the task in hand to the point where the individual is totally absorbed, forgetting time and self, may also act as a motivating force to further develop skills and keep returning to the activity (Christiansen, 2004).

It would be a distraction from the main thrust of this thesis to include an in-depth coverage of benefits and motivation in relation to leisure. At this point it is sufficient to observe that the factors that motivate people towards leisure occupations may also serve to confer meaning on them and that many of the benefits listed above relate to the self. This section continues with a discussion about some of the factors which might shape the meanings of leisure occupations, and therefore influence the construction of identity.

3.4.1 Socio-cultural contexts for leisure

Leisure occupations can be understood in terms of their local social contexts and the ways in which they are shaped by the broader influences of society. The socio-cultural embeddedness of any leisure occupation will influence its occupational form, its norms and values, its symbolic meanings and its accessibility. Despite post-modernist arguments about freer lifestyles in which people can cross social boundaries associated with gender, class, race etc, the leisure opportunities available to the individual are arguably still shaped by such factors (Kivel, 2000; Scraton, 1994). Green has posited, however, that leisure need not be regarded as an arena for oppression; it can be seen as a place where personal choice and self-determination occur (Green, 1998). Some evidence was found of this in a small study of people living with cancer, who saw art-making as a means to resist the stigmatising social identity associated with being labelled by an illness (Reynolds & Prior, 2006). On the whole, though, wider societal values do influence the values and norms associated with leisure activities. The social world of, for example, choral singing does not operate independently

from the culture in which it is situated (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986). A study of people who engage in dog sports as serious leisure, however, showed that the norms and values found in the sub-culture of a leisure social world may differ in some respects from those of the wider culture (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002). Serious leisure, these authors argued, is a good place to research identity because of people's passionate involvement. Leisure identities were found, in this study, to conflict sometimes with identities associated with roles in the non-leisure world, such as work, religion and family.

Groups, social worlds, serious leisure and identity

Associated with any leisure activity is a cluster of images arising from culturally available representations of the activity which establish expectations of the activity and the type of people who do it (Haggard & Williams, 1992; Kelly, 1983; Samdahl, 1987). As the individual associates with others who share the interest, there is powerful identification with the group, its image, lifestyle and social world. It is clear that those who engage in serious leisure are constructing an identity which has a significant influence from their leisure life, in terms of the amount of time (over the lifespan and on a regular basis), energy and emotion committed to it. Serious leisure activities, as described previously, usually have whole social worlds associated with them, including other enthusiasts, audiences or commercial suppliers (Stebbins, 2001; Yoder, 1997). This highlights the social significance of choosing to identify with a group of people who have something in common, and to a greater or lesser extent making that identification be known publicly. Engagement in a leisure activity may involve formal group membership or a loose affiliation conferred by naming oneself as having a particular hobby. The individual who says 'I am a bird-watcher' is making not only a statement about personal interests, but is also identifying him or herself with a social image which brings to mind popular and stereotypical conceptions of what that means (Kelly, 1983; J. Taylor, 2003). A grouping such as a leisure social world impacts on identity through identification with other members of the group, but also by differentiation between them (Jenkins, 2004). Some bird-watchers are twitchers and some are not. Some leisure groups are formal organisations where such differentiation is built into systems and hierarchies (for example a choral society or a show-jumping club), whilst others are less formal groups which may not even meet (for example home embroiderers). An individual may derive some aspects of identity from being an amateur musician, but there are those who play in an orchestra in front of a packed concert hall, and those who strum quietly at home, alone.

The meanings and motivation associated with engagement in leisure activities is complex, particularly with regards to serious leisure. Stebbins' approach to the study of serious leisure has employed ethnographic methodologies, exploring the social worlds of serious leisure pursuits. In a study exploring the world of the barber-shop singer, Stebbins (1996) uncovered some of the costs and benefits that such pursuits might accrue. Serious leisure requires a high level of commitment and intensity of involvement, and consequently there are costs to the individual such as disappointments, niggles and tensions (the viola-player in section 2.4 is a case in point). Stebbins argued that the individual is motivated to continue when the benefits (such as enrichment, fun, camaraderie, exciting highs, occasions that stand out, feelings of competence) outweigh the costs.

3.4.2 Embodiment and emplacement

Leisure opportunities are often dictated or inspired by the individual's geographical positioning and capacity for mobility, and by the era into which the individual is born. Those who can easily access rural areas are more able to have countryside-related leisure pursuits such as hill-walking. Those who live in a time period when paint-balling is popular are able to participate if they wish. Relatively recent trends towards passive television-watching and shopping have seen a reduction in engagement with more active, skills-based and socialisation-based recreation, particularly in the United States (Zemke & Clark, 1996). Leisure trends are influenced by a capitalist society driven by a consumerism based on 'false needs' (Agger, 2004). No matter what the cause, it is a reminder that leisure trends and conceptualisations are sensitive to place, time and culture. Leisure opportunities might be closely related to other aspects of a local community, such as the brass-bands which historically arose around work-places. It is also a consideration, given Vygotsky's ideas around mediated action (Newman & Holzman, 1996; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995) that the artefacts and other tools associated with leisure are culturally derived, albeit that mass-production and global marketing might nowadays mean that culture is increasingly global.

Stebbins (2005) and others have argued that human action is perhaps best described as a compromise between personal agency and those external forces which constrain and enable. The role of the leisure participant as agent has been discussed by Rojek, as fundamental to an action approach in leisure studies (Rojek, 2005). Through purposive social action the individual social actor achieves a goal by her intention and motivation. The action approach, argued Rojek, is not incongruent with the idea of narrative identity. For Rojek it is important, in the study of leisure, to consider the embodied and emplaced human, that is, the human as a

physical body with a thinking and feeling mind, placed in a physical and cultural environment in which action happens. Because the individual is embodied he or she is aware of the vulnerability and decline of the body, as well as its strengths and potential. Because the individual is emplaced in physical and social environments, he or she is subject to contingencies and also to the positioning of the self amongst others, making comparisons, seeking acceptance and sharing common interests in survival. Leisure provides an opportunity for active citizenship and the exercise of ethical choices. Rojek suggests that the leisure participant can demonstrate an ethic of care for the self and for others through looking after bodily well-being, environmental security and the husbandry of social capital (Rojek, 2005). Rojek's ideas have much to offer to this study, as a means to gain a better understanding of the occupied human, whose body, situated in place and time, is important in occupational performance. Identity, as constructed in leisure experiences, is essentially a product of the interplay between the person, the environment and the occupation (Townsend, 2002).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the concept of the identity as socially situated and constructed. Shaped by wider public narratives, and more local social interactions, the identity can be conceptualised as a narrative: the story that is told about the self, to others. A narrative formulation of identity accounts for continuity, whilst change is accommodated following contingencies, reflection and agency. Identity is socially situated and presented but the self is experienced internally, developed, according to symbolic interactionist theory, in response to feedback from others.

An additional argument has been presented that, whilst social interaction is clearly important in the construction and development of self and identity, engagement in everyday occupations and phenomenological experience also play their part. Occupations are socially, and personally, meaningful and offer opportunities for physical, cognitive, emotional and social experience. A body of knowledge is developing in occupational therapy concerning the contribution of occupations to the construction, maintenance and reconstruction of identity.

Leisure occupations play a part in identity construction through the processes of identification and differentiation involved in group membership, and also through the meanings conferred on the occupation by society. The occupational form, its tools, traditions and practices, are culturally derived and so occupation, meaning, society and identity are interlinked and influence each other. Much research and theory emphasises social interaction

in relation to the development of identity, but a focus on occupation allows embodiment, emplacement and the meaning of *action* to be investigated also. Whilst past research has given some evidence that occupations contribute to the construction of identity, this study focused on *how* this contribution is made. The aim of the research was to investigate how narratives told about occupations contribute to an understanding of identity.

The next two chapters will describe the method by which the investigation was carried out.

4 Narratives as data

*'His recitals were amusing in themselves to Sir Thomas, but the chief object
in seeking them was to understand the reciter, to know the young man by his
histories; and he listened to his clear, simple, spirited details with full
satisfaction – seeing in them, the proof of good principles, professional
knowledge, energy, courage and cheerfulness – everything that could deserve
or promise well.'*

(Austen, 1814, from Mansfield Park, p177)

*'Narrative analysis allows for systematic study of personal experience and
meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects.'*
(Riessman, 1993, p70)

The review of literature presented above enables some of the basic assumptions underpinning
this research to be summarised:

- Occupations, which are meaningful and purposeful, contribute to well-being, including the
  construction of identity.

- Leisure occupations can be used as exemplars of all occupations, but they offer particular
  scope for identity construction since they are usually more freely chosen (acknowledging
  sociocultural constraining factors) than other occupations.

- Identity is the self, socially located. The self can be understood as an ongoing inner
  narrative. Through this the individual makes sense of the self, in action and in context, the
  self being relatively stable but subject to revision.

- Occupations contribute to identity by means of social interaction and social symbolism
  (meanings), and also through the process of doing and phenomenological experience.

- Told narratives give mediated access to the inner narrative of the self.

The purpose of the study was to explore further the relationship between occupation and
identity. In order to achieve this, a number of methodological problems had to be solved.
Firstly, an understanding of how told narratives can give access to identity needed to be
developed. Secondly, some theoretical assumptions about narratives relating to their features,
structures and functions had to be established, in order to understand how they might reveal
the meanings of occupations. Thirdly, an approach to ensuring the research would be ethical
and of good quality needed to be planned and fourthly, a defensible and rigorous method for
collecting narratives as data for analysis had to be designed and implemented. The approach
taken to these problems will be addressed in this chapter.

4.1 Narratives as methodology

4.1.1 Methodological approach

Since social interaction is fundamental in understanding socially constructed realities and identity, a qualitative methodology based on the collection of interview-based material was appropriate for this study. This material, co-constructed by researcher and participant (Kvale, 1996), could then be subject to an interpretive process, to explore situated meaning. An interview can give information about the individual, the social worlds he operates in, the activities engaged in and the process of social interaction in the interview itself (Miller & Glassner, 2004). In this approach, it is important that the researcher remains reflexively conscious of her own values, actions and assumptions which all play their part in the construction of and interpretation of the generated interview material (Stanley & Wise, 1990).

The primary focus was not on the interview as a source of factual information. Attention was given, in this study, to the form of the narrative, the process of its telling and the contexts which contributed to its construction in this particular way. The individual's interpretation of events is important if we are to understand him better (Lawler, 2002). Yet the content of the interview was not ignored. Narrative analysis can accommodate realism and constructionism. Facts, combined with the narrator's interpretation of those facts, contribute to a greater understanding, although the form and process of telling may reveal deeper layers of the narrator's identity (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998).

The aim of this research required a methodological approach which would enable the *meanings* of narratives to be interpreted.

4.1.2 Approaches in narrative research

The use of narratives as a resource in social research (and indeed the unspecified and ill-defined use of the word in qualitative research) has increased in the last few decades. The variety of uses, for different purposes, across a range of academic fields has been described as a 'state of near anarchy' (Mishler, 1995) resulting in several attempts by authors to create typologies or categorisation systems for narrative methods (e.g. Hänninen, 2004; Lieblich et al., 1998; Mishler, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1995; Rogan & de Kock, 2005). Any overview of narrative research is made more complex given that different disciplines take different perspectives, and for different purposes (Chase, 2005; Cortazzi, 1993). This is not the place for an in-depth discussion on these systems and perspectives, but some key points can be drawn out to illustrate the nature of the diverse approaches in narrative research. The main

sources for this overview are Elliot (2005), Lieblich et al (1998), Plummer (2001), Chase (2005) and Riessman and Quinney (2005).

Some narrative researchers, as described above, give attention to the *content* of the narrative (usually naturalistic research), while others give attention to the *form* (usually constructionist). Whilst some narrative research might focus on *whole life stories* (for example Larson, 1996; Mishler, 1999; Wiseman & Whiteford, 2007) some focuses on *smaller sections of discourse*, abstracted from interview material and usually identified as being discrete, self-contained units (for example Bailey, 2001; Labov & Waletzky, 1966).

Within psychology, narrative researchers might focus on narrative *genres*, the *progression of narratives* over time, the *cohesiveness* of narratives (Lieblich et al., 1998) or how narratives shape the self (Crossley, 2000). A perspective shared by some psychologists (Bruner, 1990; Robinson & Hawpe, 1986) and some investigators of artificial intelligence (Agar & Hobbs, 1982; Schank, 1990) is the idea that narrative is a way of thinking, with its emphasis on the structuring of events through action, thought and feeling. In psychology, narrative studies usually focus on accessing the inner narrative, while sociolinguistic and sociological studies may be more interested in the structure of everyday narratives, or the interactional processes involved (Hänninen, 2004).

In terms of methodological approaches to narratives, Polkinghorne argues that there is a difference between an '*analysis of narratives'* which will bring together and compare a range of narratives resulting in a framework or a typology, and a '*narrative analysis'* in which a researcher will construct a narrative explanation of a situation which has been the focus of research (Polkinghorne, 1991). This second approach has been used in longitudinal studies in schools (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A narrative can be viewed and analysed as an expression of the identity of the speaker or it can be constructed by the researcher, as a sense-making strategy (in Polkinghorne's terms, a narrative analysis), or a collective narrative can be devised which tells a story based on those of several individuals within a sub-section of society and claims, to some extent to be 'typical' (Elliott, 2005). An example of the latter constructs a 'typical' narrative of the life of a young man with schizophrenia, from the stories told by four such men (Gould, DeSouza, & Rebeiro-Gruhl, 2005).

The approach taken here

Because there is a wide range of narrative methods serving different purposes, a clear rationale is presented for the approach taken here. This attempts to address the criticism of many qualitative studies, particularly those using narratives, that insufficient rationale and

detail are given for the design and the method of analysis (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). The method used in this research drew upon symbolic interactionist theory and sociolinguistic approaches to narrative analysis, influenced primarily by the work of Riessman, Labov, Mishler, Agar and Hobbs, and Gee. The approach used enabled an exploration of the relationship between the narratives that people told about their leisure occupations, the meanings associated with them and the construction of identity.

> ### Reflection on selecting the most appropriate method
> *The method for narrative analysis used in this study is a hybrid method, drawing together epistemologically congruent techniques. After developing my approach using Gee's poetic structures and Labovian structural analysis, I found that Crepeau had used a very similar hybrid to explore the meanings of narratives in clinical team meetings (Crepeau, 2000).*
> *Before making my choice I considered, and rejected, the following approaches:*
> - ***Propp's 31 functions of Russian folktales*** *(in Cortazzi, 1993), rejected because of the focus on function of the narrative, rather than meaning or identity.*
> - ***Narrative slopes*** *(Gergen & Gergen, 1983) were rejected because, focussing on the regressive, progressive and stable plots of whole lives, they did not give consideration to the meanings of specific everyday events and the link to identity.*
> - ***The three dimensional inquiry space*** *provided some interesting considerations about the dimensions in which action and inquiry take place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This approach, however, lends itself to exploring and explaining issues through the writing of a narrative account from a synthesis of longitudinal ethnographic data, rather than focusing on identity and the meaning of told narratives.*

Narratives

A narrative differs from a story. A story is a sequence of facts and events which occur in a chronological order, with no emphasis on causality. A narrative is a particular representation, to an audience, of a sequence of events, in which some might be emphasised, by the use of dramatic effects or by telling in a different order, with flashbacks for example (Prince, 2003). In a narrative, emplotment places emphasis on causality, and helps the narrator to convey meaning, related to the context in which it is told. The story is *what* is told, whilst the narrative is what is told and *how* it is told (Prince, 2003).

By listening to, and analysing, narratives the researcher can gain access to the narrator's representation of a story. The narrator is *performing* their own identity, in that the personal meaning of the story and its placement in the wider contexts of their world are exposed for interpretation. In a narrative, situated action is displayed; *'Narrative descriptions exhibit*

human activity as purposeful engagement in the world' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p5). A narrative makes an important link between human occupation, its meaning and identity.

Some narrative analysts would consider that *all* interview material is part of a narrative, and that everything has a place in the story that is being told (Agar & Hobbs, 1982), while some make the distinction between non-narrative discourse and narrative (which has emplotment) (Polkinghorne, 1991; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). Non-narrative discourse might consist of description, explanation, lists, reports, arguments and question and answer exchanges. A more restricted definition of a narrative was employed here, focusing on smaller units of discourse, recognisable as being self-contained. S*mall stories*, recounting short, specific incidents, rather than *big stories*, based on whole lives (Bamberg, 2006) were the focus of attention. Big stories would have been appropriate had the primary aim of the research been to explore leisure career trajectories, or identity expressed through occupational engagement across a whole life. Here, in order to explore meaning and identity in relation to everyday occupations, a narrative is taken to be a short piece of discourse about a particular event or sequence of events which occurred in a particular time and place. The narrative involves action and a plot which emphasises causality. The action unfolds over time, and there is normally a clear beginning, middle and end. The action is carried out by human actors who shape or respond to events (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000).

Narrative research is not without its critics (Roberts, 2002). Roberts suggested that realists might argue that the analysis becomes too much like fiction, with its focus on form, rather than real events. Yet it should normally be made explicit in constructionist research that the analysis is *one* interpretation. In research on identity, the 'reality' of events is less important than the way they are *represented* through the filter of the narrator. A further criticism, noted Roberts, is a feminist concern that narratives do not provide a forum for empowerment and self-definition; instead they reflect dominant conventions and hide ideologies such as patriarchy. A narrative analysis, however, *can* make transparent and give attention to the impact of public narratives on the performance of identity by the individual (Lawler, 2002; Mishler, 1999).

There are advantages in taking the narrative as a unit of analysis. It does not decontextualise units of speech; the analysis gives attention to a whole narrative which incorporates the processing of thoughts and emotions by the speaker, striving to make meaning (Mishler, 1999). Narratives are also readily accessible, being ubiquitous in everyday discourse (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Narratives about occupations

Researchers in occupational therapy and occupational science regard narrative research as an approach that will respect the complexity of the human being (Clouston, 2003; Finlay, 2004; Molineux & Rickard, 2003; Wicks & Whiteford, 2003; Zemke & Clark, 1996). Some aspects of occupational engagement, such as meaning, are not directly observable and so methodologies involving first person accounts are particularly useful (Barber, 2006; Laliberte-Rudman, 2002). In these fields, analysis of narratives has been used in relation to experiences of illness and trauma (Ellis-Hill, 1998; Gould et al., 2005; Price-Lackey & Cashman, 1996), the experience of therapy (Finlay, 2004; Goldstein, Kielhofner, & Paul-Ward, 2004; Helfrich & Kielhofner, 1994) and life transitions (Jonsson et al., 2001; Jonsson, Kielhofner, & Borell, 1996).

Seeking to elicit narratives about people's leisure experiences allows attention to be given to the detail and representation of everyday occupations which make up the routine of lives (Smith, 2003). One such study explored the use of the leisure narratives of people with learning disabilities to facilitate positive transformations in their lives (Fullagar & Owler, 1998). This study, in which the transformative value of meaningful activity is discussed, unfortunately makes no reference to the wealth of literature on this topic in occupational therapy writings.

4.1.3 Theoretical influences

The approach taken to narrative analysis in this thesis drew on dramaturgical and sociolinguistic influences. In symbolic interactionist terms the telling of a narrative is the expression of the self in interaction (Cortazzi, 1993) and this can be described using drama-based terminology, such as *actors* and *performance* (Goffman, 1959). Identity as performance is a concept that has been utilised by Mishler and by Riessman in recent work (Mishler, 1999; Riessman, 2002). The idea of *plot* within narrative is also a dramaturgical (and literary) concept; it is the plot which conveys a meaningful linking of events together (Ricouer, 1991a). When viewed as a dramatic performance, the analysis of a narrative reveals the use of dramatic techniques applied to performance and plot, such as creating and maintaining suspense, using quotes and engaging the audience (which is expected to show signs of appreciation) (Cortazzi, 1993).

The sociolinguistic influence means that attention is given to fine detail in the text as well as analysis of the whole narrative (Rogan & de Kock, 2005). Interpretation is informed by linguistic features such as words, sentences, stanzas, non-verbal utterances and the use of

visual images and metaphors. Labov and Waletzky used a sociolinguistic approach in their employment of narrative analysis to examine the formal structural properties of narratives in relation to their social function (Labov & Waletzky, 1966). For Labov and Waletzky a narrative has two social functions: it is referential (it has content) and it is evaluative (it has meaning). Their view of a narrative as referential, mapping directly onto a 'reality', has been criticised by those who regard narratives as constructions (Chase, 2005). The consequences of using a Labovian approach to narrative analysis are twofold. On one level, the analysis reveals the socially situated meaning that an individual gives to an event which they have recounted, but at a more abstract level, Labov and Waletzky showed how this understanding might be generalised to understand social exchanges. The former is of most interest here.

According to the early Labovian approach, in a true narrative the order of events organised in the sequence of clauses must correspond to the temporal ordering of the actual event. This is problematic in that a narrative must have a very simple structure and as a consequence be rare and uninteresting (Elliott, 2005; Mishler, 1986b). Mishler noted, however, that in later work by Labov a broader and less restrictive definition was used.

Mishler adopted a sociolinguistic approach in much of his work and was influenced by Labov's work because of the way in which language, meaning and action are shown to interrelate (Mishler, 1986a). Mishler argued, however, that attention should be given to the structure, form, content *and* the interpersonal function of narratives (Mishler, 1986b). In order to analyse a narrative effectively, the analyst must focus on what is said, how it is said, and the impact of the interviewer, or audience, on the narrative's construction. One of Mishler's criticisms of Labov and Waletzky's approach is that it gives no attention to the interpersonal function at all. His claim that the social context is crucial for the telling of the narrative is a theme throughout Mishler's writings (1986a; 1986b; 1995; 1999).

4.2 Theoretical assumptions about narratives

This piece of research, seeking to explore the construction of identity through narratives of leisure, was based on several significant theoretical assumptions about the nature of narratives.

4.2.1 Narratives have certain features

In the course of any interview any number of narratives may be told, short or long, interspersed with non-narrative discourse. The features of narratives, as defined above, have

been described by several authors (including Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000; Plummer, 2001; Polkinghorne, 1991; Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). The language of action theory (actors, action) can be employed, giving emphasis to the dramaturgical elements of narratives. Action theory is not incongruent with the concept of the narrative identity, and it has similarities with symbolic interactionism with its emphasis on interaction and meanings (Rojek, 2005).

The key features of narratives, by which they can be recognised and understood, are listed here. They:

- **Are about a particular event or sequence of events**

From speaking descriptively, or in generalities, a speaker will move into a specific account, giving sufficient details to create a scenario in which some action occurred. Most narratives describe *actual* events, but others can be hypothetical (it might have happened, or might happen in the future), habitual (something that regularly happens, so a typical instance may be recounted) or topic-centred (several past events which are linked by theme) (Riessman, 1993).

- **Are set in a particular time and place**

Narratives may take place in the past, the present or the anticipated future (Elliott, 2005). The past might include childhood, or even a period before the birth of the narrator. Usually, but not always, the place where the event happened is specified.

- **Involve action and a plot**

A narrative has a plot pulling together several events into a unified whole. Emplotment makes the actions in a story have meaning, allowing historical and social contexts to influence understanding and revealing human behaviour, beliefs, intentions and emotions (Ochs & Capps, 1996). The same set of events, given a different plot, could have a different meaning (Polkinghorne, 1991). A narrative normally chronicles a shift from a state of equilibrium to a changed state in a situation, particularly that of the main characters. This transformation is brought about over time, by a series of events, and as a consequence of something that happened earlier. Events are normally linked by temporality and causality, the latter of which may or may not be made explicit in the narrative (Elliott, 2005). The action in a narrative is usually a result of the protagonist attempting to attain a goal (Polkinghorne, 1991).

- **Unfold over time, with a beginning, a middle and an end, giving a sense of wholeness**

Amidst the non-narrative discourse a narrative stands out, being identified as having a beginning, middle and end, by the speaker. Although Riessman (1993) has described what she calls entrance and exit talk which delimit the narrative, these boundaries may not be clear and sometimes the analyst must make decisions as to how the narrative will be framed.

- **Have human actors who shape or respond to events**

Narrative analysts who focus on genre and traditional story-forms would argue that the main characters have recognisable roles, such as the hero, the villain or the fool (McAdams, 1993). An alternative approach, based in the drama terminology favoured in symbolic interactionism, is to consider the characters as 'actors', with protagonists and antagonists (or 'others'). Often, but not always, the narrator is the protagonist. Narratives can reveal the relational nature of identity, through social exchanges, identification and social comparisons (Somers, 1994).

Whilst a narrative has these features, it might also be expected to have a particular structure as described by Labov and Waletzky (1966) consisting of certain elements, each with its own function. These elements: the abstract, the orientation, the complication, the evaluation, the resolution and the coda, were briefly introduced in the first chapter and are described in more detail in chapter 5.

4.2.2 Meaning and coherence

The plot of a narrative reveals something of the dynamic identity of the narrator in which permanence and stability accommodate discord and change (Ricouer, 1991b). In telling a narrative the narrator comes to understand events and himself better. '*Narrative mediation underlines this remarkable characteristic of self-knowledge – that it is self-interpretation*' (Ricouer, 1991b, p198). The analysis of narratives, then, will enable the researcher to base *her* interpretation on the *narrator's* interpretation of events. The meanings which people attach to the events and occupations in everyday life can thus be explored, by understanding their place in the narrative plot and in relation to the wider context. Meaning is not observable, so it must be approached through reflection and introspection (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Mishler has argued that different approaches to analysis focus on different sources of meaning. By identifying evaluative clauses, Labov and Waletzky have looked for functional meanings in social exchanges, while Agar and Hobbs have focused on general cultural themes and values (Mishler, 1986b). A detailed approach to analysis seeking to better understand the meanings revealed by narratives would give attention to both social interaction and culturally situated values. In the meanings of the narratives that they tell, people reveal something of their inner narrative, their self, and the socially situated identity (Hänninen, 2004).

Humans operate in multiple contexts and so the concept of multiple identities existing in parallel has been suggested (Mishler, 1999; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). Multiple identities, we might expect, lead to some contradictions and conflicts within narrative accounts, and

these have been noted by several authors as being aids to the analyst (Lieblich et al., 1998; Temple, 2001). The narratives that people tell make connections between themselves and others, the past, present and future, and also their multiple selves (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Narrative is a way of creating continuity and structure in relation to experiences (Riessman, 1993; Somers, 1994). People, as they tell narratives, will try to make them coherent, just as they will try to create coherence in the inner narrative of the self. The process of making coherence is often, also, the process by which meaning is made.

In his earlier writing Mishler (1986a) employed an approach developed by Agar and Hobbs (1982) which examines the text for *local coherence* (how each part of the text is related to the previous one by syntactic, temporal, or causal relationships), *global coherence* (how each utterance serves the overall purpose of progressing the narrative) and *themal coherence* (the consistent way in which various parts of the text reflect cultural values). In any length of discourse, coherence is created by the connecting of each section to the preceding one by a 'coherence relation' (Agar and Hobbs, 1982). Without these the speech would be just a chain of disconnected utterances. By a close examination of narrative material at these three different levels the way in which the self is presented, expressed and constantly validated is revealed. This is a systematic approach which helps explore coherence and cultural context but it gives no heed to the interaction between speaker and listener, nor did Agar and Hobbs appear to separate out narrative text from non-narrative text (Mishler, 1986b).

In his later work Mishler argued that the idea of coherence should be put aside; it defies any attempt to define it, and this is largely because, in personal narratives, which are interactional, the speaker and the listener construct coherence between them as the interaction develops (Mishler, 1999). In this study of craft-artists he developed an argument against the idea of a 'good' narrative which has more coherence than another. He also argues against the idea, particularly seen in humanist psychological discourse, that the person who is more in touch with their integrated, authentic self is able to deliver a more coherent narrative. Polkinghorne is one author who has suggested that the individual does work towards achieving a unified coherent whole self (Polkinghorne, 1991). The conceptualisation of coherence, against which Mishler argued, would appear to be different from that used by other authors who have used the word to refer to people struggling to make sense, dealing with contradictions and inconsistencies as they tell their story. Temple (2001) argues that the researcher should be alert to those moments in narratives when there are inconsistencies, because these will give clues to the impact of context on the construction of identity. Using

Hänninen's terminology (Hänninen, 2004), there appears to be a distinction between coherence in the *inner* narrative and coherence in the *told* narrative.

4.2.3 Narratives are socially situated

Narratives situate identity in culture

The telling of a narrative is a form of self-presentation in which an identity is claimed and expressed against a backdrop of the values and norms of culture (Mishler, 1986a). The content of a narrative and the method of its telling both have their roots in culture. Certain narrative structures and types are recognised and understood between those who have similar cultural backgrounds. Whilst there are common elements, however, the narrative which each person tells is unique, influenced and overlaid by the uniqueness of the identity of that individual and their experiences (Plummer, 2001). Each person is born and lives in a certain time and place, and alongside certain public narratives (Lawler, 2002). The public narratives of capitalism and gender roles, for example, are dominant influences in the current Western world, and the narrator and the listener share an understanding of what this means if they both come from the same cultural background. This means that both will share an understanding of what is valued and 'normal', though this normally remains unspoken (Mishler, 1986a). An individual's personal narrative is inevitably influenced by such cultural forces, but, as Mishler points out, the individual is able to reflect and might be seen, in their narratives, to adopt, adapt or resist them (Mishler, 1999). While one person might adopt an identity with is commensurate with traditional views of gender roles, another might not. Or, of course, an individual's relationship with a public narrative might change over time, place or according to social interaction. Narrative analysis depends, to some extent, on the researcher bringing an understanding of the dominant culture into consciousness in order to understand how the narrator positions himself (Mishler, 1986a).

Because the telling of a narrative is so closely embedded in socio-cultural context, analysis allows aspects of specific cultures and sub-cultures, such as those associated with leisure occupations, to be revealed and explored (Elliott, 2005).

Identity is co-constructed

The narrator is active in the production of narratives, not only making choices about which narratives to tell, but also making choices about how they are told. The very act of a narrative being told and heard indicates that it has some significance for both narrator and listener (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In this way identity is shaped. The narrator is reflexive, and uses

various strategies to construct and edit their tale as it progresses, with the audience in mind (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998). Identity and narrative are performances in which the audience has a role. The narrator, for example, must decide how much detail they can leave out, assuming that the listener already knows it. In pursuance of this end, the narrator will take into account the age, gender and culture of the listener, and previous conversational clues. Where narrator and listener are from different backgrounds, misunderstandings may occur (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000).

Attention must be given to the verbal and non-verbal interjections of the interviewed and the interviewer, in order to understand how the interview material is co-constructed (Mishler, 1986b). The (often unconscious) influence of the interviewer might even go beyond the conversational interaction. Lieblich et al (1998, p166) ask that the analyst consider '..*the mere acts of being together in a room, stating the purpose of the encounter, asking questions, relating to the responses, and participating in the creation of an atmosphere..'.* The performance of identity is influenced by all of these factors.

4.3 Ensuring good quality in the research process

Having established that told narratives are a rich resource for exploring the construction of identity, and before explaining how the research was designed and implemented, this section will describe the measures that were taken to ensure that the research was rigorous, trustworthy and ethical.

4.3.1 Quality

Positivist researchers are concerned with reliability, validity and the potential for generalisation, whilst some qualitative researchers, using post-positivist principles, work towards credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within the social constructionist paradigm it is accepted that consistency between data-collecting interviews (*reliability*) cannot be achieved, each being a unique event, the uniqueness contributing to analysis. To ask whether the research tool or interview is *valid* makes an assumption that there is one true reality waiting to be uncovered and described in the findings, when the constructionist assumption is that the findings represent one out of many versions of reality (Finlay, 2006b). The issue of whether findings might be considered generalisable is discussed in 4.4.1.

In the constructionist paradigm the researcher must convince the reader that the research has been carried out rigorously, is trustworthy and has relevance. Clarity, transparency, critical thought and reflexivity can be used to make these features explicit. Whilst there are various approaches for addressing quality when engaged in interpretivist / social constructionist research (Finlay, 2006b) the approach adopted here will be organised around four considerations (Ballinger, 2006). These are:

Coherence: In this thesis a clear link is made between ontology, epistemology, methodology, method of data collection and analysis, and the extrapolations which can be made from the findings.

Evidence of systematic and careful research conduct: The reader should expect that there is clarity and rigour in the way that the research has been planned, justified, executed and reported. It should be transparent to the reader, for example, what contributed to variability across interviews, and what sense is made of this. In this research a clear account is given of the research planning and procedures, with links made to relevant literature.

Convincing and relevant interpretation: The reader of the research account should be able to recognise that '*the research has something significant to contribute to knowledge within the domain under investigation.*' (Ballinger, 2006, p241) The systematic and transparent approach to the method will contribute to this, as will the arguments made for professional relevance.

The role of the researcher: It is consistent with the constructionist position (Fontana & Frey, 2003), and responsive to feminist concerns (Stanley & Wise, 1990), to give attention to the role of the researcher in the research. This is particularly important at the point of data collection and interaction with participants in the interviews, but is relevant also to data analysis and interpretation. The researcher cannot be considered to be objective nor invisible in the research process and products. Research knowledge can only make sense if we see the processes by which the knowledge is produced (Plummer, 2001).

> *Reflection on my leisure life in context*
> *In this research I have given ongoing thought to my own leisure life, indeed I have been asked about it by research participants and by audiences at conferences. I would describe myself, with my yoga, knitting, running, film-watching, reading and hill-walking, as not so much a serious leisure enthusiast, as a serial, multiple, casual leisure participant. Whilst doing this study I wrote a paper which examined my doctoral studies through autoethnography (J. Taylor, 2008). This placed me in the context of the North-west of England, living in a rural area, enjoying the outdoors as well*

as creative activities. This context has, without doubt, influenced my access to participants. As an occupational therapist, work-life balance is of professional and personal interest and so leisure is a valued aspect of life.

As well as making the researcher more visible, and giving some insight into issues that might impact on the research, reflexivity helps the researcher to be more aware of factors such as age, gender and culture in interview-based research (Chesney, 2001).

These considerations have been influential throughout the research and the writing of this thesis. Evidence of their impact is included in a variety of ways, implicitly and explicitly.

4.3.2 Ethics

The research proposal was approved by the Research Governance and Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of Salford before the research was begun (see Appendix A). The research was carried out in accordance with the research ethics guidelines of the College of Occupational Therapists (C.O.T., 2003).

Each participant in this research was given an information sheet (Appendix A) written in an accessible format with sufficient time to read and consider it. They were assured that the interviews were not intended to cover any particularly 'personal' material. Sufficient information was given so that the participants could give their informed consent to taking part in the research. Further, assurances were made that confidentiality and anonymity would be safeguarded. Personal details were separated out from the interview material and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants were told that they could withdraw at any point in the study, before, during or after the interview, without having to justify their decision. Each participant signed the consent form.

Issues arising in relation to ethics in this research

Research is acknowledged as creating a power imbalance between researcher and participant (Stanley & Wise, 1990), and in interviews this must be heeded with sensitivity in order to avoid exploitation. It was an issue in this research (as it is in much research, although frequently not acknowledged) that, although each participant was given information and all the usual assurances about confidentiality etc, he would have found it difficult to refuse consent to participate and turn me out of his home. To do so would have challenged cultural norms of politeness and hospitality and would have required considerable assertiveness, no matter how easy this option was made.

I used 'gatekeepers' to obtain introductions to participants, making me particularly aware of the need for assurances about confidentiality, given that the gatekeepers were mutual acquaintances. Anonymity also emerged as an issue as transcription was carried out. Whilst names could be changed to anonymise transcripts, in-depth interviewing can reveal clusters of identifying details other than names. This is discussed further in 5.1.1.

> ***Reflection on disclosure in interviews***
> *Another ethical issue which arose as the interviews progressed was that, although I had said (and, believed) that the interviews were not going to cover personal material, in fact, this proved to be naive. A relatively unstructured interview hands much of the control over content to the interviewee, and unanticipated personal material may be raised. This happened with the Gym-member, whose stories of her childhood led her to reflect on her relationship with her father, and she shed a few tears. (She quickly recovered from this, and asserted her wish to continue). This situation raised another ethical issue for me, which was the extent to which the roles of research interviewer and therapist / counsellor must be kept distinct (coming, as I do, from a background of practicing occupational therapy in mental health settings). A very clear point can be identified in the transcript where my interjection was more akin to what one might have expected from a counsellor than a research interviewer. In qualitative, unstructured interviews such as this, the researcher must be aware of the shifting nature of what the participant consented to at the beginning of the research, and the situation as it changes throughout the research. Consent and withdrawal may need to be continually renegotiated.*
>
> *This may be a particular issue for the female researcher, when interviewing female participants. Finch has observed that two women in conversation can quickly move towards intimate and 'friend-like' conversation. This may have value for the researcher, but could be exploitative of the participant, who may become less aware of the research context as the interview develops (Finch, 1993)*
>
> *It is clear that qualitative research interviews which focus on the mundane and apparently innocuous activities of daily life can provoke emotional reaction in an unexpected way.*

4.4 The method

4.4.1 The research participants

Rationale for sample selection

The use of the word 'sample' has positivist connotations, suggesting that data gathered from the sample is statistically representative of the larger population from which it is drawn, thus allowing inferences to be made. The word 'sample' will be used here, to conform with

research conventions, but with the understanding that an alternative logic for sampling (Mason, 2002) was used. In qualitative research such as this the focus is on smaller numbers and richer, more detailed data which allow the situated complexity of individual cases to be explored. Whilst some would say that, in such research, generalisation is not important Mason (2002) takes the perspective that qualitative research '*should produce explanations or arguments which are generalisable in some way, or have some demonstrable wider resonance.*' (p8).

In qualitative research the group of participants must be both *appropriate* and *adequate* for the purposes of the study (Morse & Field, 1996). In this study an appropriate sample was achieved by theory-based sampling (Kuzel, 1992). The focus of the study is on the theoretical proposition that occupation and narrative are related to the construction of identity. The sample of participants must be shown to have a meaningful link with the wider context, in order that there can be some justification in claiming generalisability or resonance. Since almost all people engage in occupations, and all who live in societies have identities, then it can be argued that anyone could be included in the sample for this research. A sampling strategy was employed, however, that facilitated the testing and the development of the theories advanced in the literature review, by selecting participants who possessed certain characteristics (Bryman, 1988; Mason, 2002).

It has been recommended that those who wish to research identity should focus their investigations in 'local activity settings' where people, through activity, are actively forming their identities (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p83). Whilst this study did not take me into the activity setting, it did take the first-hand accounts of leisure participants as its starting point. Engagement in leisure occupations was chosen to exemplify occupational engagement in general. The contribution of occupations to the construction of identity is one of the theories being explored here. Further, serious leisure enthusiasts were identified as particularly appropriate for this research, given their decision to invest considerable resources (time, energy, money) into their leisure lives. Also, serious leisure is anticipated to have a particular impact on identity (discussed in section 3.4.1). Those who engage in serious leisure usually like to talk about their hobby and they have a wealth of experience to draw on, so that they have the potential to be prolific producers of narratives. The characteristics of leisure and enthusiasm enable the relationship between occupation, identity and narrative to be explored. These characteristics help to make the sample information-rich and meaningful in relation to the theoretical background of this study (Kuzel, 1992; Silverman, 2000).

Extrapolation can be made from this sample to the general population insofar as the theoretical relationship between identity, narrative and occupation applies to all.

Procedure for sample selection

There were some basic criteria for inclusion into the research sample.

Firstly, participants should be engaged in a serious leisure pursuit thus defined:

1) It takes up a fair amount of their time and energy

2) It is usually an enjoyable activity, but not always

3) They keep doing it even if it is not always easy

4) They have been doing it over 3 years

5) They do not get paid for doing it (not the primary motivation)

6) It involves them getting up and doing something (rather than sitting and watching)

The first three points were derived from the description of serious leisure offered by Stebbins (2001), which overlaps with the concept of 'engaging occupation' (Jonsson et al., 2001) as discussed previously. The fourth point was added to ensure that the leisure enthusiasm was an enduring one. The fifth point was added in order to distinguish leisure from paid work. The sixth point was added because the theoretical background to the thesis makes the link between narrative, identity and action. It can be argued, of course, that one could be a leisure enthusiast by passive observation. This criterion helped avoid this 'grey' area.

Secondly, the serious leisure enthusiast should be happy to talk about their leisure life.

Thirdly, participants should be 16 years or over, for ethical reasons.

Fourthly, they should be situated geographically in the North West of England. This criterion had pragmatic advantages, in terms of researcher travelling time.

Efforts were made to find participants who were diverse in terms of age, socioeconomic background, educational level, gender and race. From a social constructionist perspective this increased the range of sociocultural backgrounds and situatedness within public narratives. To ensure that data was not skewed by certain types of leisure activity, a variety of types was sought, differing in the degree of physical exertion, environment and social contact. Using Stebbins' typology (Stebbins, 2001), amateurs and hobbyists, but not volunteers, were sought. Volunteerism is, arguably, close to the notion of work in some respects.

Two methods were used to recruit participants. One attempt involved approaching key people in particular leisure-related groups. For example, emails were sent to the secretaries of

local stamp and coin-collecting societies, but replies were either unhelpful or did not arrive. The secretary of local clubs for sailing and for yoga agreed to put notices up on the club notice-boards, but these elicited no responses. The second strategy for recruitment was more successful, relying, as it did, on personal approaches (supported by a brief information 'flier') to friends, work colleagues and acquaintances inviting them to suggest appropriate people. This approach has been used by others to access an appropriate sample (Fontana & Frey, 2003). Invitations to take part were thus initiated through gatekeepers who helped to successfully broker access to appropriate and willing participants.

Each recommended leisure enthusiast agreed to take part. The use of gatekeepers may have introduced a sense of obligation, but also the gatekeeper may have acted as a kind of referee, promoting me and my research (Denscombe, 1998). There was a further advantage in this, in that, being personally recommended into the research helped to establish trust in the research interview (Fontana & Frey, 2003).

Sample size

At the commencement of the research, practical considerations suggested that between 15 and 20 leisure enthusiasts might be interviewed. These interviews could generate many hours of transcription and up to 100 narratives for analysis. After 17 people had been interviewed it was clear that whilst each interviewee was still producing unique material, there were very few surprises in the narratives in later interviews. Transcription, considered to be an early stage of analysis (Riessman, 1993), being carried out at this point, confirmed this idea. The sample size at this point was deemed to be *adequate* as well as appropriate, in that the narratives appeared to offer a completeness or saturation, and the theoretical assumptions of the study appeared to be well-supported (Morse, 1989; Morse & Field, 1996).

Appendix A gives brief summary information regarding the participants' leisure enthusiasms and their demographic profiles. This demonstrates a degree of diversity. The youngest participant (the Soul-singer) was 16, whilst the oldest (the Yoga-practitioner) was 71. There were 11 females and 6 males, an imbalance which may reflect my own gender. All of the participants lived in the North-west of England. A range of types of leisure occupation were included, although it can be seen that most could be classified as amateurs, rather than hobbyists.

4.4.2 The interviews

Rationale for approach to interviews

The social constructionist perspective has several implications for the way research interviews are understood and carried out. The interview is not regarded as an event in which the participant 'produces' data for the researcher to hear objectively and collect. The interview is a specific context and an event in which two people interact and co-produce the material which may be construed as 'data' or knowledge (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Kvale, 1996). The interviewer must give some attention before, during, and after the interview, to her or his role in the construction of the data. The context, in more general terms, is also an important focus for consideration, in that the transitory temporal, spatial and historical contexts of the interview contribute to its content (Riessman, 1993).

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit narratives about events in the narrator's leisure life and so they required little structure or guidance from the interviewer. A schedule (Appendix A) was, however, taken into the interviews, with some ideas of questions which were likely to elicit narratives. These were based on prior reading about leisure and also personal curiosity. The position was taken that no researcher can judge themselves as being a *tabula rasa*, and so the interviews and analysis were approached from a position built on some theoretical knowledge. The schedule proved itself to be useful in early interviews but at times impeded the natural flow of conversation. A researcher's attempts to probe for anticipated narratives might actually impede the participant from telling the narratives they think are important (Chase, 2005). In later interviews the schedule was not actively referred to, although the content was drawn on from memory.

The interviewing style adopted was influenced by 'active interviewing' (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997), in which the contribution of both parties to the production of the interview content is acknowledged. The 'active interviewer' asks questions, but, more importantly, helps to create a conversational atmosphere in which the interviewee feels relaxed and able to talk freely with minimal interruption. Feminist researchers (for example, Finch, 1993; Oakley, 2000; Stanley & Wise, 1990) have argued that when the researcher shows a more human side, and acts naturally in the interview, the power can be shifted towards the interviewee, enabling them to set the agenda and speak freely and naturally. In accord with the dramaturgical influence of Goffman's interpretation of symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1959) the interviewer is the audience for the performance of the interviewee. This analogy to drama is

particularly important, because it is likely that the narrator will use a variety of dramatic devices which are designed to elicit certain responses from the audience / interviewer.

> ### *Reflection on active interviewing*
> *Holstein and Gubrium (1997) advocate the disclosure of personal information by the interviewer in order to create an atmosphere more conducive to a 'conversational' style of interview. I have had a range of leisure interests in the past and still do (albeit curtailed by PhD activity). I was able, in the interviews, to offer up my knowledge or lack of it, in order to help the interviewee to know what level of knowledge and experience they could assume in me. For the Yoga-practitioner, this meant that she could use 'shorthand' in her speaking, such as the names of postures, because she knew that I understood. In some interviews I admitted complete ignorance of the activity, which, on the one hand, was a useful opening gambit to open up conversation, but on the other hand, caused some interviewees to go to great lengths to describe in detail various aspects of their hobby.*

Active interviewing is conducive to the telling of narratives in that space is left for narratives. Where non-narrative discourse dominated the interview, various strategies were employed. Interviewees were asked '*give me an example of when that happened*' or more directly, ' *what I want is for you to tell me a story about …*'.

Procedure for the interviews

Potential participants were contacted by telephone to arrange an interview. The telephone call included more information about the research project, including assurances about anonymity and ability to withdraw. Recruitment of participants continued during the period of time when the earlier interviews were being carried out. All of the interviews, except two, were carried out in the homes of the participants. One individual chose to be interviewed at her office, and another at my home, for convenience.

> ### *Reflection on interviewing in the participant's home*
> *Personal safety is an issue when going into participant's homes, but this was partially resolved by the use of mutual acquaintances as gatekeepers. Both interviewee and interviewer had an implicit 'character reference' from the gatekeeper. Details of my whereabouts and my expected time of return were left in a closed folder at home.*
> *Interviewing on the interviewee's own territory raised other unanticipated problems. In one house the television was on, to entertain a toddler, in order that the mother might be free to talk to me. Some careful negotiation had to take place, which balanced politeness with necessity, in order to have the television switched off for a clear tape-recording. The toddler then proceeded to cry, laugh and shout throughout the interview,*

also trying to grab the tape-recorder. In another house the interview was interrupted by a ringing, hidden, mobile phone which had to be found and turned off. Another house had a snoring dog and a washing machine and in yet another, the interviewee's wife joined us for part of the interview. All of these factors were troublesome to me, the interviewer, but, in fact, interviewing in someone's own home is probably a key step in enabling an interviewee to talk fluently and with comfort.

Each interview was carried out in a relatively quiet place. Information and consent procedures were carried out as described above (4.3.2). The research project was described as a study which looks at how our everyday activities, in particular leisure activities, contribute to our identities. Following any questions, the consent form and its implications were discussed and signed. A second form was used to collect basic demographic details and to assign a code number. This later became redundant as participants came to be identified by their leisure occupation: participant 14 became the Soul-singer (SS), for example.

Interviews were tape-recorded on 30 minute mini-tapes. Interruptions and tape changes were noted. In one case (the Mountain-biker) a cleaning tape was mistakenly taken to the interview instead of a second tape. This disrupted an otherwise productive interview and a second interview was arranged to complete the process. This was not entirely satisfactory as we both had time to reflect on what had been said previously. This may have impacted on the spontaneity of the second session. For all participants the interview began with an initial question asking the participant to talk about his/her involvement with his/her favoured leisure occupation. Each interview ended by inviting the interviewee to add anything else that they wanted to and by asking if they would be willing to be contacted again should this be necessary. All agreed to this latter request, and a few people asked if they could see the results of my research when finished. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

In can be argued that the interview did not begin after the tape-recorder was switched on, because some conversation did occur before this, as information was given, forms were filled in and trust was established. The whole interview and its recording is influenced by the presence and the actions of the researcher, who decides when to start recording, which participant utterances to respond to, when to look encouraging and when to change the subject. What can appear to be an objectively made recording is, in fact, already subject to a process of influence and interpretation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Reflection on the interview experience for participants
Talking about one's leisure life is, on the whole, a pleasurable thing to do. Many of the participants said that they had enjoyed the experience. One or two people felt that they had gained some new insights into events that they

had recounted. Most of the narratives were touched with some emotion.
Many created an emotional reaction in me, so that I laughed with people,
sympathised, or shared their excitement or puzzlement.

After the interview, and away from the setting, personal impressions of the setting and the overall 'feel' of the interview were noted as field-notes, and a few days later each participant was sent a personalised letter of thanks.

> ### *Reflection on interviewing and impression management*
> *No two interviews were alike, given the uniqueness of each participant,*
> *and the unique nature of their interaction with me. Before each interview I*
> *had little information about the participant, other than their gender,*
> *address, leisure occupation, and perhaps a small amount of information*
> *that the gatekeeper had revealed. I noted in my research diary that I chose*
> *the way I presented myself (in clothes and manner) according to*
> *assumptions about who I would meet. This has been called the 'identity*
> *work' that a researcher may do before entering the research situation*
> *(Mason, 2002). I dressed more casually to meet with the 40 year old male,*
> *house-decorator mountain-biker than I did to meet with the 61 year old,*
> *female, ex- deputy head teacher choral singer, perhaps reacting to my*
> *own stereotypical images relating to age, gender, employment and leisure*
> *occupation. The act of interviewing relies on a degree of adaptation on*
> *behalf of each party in response to the other.*

Revisiting the participants

In his narrative study of the identities of craft artists Mishler regretted not returning to his participants to seek clarification, elaboration and perhaps get changed responses from the first interview he did with them (Mishler, 1999). This indicates a post-positivist perspective, in which it would be appropriate to use member-checking to ensure accuracy of transcription and, possibly, interpretation. In some forms of critical theory research participants are seen as collaborators in the research, and would be consulted at each stage.

In this research, however, these steps were not appropriate. Each interview was regarded as a unique, contextually specific event in which the interview material was co-constructed between participant and researcher. The participant could not be asked to verify the content of the transcription, which, being made from a sound recording, would be more accurate than human memory. Neither could the participant be asked to verify the interpretation, which is acknowledged as the researcher's own, based on a particular synthesis of theoretical assumptions and a complex analysis. Participants, then, were not visited again for the purpose of verification or validation of interpretation. This decision was supported by other arguments. The participant's agenda is different from the researcher's. If the participant does not agree with the researcher's interpretation, he may want to censor it (Bryman, 1988), or

tell a different version, locating his story in a different frame of reference (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007). Also, the way in which the interpretation is presented may be in an academic language and so difficult for the participant to understand (Bryman, 1988).

On the other side of this debate going back to the participants is an ethical and respectful thing to do, to show them how their contribution has been used. Exposing one's findings to the participants is a way of increasing integrity and transparency in the research process and, by observing their reactions, it is a way of judging credibility (Finlay, 2006b; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Savin-Baden & Fisher, 2002). Participants' responses might also provide further theoretical insight (Riessman, 1993). Sharing research findings, however, with participants is not a 'quick-fix' to validity (Mason, 2002, p193). Taking this debate into account, I decided not to return to participants for validation of my interpretations, although I returned to three people regarding anonymity issues (section 5.1.1).

4.5 Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that a qualitative methodology, based on eliciting narratives, was appropriate for this study which aims to explore human occupation, its meanings and its relationship with identity. Whilst there is a range of narrative methods to draw on, in this study the focus was on short pieces of discourse, telling about specific incidents. Social action theory, sociolinguistic and dramaturgical influences allow attention to be given to the form, structure, content and interactive processes associated with narratives.

The methods employed to enhance quality in the research were also discussed, particular attention being given to Ballinger's (2006) concerns that coherence, evidence of systematic and careful research conduct, convincing and relevant interpretation and the role of the researcher come under scrutiny. The ways in which the ethical conduct of the research was assured were outlined, with attention being given to issues of respect and power in the interview relationship. Finally, the procedures which were carried out to recruit a sample of appropriate participants and interview them were described and discussed.

A narrative allows access to identity. We hear about a person's engagement in action or occupation, which in itself is fundamental to identity. Also the narrative can be regarded as identity performance. In order to explore how narratives of leisure enable an understanding of identity the final analysis must focus on narrative content, form and structure, to expose meaning. The methods by which the analysis achieved this are discussed in Chapter 5.

5 Analysis

> *'The story of an experience provides a window of understanding into the way the storyteller interprets and frames the events that took place. An understanding of the meaning of the experience may, thus, be gleaned from the story.'*
>
> (Hasselkus, 2002, p8)

When interviewed, the participants all used narratives to illustrate aspects of their leisure experiences. This is not surprising; narratives are a part of everyday speech, ingrained in the human way of thinking (Polkinghorne, 1991). This thesis is built on a synthesis of theoretical assumptions which suggest that narratives, told about occupation, will enable an understanding of the personal and social meanings associated with that occupation, with a view to better understanding the constructed and performed identities of the narrators. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the narrative analysis was carried out which enabled meaning and identity to be accessed.

In qualitative research, to describe data analysis as a separate process from data collection is misleading, since the two tend to proceed in parallel (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In this study analysis began whilst listening to narrators in the interviews. Field-notes made after the interviews contained analytic thoughts, and these were developed as transcription took place. It is for ease of description and discussion that the two processes of data collection and analysis are described separately, in the last chapter and in this. The focus of this chapter is the systematic handling and interpretation of the narratives.

Any interpretation in qualitative research should be convincing and relevant (Ballinger, 2006), made so, in part, by systematic procedures, transparency and openness. Various measures were taken to ensure the robustness and relevance of the findings, and these are described here.

> **Reflection on presenting the interpretations to others**
> *While carrying out this research, particularly in the later stages, some of the narrative analyses were presented to others in seminars and at conferences. Audiences have included other occupational therapists (practitioners and academics), occupational scientists, other health care professionals, postgraduate students from a range of unknown backgrounds and undergraduate students. The responses and questions from audiences have indicated that they found my interpretations plausible and relevant, although, of course, a conference presentation gives little time to consider alternative interpretations. A list of*

conferences at which aspects of the narrative analysis have been presented to others is included in Appendix B.

Perhaps more importantly, although I did not return to participants for validation of my interpretations, I did get feedback from three of them whom I revisited to discuss issues of anonymity. None of them disagreed with my interpretation of their narratives, indeed the Choral-singer and the Railwayman nodded vigorously and seemed impressed by the insights I had achieved. The Bridge-player was a little more circumspect, giving little away. The Dog-trainer also saw my interpretations. I emailed section 8.1.1 to her when I heard that her dog had died, to show her that I had some understanding of their relationship. Her return correspondence indicated that she thought I had got it right (Appendix B).

The first section of this chapter explains the approach taken to the extraction of narratives. The second section shows how turning the analytic focus onto the structure of the narratives helped to elicit their possible meanings, while the third section describes how the analysis then examined coherence and drama in the narratives. Finally, the ways in which these methods of analysis contributed to an understanding of identity is discussed.

Dramaturgical and sociolinguistic approaches are combined here. The former allows a focus on the dramatic formulation and delivery of the narrative, and the interaction between speaker and audience. The latter enables consideration to be given to internal structures and form in the narrative. Both approaches rely on a close listening to the content of the narrative.

5.1 Extracting the narratives (stage 1)

5.1.1 Transcription

Rationale for methodological choices

In stage 1 of the analysis, a full transcription of each interview was made. I did this personally, to develop familiarity with the material, and begin early analysis. In accord with the epistemological position taken here the transcript was produced verbatim, with the non-lexical utterances (e.g. 'uh', 'hmm') pauses, false starts and discourse markers ('y'know', 'so') included. Some researchers, requiring clearer access to *content* as data, prefer a 'cleaned-up' version from which such utterances have been removed (Riessman, 1993). Those who are interested in the way that speech is structured and who are looking for clues about how thoughts are processed gain more by leaving these elements in the transcript (Gee, 1986; Mishler, 1986b). Crepeau (2000), who used a similar approach to narrative analysis to the one

used here, also 'cleaned up' the transcripts, but in doing this may have erased some useful indicators of interaction and cognitive processing.

Elements of discourse such as pauses and other non-lexical markers were recorded using transcription conventions (Appendix B) adapted from Silverman (2004). This is a less detailed and formal system than would be used by a discourse analyst (Burman & Parker, 1993), but relies more on the received wisdom of others than Bird's recommendation that the researcher develop conventions to meet her own precise purposes (Bird, 2005). The amount of detail in the narrative transcripts enabled an understanding of their performative and interactional features. The co-construction of the interview material was considered to be fundamental to the analysis in this research and so the questions and other interjections of the interviewer were included in the transcription.

Procedure

A minicassette transcribing system (Sanyo Miniexeckit) was used, in combination with a personal computer word processing programme, to transcribe each interview. The transcripts were headed with the pseudonym of the narrator (e.g. Choral-singer), the date of the interview and the dates of the transcription process. Labelling was used to indicate which speech belonged with whom. Each line was numbered and the time passing in the interview was recorded regularly in brackets. A note was made when the tape was turned over or changed, or if any unexpected interruptions occurred. Each tape was listened to several times for the transcription, in order to check accuracy and clarify indistinct sections. During the transcription process words were typed as they were spoken, although, as Bird (2005) found, it was tempting to correct grammar and soften dialect.

> ***Reflection on transcribing***
> *An ethical issue arose for me whilst transcribing. When I found myself making an adjustment to a grammatical error in one of the interviews I stopped short (I made a footnote in the Fisherman narrative 2 about this). It felt arrogant and patronising to correct dialect, grammar and hesitations in the participants' discourse – yet I felt protective of them and did not want them to be thought, by a reader, to be less intelligent than I had found them to be. I was in some conflict about this – and still am, but I made the decision to leave the speech as it was spoken, rather than clean it up, this being an honest representation.*
> *Some of the people I interviewed had accents or hints of dialect, some coughed and hesitated, some used many non-lexical utterances such as uh, erm, ha. These aspects of speech are indicators of the variations between individuals, perhaps their age, region, race, style of cognitive processing,*

*level of education – to negate them would be to ignore an important part of
the contextual detail which would inform my inquiry.*

Identifying features were changed during transcription, although this presented a further ethical dilemma. The people that I interviewed were all leisure enthusiasts in the North-West of England, some active and prominent in their field, and therefore, possibly, relatively well-known in the region, or even nationally. So, although names might be changed to provide anonymity, the narratives themselves might give enough specific details of organisations or events to identify the person involved. The Bridge-player gave me his international ranking, the Railwayman named stations and events and the Choral singer was proud to be a member of a well-known choral society. The names of people, animals, events and places could be changed, but sometimes this threatened to change the meaning in the discourse. This issue could only be resolved by returning to these particular participants and asking for their view on leaving such names unchanged, or negotiating an acceptable compromise (Elliott, 2005). In all, five of the participants were contacted for this reason. Two indicated that they would trust my judgement on how to proceed without a meeting (and so I removed all identifying references). After meetings with the other participants, some adjustments to identifiers in narratives were suggested, and others were left untouched, as agreed.

Transcription is an act of re-presenting oral language in written form, and, as can be seen from the reflection above, this interpretive act is not free from the subjective influence of the transcriber (Bird, 2005; Riessman, 1993). Also, audio-recording cannot capture those aspects of communication which rely on the eye for interpretation (Mishler, 1986b). In order to heighten my own awareness of these distorting processes I used footnotes to record my immediate reactions to the interview material during the transcription process. Like a stream of consciousness, the footnotes consisted of comments on the interview content, my own interviewing style, interpretations of speech content and some added contextual information.

5.1.2 Extracting the narratives

Rationale for decisions

During the interviews participants told narratives. Unlike the more commonly employed (in qualitative research) thematic analysis the analysis of narratives allows sections of discourse to be kept together and seen as integrated, meaningful wholes. Complexity is captured in the coherence and sequential form of the narrative (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007). The narrative's plot exposes sequences of action, consequences, reactions, goals and motives, all of which allow the analyst to examine meaning. A narrative is more than the sum of its parts

(Elliott, 2005). The perspective of the narrator can be accessed by examining how characters, contexts and actions are interlinked. When people tell narratives, they have the opportunity to '.."relive" moments of their past, re-entering the rich emotional landscape of powerful experiences..' which in turn allows the researcher access to meanings rather than 'abstract generalisations' or 'belief statements' (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000, p5).

Procedure

Based on the definition given in chapter 4, a narrative was identified as an account of an event or sequence of events, with people, action, consequences, the passing of time and usually an evaluative comment. The event could be a specific occurrence, or it could be something which the narrator says has happened often (a habitual narrative) or one which might happen (a hypothetical narrative) (Riessman, 1993). The narrative might be interrupted by other speech elements, such as explanation or description, and, rarely, might be told in two parts clearly connected, but told at different points of the interview. This guide was used to distinguish narrative from non-narrative discourse. Riessman (1993) and VanderStaay (2003) both argue that to be too restrictive in one's definition of a narrative might preclude the interpretation of important material, given that there may be differences in culture and styles of speaking, and this proved to be useful advice.

Following transcription, each interview tape was listened to again and an interview outline drawn up, an approach used by Agar and Hobbs (1982). Narrative and non-narrative discourse were identified and shown on a table in relation to each other. Narratives were numbered according to the order in which they were told. An example of an interview outline chart, for the Yoga-practitioner, is given at Appendix B. Each transcript was then re-read, and the narratives and non-narrative discourse were marked without reference to the earlier aural exercise. In almost every case the same narratives were identified by both methods, although there were occasional discrepancies with regard to endings and beginnings. This double-checking served to ensure that the definition used to identify narratives was being used consistently. Selecting the 'frame' of each narrative i.e. its beginning and its end-point (Riessman, 1993) was an interpretive decision which could alter its meanings. Such decisions were made with reflexive self-consciousness, and noted as they occurred.

Some of the participants, e.g. the Dog-trainer and the Mountain-biker, spoke fluently, producing narratives with little prompting. Whilst some people turned naturally to narrative accounts to make their points, others did not. The Artist and the Runner gave descriptive answers to my questions, telling very few, short narratives. The Amateur Operatic Performer

produced longer lengths of speech, but used few narratives, instead describing or listing all the tasks which need to be done in amateur operatics. She seemed reluctant to portray events which had personal meaning. Research participants may make an assumption that a researcher is more interested in generalities than personal narratives (Chase, 2005).

From each interview up to six narratives (normally five) were identified for extraction. Where there were five or less narratives in an interview, all were used. Some narratives were easier to recognise than others, and narrators had different styles of speaking which could, for example, mask the evaluation which is considered to be essential in a narrative (Labov, 1997). Where there were more than six narratives, the ones selected for analysis were chosen because they had a clear evaluative clause or because they were told with emotion, which was taken to be an indicator that the narrative was particularly meaningful (Mishler, 1999).

In his study of craft-artists in 1999 Mishler noted that focusing purely on narrative discourse resulted in a radical reduction in the amount of interview material used (he used approximately 10% of the original material). Although our definitions of narrative appear to differ, this was the case here, also. A rough count of lines indicates that approximately 16% (the Bridge-player), 41% (the Horse-rider) and 9% (the Amateur Operatic Performer) of the total interviews was used by extracting narratives. This serves as a reminder that, although identity is, here, being explored through the meanings of narratives, more was said that may have yielded different findings if analysed in different ways.

A list of the 78 narratives selected for analysis can be found in Appendix B. A table summarising the four key stages of analysis can be found in Appendix C.

5.2 A focus on narrative structure (stage 2)

Rationale overview

The overall aim of analysis was to reveal meanings embedded in and displayed by the narrative as it was told by this person, on this occasion. I have noted that Hasselkus and Murray, in their narrative study of the experiences of caregivers, controlled the interview so that participants *did not* formulate their own interpretation of the events described (Hasselkus & Murray, 2007). In my study, however, the narrator's account and own interpretation of the event is the important basis for my own interpretation. Indeed, it can be argued that all narratives have an evaluation and so interpretation by the narrator is inevitable.

Mishler has described how different approaches to narrative analysis have focused on narrative structure (Labov, 1972) and on coherence (Agar & Hobbs, 1982) and has argued for

attention to be given to the interaction between narrator and interviewer (Mishler, 1986b). Structure, coherence, interaction and the notion of narrative as performance all contribute to the meaning of a narrative and the presentation of the identity of the narrator. This being accepted as the case, the analytic approach used here, influenced by Mishler's arguments, examined each of these features with the understanding that they are inextricably linked. The structuring and form of a narrative may be influenced by the audience. The audience and the narrator, in interaction, may make coherence. The narrative content and its dramatic delivery will be influenced by interpersonal interaction and will influence structure and form.

Following the extraction of the 78 narratives a pro-forma was developed, informed by the literature, to guide stage 2 of the analysis. At this stage, five analytic procedures were carried out, two of which focused primarily on narrative structure (described below) and the others on drama, interaction and coherence (described in 5.3). This is a false division, however; it has been noted above that these elements all influence each other. An example of the stage 2 procedure, based on the Dog-trainer narrative 5, is included in Appendix C.

5.2.1 Applying Gee's poetic structure

Rationale

Gee advocated a particular method for laying out a transcript on the page which would reveal poetic structures (Gee, 1986). Exposing the poetic structure of speech in its written form increases awareness of the subtleties of language, and the structuring of a narrative, the building blocks which contribute to accessing meaning (Riessman, 1993). The language of narratives, according to Gee, is 'poetic' whilst non-narrative prose is 'prosaic'. In a further paper, he developed his ideas about the structure of narratives giving access to sense-making (Gee, 1991). Crucially, attention is given to pauses and non-lexical markers as being relevant to meaning and structure, since they often mark transitions and boundaries between groups of ideas. Hesitations and false starts, according to Gee, indicate cognitive processing.

Procedure

In order to reveal their poetic structures, each narrative was first broken down into *lines* which Gee described as being made up of *idea units*, containing a single focus of consciousness (Gee, 1991). A line is usually relatively short, consisting of a simple clause, and it often begins with 'and' or a similar simple conjunction (e.g. 'then', 'so'). A line ends, usually, with a pitch glide (a rising or falling movement of the pitch of the voice) and a slight

pause before the next line begins. Lines often have syntactic or semantic similarities with the lines adjacent or near to them. Line lengths, for example, may be similar or similar words or patterns may be discerned. At this point in the laying out of narratives the tape-recording was used again to clarify what was said in the narratives and *how it was said*.

After the narrative had been arranged into lines, the lines were grouped into **stanzas,** groups of lines based around a similar theme, topic or structure. The lines in a stanza *sound* as if they belong together; they are often spoken with the same speed and with little hesitation between them. Each stanza can be said to describe a 'scene' or an 'image' in the narrative (Gee, 1991). Gee also suggested that stanzas are often four lines long, or sometimes two. Whilst examples of this can be found amongst the narratives in this research, stanzas, as identified in this interpretation, varied in length. There are instances where a particular length of stanza appears to be favoured by an individual narrator, but it is rarely used throughout a whole narrative. Stanzas are a useful device to help draw analytic attention to patterns, rhythms, structure, repetitions, lexical choices and the use of metaphors.

After each narrative had been represented in stanzas, each stanza was given a heading (in bold) which acted as a summary of the content. This served to reinforce the shifts in topic-focus of each stanza, and also acted as a quick reference to the content of the narrative.

Issues when applying Gee's poetic structures

Whilst Gee (1986) argues that his method *uncovers inherent poetic structures*, Riessman (1993) sees his approach as simply a useful method of transcription which *presents the speech in a poetic way*. While this debate does not have central importance in this thesis, I have taken Gee's position, assuming poetry in the way that people speak, particularly when the narrator is telling something she cares about and emotion is aroused.

The poetic patterns in the written representations of the narratives were interrupted in places, by the inclusion of the contributions of the interviewer. Whilst, clearly, the researcher would wish for the narratives to originate with the narrator, and so try to minimise her interference in the interview, she is part of the construction of the generated material, and so cannot be ignored.

5.2.2 Revealing the Labovian structure

Rationale

After each narrative was laid out in its poetic form, its structural properties as described by Labov and Waletzky (1966) were identified. In telling a narrative, the narrator is setting forth

a viewpoint via an oral account of an experience, with the personal meaning of the events made explicit in the evaluation (Labov & Waletzky, 1966). By identifying the parts of the narrative according to the Labovian structure, attention is focused on the evaluation.

Procedure

In each narrative the following structural parts were identified and marked:

Abstract (optional)

> This is the part which, if it is present, signals the start of the narrative. It is often a general proposition of which the narrative will be an example.

Orientation

> In this the audience is introduced to the necessary background for the narrative. Characters, time, physical and social settings may be mentioned or more fully described. This part may be brief if the audience is already familiar with the context.

Complication

> After the orientation (usually) the narrator introduces a complication, which may be small, such as an occurrence of interest or it may be more significant, such as a problem, a crisis or a turning point. This is often delivered in the simple past tense.

Evaluation

> Often told in non-narrative clauses, separate from the forward movement of the story, the evaluation conveys the meaning of the narrative to the listener. The evaluation will also, normally, reveal the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative. Without an evaluation the listener would be left wondering what the point was (Elliott, 2005).To show that she has understood the point of the narrative the listener responds with what Goffman called a 'receipt': a non-verbal or verbal acknowledgement (Cortazzi, 1993).

Resolution

> The resolution of the complication normally follows the evaluation, according to Labov and Waletzky. Here the narrator reveals the outcome of the events.

Coda (optional)

> The narrator may signify the end of the narrative by adding something which brings the narrative and the audience back to the present moment.

The identification of the evaluation device was almost always a key element in identifying the meaning of a narrative, although it was not the only approach used. Following

the application of the Labovian structure each narrative was named using a key phrase from the evaluative device.

Issues in determining the Labovian structure of a narrative.

It is worthy of note here that Labov and Waletzky's original description of the structure of a narrative held rigidly to the idea that these parts occur in the order given above, particularly that the evaluation should follow the complication. Others have disagreed with this (for example Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) and, indeed, in this research there were several instances where, in my view, the evaluation occurred at other points in the narrative. The evaluation clause is a 'non-narrative clause' and its place in the narrative can be changed without changing the sense of the story. The identification of the evaluative phrase in a narrative is made more complex because there are a variety of ways in which it can be effected. The evaluative device is normally more complex, syntactically, than the rest of the narrative, and it is often marked by some kind of emphasis. Sometimes the evaluative device is external to the narrative; the speaker interrupts the narrative to explain the point being made. Sometimes the evaluative device is internal to the narrative; it is embedded in the normal narrative structure, perhaps in the wording or in the emphasis put on a word, or by some non-lexical utterance. The type of evaluative device used will depend on the individual and it has been suggested that factors such as class may impact on this (Labov, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1966).

Sometimes the abstract appeared to contain a short form of the evaluation: as if the narrator was saying 'this is what I'm going to give you an instance of; this is the point I will make.' In many instances there was no abstract at the start of the narratives. In some cases the abstract could be spoken by the interviewer, in a prompt to trigger a narrative, for example 'Tell me about one of the worst experiences you have had'.

The strict order of orientation – complication – evaluation – resolution was observed in many narratives, but in others it was not. Indeed, the re-ordering of the parts sometimes contributed to the dramatic effectiveness of a narrative, for example, a narrator might tell the end point first, and then explain in more detail how this point was arrived at.

5.3 A focus on drama, interaction and coherence (stage 2)

Rationale

Whilst the methods of Gee and Labov and Waletzky help to focus attention on the meaning of each narrative from a sociolinguistic perspective, they neglect some of the dramaturgical

aspects of narrative telling. The linking between accounts of experience (narratives), their meanings and the construction of identity is made more complete by turning the attention to the narratives as interactive, dramatic accounts. The dramaturgical elements of the narrative and its coherence were examined from three understandings:

- The meaning of a narrative might be accessed in its plot and in the transformation which often takes place as consequence follows action (Polkinghorne, 1991).
- Meaning might also be conveyed in the interactive processes between speaker and listener (Goffman, 1959; Mishler, 1986b).
- The coherence of the narrative (examined at three levels) helps the analyst to see contradiction, themes, patterns of speech and metaphors (Agar & Hobbs, 1982).

Procedure

The methodological procedures at this stage were designed to be congruent with the theoretical assumptions about identity and narrative described previously. This was done, practically, by creating a list of questions (see Appendix C) which guided a close examination of each narrative (including the Labovian analysis described above). These questions ensured a systematic scrutiny of each narrative, with attention given to content, narrative formulation and interactions between speaker and listener. The questions focused on each of these functions either singly or in an inter-related way. Each question was derived from a list of theoretical assumptions which are summarised here and presented more fully in Chapter 4.

- *That a narrative has certain elements, a certain structure and gives access to meaning*
- *Narratives have coherence*
- *Narratives give access to identity via form and content.*
- *Narratives will reveal the influence of culture and cultural values on identity*
- *The expression of identity is influenced by the interview context which will determine what narratives are told and how they are told.*

5.3.1 Drama

The stage 2 pro-forma enabled each narrative to be viewed as a drama, with characters, setting, goals, action, plot, consequences and possible transformation of the characters (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1991). The chronological sequence of events and their ordering in the narrative were analysed, in order to illuminate meaning. Further, by regarding a narrative as an oral performance, attention is given to the ways in which the

narrative is made dramatic by the performer, for this particular audience (Goffman, 1959, 1975; Mishler, 1986b). This includes use of voice, emotion, metaphors, the rhythm and patterns of speech, and other techniques used to enhance dramatic effect. The previous structuring and scrutiny of the narratives, using Gee's poetic structuring and Labovian analysis, aided this process.

5.3.2 Interaction

Attention was also given to the ways in which the narrator and I interacted. The audience has an active part to play in the telling of narratives and the performance of identity. The narrator looks for signs of understanding and appreciation; without the audience providing nods, 'wow's and laughter, there would be no performance (Goffman, 1975). From a symbolic interactionist perspective the human being seeks to formulate a view of what others might think about her, and this is synthesised into the construction of the 'self' (Hewitt, 1994). Using the guidance questions, attention was given to any interactions in the narratives, and whether these conveyed any shared, but unspoken assumptions between myself and the interviewee, for example about cultural values. Attention was also given to misunderstandings, and times when a narrative evoked emotions in the narrator and me, the audience. My role in the storytelling was noted (for example, was I there to be amused, informed, shocked, impressed or was I a witness?) and instances where I may have interfered with a narrative plan were noted. The ways in which the narrator and I related to each other were noted. This included observations, when appropriate, on gender, age, class or culture which can affect the relationship between narrator and interviewer, their communication and the understanding of meanings (Poindexter, 2003).

> ### *Reflection on relating to participants*
> *Interviewing in people's own homes was a strategy used to make people feel at ease, but in the case of the Artist (sect 1.1.2), with no chairs or settee to sit on, this did not necessarily work. This interview was not an easy one, there were pauses and she looked to me to ask questions, rather than talking spontaneously. I wondered if this was because of ethnic differences (the Artist being Bangladeshi Muslim), yet the Runner and the Yoga-practitioner also looked to me to set the agenda, and so this may not have been the case. Differences in culture may have had an impact sometimes, although it is difficult to say whether my cultural background, being brought up as a white, English, working-class girl, made me more similar to the Bangladeshi, working-class Artist or the Horse-rider, white, middle-class, raised on a farm and who went to boarding school.*

5.3.3 Coherence

The concept of 'coherence' in narratives was explored using a three layer structure described by Agar and Hobbs (1982), derived, in part, from artificial intelligence research. The three layers of coherence consist of:

Global coherence

> This is the overall plan which the narrator has for achieving her narrative goal. The speaker monitors the listener's responses and adjusts the tale accordingly in order to meet this goal. Global coherence focuses on a top-down view of the narrative.

Local coherence

> These are the strategies used for making coherent links between utterances. Agar and Hobbs described coherence relations such as the 'occasion relation' which makes a link telling what happened next and the 'elaboration relation' which enriches the listener's understanding. Local coherence utterances give access to the speaker's beliefs and relevant cognitive worlds. They give a bottom-up view of the narrative.

Themal coherence

> These are chunks of content (themes) that repeatedly occur. These include implicit assumptions, frequent distinctive discourse devices or coherence structures and long range narrative strategies and concerns (e.g. occurring in several narratives) Themal coherence shows how a person's beliefs are integrated into a functioning world view.

The value in using this approach was that another perspective was offered for the fine-reading and understanding of each narrative, with links to meaning, interaction and performance. In effect, attention to local, global and themal coherence often confirmed the understanding which had been gained from a Labovian analysis, but also helped to enhance that understanding. The stanza headings which were ascribed during the layout of the poetic structure enabled a better understanding of the global coherence of each narrative.

Issues in exploring drama, interaction and coherence in the narratives

The identification of the dramatic elements of a narrative (characters, setting, plot etc) was done in parallel with the identification of the Labovian elements, and there was some overlap between the two approaches. Regarding a narrative as a drama, however, focuses attention on the various contexts in which the narrator operates. The social context included

identifying who the key character is (the protagonist) and who the 'others' are. There is value in this, in relation to understanding the socially situated identity.

> ### Reflection on 'characters' in these dramas
> *The leisure occupations of the Horse-rider and the Dog-trainer both involved close relationships with animals, which I came to regard as key characters in the narratives. The dogs and horses which played a role in these narratives were clearly significant in terms of emotional involvement and aspects of caring. They were also significant partners in some of the events described, their 'personalities' having an impact on the action. It was not unusual for these two participants to use the pronoun 'we' to include their animal with themselves. I came, then, to regard these animals as social beings, interacting with these two narrators and therefore playing a part in constructing identity.*

A drama-focused perspective on the narrative also enabled focus on emplotment, which reveals explanations of causality in this representation of the story, and on any transformations which are described as taking place.

The application of Agar and Hobbs' approach to coherence possibly gave the least return for the amount of time it took. The process, however, guaranteed a close and questioning reading of each line and each stanza, drawing attention to dramatic devices and structural features which may otherwise have been overlooked.

> ### Reflection on being judgemental
> *I found it difficult, when analysing these narratives initially, not to be judgemental, finding myself liking or disliking the participants because of the narratives they told. This caused me some discomfort until eventually I went through each narrative analysis and asked myself the question 'could I show this to the narrator?' This made me rephrase things, and also re-think what the narrator was actually saying. Any judgements were more likely to be a manifestation of my own identity, rather than theirs. My end position was one of respect for the views, actions and lives of the narrators, given their very individual circumstances and histories. Respect may be the most important ethical responsibility in research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).*

Stage 2 of the analysis was a close reading of the narratives in a structured and systematic way, with particular focus on the meanings of leisure-related events as recounted to the researcher-as-audience. The methodological procedures were based largely on the ideas of Gee and Labov and Waletzky, although like Crepeau (2000) these were used in an adapted way, for convenience and taking into account some of the identified weaknesses of these procedures and their foundational theoretical assumptions.

Whilst the analysis was being carried out, a grid was developed which allowed a cross-referencing between all the narratives and certain features which had been noted to occur in several narratives. For example, where higher education was noted to have been mentioned in a narrative as impairing or progressing the leisure occupation, this was marked on the grid. Another example was when participants used the first person plural to describe their activities ('we were always winning'). It can be seen from the two examples given that the grid showed aspects of the form *and* the content of the narratives.

> ***Reflection on ad hoc attempts at analysis***
> *At this stage the grid described above acted as a repository of ideas as they arose during analysis. Later, in an attempt to organise the grid more logically, the contexts of time, space and social relations came to the fore, and this eventually helped with the development of the stage 3 pro-forma. Whilst writing up this analysis section I have been reminded of the many different attempts I have made to make sense of the narrative material at different stages, and this was not always done in a planned and consciously systematic way. The fundamental ontological and epistemological influences underpinning the study acted as a constant, from which my methods did not stray far. Ad hoc peripheral investigations or ideas were quickly abandoned as I realised that they were based on a realist ontology.*

5.4 Meaning and identity in the narratives (stages 3 and 4)

5.4.1 Re-visiting the whole person

In the third stage, the narratives relating to each of the 17 participants were brought back together and a summary sheet made which helped to form a picture of the whole person. The structure for stage 3 was an analytic line of thought arising from stage 2. The pro-forma of the stage 3 summary sheet is included in Appendix C. This was designed, in part, to group the findings around different aspects of identity. The stage 2 analysis had suggested that the contexts for occupation could structure an 'umbrella' framework for understanding how an individual reflected on her 'self'. The contexts of interest were:

- The self emplaced spatially
- The self emplaced temporally
- The embodied self (including, at this point, the sensual self, the agentic self and the competent self)
- The social self (including, at this point, the communal self and the moral self)

The emergence of these aspects was partially influenced by *a priori* knowledge of identity theory (chapter 3), and the contexts for occupation (chapter 2).

Stage 3 served the purpose of increasing familiarity with the material and reinforcing an awareness that the narratives were clustered around 17 individuals. Other sections on the pro-forma enabled a focus on sociocultural issues, the interaction between interviewer and narrator and what the occupation appeared to offer the individual. The stage 3 forms were filled in as a collation of the individual stage 2 narrative analyses.

> ***Reflection on the purpose of stage 3***
> *Stage 3 was designed to gain a perspective on the narratives when brought together, as if to represent each of the narrators. With hindsight this was based on erroneous logic, because in this research it is the narratives, and not the individuals, which were the focus for analysis. At the end of stage 3 I spent much time trying to find ways to represent the identity of each individual based on the content of the narratives. Having only selected up to 6 narratives, and having used a minimally structured interview wherein the participant set the agenda, I realised that I was not in a position to do this. I was beginning to treat the narrative data as if it were a source for thematic analysis, which was not my original intention. It was not appropriate to base my interpretations on themes, such as how the leisure occupation began, or key turning points, as Mishler had. This realisation drew my attention back to each individual narrative as a representation of meaning and identity for each narrator.*

Stage 3 served three useful purposes. Firstly the narrative material and the commonalities and differences between narratives became much more familiar. Secondly the contextual framework for understanding aspects of identity was refined, so that a strategy for 'sorting' the meanings of the narratives could be developed. Thirdly further attention was given to the dramatic and interactive elements of narrative performance used by each individual.

5.4.2 A distillation of each narrative

The content of each narrative gives account of engagement in occupation and each narrative is an identity performance, the identity being constructed within the context of the interview through *what* is said, *how* it is said and *why* it is said. It followed that the final stage of the analysis should return to the individual narratives, their meanings and their relationship with the identity of the narrators. In stage 4, a simple, single sheet pro-forma was developed to distil the essential findings of stages 2 and 3, with a focus on each narrative in terms of:

1) Content and form (including evaluation and emotion) to expose meaning, and the contexts for the narrative.

2) The co-construction processes which occur in the interview setting: identity performance.

A completed pro-forma for this stage is included in Appendix C, 'Stage 4 analysis Bridge-player narrative 5'. Stage 4 captured the key features of the content, form and performance of the narrative, including emotional content, use of metaphors and any conflicts expressed by the narrator. The reasoning to reach this endpoint always began with the name of the narrative, which was derived from the evaluation, or the meaning of the narrative. To complete stage 4, everything that had been written about each narrative at the earlier stages was re-visited. The original narrative itself was re-read and appended to the completed pro-forma. A series of simple statements were made on the pro-forma which led to the stating of the aspects of the self which were revealed in the narrative. The series of statements were followed by a consideration of which contexts were important in the narrative. In a second series of statements on each pro-forma attention was given to the co-construction of the narrative in terms of the role of the interviewer as audience and the participant as performer. The physical context for the interview was also noted, with particular regard to anything relevant to the occupation or the interview.

Stage 4 served to summarise the salient points derived from the earlier analytic stages, keeping in mind a developing framework for sorting the narrative meanings.

5.4.3 Formulating a synthesis

Using the 78 data sources, there followed a need to formulate a synthesis which would enable an understanding of the relationship between narrative, meaning, identity and occupation. The aspects of self captured in each stage 4 analysis were tabulated and mapped for each narrative ('Table of facets of self' Appendix D). This table evolved in parallel with the development of a framework which could logically organise the different aspects in relation to the overarching concept of 'the occupied self'. As table and framework evolved, the stage 4 analysis for each narrative was reviewed to ensure that there was 'good fit' between them. The meanings of the narratives, reflected in the 'aspects of the self' statements could be grouped into clusters. These arose inductively, but were influenced by 'sensitising concepts' from prior reading (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

The table shown in Appendix D, and the framework (to be discussed later) encapsulated and organised the meanings of the narratives revealed by the various parts of the analysis.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated a synthesis of approaches to narrative analysis which allowed people's accounts of their occupations to be systematically scrutinised to reveal their meanings. This was based on the premise that the meanings that people convey through narratives reveal something of their inner self and their socially situated identity. Scrutiny focused on meaning, as revealed in the structuring, form and evaluation of the narrative; on the coherence of the narrative, at global, local and thematic levels; on the dramaturgical features of the narrative and the interpersonal interaction between narrator and audience. All of these factors, though considered independently, are inextricably related. The method of analysis was developed specifically for this purpose.

The analysis, a subjective, but systematic, interpretation, revealed various aspects of the self which the narrator brought into the interview situation, as identity. These aspects, when grouped, offered a way to conceptualise the occupied self. This conceptualisation relies on an understanding of identity as constructed:

- through performance, i.e. the telling of what happened
- through the meanings given to the narratives, i.e. the told understanding of what happened
- in the content of the narratives, i.e. the events themselves (mediated through the telling)

The conceptualisation evolved into a framework which provides a schematic representation of the facets of the occupied self. In the next chapter the framework will be described, whilst the following chapter will illustrate its empirical underpinning, using and integrating examples from different stages and different parts of the analysis.

6   A framework of the occupied self

> *but the railway*
> *because it's such a different facet*
> *makes me a whole, if you see what I mean*
> *such a major facet*
> *that I can't envisage myself being without it*
>   The Railwayman RM15

The analysis of the narratives provided an interpretation of their meanings. By understanding the meanings of narratives about occupations, an associated understanding can be developed about the relationship between occupation and the construction of identity. Whilst a relationship between identity and occupation has been claimed in the literature, both in theory and in empirical evidence, there is a paucity of exploration of the nature of this relationship.

This chapter will show how the narrative meanings derived from analysis can be organised into a framework which provides a conceptual and diagrammatic representation of the occupied self. The first section of the chapter will describe the framework, how it emerged, and how it relates to the theoretical relationships between occupations, their meanings, self and identity. The following three sections will describe the three key dimensions of the occupied self, and their constituent parts, as illustrated in the framework. Relevant literature will be used to provide theoretical context as appropriate. At this stage the presentation of the framework will be descriptive; Chapter 7 will provide illustration and substantiation of each dimension and its parts.

6.1 Dimensions of the self: an organising framework

6.1.1 Emergence of a framework

As previously described (section 5.4.3) the meanings of the narratives were sorted onto a table (Appendix D) the structure of which developed as it became apparent that the meanings with similarities could be grouped together. The framework developed as a diagrammatic representation of the table. The process was a systematic and iterative one. As the table developed, there was a continual process of cross-checking and re-grouping. The framework emerged inductively from the data by this systematic process, with some influence from prior reading. The pre-existing theory and the data analysis came together in a dialectic process, each informing the other (Mason, 2002; Riessman, 1993).

Three main groupings of narrative meanings emerged, and these are described below as *dimensions* of the occupied self: the active self, the located self and the changing self. The participants told narratives which laid emphasis on the protagonist in action, the protagonist located in certain contexts and / or the protagonist undergoing some kind of change. Within each of these dimensions, the idea that there are various *facets* of the self being displayed in the narratives, will be presented in the sections below.

> *Reflection on word-usage*
> *The word 'facet' is used here with intention. Defined in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Pearsall, 2002) as 'one side of something many-sided' or 'a particular aspect of something', this word, used so aptly by the Railwayman (quoted above), reminds us of the complex, many-sided nature of the self. Facet is an old French word, a diminutive of 'face', a reminder that identity is what is shown to others in society, though perhaps not all facets are shown together.*

6.1.2 Occupation, meaning, self and identity

Before moving on to describe the framework, some key terms and their relationship with each other will be re-iterated. This study has been undertaken within a social constructionist ontology, influenced by a symbolic interactionist perspective. This means that it is assumed that each occupation that an individual engages in has a meaning derived from symbolic understandings and constructions within the socio-cultural context. Such meanings may be socially shared, but may have, also, a personal configuration, deriving from the individual's unique life trajectory. In other words, the form of an occupation may be universally understood in society, but some aspects of it, for the individual, may be personal, given that an occupational performance has many unique elements.

A distinction has been made between the private or personal identity and the public or social identity (Charmaz, 2002; Hewitt, 1994; A. M. Unruh, 2004). Social identity is embedded in the cultural meanings of community membership, but personal identity gives a sense of location, differentiation, direction and continuity, by and in relation to the personally experienced self (Charmaz, 2002). Symbolic interactionism puts the emphasis for the development of the self and identity on social interaction. It has been argued, however, that the self is constituted and reconstituted through everyday activity and that social interaction with others is a sub-set of this activity (Kuentzel, 2000). This is important here, because the findings of this research offer some evidence to support this. Occupations do not always take place in a public arena (A. M. Unruh, 2004), so these would become socially situated only at the point of telling, in a narrative, when the narrator presents the events in a certain way, with

the audience in mind. Narratives describe situated action (Bruner, 1990), but it is not always socially situated. It could be argued that, even when the narrator tells about a socially situated event, the experience is actually an intensely personal one, which contributes to the construction of the inner narrative of the self. '*Selfhood rests on the essential privacy of meaning; in what else might it consist?*' (Cohen, 1994, p142)

The events told about in the narratives were, in most cases, personally experienced by the narrators. The narrative allows the individual to strive to put the phenomenological experience of the occupied self in front of a listener. The experience of an occupation contributes to the construction of the self, with its ongoing inner narrative. The re-playing of that experience and its personal (and socially derived) meaning, to another person, through narrative, contributes to the socially situated identity.

Essential to this study is the idea that action contributes to the construction of the self (and therefore identity) through the reflexive project of the self, which strives to maintain a coherent narrative. I reflect on events and try to make sense of them, telling myself a narrative to do this, trying to fit them into a plot which is coherent. Identity is when I tell the narrative to others. What people tell in narratives about their occupations is *their* interpretation of what the occupations meant. Narrative is self-interpretation (Ricouer, 1991a).

6.1.3 The framework: an overview

The framework (see Figure 6-1, overleaf), based on a narrative conceptualisation of self and identity, contributes to an understanding of how occupations, meanings, self and identity are related. The individual, telling about events that occurred whilst engaging in an occupation, can represent the occupied self as having three dimensions:

- The active self
- The located self
- The changing self

The three dimensions contribute to the construction of the on-going narrative which the individual tells to herself, about herself. They also feature in the narratives told to others, in the construction of the socially presented identity.

The nature of a told narrative is that it will normally consist of elements which portray activity, context, and transformation (Polkinghorne, 1991). In this study it was found that narratives placed greater emphasis on one dimension or another, and in different ways. For some individuals, in some or most of their narratives, the emphasis of the meaning was on the action, or the context or transformation. Meanings could, therefore, be classed and grouped as

relating to the active self, the located self or the changing self. It was usual for narratives to have meanings relating to one or more of these dimensions.

Figure 6-1 A framework illustrating the occupied self
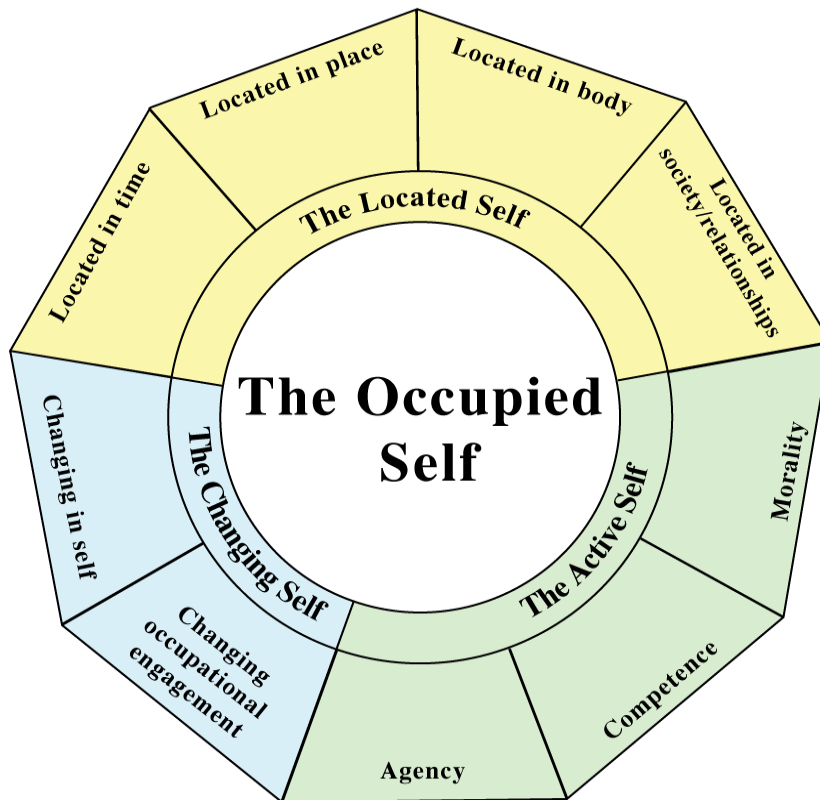
A framework of the occupied self : **Key**	
Dimension	**Facets**
The active self (green)	Agency Competence Morality
The located self (yellow)	Located in time Located in place Located in body Located in society/relationships
The changing self (blue)	Changing in self Changing in occupational engagement

Each of the three key dimensions could be used, in narrative telling, to show different facets of the self. These are shown on the framework as sub-divisions of the dimensions. The **active** self could be demonstrated in terms of agency, competence or morality. The individual could emphasise the **locating** of the self in the contexts of time, place, the body and /or society. Further, narratives about the **changing** self could feature transformations of the self or the relationship with the occupation. The facets were found to have different forms, as will be discussed below. The table included in Appendix D shows a detailed breakdown of the dimension, the facets and the forms, as they appeared in each narrative.

6.2 Facets of the active self

One group of meanings was associated with the self engaging in action (the green section in Figure 6-1). In occupation, the individual uses mental and physical capacity to act in and on the world. Action is argued to be a fundamental part of identity (Bruner, 1990; Charmaz, 2002; Gover & Gavelek, 1996), being represented in narrative by emplotment (Somers, 1994). Every narrative gave account of a protagonist carrying out action (including speech acts), but in some narratives this was foregrounded in the meaning of the narrative. When the narratives were analysed, three types of meaning associated with the self 'in action' emerged. The actions of the protagonist were recounted as being related to three facets of the self: agency, competence and / or morality. Participants could use a narrative to make a point about one or more of these facets. In describing a challenge presented by the occupation, for example, the narrator might show how the protagonist (usually the narrator) took control and took decisive action (agency), which he considered to be 'right' (morality). Another narrative might have a meaning illustrating a high degree of skill (competence) by the protagonist.

> ### Reflection: the emergence of the 'facets of self'
> *The role played by* a priori *theory in qualitative research varies depending on the epistemological position of the researcher. Some qualitative researchers would argue that one should enter the data-gathering process with a* tabula rasa*, having no preconceived ideas. Others would argue that this is impossible, since one has pre-existing knowledge from one's academic discipline already in place. I take this second position and I approached analysis having already done a significant amount of reading. The analysis of the narratives will, then, be influenced by prior reading. I had learned from different sources that identity might relate to agency, morality and/or competence. In vain I searched for a text which would declare these and only these to be components of the identity of the active being. My analysis of the narratives, therefore, began with the knowledge of these three components, and I proceeded, intending that I would uncover other*

components. I did not. However, I found myself arguing the case for components such as the 'temporal self' and the 'embodied self', which ultimately helped the analysis to evolve in other ways.

6.2.1 Having agency

As with all the facets of self which will be discussed in this section, agency could be said to be represented in every narrative examined. Some individuals, however, appear to place agency in the foreground, in the meaning of the narrative, wishing to emphasise the degree of control, or lack of it, held or felt by the key character in the story. It was useful, in the analysis of all the narratives, to give attention to the narrator's account of causality in the narrative. This enabled an interpretation about a sense of personal control and agency to be made. Agency appeared in two main forms in the meanings of narratives. Where agency was foregrounded as a facet of the self the protagonist was portrayed as feeling or being helpless, or in control and effective.

- **Feeling helpless.** Contingencies and obstacles happen to people. In some situations, and for some people, the reaction was helplessness, not agency. These narratives were often emotional ones, the meaning apparently painful for the narrator. Faced with an unanticipated or overpowering event, such as an injured ankle or an authoritarian father, they were unable to feel in control.

- **Feeling in control and effective.** Contingencies and obstacles were not always problematic for the protagonist. Fateful moments happen; sometimes they are a problem which is viewed as a challenge to be overcome; sometimes they offer opportunities for decisive action. Narratives were told about people exercising agency in establishing their leisure careers, setting and achieving goals. Other narratives were told about overcoming obstacles and difficulties in trying to pursue their chosen occupation, or in completing a particular task. Faced with dead cats, broken bones, Foot and Mouth disease, lost horse-shoes, Beeching's modernisation of the railways and self doubt, protagonists in various narratives managed to demonstrate agency.

6.2.2 Levels of competence

Those who were interviewed were serious leisure enthusiasts, committing energy, time and other resources in the pursuit of their chosen occupations. It is not surprising then, that they represented and described a considerable level of expertise. As with agency, most of the narratives did involve talk about competence, but some foregrounded it more than others in

the overall meaning of the narrative. Where it was foregrounded, the occupied protagonists experienced competence in three ways:

- Some narratives were about **lacking competence.** A narrative might portray the protagonist, for example, as being very skilled in his occupation, but less competent with social skills. Narrative meanings might focus on constant battles with feelings of incompetence, when trying to progress a leisure career.

- **Developing competence** was also featured, particularly in narratives from the earlier days of someone's leisure career.

- **Having competence.** These narratives were common, for the reasons outlined above. In fact the high levels of expertise of the narrators, in their chosen leisure pursuits, often meant that they tried to find a way of telling their narratives without appearing boastful. Competence and high levels of skills were often displayed, in the narratives, in a social setting, with others there to act as competitors or witnesses, for example winning a race, or having art-work admired. Levels of competence were sometimes established by narratives being told about the groups with which the individual affiliates (e.g. national team membership, local clubs) or by comparison with others. In contrast, competence was sometimes described in a narrative as being personally and privately experienced, although it could be argued that the very act of telling to an audience made it a social display.

Narratives were told about expertise and competence in a range of occupations. An assumption could be made that having a strong belief in one's own agency, combined with a high degree of skill, would equate to considerable levels of commitment and mastery, as might be expected in these serious leisure careers.

6.2.3 Being moral

Christiansen (1999) suggested that the occupations in which people engage have social meanings and are associated with an expression of moral values. When telling a narrative about an occupation, the narrator has a further opportunity to emphasise their moral position in relation to the happenings. All of these narratives might be argued to have an element of morality, reflecting personal and social values, but in some a moral concern was highlighted, directly or indirectly. Often, by their comments about others, we learn something about the narrators' values. Morality, when foregrounded, was displayed in four forms:

- Narratives were told that foregrounded an **ethic of care for others** (Rojek, 2005)**.** There were various manifestations of this. Several people told narratives which placed a sense of loyalty to the fore. It was not uncommon to be loyal to a group of people with whom an

occupation is shared. With loyalty, and the decision to commit oneself to a leisure pursuit, comes a sense of obligation or duty. In a less local sense an ethic of care can also be manifested in terms of social conscience and social activism. Amongst the participants, the ethic of care extended itself to fellow leisure group members, to family members, to society, to the environment and to animals.

- Some of the narratives had meanings which placed emphasis on **caring for the self**, in terms of trying to keep healthy and well, both in body and in mind. For some, the pursuit of a sporting occupation was less about competence, and more about keeping fit. For others, the stresses caused by, or dissipated by, the leisure occupation was a concern.

- Devoting a proportion of one's time to the pursuit of pleasure, through leisure, is counter to the Protestant work ethic which can be deeply ingrained. Narratives of leisure can contain an element of guilt; some participants pondered whether leisure equates with **selfishness**, when care for the self conflicts with care for others, duty and obligation.

- Morality could be foregrounded in a narrative when the position of the protagonist in relation to **cultural values** was told. Narratives were told in which such values were being accepted or rejected. The moral position which an individual takes, when telling a narrative, was sometimes highlighted by making a contrast with the behaviour or attitudes of one or more others (Seale, 1998), thus establishing a position in relation to cultural norms. It can, of course, be argued that the moral values in the three forms above are all derived from cultural norms and expectations, but in some narratives it was made more explicit. This was particularly the case when the values are imposed by an external authority such as a religion or a government.

6.3 Facets of the located self

When the participants told narratives, they normally described the contexts in which the action took place (in Labovian terms this is part of the orientation). This section describes the contexts that the participants emphasised when they expressed the located self (the yellow section in Figure 6-1). *A priori* theory suggested that the contexts for engagement in occupation are the temporal, spatial and social environments, but within this framework the body (including mind) is also included as a context within which the self operates on the world. As will be seen, the body, for some, was a particularly important place for the location of the self. The framework is designed to ensure that time and place, as locations, feature alongside the social context, and that the embodied self is recognised to play a part in the

construction of identity. This conceptualisation is influenced by the idea of the phenomenologically experienced self (Gover & Gavelek, 1996) and the embodied and emplaced self (Rojek, 2005).

The context which is generally considered to contribute to the shaping of identity is the social context, identity being the socially situated self. The social context provides feedback from others which can be incorporated into the ongoing narrative of the self. Social interaction can, however, be regarded as a subset of everyday activity (Kuentzel, 2000) for which time, place and embodiment are also contexts.

6.3.1 Time as a location

Time is of central importance in a narrative. A narrative is usually about a particular time and about a series of events which happen, over time, in a particular order, even though they may be told in a different order. Without the passing of time, no transformation can take place: there is no *before* and *after*. It is expected, in most narratives, that the narrator draws the listener's attention to when the events took place, whether this be a particular year, or era, season, date, day or hour. In the case of an habitual narrative, the event may take place regularly, and in the case of a hypothetical narrative, sometime in the imagined future (Riessman, 1993). The single small leisure narrative takes its place in a stream of similar small narratives which make up the trajectory of the whole leisure career or, indeed, the life.

While *all* narratives feature time as a context for events, several of the narrators in this study foregrounded it as particularly important in the meaning of one or more narratives. Their location or emplacement in time, in relation to the events described in the narrative, was particularly meaningful in one of several ways:

- For some, meaning focused on the **amount of time** that the occupation occupied. As might be expected in serious leisure the occupied self was often busy and sometimes under pressure from the demands of this and other commitments.

- **Special times and seasons** were also featured as being meaningful aspects of the event recounted in some narratives. This might entail a general reference to Christmas, for example, or to a specific occurrence on one winter's day.

- **Continuity in time,** perhaps over a lifespan, over generations, or in history, was particularly meaningful in several narratives. For some, the occupied self in the present time had links back to the occupations of childhood, whilst others made links back to past or forward to future generations through their occupation. Some considered possibilities for continuing the occupation into the future. Further, these narratives of leisure reflect and

evaluate experiences which are 'of their time' in a continuum of the history of leisure activity set against the cultural and political backdrops of the early 21st century.

- Finally, time sometimes featured in narrative meaning as a **measure of ability**, particularly in competitive sports. One's locatedness in time, as someone who can run 10 kilometres in less time than one ran it last year, is a facet of the occupied self.

In all of these cases, the individual, and their occupation, are located in time, and they are also *of their time*, which will be discussed later, as a socio-cultural issue.

6.3.2 Place as a location

Places and spaces influence what people do and how they do it, and their occupations, in turn, impact on environment (Fidler & Velde, 1999). Again, most narratives include an orientation which includes a sense of place, but some of the narratives had a meaning which was particularly associated with the place where the action occurred. For some people, a sense of place and space appeared to be important in contributing towards the construction of identity in the narratives. There were four main forms of expression for the physically located self:

- **Risks and safety** in the physical environment were central to the meaning of some narratives. The embodied self must manage an awareness of danger and vulnerability when located in certain physical environments (Rojek, 2005).

- Place and space were also meaningful when people told narratives about the **amount of space used** while engaging in the occupation. Some told narratives about the widening territories for their occupations as they grew through childhood, whilst getting older appeared to diminish the space used.

- Just as people sometimes used a narrative to place themselves in a special time, so they sometimes placed themselves in **a special place**. Being in a particular element, such as water, being out in the countryside or being in an evocative place were all used as ways of expressing this facet of the occupied self.

- A further form for including spatial location in a narrative was to emphasise the **specialist or universal places** where the occupation could be carried out. Some leisure occupations are easily transposed from one place to another, while others require special facilities.

The places where an occupation is carried out are often difficult to separate from other aspects of the occupation, such as other people, or special equipment. Mishler, in his research

about craft-artists' identities, described 'identity spaces' (Mishler, 1999, p117) where identity can be constructed.

6.3.3 The body as a location

The body (including mind) is included here as a context within which the self operates and defines itself. As Giddens observed '*The reflexivity of the self* extends to the body' (Giddens, 1991, p77, his emphasis). Embodiment includes mental, emotional, physical and sensual aspects (Rojek, 2005). Because of the precariousness of the physical world the body is vulnerable, and because of the temporal context, it ages. Those participants who foregrounded the body and the mind in the meaning of their narratives did so in a variety of ways.

- The meanings of some narratives placed emphasis on the **sensory, emotional and physical experiences** of the body and mind. Moments of intense emotion were recounted, as were events that involved displays of intellect or physical prowess, with the protagonist registering the sensations and effects. Body and mind awareness were sometimes highlighted in narratives.

- Some told narratives about the **body being vulnerable**: prone to injury, illness or risk. These risks were sometimes, but not always, associated with the physical environment. Sometimes the very occupation which participants wish to continue to pursue may have done the body damage in the first place.

- In contrast, some narratives had meanings associated with **caring for the body** or the mind, seeing it as a location for the self which required attention and improvement.

6.3.4 Society and relationships as a location

With one exception only (the Runner) social relationships, or the socio-cultural background, were foregrounded as a meaningful context for all the research participants in one or more of their narratives. In the case of the Runner, relationships were mentioned, but they were always incidental to the main point of the narrative. In general, the socio-cultural context was given a broad interpretation ranging from society, community and culture, through to family, leisure group members, other people, friends and animals. In relation to the leisure occupations, all of the participants talked about some kind of affiliation to a group or organisation except the Soul-singer. Some groups were small and casual while others were large, formal and hierarchical. Some of the participants were ordinary members, while some had key organisational roles.

As indicated above, there were various ways in which social context was foregrounded in the meanings of the narratives. These have been grouped into six forms:

- The first form includes those narratives in which the meaning is focused on the protagonist's **relationship with the community or wider culture**. For some, the socially located self involved showing social responsibility and for others it involved dealing with cultural expectations. This form also includes those who told about their developing social self; these narratives may have been told about the protagonist's childhood, foregrounded as being relevant to the current occupied self. Also included here is the individual's relationship with the **tools and artefacts** required to engage in the chosen occupation. Such tools, whether psychological or physical, are culturally-derived. In this study the position is taken that culturally available artefacts and tools, part of the occupational form, help to shape identity (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). They are included here because they represent culture and so have symbolic meaning (Fidler, 1999).

- The second form of this facet includes those narratives whose meanings were about **relating to family**. There were several of these, sometimes featuring strong affiliation, or shared leisure interests, and sometimes featuring guilt in relation to spending too much time engaged in the leisure occupation.

- Another form of social locatedness was captured by narratives which told about the protagonist's relationship with other people **belonging to the leisure-affiliated group**. Some of these narratives told about group membership as a positive experience, while others told about problematic relationships, conflict and irritations.

- In symbolic interactionist theory, the role played by 'others' in the construction of identity is emphasised. Whilst some narratives told about the protagonist relating to specific others, some identified **the imaginary perceptions of unspecified 'others'** as meaningful in relation to social image, self doubts, feelings of inadequacy or gaining esteem.

- Social locatedness was also meaningful in narratives about **friendship**

- Some told narratives whose meanings were about **relationships with animals**. This is, possibly, a controversial inclusion in a thesis based on social constructionism, since the word 'social' normally relates to humans. Those whose leisure occupations involved relating to animals, however, gave evidence of emotional relationships in which they believed that they received communicative feedback from the animal. This will be discussed further, with examples, in the next chapter.

6.4 Facets of the changing self

It can be argued that the self or the identity is relatively constant, striving for stability over time (Reynolds & Prior, 2006). Contexts are unstable, however, and the inner narrative must be constantly responsive to external changes, whether they be catastrophic, or smaller everyday shifts. The process of striving for the continuity of the self involves accommodating change in response to experiences, agency and reflection (Charmaz, 2002; McAdams, 1997). Engagement in action / occupation contributes to this process. A narrative is told about goals and action, sequence and consequence and so it will tell of change. The participants gave accounts of transformation, sometimes overtly reflecting on personal change, on the circumstances that brought change about and about conflicts, decisions and turning points. As with the other dimensions, while all narratives could be said to describe change, for some narrators the change or transformation became the main point of the narrative: a reason for it being told. Narratives highlighting change in the occupied self could be divided into two main types or facets: changes in the protagonist and changes in the way the protagonist engaged in the occupation (the blue section in Figure 6-1).

6.4.1 Changes in the protagonist

The most common facet of the changed occupied self was a change in the protagonist themselves, although it should be noted that such changes were often very closely linked to changes in context or changes in the nature of the engagement with the occupation. Sometimes the narrator, who was usually also the protagonist, openly reflected on the change, but other narratives were about change expressed implicitly in the meaning. Four main forms of this facet were noted:

- Narratives were told in which the protagonist underwent a change which could be **physical, psychological or social**. People got fitter, or became ill, they matured physically or psychologically, they became happier or less happy, got married or had children, for example. The changes may have been triggered by the occupation, or another aspect of life, but it had consequences for the occupied self.
- Changes were sometimes precipitated by an inward tension or conflict, **pulling the protagonist in two directions**. Many of the narrators told narratives about contradictions, conflicting desires and motives, almost as if two different selves were battling for dominance. Narrative contradictions may allow some insight into different selves which are brought to the fore in different contexts, and which are sometimes

made to confront each other (Mishler, 1999; Temple, 2001). These can be moments of transformation, when selves are shaped. Narratives were told about wanting to spend time engaged in the leisure occupation, knowing that other duties (wife, family, work) had a call on that time. Others told about wanting to pursue the occupation even though it might damage their health or even though it might socially embarrass them. Some told about the conflict between pursuing the occupation for pleasure or for money. It can be seen that there is some overlap here with values and the moral self. One's decisions and actions demonstrate what one values at a given time.

- Some narratives focused on events when **something had been learned** and the protagonist consequently felt changed.

- Others told narratives which were often very moving, of moments when **the protagonist felt fulfilled** through engagement with the occupation.

6.4.2   Changed engagement in the occupation

In the course of a 'leisure career' an individual might be expected to engage with the leisure occupation in different ways, over time. Different narratives can be told about different stages of the career. It is too simplistic, usually, to say that one has been a choral-singer or a mountain-biker for 20 years, because the nature of one's involvement will change. Such changes may relate to various factors such as increased expertise, new tools becoming available (the word 'tools' being used in its broadest possible sense), changes in circumstance, new social contacts, fateful moments or a desire for novelty. All of the participants told narratives that involved these kinds of changes. As one's engagement with an occupation changes, so will this impact on the inner narrative one tells oneself, and the narratives told to others. The research participants told narratives from when they were first encountering and learning this important leisure occupation, through times when they were developing expertise, and sometimes they told hypothetical narratives about anticipated future changes that might occur. There were four forms of this facet:

- People told narratives about how their engagement changed so that they were **doing less or more** of the occupation. Such changes might be brought about through life stage development, or through changes in circumstances, such as illness, getting married or having children. Other occupations, such as work or child care, could reduce the time available for leisure, or a change in social circumstance might make new opportunities

arise, or curtail them. Joining a new club, choir or band might move the protagonist into a whirlwind of activity previously not encountered.

- Some narratives about changed engagement had meanings which focused on **changes in the quality of participation** in the occupation. Narratives were told about developing expertise, or times when expertise was not developed or was lost.

- Several people told narratives (prompted by my questioning, usually, but not always) about **their first encounter** with an occupation which came to dominate their lives. These were often special moments, when a protagonist recognised an occupation as being particularly suited to him or her.

- The fourth form of this facet emerged from a group of narratives in which the protagonist changed the way in which he engaged with the occupation, **doing it differently**. This might involve using a different kind of instrument, joining a different kind of club, choosing to pursue a particular branch of the leisure occupation rather than another or adapting participation during a change in circumstance. Most leisure occupations, it would appear, have tremendous scope for flexibility in the way people can participate. These make for subtle differences in the narrative of the self and the socially situated identity. There is a difference, as the Railwayman told me, between being a trainspotter and being a railway enthusiast.

The framework illustrating the expression of the individual occupied self

Mention has been made, above, that each individual placed greater or less emphasis on the various dimensions and facets, through the meanings expressed in each narrative. Each individual is unique in the expression of the occupied self. Included in Appendix D are two examples of how the framework can be applied to guide an understanding of the occupied self. The meanings from the narratives of the Runner and the Scuba-diver have been used to populate the framework in these examples. It can be seen which facets were foregrounded by these individuals, and which had no or little prominence. Competence and agency appear to be important facets of the Runner's active self, while time and the body are important facets of the located self. Interestingly, social location had no prominence in the Runner's narratives. For the Scuba-diver, agency is a well-featured facet, as is the self as located in place, in body and in relationships. Competence, morality and time as location were given no prominence. These examples show how identity can be constructed through narratives about occupations.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the *meanings* of the narratives that the research participants told. The analysis of narratives has enabled an examination of the ways in which identity is constructed through the replaying of experiences; engagement *with* a meaningful occupation, and the *telling about* that engagement. By examining these it has been possible to suggest a framework which can account for the different dimensions and facets of the self as presented in these interviews.

The framework enables a detailed and systematic understanding of the occupied self. It displays congruence with Plummer's conceptualisation of the human being described in life stories as being contextually embedded, dialogic and inter-subjective, surrounded by fateful moments, embodied, universal and with a moral character (Plummer, 2001). The framework also accords with Gover's argument that narrative and identity arise from five integrated dimensions of time, affect, artefacts, activity and self-reflexiveness (Gover, 1996), but goes beyond this to draw attention to other aspects such as the body, the physical environment and morality. The manifolds within which Harré and Gillett (1994) described identity as being located (spatial, temporal, moral and social) are also represented. The framework, by encapsulating the occupied self, acts as a good synthesis of various theories of the identity of the human being, none of which bring together all the elements of context, action and the changing self in a similar way.

In telling a narrative, the individual tells something about the way they are making sense of the world; they are sharing something of their self, or their inner-narrative with a listener. In the process of sharing and interacting with the listener, identity is constructed. When telling a narrative about themselves as occupied beings, individuals could place emphasis on the active self, the located self, and the changing self, through the meaning of the narrative. An individual could use a narrative to portray his active self as physically competent, for example, or as a rebel against cultural moral values. His located self might be portrayed as belonging in the great outdoors, or amidst his family, and his changing self might be portrayed as changing alongside the occupation in which he engages. Scrutinised closely, most narratives had elements of all three of these dimensions of the self, but each narrative was unique in what was foregrounded by the narrator. The parts of the framework as described here exist for everyone; they are universal, but the ways in which these parts interact with each other over the lifespan of the individual is unique to the individual, and

provide material for the narrative of the self. When interacting with an audience, certain dimensions and facets will be emphasised more than others, as identity is performed.

The framework described above is a construction, based on narratives about leisure occupations obtained from these 17 people. No claim can be made that it is a finished structure, fully accounting for all occupation-focused narratives. The creation of categories such as dimensions and facets is based on interpretation and subjective decisions, driven by the desire to make the narrative material accessible in a form which furthers understanding of the occupied self. Such subjective interpretation is a perspective on the available data. The next chapter will give examples from the narratives and the analytic process, in order that this interpretation and construction can be populated with instances to demonstrate its relevance and rigour.

7   How meaning was made: the framework illustrated

But you can't beat, say autumn or spring . .
sat in a hide, whether it be on your own
or wi' a family member
and a huge flock of birds landing and all making a noise
you can't – you couldn't really paint –
I can't picture it well enough for you
The Bird-watcher BW6

People tell narratives for various reasons. Narratives can illustrate a point, make the listener feel something, transport the listener, transfer some piece of information into the head of the listener or summarise significant events (Schank, 1990, p48). These are intentional goals of the speaker, and here, must be supplemented by the goal of answering the questions of a researcher. All narratives have meanings. It can be argued that *illustrating a point* can be achieved by making the listener feel something, by transporting her, by transferring information or summarising events. The meaning of a narrative is conveyed not only through its content, but also in the way it is delivered.

The previous chapter presented a framework constructed by organising the meanings of the narratives, following analysis. Within this chapter the framework will be illustrated by examples taken from the narratives and their analysis. The aim of the chapter is to make transparent the interview material and the analytic processes which contributed to the emergence of the framework and its parts. The discussion of each part will be enriched by reference to literature, linking back to the literature review in chapters 2 and 3, and to other literature, found to be relevant following the development of the framework.

The first section gives a general description of some of the strategies used by participants for making and enhancing meaning. The next three sections will give examples to illustrate how meanings were made, and enhanced, in relation to the dimensions of the occupied self.

A note about the use of narrative extracts.

One of the advantages of using narratives as data in this type of research is that it allows 'chunks' of unbroken discourse to be presented. The meaning of a narrative can best be conveyed by exposure to the whole, so that, in the absence of the narrators themselves, or the audio-tapes, the reader can gain some impression of what was said and the emotion and poetry in how it was said (Poindexter, 2002). Clearly it would be impractical to display all the narratives, and presenting 'semi-raw' data would detract from the analysis. Selected examples

will be included throughout the text. Some are whole narratives, and some are extracts, chosen to make a particular point. Some parts of the framework will be discussed more fully than others, as an illustration of the depth to which each could be taken. The choices are subjective, reflecting my view of what will serve the thesis best.

7.1 Making and enhancing meaning

The analysis was designed to identify meaning as made through evaluative devices that the speaker used (as revealed by Labovian structural analysis) and also as made in the narrative plot. Additionally, the telling of a narrative is a performance, when viewed from a dramaturgical perspective (Goffman, 1975). When a narrative is told, it is told to an audience. In this way meaning is jointly negotiated (Mishler, 1986b). Attention was given to the selection of stories, the use of dramatic devices and other performative and interactive features which complemented the meanings conveyed in the evaluative device and plot. Note was also made as narratives were made coherent, showing reflection and ongoing development, as events were recounted and interpreted for the self and for the listening audience. In the rest of this section the importance of interaction and performance in creating and enhancing meaning are discussed with illustration. Further examples will be given in the rest of the chapter as the parts of the framework are addressed in more detail.

7.1.1 Narrative coherence and reflection

There is a close relation between narrative meaning and narrative coherence (see section 4.2.2). During the process of analysing the narratives, attention was given to how the narrator strived for coherence. This appeared to happen in two main ways. Sometimes a narrator appeared to strive for coherence for the audience's benefit, and sometimes for their own, perhaps when there was a conflict between two possible ways forward for the future self, or when the narrator appeared not to be able to make sense of what happened. This is the difference between making sense of the story told to oneself (the narrative of the self), and making a sensible story to tell others (narrative coherence in the presentation of the self as identity) (Hänninen, 2004).

In the evaluation, the narrator is conveying the point of the narrative, the reason for its being told, and so it could be said that every narrative reveals something of the reflexive self. The narrator has reflected on his attitude to the events of the story being told. Some narrators, in the telling of the narrative, developed their internal reflections further, exposing their internal reasoning to the listener. Sometimes this occurred, as if in a practiced way, as if the

narrator was telling me about something that they had struggled with and thought through previously. In these cases the narrator appeared to know, as they began, that the narrative would act as a vehicle to show these internal tribulations and the consequent outcome.

Sometimes narrators stumbled, striving for coherence. The Bridge-player stumbled in his fluency as he realised that, in order for me to understand his story, he needed to explain some of the technicalities of the game. This happened to several of the leisure enthusiasts, their narrative delivery interrupted, trying to compress years of knowledge and skill into a few sentences. The narrator must continually evaluate the effectiveness and coherence of a narrative, editing it and giving additional information, as required (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998). Each utterance should serve the purpose of progressing the narrative plan; this is global coherence (Agar & Hobbs, 1982). Narrative editing is the active process involved in achieving local coherence. At this level, the speaker strives to make each small part of the text relate to the previous one. In these ways the narrator strives to present a coherent, preferred, identity to others. The Dog-trainer (Figure 7-1) sometimes gave the impression of stumbling and hesitating, when in fact she was carefully crafting her story during its telling.

Figure 7-1 Dog-trainer DT2 'It's a two-way thing'

> **Stanza 3**
> *I wasn't getting very far*
> *so somebody told me to go to this other club*
> *where they do competitive obedience*
> *and it's a lot -* it's like the next level up really, from a pet club*
> *so I went -* I started going there as well,*
> *and that was really good*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *and they really liked the -**
> *they liked the high energy type dogs*
> *who really want to work,*
> *because you're asking a lot more of your dog*
> *and your do -**
> *and that kind of a dog is happy to do it*

The asterisks indicate where the Dog-trainer interrupted herself to find a preferable phrase, to tell her story better. In her attempt to make a coherent account for me she wished to use words and phrases accurately, and was not afraid to be seen sifting and selecting to attain this. Perhaps it is no coincidence that she is the editor of a club newsletter.

The listener can be a witness as the speaker struggles to make sense, or has an insight which appears to have occurred through telling the narrative. The Yoga-practitioner told a

narrative about a 16 year old girl who joined the yoga class with her mother, and wondered why she keeps coming (Figure 7-2).

Figure 7-2 Yoga-practitioner YP3 'a mystery to me'

> **Stanza 5**
> *And I thought 'she won't stick it!'*
> *Now whether she, I don't know, to me she doesn't look as though she's*
> <u>*really*</u> *interested in it*
> *but yet her mother said she ^is. She says she's enjoying coming*
> *and she doesn't want to mi^ss,*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *so that's a mystery to me really,* **(evaluation)**
> *because I look at her sometimes*
> *and I think 'ah well, she's a bit young and er, you know,*
> *she'll feel out of it'*
> *but yet, she's coming ( )*

There is an air of an unresolved problem in this narrative. In the Labovian analysis[2], I took the evaluation to be '*that's a mystery to me'*. The Yoga-practitioner was not happy about presenting the narrative without a substantiated opinion. Her view that the girl 'won't stick it' was not supported by what the Yoga-practitioner saw happening. The incoherence became the point of the narrative, and reveals to us, perhaps, that this is a woman who likes to understand what is going on and in this instance, does not.

7.1.2 Drama and imagery

The performance of a narrative entails the use of a range of dramatic devices which can place emphasis, create atmosphere and contribute to meaning. Participants in this study used pauses, tension and suspense, changes in voice pitch and flashbacks amongst other strategies, to do this. By telling events out of their actual chronological ordering, for example, a narrator can place an emphasis on the part of the tale which he wishes to convey as most meaningful. A little laughter would make an audience infer a different meaning from the same narrative told seriously. The participants in this study made or emphasised meaning using a range of linguistic and non-linguistic means. Inevitably some of the non-linguistic means were not captured, due to the analysis being based on transcription from audio-tapes.

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[2] In some of these narrative excerpts parts of the Labovian structure are shown, where they are relevant or interesting in the context of this chapter

A common dramatic device used in story-telling is to build **tension and suspense**. The narrator may use pauses or hold back information, so that the audience does not know how the story will end. The narrator may have given a preview of the outcome of the narrative, at the beginning, before embarking on the detailed narrative. In these cases the audience listens as if it does not know the outcome, for the narrative to have fullest effect (Cortazzi, 1993).

When asked about a low point in her running career, the Runner described a period when she was injured, and contrasted it with a race one month earlier where she had had an outstanding performance. Such **contrasts** were used by several people, to emphasis a point that was being made. Danger was made more vivid when a calm, peaceful contrast was described; the misery of being unable to run was emphasised by comparing with the elation of performing well; the trauma of a biking accident was made worse by setting it in the beauty of a summer's evening. Some narrators enhanced the meaning of narratives by using **superlatives.** The Horn-player (Figure-3) described a key turning point in his musical career while emphasising some of the qualities he admires in music and musicians.

Figure 7-3 Horn-player HP2 'an amazing moment'

> **Stanza 6**
> *'cos they – you know –*
> *and I was <u>absolutely</u> gob-smacked by the band.*
> *I'd <u>never</u>, <u>ever,</u> heard a big band live,*
> *and it, it, just blew me away*
> *with the, with the, the the noise and the - and just the, sort of, power,*
> *and the rawness of it.*
> *It was erm it was, it was an <u>amazing</u> moment*
> *I thought 'oh, I like – I <u>really</u> like this'*

There is an interesting contrast here, between the superlatives in the body of the stanza and the **understatement** at the end. In a context away from the preceding lines '*I really like this*' (last line) would sound less meaningful.

The manner in which narratives were delivered, in terms of **speed, rhythm and patterns** of words, lines and stanzas also added to meaning and drama. Some people notably placed (possibly unconscious) emphasis on certain words or phrases by repeating them. The Soul-singer's repetition twice of '*it wasn't nice*' (SS4) and the Choral-singer's repetition three times of '*she couldn't sing*' (CS9) added poignancy and meaning to these narratives. The patterning and structure of a narrator's speech was highlighted by the transformation of the text into lines and stanzas (Gee, 1991). This allowed some interesting observations on the way

the rhythm of words mimicked the actions of occupations, or the way that pattern of stanzas revealed patterns of behaviour. Examples will be given later in the chapter.

The research participants often tried to tell their narratives in a way that helped to 'transport' me to the time and place that they were recalling, particularly useful for those who wanted to emphasise the importance of the located self (see section 7.3). One of the ways that they did this was to use **vivid description and imagery** to help 'paint a picture' for me, trying to convey subtleties and extremes of emotion and experience. Indeed, in the quote at the top of this chapter, the Bird-watcher feared that he could not paint it well enough.

> ***Reflection on sharing memories***
> *I considered, during analysis, the frustration of someone trying to tell a powerful memory, and how they might feel inadequate in their abilities to help me share the moment. When the narrator thinks that the audience has never had a similar experience then the narrative details may be painted more vividly, than if told to a fellow enthusiast.*

Several participants told narratives which were so vivid that even the written form of the orally presented narrative is still effective in its 'transporting' abilities.

Another powerful way in which images and meanings can be communicated is with **metaphors**. When the literal meaning of a metaphor is explored, the meaning of the narrative becomes clearer. The Bird-watcher's metaphor of being unable to paint a good enough picture helped him to say that the moment he was describing was more special than he could adequately convey. Through metaphor, the narrator draws on culturally-shared reference points to create meaning (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Keponen & Kielhofner, 2006). The Yoga-practitioner, 71 at the time of interview, went back to her childhood to try to explain some influences that attracted her to yoga (Figure 7-4).

Figure 7-4 Yoga-practitioner YP5 'because it was different'

> **Stanza 4**
> *and then we had, er a line in the house, you know,*
> *that was there permanently, clothes line,*
>
> **Stanza 5**
> *he wasn't erm, demonstrative, you know, my dad,*
> *he never gave you any affection, or anything like that*
> *but he liked you to do exercise,*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *so >he'd put me up on this thing,<*
> *and I like (laughs) doing anything like that, you know – (laughs)*
> *just swinging my hands about like a monkey*

Her use of the phrase 'like a monkey' introduces images of flexibility and agility. She creates a picture of someone who is daring, maybe cheeky and good fun, encouraged by a father who may not show affection, but who showed he cared.

Leisure occupations can arouse extreme **emotions** of excitement and awe and these enhanced the drama of several of the narratives. Examples include the Bird-watcher seeing a rare bird, the Horn-player hearing a big band for the first time and the Scuba-diver fulfilling her ambition to see a manta ray. We might assume that each person is recalling, in their highly emotional narratives, something that they greatly value in life (Lieblich et al., 1998), and so narratives about the moral self can often be seen to be emotional.

Emotions about leisure occupations are not always positive. The Bird-watcher (see Figure 7-14 later) expressed sadness and anger that other people didn't care about the environment (and so revealing, by implicit contrast, his own values). The Gym-member shed some tears as she recalled how her father's interpretation of his faith stopped her from running in races on Sundays. Emotional expression could also be deceptive. The laughter of the Horse-rider and the Choral-singer occurred in narratives about public humiliation and sorrow, respectively.

The skilful use of **pronouns** was also used effectively as a dramatic device to pull the listener into the action. These often gave clues to identification, differentiation and who is ascribed as the author of the action (Ricouer, 1991b). This served to make the meaning of the narrative much more obvious when communicating the socially-located self. The word 'we' used instead of 'I' clearly positions the speaker alongside another, or others. In a notable example in one of the narratives which was not subject to analysis, the Dog-trainer said '*we're a rare breed*', which gives some indication of the close relationship with her dog! A narrator might speak about an experience in the second person 'you', as the Runner did in Figure 7-5. This pulls the listener into the action, as if running alongside the protagonist.

Figure 7-5 Runner R3 'you know yourself how you're running'

Stanza 2
Sometimes, say you're doing a 10K,
say you're doing a 6 mile run on the road
when you set off, you get this feeling if you're going well
or if you're not going well.
Sometimes your legs can feel heavy,
sometimes your breathing can be a little bit heavier than normal,
or you can sometimes –
the clock's around 10 minutes out, you know

A similar device is to use the second person to suggest an assumption of a universal experience, as when the Fisherman said '*well, we all do, you know, you go into the street and round where your house is, with minnows, with jars and what have you*' (F1). The Fisherman slips from 'we' to 'you', after his statement 'we all do' suggesting a universal childhood. Although the audience may not have actually shared this experience, they are helped to believe that they could have done. Both of these latter strategies make the narrative a more effective device for helping the listener to identify with the protagonist, so that the evaluation or the meaning of the narrative, when delivered, will be better understood.

Just as a clever use of pronouns can pull the listener into the action of a narrative, so can the way in which **time** is referred to. Most of the narratives used in this study replayed past events (although some made hypothetical forecasts for the future). Past events were not, however, always referred to in the past tense. The use of the *present* tense to make the past more vivid to the listener has been called 'transposition' (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p25). In Figure 7-6 the extract from the Mountain-biker shows how he used the present tense combined with the second person to take the listener on an exciting bike ride, experiencing the skill of high speed manoeuvring and risk, which underlines the point of the narrative.

Figure 7-6 Mountain-biker MB7 'got away with that, no problem'

> *It's hard to describe unless you've done it,*
> *but – your fingers are on the brake,*
> *you're gliding,*
> *you're all focused,*
> *just going for it,*
> *know what I mean?*

There are many more examples of dramatic devices. Some of these will be included below, to show how the narrative meanings that shaped the various parts of the framework were made and conveyed.

7.2 The active self

All of the narratives included action. The need to be active is universal, and, by acting, people interact with the physical and social environments (Kielhofner, 2008). As described in the last chapter, the dimension of the active self was emphasised by some people in some narratives. The facets of the active self which could be foregrounded, singly, or with other facets, were agency, competence and morality. These were shown diagrammatically in Figure 6-1.

7.2.1 Active self – agency

Through action the individual has **agency** in the physical and social world (McAdams, 1993). In terms of agency, people usually told narratives in which their leisure occupation enabled them to feel in control and effective. For these individuals engagement in these particular occupations meant that they could present themselves, variously, as effective problem-solvers, goal achievers and initiators of action. A strong sense of agency can result in positive, effective experiences of occupational engagement; recalling and telling about those experiences helps to re-affirm that self narrative (Bruner, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1996).

In Figure 7-7 the Canoeist uses a contrast, comparing her own controlled behaviour with that of the group of young women she is with.

Figure 7-7 Canoeist C2 'I could see the funny side'

> *I was out with a group* **(orientation)**
> *of young black women, adults*
> *we'd gone through about 2 locks*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *heading down stream,*
> *quite still waters,*
> *quite a nice calm day*
> *one of those 'oh it's going to rain'*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *I was with this group,*
> *and we had two instructors with us*
> *and . . . there was this object* **(complication)**
> *floating towards us on the water*
>
> **Stanza 5**
> *and I recognised it as a dead cat*
> *and a group of women got into this small area*
> *and they just panicked,*
> *trying to get away from this floating dead cat*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *and trying to keep away,*
> *but while they were panicking*
> *trying to keep themselves safe*
> *they capsized. (banging into each other?)* **(resolution)**
>
> **Stanza 7**
> *I saw the funny side (***Evaluation***)*
> *Had to keep myself safe*
> *(pressing into the bank?)*
> *that was quite scary ((we laugh))*
> *didn't put me off canoeing*

The point of the narrative is that, though she could see the funny side, *she* knew how to keep herself safe. The agentic self was foregrounded in all three of the Canoeist's narratives. For her it is a facet of the occupied self which is worth foregrounding.

In the Yoga-practitioner's account of why she is now practicing less yoga at home (Figure 7-8), the poetic structure of the stanzas helped to reveal her persistence and sense of agency. She uses a repeating pattern which acts as an intensifying device (Mishler, 1999) to build the dramatic effect of her narrative as she makes every effort to practice yoga at home, despite a retired husband and a new, less convenient, house.

Figure 7-8 Yoga-practitioner YP4 'I'm not doing as much as I used to do'

JT	*but you do stuff at home like you practice to tapes ( ) ..*
	Stanza 1
YP	*I used to do* *but there again, you see,* *when you're both retired,* *and your husband's always there,* **(complication 1)** *it's very very difficult really*
	Stanza 2 *and with it being (?) one room* **(complication 2)** *so I'd have to go upstairs ((both laugh))* *and they're only small bedrooms ((laughs))* *and you don't have the roo::m, you know,* **(complication 3)** *to stretch and do yourself*
	Stanza 3 *now before, I used to do erm ..* *Remember Salute to the Sun?* *I used to do that every morning in the bathroom.* *But this bathroom's so tiny (laughs)* *I can't do it, the toilet's in the way!* **(complication 4)**
	Stanza 4 *So I'm not doing as much* *as I used to do* *even since I moved here,* *because of the way the house layout is*

It can be seen, in this humorous narrative, that the Yoga-practitioner has been persistent in her attempts to do her yoga practice at home, but has encountered various obstacles (noted as complications, from the Labovian analysis). She presents herself as good-humoured, long-

suffering and persistent in her attempts to problem-solve. The cyclical repetition in the five-line stanzas has revealed a little of the agentic woman behind the narrative.

There is a distinction, when considering this facet of the self, between actually being in control and effective, and perceiving oneself (or not) as being so. The narratives of the Runner appeared to make no connection between her successes and her training regime. The Bridge-player gave the impression of being very much in control of his bridge career and performance, while the Horn-player seemed to attribute his successes to chance. For the Gym-member and the Artist, religious beliefs played a part in determining choice and control.

Although the human being has agency, deciding to act and bring about change in the world, not every action is initiated by internally planned purpose. In the course of any life, there is contingency, made up of fateful moments. Disease, accidents, chance encounters, 'lucky' events happen. These impinge on the individual's life, and may or may not elicit action as a response. In the face of life's contingencies creating instability, the reflexive project of the self strives to maintain a coherent narrative of identity (Giddens, 1991). How a person responds to such eventualities may depend on the perceived impact of the event, upon internal belief systems about the efficacy of the self, and about external loci of authority and responsibility, such as God, government or 'others'. In his study of craft-artists, Mishler noted that important turning points in a career might hinge on something which was not self-initiated (Mishler, 1999). In the narrative extract in Figure 7-9 the Mountain-biker had just told how he had been a racing cyclist in his younger days, until he injured a knee. A chance sighting in a shop window in 1984 re-introduced him to biking of a different variety:

Figure 7-9 Mountain-biker MB1 'I didn't even think'

> **Stanza 5**
> *and there was, like, a real weird looking bike,*
> *no-one had ever seen such a bike,*
> *because it was all racing bikes and touring bikes.*
> *And these mountain bikes with these fat tyres erm*
> *caught my eye as I walked past erm,*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *and I didn't, I didn't even think,* **(Evaluation)**
> *I just went in and bought one*
> *there and then.*
> *I just walked past the window, saw it, turned round erm,*
> *and I walked through the shop*
> *and said 'how much is that?'*
> *'£175'*
> *'right, I'll have it'.*

The Mountain-biker tells something of his identity here. A 'fateful moment' occurred when he saw a strange looking bike in a window. He went in and bought it there and then. The meaning of the narrative, using Labovian analysis, is found in the phrase '*I didn't even think*'. He reacted to this contingency impulsively. He was attracted to the bike, and it meant so much to him that he bought it immediately; he was agentic. This was the action that started his mountain-biking career. Another person may have walked away and done nothing.

Whilst many narratives had meanings related to feeling in control and acting effectively, some were told about feeling helpless. In the short narrative shown in Figure 7-10, the Choral-singer tells the events in reverse order. In the *telling* of a story it becomes a narrative, and a narrative may unfold the events in any order which enhances drama and meaning.

Figure 7-10 Choral-singer CS9 'it was awful for her'

> **Stanza 1**
> *it happened to my mum*
> *she couldn't sing* **(resolution)**
> *I told you she had a little mini stroke* **(complication)**
> *only a very small stroke*
> *but it meant she couldn't sing as she wanted to.*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *It was awful for her* **(evaluation)**
> *because when she was in church* **(orientation**
> *you always knew she was there*
> *she had a marvellous voice*
> *you know, really really beautiful*

Here the drama (and the meaning) of the narrative is enhanced by telling the resolution and the complication before the orientation. At first we know only that she couldn't sing, then we find out it was because of a stroke and then, in the next stanza, it is revealed to the listener that the tragedy is heightened because her voice was beautiful. Yet the actual story in correct chronological order is:

Mum had beautiful voice

⇩

she had a stroke

⇩

she could not sing.

By telling the narrative in reverse order of events, the Choral-singer conveys to us how much she values singing, and the tragedy of having a beautiful voice and being unable to use it. '…*narrators may shift back and forth in time as bits and pieces of a tale and the concerns they manifest come to the fore …*' (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p24)

7.2.2 Active self – competence

Amongst these serious leisure participants, committing considerable personal resources to their leisure, narratives were told which gave evidence of their levels of **competence**. Sometimes this was in answer to a question from me, but often it was embedded in narratives about other things. This facet of the self took three main forms in the narratives people told: lacking competence, developing competence and having competence. Perceiving oneself to be competent is one of the rewards of doing a leisure occupation (Stebbins, 1996) which might account for why people continue to do it. Competence has also been associated with flow (Kiewa, 2001) and with feelings of well-being (Lysack & Seipke, 2002).

Competence was described as being personally or socially recognised. The Runner, for example (Figure 7-5), described how she could assess the level of her current ability and potential, as she set off on a run, by being aware of the heaviness of her legs and breathing. This was about personally recognised competence. Other narratives foregrounded competence by comparing the protagonist's skills with others. The Mountain-biker, in Figure 7-11, tells a narrative, the point of which appears to be to demonstrate his competence, not only in mountain-biking, but also in bike knowledge, by comparing himself with some other cyclists.

Figure 7-11 Mountain-biker MB12 'he was certain that I wouldn't do it'

> **Stanza 1**
> *but people are in that mind-set now.*
> *They've got excess income*
> *and just go out and spend a lot of money*
> *on a bike which is not suited to them,*
> *and they don't know why they're buying it*
> *and they've all the (equipment?) on it and they don't know why,*
> *and they ride the same routes, week in, week out,*
> *and . . I don't know,*
> *they do it for other reasons than why I do it.*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *We have a guy at work.*
> *I've probably said this before,*
> *but, he's never even talked about mountain-biking to me,*
> *ever, ever, at work*
> *and I've known him for years*
>
> Cont…

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Cont…

Stanza 3
and er, then all of a sudden he buys one about three years ago ( )
he's a 57 year old, about 57
and 5 or 6 of them go out every Wednesday,
and now he's talking to me as if I never rode a bike,
it's 'oh you probably wouldn't be able to ride over that rocky section'
and – very patronising he is. Erm

JT   *so do you put him right?*

Stanza 4
well, what can you say?
What can you say?
You put it right when you're riding,
which I did one night.
I went out one night with him and he set a challenge down
and it actually backfired,
it worked in my favour really.

Stanza 5
There's a really steep hill with a potholed bit (?)
Rawnston Hill it's called,
and at the bottom there's a rocky section for about 20 feet.
It's really bouldery,
really, really hard to get over. You know,
and just, like, to carry your bike over there it takes a lot of skill really

Stanza 6
And I'd just been up there, 2 minutes before.
I rode up,
got to the top
and met these guys at the top
and I'm going in the opposite direction,
and he said 'oh, are you not joining us?
Oh' So I had to join them,

Stanza 7
so we went through this wooded section,
it turns out we ended up having to come back up Rawston Hill,
about 20 minutes later,
which I'd already just done.
So he said 'first one to the top,
I'll buy an Easter Egg to –
er you know, because it were near Easter then,
'First one to clear the hill',
thinking his mate, Chris, was going to do it.
He was certain that I wouldn't do it - **(Evaluation)**
that I wasn't capable of going over this boulder-field.

Cont…

Cont…

Stanza 8
So Chris sets off,
I set off behind him,
Chris gets half-way up,
bails out.
So he pulls back
so I say 'can I just get past then?'
you know what I mean?
I cleaned it.
Got to the top,
waited 5 minutes for them.
They were miles behind,
you know all pushing their bikes.
So I got to the top and said 'Do I get my egg then?'
He had a bit of a chunner.

Stanza 9
He came into work the next day
and I says 'Have you got my egg?'
He passes me a Creme Egg ((JT laughs))

Stanza 10
after that, he's not said a word to me since,
after that, conversations now,
when he goes out with his mates,
when he comes into work the next day
and says 'I went out with such and such-a-person,
and we went down this rocky descent,
oh it was really hard,
there's only Jed managed to do it,
and er, there's only probably er . .you . . would have done it as well'.

This is like a classic Cinderella tale. Our hero, ignored, then patronised, is set a challenge which, despite being at a disadvantage, he wins. Even better, he is able to claim his prize in a public setting, winning respect which must always be acknowledged by his rivals. This is a tale of competence, and also, because the villains get their comeuppance, of morality.

The Mountain-biker told many colourful and evocative narratives. In this next brief excerpt (Figure 7-12 overleaf), competence is not referred to explicitly. Speech rhythm and speed were used to mimic the activity which was being described. The Mountain-biker uses this to recreate the excitement of a 30 mile per hour bike ride, and his skill, of which the audience becomes convinced.

Figure 7-12 Mountain-biker MB7 'got away with that, no problem'

> **Stanza 1**
> *it's body weight,*
> *it's your body,*
> *to ride a bike,*
> *it's your body,*
> *not your steering,*
> *don't count on your steering,*
> *for trying to swerve round the rocks.*
> *Split seconds left or right,*
> *bang, go rigid,*
> *it's as quick as that.*

When presented as lines and stanzas using Gee's approach, the poetry in narratives is revealed in a way which helps to understand better *what* is being said, by *how* it is being said. The account above was made more compelling and evocative by dramatically emphasising the action, conveying strong emotions with 'an economy of words' (Poindexter, 2002, p713). The Mountain-biker's oral delivery re-presented above gives a sense of the identity he is presenting (adventurous, fearless, focused and skilled) in the meaning of the overall narrative.

In contrast to the highly competent selves normally portrayed in the narratives, some people revealed events in which they felt that they lacked competence. The Bird-watcher, for example, very competent at his hobby, told two narratives that featured his social incompetence; a handicap when it came to reporting data to bird-club meetings. The Horn-player, in other ways a confident man, told more than one narrative which foregrounded his feelings of musical incompetence. Confessing a moment of incompetence, the Amateur Operatic Performer told what it is like to forget lines in the middle of a performance. It feels like a long period of suffering and embarrassment which, she said, can be stopped by other lead actors also on stage, who may not help, apparently, if they don't like you! Not only acting competence, but also social competence was being featured in this narrative.

7.2.3 Active self – morality

Being agentic means that one can act to have impact in the world and this is associated with morality (Christiansen, 1999; Gover & Gavelek, 1996; Harre & Gillett, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1991). An individual's actions have meaning within society, and will be interpreted according to predominant societal values. Identity and morality are closely linked. '*We have a sense of who we are through a sense of where we stand in relation to 'the good'*' (Crossley, 2000, p16). In the framework of the occupied self, morality is the third facet of the active self.

Participants told of their moral selves in various ways which I have grouped into four forms: adopting / rejecting societal values, care of others, care of self and moral conflicts.

Figure 7-13 Artist A2 'a bit rebellious really'

Stanza 1
I showed my dad once, a portrait **(orientation)**
and he was in utter disgrace.

Stanza 2
Just a face portrait.
He was like ' you can't draw people' **(complication)**
and 'how could you?' and whatever.

Stanza 3
And I felt quite bad, **(resolution)**
and he was right,
because you're not meant to draw.
That's why I don't have –
I've only just about got my two children up, there ((points to a photograph))
but I don't have any life drawings on my wall,
because even I don't agree with it,

Stanza 6
but really, there's a kind of turmoil,
a bit rebellious, really – **(evaluation)**
which is really –
it's like 'I'm quite enjoying this' ((both laugh))
my mum stopping me
'you're not doing it!'
so it kind of brings out this teenager side of me
yes you do, you regress ((both laugh))
you kind of go back in your childhood

The individual '*will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society'* (Goffman, 1959, p45). Most participants, implicitly in the content of the narratives, adopted predominant societal values. This was less easy for me to identify if the speaker shared my own cultural background. Some told about struggles with cultural values; the Gym-member and the Artist, whose families were very religious, were examples of this. The Artist (introduced in section 1.1.2), born in England, was raised by her Bangladeshi parents as a Muslim. She told (Figure 7-13, above) about taking art classes, having to paint portraits as part of the course expectations, then choosing to show one of her portraits to her

father. Her actions, she knew, went against the norms and values of her ethnic community. The norms and values of one's leisure community may be different from those of the broader culture (Gillespie et al., 2002). In this narrative we appear to be hearing someone unsure whether to conform or rebel against a culturally accepted morality. The Artist uses drama to evoke the tension of the situation, partially, by mimicking her parents' responses to her actions. She wonders whether she should be an obedient or a rebellious child.

As well as the wider society, it is common for sub-groups, including leisure groups, to have their own moral codes and standards to which members are expected to adhere (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986). At this 'micro' level, there was evidence in some of the narratives, of people adopting, or rejecting, the values of their own leisure community. The Mountain-biker had firm views about how mountain-biking should properly be approached, as did the Dog-trainer, with regard to agility training classes.

Perhaps most commonly, narratives were told which reflected what Rojek has called an ethic of care towards others, or active citizenship (Rojek, 2005). There were narratives about duty, loyalty and obligation, about caring for fellow leisure group members, family members, the future of young people, the general public, and animals.

At a societal level, narratives were told that showed caring for the futures of young, inner-city black women (the Canoeist), the environment (the Bird-watcher) and the preservation of heritage (the Railwayman). This level of social caring, almost political in its nature, is better understood against the backdrop of the *'broader historical contexts'* that surround it (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000, p8) and is associated with the individual taking a personal position in relation to societal values and deciding to work for what he or she believes is 'the good'. The Bird-watcher (Figure 7-14, below) struggled to interpret my use of the word 'bad' and ranged around in his experiences to find an answer that might satisfy me. His struggle to find a narrative was evidenced by pauses and self-interruptions. He responded by giving a personal interpretation of what 'bad' could mean, and went on to speak in more general terms, which introduced a hypothetical narrative in which people standing at a bus-stop, because of their ignorance, do not hear a rare bird singing. It was more important for him, here, to construct a narrative which told me something of his priorities and values, than to tell about a time when he spotted no birds.

Figure 7-14 Bird-watcher BW7 'people take it for granted'

> JT   *so, on the other end, do you have bad moments?*
> BW   *. . . . no – not that I can categorise as bad, no, I mean, I suppose the worst is when you go out and you don't see bugger all* ((wry laugh))
>
> **Stanza 1**
> *that's probably as bad as it gets – you just –*
> *if you mean bad – do you get angry at things, yes?*
> *Things er – the ignorance of people . . .*
> *people not knowing ... er being aware of what's around them –*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *that's only the bad points of bird-watching*
> *the fact that – you know that what you see is fantastic,*
> *and it's important, . .*
> *I think it's very important – the environment –*
> *and other people take it for granted.*
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *That's the only – for me, that's the only bad bit of bird watching,*
> *the fact that I feel it's a right thing to do –*
> *not just bird watching, but the environment as well,*
> *caring about the environment, er,*
> *and other people . ..not that they don't care,*
> *but they're not tuned into it.*
>
> JT   *have you got something in mind that's made you think of that? Is there something – can you give me an example of what you mean?*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> BW   *Can only say - you've got the rarest bird in the world,*
> *on a winter's morning,*
> *singing next to a bus-stop full of people,*
> *and they wouldn't know –*
> *they wouldn't even hear it –*
> *they wouldn't be able to define what it were,*
> *because they wouldn't even hear it singing . . .*

Whilst the ethic of care can act at a societal (or environmental) level as with the Bird-watcher, above, people also told of more localised acts of caring. These were sometimes enacted as tales of duty and loyalty. The Amateur Operatics Performer told of going on stage with a chipped bone in her foot, ending the tale on a classic show-business note which conveys a sense of *agreeable obligation* (Stebbins, 2005).

Figure 7-15 Amateur Operatic performer AOP3 'you do what you have to do'

> **Stanza 3**
> *you just seem to forget about it,*
> *and you do what you have to do –* **(Evaluation)**
> *you do your dancing,*
> *you do your speaking,*
> *you do your talking*
> *whatever,*
>
> **Stanza 5**
> *So yes, I've been where I've been in pain,*
> *but you just carry on,*
> *the show must go on*

The Horn-player, in the hypothetical narrative below (Figure 7-16), tried to respond to a question about whether he could imagine his relationship with music changing.

Figure 7-16 Horn-player HP9 anticipating the future

> **Stanza 1**
> *I know there will come a point in time* ***(Orientation)***
> *when I'm not as good as I want to be,*
> *I'll have to make way for somebody else to take my place* **(Complication)**
> *One of the things though,*
> *I hope that I'll be mature enough to accept that*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *You know, I want to develop young children,* **(Imaginary resolution 1)**
> *so they can grow into adults who can play as well*
> *So part of this is, you know, I have done, teaching kids*
> *to try and repay some of that patience*
> *that other teachers have given me in my time as well*

Striving to offer something back that he has received himself, the Horn-player wants to teach young people to play musical instruments. This is an extract from a longer narrative in which later stanzas list some of the moral struggles which he imagines having if he stops playing for the band. He will experience a sense of relief and freedom from the pressures, but will feel disloyal to the band which needs players. Such moral struggles were a feature of several people's narratives. Another form of morality is what Rojek (2005) has called the ethic of care for the self. There were narratives telling of people looking after their physical and mental well-being, and others where people just wanted to have a good time, but several found that this conflicted with obligations to others. Some narratives focused on the

consequent feelings of guilt and selfishness. The Bird-watcher wondered if his pleasure at being the first to spot a rare bird was based on selfishness and the Yoga-practitioner, perhaps reflecting the moral values of her generation, declared that '*there's more in my life than just leisure*' (YP2). It is not surprising to find that others, researching serious leisure, have found similar conflicts. Those involved in kennel club activities were often found to have to negotiate the boundaries between their hobby and family and relationship expectations (Gillespie et al., 2002).

Stebbins introduced the idea that agreeable obligation can have its '*dark side*', when the obligation to turn up for leisure commitments caused friction between the participant and their family (Stebbins, 2005, p351) but he did not mention personal costs in relation to feeling tired, feeling guilty and some parts of leisure hardly being enjoyable at all (Figure 7-17)

Figure 7-17 Horn-player HP4 'if you don't turn up your name's mud'

> **Stanza 10**
> *well I can't go on bearing that guilt*
> *So, in spite of the fact that you enjoy it,*
> *but also, with that band*
> *they were getting ever so serious about the music,*
> *and again it wasn't something ..*
> *you know, I like music and I play it for enjoyment,*
> *but the seriousness of it,*
> *the complaining and the griping that they had*
> *about the type of music they were playing*
> *oh, I don't really want to hear all this*

Although the Horn-player left this band eventually, his feelings of loyalty and obligation kept him there for a long time, despite the fact that his leisure was giving him little enjoyment. Morality, as a facet of the self, is complex and the focus for emotions which are negative, positive and ambivalent. Like all the facets in the framework, it does not stand separate from the others. Agency displays moral values, for example, and values are impacted on by one's social and temporal location.

7.3 The located self

The second dimension of the occupied self is the located self. The individual can conceptualise the self as having a particular location in the temporal, spatial, socio-cultural contexts and within the body/mind. Each of these contexts offers elements which are both

universally shared and uniquely experienced as backdrops for the construction of identity. These contexts are inter-related. Time impacts on the physical environment and on embodied people and on society (spaces, places and people change over time). Politics, culture and history are products of the interface of time and society. Embodied people (as individuals, local or global communities) impact on the physical environment and the physical environment impacts on people. The experience of time, by an individual, can be shaped by others, if, for example, too many or too few, demands are made. The measurement of time and productivity are closely linked in industry as a measure of efficiency. The embodied individual, body and mind, is emplaced in time, space and society. Embodiment and emplacement means that the individual can act *in* and *on* the environment (Rojek, 2005), this is occupational performance (Nelson, 1988). The facets of the located self were shown, diagrammatically, in Figures 6-1.

Context plays an important part in narrative construction. The meaning of an account is made by connections being made, by the narrator, between the action in the narrative and the contexts in which the action was carried out (Polkinghorne, 1988). Whilst many authors only consider the social context as a background for meaningful action as it relates to identity construction (e.g. Jenkins, 2004; Mishler, 1999), others also regard the physical and / or temporal contexts as important (Gover, 1996; Gover & Gavelek, 1996; Rojek, 2005). Jenkins has suggested that identity is formed on the interface between the personal (what goes on in the head, the reflexive self) and the contextual. Identity is thus relational, contextual and related to activity (Kuentzel, 2000). The narratives told by the participants in this study draw our attention to the interface between individual and context. In the evaluative device of a narrative, a context comes to the fore and the interface between the individual and the context illuminates a facet of identity.

7.3.1 Located self – time

When participants in this study emphasised the temporal context as being important in the meaning of a narrative, it was in one of four ways. For some, e.g. the Runner (as in Figure 7-5 above), time was important because it measured ability in her occupation, '*the clock's around 10 minutes out, you know'*. For others, time was important as a limited resource, given the various demands on it. The Amateur Operatic performer, the Horn-player and the Bridge-player were examples of this. Some people highlighted a special time, such as a season or an annual cultural event (three people featured Christmas in a narrative, whilst for some, summer or winter had a particular meaning).

The fourth way in which time was featured as an important context for the construction of self was in the sense of continuity which several people spoke of. Some made links back to childhood or forward to an anticipated future. Some made links to past generations or to future generations (e.g. parents, children). Other had a more abstract sense of belonging in time, almost ideological. Through their occupations, the Horn-player and the Railwayman could experience a sense of locatedness in past eras and contribute to the preservation of traditions associated with them. For the Horn-player, membership of a big band, playing post-war jazz, linked his identity to an era of raw, powerful American-influenced music played by ex-Forces men, with whom it was an honour to be associated. For the Railwayman, the railway preservation society linked him to the age of steam trains, busy platforms peopled with smiling families and historic uses of the railways, such as transporting troops in the Second World War. Association with an era consists of more than just a point in history. It was clear from their narratives that for the Horn-player and the Railwayman, their leisure occupations were associated with an amalgam of sounds, smells, sights, atmospheres and attitudes which are rarely found in combination in the present time.

> ***Reflection on narrative expression***
> *In the last three sentences I have tried to capture what a sense of belonging to a past era is about. My attempts to give an objective, dispassionate account cannot compare with the effectiveness of the source narratives (HP2, featured in Figures 7-3 and 7-18 and RM1, and RM9 featured in chapter 8). This is evidence of the power of a narrative to convey knowledge and understanding.*

Figure 7-18 Horn-player HP2 'an amazing moment'

> **Stanza 10**
> *and er, so it was a complete shock*
> *to hear these grown men playing music properly*
> *and these had all come out, at that time, of, of the Forces*
> *and out of the 50s big band era*
> *and ah so it was such an <u>honour</u>*
> *to be with this, this group of, of people.*

7.3.2 Located self – space

Narratives were told in which particular mention was made of a spatial context, or a place, as essential to the meaning of the narrative. This seemed to indicate that for some, place was a key element for the construction of the self. As Williams has noted '*The meaning and use of*

places become entwined in the stories we tell our selves and others about who we are.' (D. R. Williams, 2002, p362).

In terms of these leisure narratives there were four main forms of this facet. As with time, the *amount* of space available as a resource was sometimes a factor in the self-narrative. The Fisherman, the Bridge-player, the Canoeist and the Railwayman told narratives which showed how they occupied increasingly wider circles of physical space, as their leisure occupations developed. The Bridge-player moved from home, to school, to university, to national then international matches. Gee's poetic structure in the Fisherman's first narrative helped me to see how as a child, he expanded his range from fishing for minnows near home, to catching the bus to reservoirs further afield, as his age, confidence and expertise progressed. In an interesting parallel, the spatial dimension of his fishing also expanded from being in close proximity to his body (with a fishing net) to being able to cast a line out to 20 or 30 feet. Occupying more space and going further afield is a feature of human development, and so at the other end of life, it is not surprising to see the Yoga-practitioner travelling less far to pursue her leisure occupations, and also struggling to find space for her home yoga practice (Figure 7-8).

The meaning of some narratives indicated that a particular leisure occupation could be carried out in a range of places, not being tied to one environment. It was important to the Runner and the Railwayman that they could still run, and be involved with trains, respectively, no matter where they travelled. There is an indication here of the adaptability of the chosen occupation, and also, perhaps, the participant's ability to exploit opportunities.

A third form of the facet of spatial locatedness was the foregrounding of 'special' places. Some narratives were particularly effective at transporting me to these places, as the narrators employed vivid and effective imagery in their attempts to share the experience. For the Fisherman, the Horse-rider and the Bird-watcher the occupied self found meaning in being located outdoors, amidst nature. In Figure 7-19, the Fisherman paints a concise, but vivid, picture to illustrate to me why he goes fishing. In this narrative, ostensibly about his motivation for fishing, we learn much about the values and therefore the identity of the Fisherman. He could have replied to my question by saying, 'I like to be near nature' or 'fishing allows me to see wild animals close up', but he did more than this. In the detail of the narrative he invites me to sit by him and watch as events unfold.

Figure 7-19 Fisherman F5 a wild animal sitting next to me

JT   *Wh^y do you do it? What keeps you – cos, the – right -*
F   *it's the outside isn't it? -*
JT   *you're 50 now*
F   *yes*
JT   *you started 45 years ago -*

Stanza 1
F   *if you were sat on a river or on a pond,*
with just you there,
you've even got –

stanza 2
like the other day when I were fishing,
I have what I call pinkies,
which are like miniature maggots if you will
and there's - and when you're baiting up
you might drop one or two on the floor, then,

stanza 3
I were fishing the other day,
and then the next minute,
there were a little robin there,
just sat,
<u>right next</u> to me,

stanza 4
I were just like that ((gestures))
throwing some down,
and I have a tray on the side of my fishing box,
so I just put a few on there,

stanza 5
and it were just coming
and sat,
you know, like a wild animal,
or a wild bird should I say,
tame as anything,
just coming and sitting next to me.

The listener (and the reader) experiences with the Fisherman his awe of this little bird which has trusted him enough to come close. His immediate answer to my question, '*it's the outside isn't it?',* was expanded in this narrative to convey the meaning of what being outside can be about, to those who appreciate it.

In a similar way the Scuba-diver (Figure 7-20) told narratives of being in water, and the Railwayman showed a clear affiliation with the railway environment. For these people, the sense of the occupied self partially incorporated being located in specific places. The Scuba-diver told narratives which showed that scuba-diving has a particular meaning for her. For her, this occupation is, partially at least, about locating herself in water, and experiencing the water sensually. The special feeling of belonging in water is part of the narrative she tells to herself and presents to others.

Figure 7-20 Scuba-diver SD1 'absolute magic'

> **Stanza 10**
> *but, now, it's just absolutely wonderful,*
> *I mean I just love being in the water,*
> *it's almost like a sensual experience, you know,*
> *and that first breath underwater, absolutely magic!* **(evaluation)**
> *It really is.*

A study investigating the meaning of sea-kayaking for people with spinal cord injuries found that people valued 'the "*other world*" aspect of the aquatic outdoor environment (L. P. S. Taylor & McGruder, 1996, p42).

A fourth way in which some people talked about the located self involved the interface between the vulnerable body and the unsafe physical environment. Some serious leisure occupations offer locations, for example, in dangerous waters (the Canoeist) or on steep hilly tracks covered in boulders (the Mountain-biker). A personal association with these risky, even dangerous, environments was highlighted in the telling of these narratives. Some occupations offer the opportunity to place one's self in an environment which one can experience as unsafe. Further, this experience might be witnessed by others, or it can be told to others, so that it becomes part of the socially presented identity.

7.3.3 Located self – the body

When the body and mind are regarded as a context for the occupied, reflexive self, it must be considered as operating within the other three contexts of time, space and society. The physical body is vulnerable to physical harm in the physical, spatial context and undergoes development and aging in the temporal context (Rojek, 2005). The mind, also, is vulnerable to harm and dysfunction. The body and mind enable occupational performance, as the individual operates in and on the world through occupation. Embodiment (having a thinking, feeling mind and a performing body) means that the individual can demonstrate mastery, (or

competence) to his or herself or to others (Christiansen, 1999; Giddens, 1991). There is a link, also, to the socially situated and agentic self, in that '*Routinised control of the body is crucial to the sustaining of the individual's protective cocoon in situations of day-to-day interaction.*' (Giddens, 1991, p56).

In this study there was evidence to show that some people, in some situations, regarded the body as an important context for the occupied self. Embodiment, as a facet of the self, had three main forms. Firstly, the body (and mind) is the context for sensory, emotional and physical awareness and experience. Some of the narratives (e.g. the Bird-watcher excitedly spotting the rare bird, the Runner assessing her body's performance and the Soul-singer knowing her voice had changed) showed that the participant's leisure occupations offered them this form of embodied experience. Secondly, some narratives showed people caring for their bodies in terms of well-being or appearance (e.g. the Yoga-practitioner and the Gym-member) while a third form of this facet was people recognising the vulnerability of the embodied self (as did the Canoeist in dangerous waters, the Choral-singer losing her voice and the Mountain-biker injuring himself). The narrative in Figure 7-21 illustrates the centrality of the body as part of the Runner's 'self'. The meaning of this narrative appears to be about contingency, risk and vulnerability, as well as the link between bodily well-being and mood.

Figure 7-21 Runner R2 'that was probably a bit of a low point'

> **Stanza 1**
> I *did a fell race at Christmas*
> *in which I did really really well,*
> *but I slipped going down a hill,*
> *and it just jarred my knee a little bit*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *and then bent down at nurse – er at work very quick*
> *and jarred my knee*
> *and then on Christmas Day I really injured my knee.*
> *I say injured it, I really took quite badly,*
> *I couldn't run for a month.*
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *I don't know why*
> *but I did feel ((laughs)) quite low at that point,* **(evaluation)**
> *in fact I couldn't do a great deal*

The inclusion of body as a *context* for the occupied self might be disputed. It is included here, however, with the recognition that the individual can reflect on the self located in the body, just as she can reflect on the self located in time, place or society.

7.3.4 Located self – society and relationships

All human beings are located in a social context; this is the fourth facet of the located self. The social context includes the matrix of relationships and socio-cultural influences within which the individual operates. It is in this social environment that the attitudes and reactions of others are processed and integrated by the reflexively self-conscious self (Charmaz, 2002; Gover, 1996; Jenkins, 2004; Somers, 1994). These narratives of leisure draw attention to the social context in various ways. Six forms of the facet of the socially located self were identified, ranging from outer to inner circles of influence: from location in the wider society to location in personal relationships.

The first form arises from the location of the individual within the wider socio-cultural-political context which include religion, politics, forces of oppression and dominant societal values (Lawler, 2002). For some of the participants the occupied self involved offering empowering opportunities for young black women (the Canoeist), resisting cultural norms (e.g. the Gym-member and the Artist) or conforming to them (e.g. the Gym-member and the Choral-singer). Mishler described how the men in his craft-artists study drew their stories from those available in the cultural repertoire available for male development and how both men and women's stories reflected the gender expectations of society (Mishler, 1999). Socio-cultural positioning impacts on values, as previously discussed, and it also impacts on the ways that the narratives were told. The Soul-singer deserves special mention, in that her age and culture prompted me to note, during analysis, that she '*speaks in a young person's street manner, which was sometimes hard to follow and certainly impossible to capture the rhythm of in the transcript*'. It is possible, also, that a young black person in an urban area may be using words in a way which differs from mainstream societal usage (e.g. she used the words 'It was like mad' in narrative 1, which I took to mean, following consultation with people younger than me, 'it was marvellous').

In order to tell a narrative, people rely on (and may be constrained by) their knowledge of culturally available narrative forms and types. These are likely to be recognised and understood by their audience (Plummer, 2001; Polkinghorne, 1991; Silverman, 2001). Although my focus in this research was not on narrative genres, there were some incidences where the way a person told a narrative (or the way I heard it) reminded me of a familiar

narrative type or a myth. These are illustrations of how identity can be hinted at in narrative telling, through culturally shared symbols. Two of the Amateur Operatic Performer's narratives gave a very clear message that '*the show must go on'*. In all three of her narratives the Amateur Operatic Performer conveyed the impression of being a 'trooper', someone who would do anything to make sure that her colleagues and the audience were not let down. '*The show must go on'* is a phrase popularly associated with a certain era of musical films, when, against all odds, Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, or similar, would ensure the success of the show.

The Railwayman told a narrative (RM1), in which Beeching's 'axe' fell on the railway network of the 1960s, and groups of ordinary men ('*Joe Bloggs, Fred, Harry'*) organised themselves to buy up track and engines. It was my impression that this narrative drew on some of the features which made '*The Titfield Thunderbolt'* a much loved British film. I am not suggesting that the Railwayman was consciously drawing on this source, but that his narrative contained elements which reflected similar values and popular folk-lore about what it is to be British and about the small man winning against bureaucracy. This contributed to the construction of his identity.

The Choral-singer, although she appeared not to be aware of it, seemed to use the Christmas story from the Bible as a source of reference in the narrative in Figure 7-22.

Figure 7-22 Choral-singer CS6 'they thought I was upset'

Stanza 2
And it was the time of the Carol Concert,
it was Christmas,
and I was going to go to the Carol Concert,

Stanza 3
it was the first one that Jane, my daughter, was going to go to,
she was four,
James was going to take her,

Stanza 4
and, lo and behold I ended up going in hospital
to go and have Tim
so James took Jane on her own

Stanza 5
and that night
we had some singers came round to the hospital ward –
they were singing carols –
I was in flo^ods of tears

Not only is some of the language reminiscent of the Bible ('*lo and behold', 'and that night'*) but the story is about a birth at Christmas. This narrative and others made me aware of the embeddedness of the Choral-singer's leisure pursuit in Christian culture. The narratives told by people are drawn from a long cultural history of story-telling and so have some similarities of structure and form. Each individual, however, confers uniqueness on her own narratives, created by the unique individual telling the story in a specific context.

The socio-cultural context also includes culturally derived tools (physical and psychological) with which occupations are carried out, and with which some research participants particularly identified. This was the second form of the facet of the located self. The special meaning of particular fishing rods, mountain bikes, yoga postures, musical plays and choral works were recounted. Taking human occupation as a basis for understanding identity, as this research does, the importance of such culturally derived tools, and their impact on functioning, must be acknowledged. The Fisherman uses rods and these have a long history as a cultural artefact. The purchase of his first 'real' fishing rod was a key event. The Mountain-biker appeared to disapprove of those who bought expensive bikes without knowing if they were the best for the task. There is a relationship between material possessions, commercialism and identity (Collins & Rushing, 2003).

> **An extract from field-notes: the special role of artefacts of leisure**
> *After interviewing the Mountain-biker I was shown his front room, which was really a bike workshop. It was immaculately clean and tidy, with a bike rack in the middle of the floor, holding a bike which looked new. There were tool racks on the walls, and other equipment stored neatly. There were photo collages on the walls, including some of his trip to Moab, Utah, a pilgrimage for mountain-bikers. There was at least one other whole bike in the room, and a frame from an old, much-loved bike. He cleans his bike and services it after every ride, he explained. It takes him 2 hours to do this, but it ensures that the bike never lets him down. In the interview the Mountain-biker expressed disdain for people who spend a lot of money on bikes, without understanding them. He described an affectionate relationship towards his bikes which was not associated with monetary value, but with nostalgia and respect.*

Several of the participants made (often emotional) reference to special tools or pieces of equipment without which they could not engage in this occupation.

Two of the forms of the socially-located self were to be found in narratives which foregrounded relationships with family and friends. For some people, these were clearly meaningful in the construction of the occupied self. The relationship between the Horse-rider

and her husband, the Bridge-player and his wife, the Choral-singer and her family (as in Figure 7-22 above), the Mountain-biker and his friends, for example, were all foregrounded.

The locatedness of the self alongside fellow leisure enthusiasts is another form that this facet can take. Group membership shapes identity (Jenkins, 2004; Tajfel, 1978) through processes of identification and differentiation. Following his study of football fans, Jones has suggested that social identification may be what keeps people involved in certain leisure activities (Jones, 2000) despite the difficulties and disappointments which can occur. Yet whilst social identity might be constructed through identification, a group is rarely homogenous (Jenkins, 2004), so there is scope also for differentiating oneself. The Yoga-practitioner, at 71, compared herself with a yoga class-mate (Figure 7-23).

Figure 7-23 Yoga-practitioner YP2 'there's more to my life than just leisure'

> **Stanza 1**
> *because there's a lady goes who's 81*
> *and she said, she always says to me*
> *she's been going even longer than I have*
> *and she said 'you're much better at yoga than I am'*
> *she said 'and when you're as old as me, you'll be better at it'*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *but I won't because I'm not as dedicated as her.*
> *She doesn't cook,*
> *she doesn't bother cleaning,*
> *she doesn't bother with housework*
> *or anything.*
> *Her leisure activities are her life,*
> *well there's a lot more in my life than just leisure.* **(evaluation)**

In this narrative, she is able to convey what she regards as her own characteristics by listing those of someone else. The social worlds and sub-cultures of leisure groups give considerable opportunity for comparisons to be made with other individuals, with groups other than one's own, and with those who participate in variations of the same activity.

Club or group membership presented a range of challenges to individuals, in relation to maintaining a coherent and satisfactory inner narrative. Joining a new group, standing at its boundaries and trying to understand its culture can be a time when identity is threatened (Jenkins, 2004). The Bird-watcher told a narrative about when he first joined a local bird club (Figure 7-24). The move was important to him, in order that he could be part of the

information-sharing ornithological community, but he is a shy man, and experienced acute discomfort initially.

Figure 7-24 Bird-watcher BW1 'at first I was overwhelmed'

> **Stanza 3**
> *as I say at first I was overwhelmed by –* **(evaluation)**
> *I mean you can imagine when you first get into anything like that,*
> *it were very difficult, er*
> *gettin' to know a new group of people*
> *and my skills weren't up to their level.*
> *So it were really strange,*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *they were askin' me if I wanted to go out on trips wi' 'em.*
> *Like if they saw a certain bird within an area,*
> *'do you want me like, to ring you?',*
> *I were like, 'ring me? What for?'* ((laughs))
> *It were really strange, but I soon got into that, er,*
> *but no, I do enjoy it,*
> *it's definitely fulfilling. Massively.*

In response to the stressor of a new social location, which he had brought about by his own agency, the Bird-watcher had to make adjustments to his inner self narrative.

The fifth form of this facet is, perhaps, the more classic way in which feedback from 'the other' is incorporated, through reflection, into the sense of self. Concerns and imagined feedback about social image, looking foolish, gaining esteem and feeling inadequate were all features of narratives told in this study. These concerns were often in relation to a generalised sense of the other (representing an internalised perception of society), rather than any specific individual or group, as with the Bird-watcher, above. Amongst others, the Bridge-player gained esteem, he felt, from coming second in a particular match, the Gym-member was concerned about how others viewed her appearance and the Mountain-biker was pleased to have people asking about his unusual bike. The Bird-watcher is worth noting again in relation to this point. He used a metaphor to describe the difficulty he had telling his work-mates that he is a bird-watcher. Being a shy person, he was anxious about their jokes and the image they would have of the hobby. Telling them, which he eventually did, '*were really like coming out of a closet*' (BW3). My understanding of the discomfort he felt at this public exposure was heightened when I recalled that this metaphor (*coming out*) is used in common parlance about

homosexuality. The Bird-watcher was not commenting about his sexuality, of course, but was, in effect, unconsciously comparing two socially-stigmatised situations.

A further way in which social locatedness impacted on the construction of the self was through relationships with animals. It is not usual to include animals amongst social relationships, but the relationship between the Dog-trainer and her dog, and the Horse-rider and her horse could not be ignored; they were relationships which involved symbolic interaction. Both talked about their animals as being able to give communicative feedback, and receive it. The feedback was not in the same form as the symbolic strategies for communication associated with human relations, but it was regarded as communication. The Dog-trainer, for example, told narratives about how an understanding of her dog's happiness impacted on her, and the Horse-rider similarly told how her own anxieties and those of her horse could affect each other. In the narrative extract in Figure 7-25 the Horse-rider tries to explain the relationship:

Figure 7-25 Horse-rider HR3 'it does me good'

> **Stanza 9**
> *but there's also this sort of relationship and ..*
> *bonding that you have with the animal itself...*
> *which is, you know, it's really pleasant*
> *he's nice to be with, is my horse.*
>
> **Stanza 10**
> *It's quite a comforting thing to have –*
> *they don't answer back,*
> *they don't argue with you* ((JT laughs))
> *they don't make too many demands,*
> *other than, obviously, the need to be cared for*
>
> **Stanza 11**
> *and to be respected –*
> *you do have to respect them, I think.*
> *That in itself is quite an achievement,*
> *developing a good relationship with the animal that you're riding*
> *is in itself an achievement*

Such special relationships with animals (dogs particularly) have been noted in other studies of the relationship between leisure occupations and identity (Baldwin & Norris, 1999; Gillespie et al., 2002).

Social locatedness contributes to the ongoing construction of the inner narrative, and is also the foundation for identity. Additionally, the sense of locatedness of the individual, engaged in occupation, is, it is argued, important to consider in terms of locatedness in time, in place and in the body. These, too, contribute to the construction of the self.

7.4 The changing self

People are in a continual process of transformation. This process is influenced by who they were; what they imagine the future to hold; what they do; unanticipated contingencies; the era into which they are born; the tools available to them; the places they are located in; history; politics; relationships with others and socio-cultural norms and values. This is a complex picture. The key features of the narrative conceptualisation of the self are time and emplotment. These allow a response to contextual instability through adaptation and personal change whilst maintaining some sense of durability and permanence of the self (Ricouer, 1991b). This process may be gradual or sudden. Some have suggested (Mishler, 1999; Temple, 2001), that, in response to multiple contextual factors, the individual has multiple identities which might come into conflict with each other. Some narratives revealed that individuals sometimes experienced conflicts, perhaps between moral positions, and therefore, perhaps, between possible selves which are potential optional developments for the future.

The human being is transformed by engagement in occupation (Townsend, 1997), and this transformation can be captured in the telling of a narrative (Lawler, 2002). The changing self is a dimension of the self-narrative which is embedded in the context of time, involving who the person *was*, who they *are* at this point in time and who they *will be* following the events being recounted. The narratives, by the very fact of including an evaluation, show the process of transformation which occurs through engagement in occupation and through telling about it. Through occupation and through the telling, people can 'try out' different options for the presentation of the self and can mould and shape it according to reflexivity and the feedback received from others.

As the participants told their narratives, the changing self, as a dimension of the occupied self, appeared to have two main facets. People told of changes in the protagonist of the narrative (usually the narrator) and changes in engagement with the occupation. Whilst it can be argued that *all* narratives show transformation, the focus here is on those narratives where the narrator foregrounded transformation in the meaning of the narrative. Sometimes the

transformation was made apparent through the verbalisation of reflections, or the description of conflicts between roles.

7.4.1 The changing self - protagonist

Several narratives were about changes in the protagonist, and often these were physical, psychological or social status changes. The Bridge-player became a family-man, for example, whilst the Choral-singer's mother lost her ability to sing. The Scuba-diver overcame her anxieties, and the Bird-watcher's social status changed when he revealed his hobby at work. In the narrative in Figure 7-26, the young Soul-singer goes back four years to a special day in her singing development. Like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, she was transformed.

Figure 7-26 Soul-singer SS3 'wow, it's got something to it'

> **Stanza 1**
> *erm, once when I was 12*
> *I sung in a karaoke in Tunisia,*
> *and I sung a Whitney Houston song*
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *and what it was, it was like, ( )*
> *a guy's voice breaks,*
> *it's like my voice just –*
> *it was really, just cute before,*
> *it's like it just matured,*
> *obviously not overnight,*
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *but that was when I first realised that –*
> *wow, it's got something to it,* **(evaluation)**
> *and it was unprepared,*
> *but I just went up,*
> *and my voice just went up,*
> *it was like my voice just sounded a lot better than it usually did –*
> *that was big.*

Achieving coherence in a narrative tends to indicate that the person could make sense of what happened, constructing a satisfactory self-narrative. It was normal, in this study, for narratives to be coherent, and so the ones that were not were of particular interest. The Soul-singer was on the cusp between childhood and adulthood. She was trying to turn her leisure interest into a professional career so she was also on a cusp between two worlds in this

respect. She had made some incursions into the professional world of 'girl-band' auditions. She tried to make sense of being unsuccessful in an audition, and could not (Figure 7-27).

Figure 7-27 Soul-singer SS2 'none of it's fair'

> **Stanza 3**
> *they didn't put me in the girl band*
> *because they wanted to sign me on my own, definitely,*
> *which was good*
> *but then that didn't quite work out, so –*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *that's why in competitions,*
> *none of it's fair,* **(evaluation)**
> *'cos, like, I did deserve to be in the band*
> *but then they said 'oh, no because you're too good' ( )*
>
> **Stanza 5**
> *so I sang solo –*
> *everything's just . . . I don't know,*
> *you just don't know what's happening*

The audience strives, with the Soul-singer, to make sense, but cannot, unless they listen with ears more cynical than those of an adolescent. Here we see someone struggling to form a coherent identity, struggling to know who she is and how she fits into a world which is outside of her experience. As Ochs and Capps (1996, p21) say '*We come to know ourselves as we use narrative to apprehend experiences and navigate relationships with others*.' Participants who entered into this kind of overt reflection did not necessarily know that it was going to happen until it did. Sometimes people seemed to learn something about themselves as they spoke, delivering the narrative. The Artist (in Figure 7-13) is an example of this. 'Learning something' was identified as one of the forms of the changing self.

Changes to the self were also found to be associated, in some narratives, with gaining satisfaction or fulfilment, and / or the conflicts arising from being pulled in two directions. The Gym-member told me about her early experiences with sport, whilst at school (Figure 7-28 below). In this narrative it can be seen how the content, the form, the structure, the performance and the interactive elements all combine to create meaning. The drama of the moment was accentuated by the wording ('*zang*') and the rhythm of her oral presentation, which speeded up as the race was won and was delivered, in part, in a little girl's voice.

Figure 7-28 Gym-member GM1 'since then it's all been out there!'[3]

> **Stanza 2**
> *so I think there was Mr Banks or Miss Rayner one of those,*
> *they saw me running* **(orientation)**
> *so decided to take me out*
> *and run on the track,*
> *God, it was fantastic*
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *it's so funny,* **(orientation)**
> *because I was brought up in church* ((laughs))
> *we were always told, you know,*
> *'don't show your knickers', (?)*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *So, but you had to wear a gym skirt* **(orientation)**
> *with navy-blue knickers underneath*
> *so when I was running* ((JT little gasp of realisation))
> *I was always like this* ((gestures holding skirt down over legs))
> *and I never won a race!* ((laughs))
> *and I always came second*
>
> **Stanza 5**
> *and my teacher said* **(complication)**
> *'if you <u>let go</u> of your skirt,*
> *you'll win a race, eventually!'*
> *and I said 'I can't, I'll show my knickers'* ((laughs))
> *but one time this girl kept on beating*
> *I wanted – I'd just had enough*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *I went 'zang'*
> *and I let it go*
> *and I beat her* **(resolution)**
> *so since then,*
> *it's all been out there!* ((laughs a lot)) **(evaluation)**
> JT   ((laughs)) *that was a terrible moral dilemma for you!*

I took the evaluation to be '*since then, it's all been out there'* since this appeared to be a personal turning point for the Gym-member. Yet both this statement and the earlier lines '*I went 'zang' and I let it go'* have some ambiguity. What is the '*it*' she is referring to? Her clothing, her modesty, her ability or her confidence? Our interaction is apparent. I giggled

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[3] The names of teachers have been changed

with her, like a schoolgirl in the narrative, then checked out the narrative's meaning by suggesting it was a moral dilemma.

7.4.2 The changing self - occupational engagement

The occupied self also underwent transformation when the nature of the engagement with the occupation changed. This could be a change in the amount of involvement, the quality of involvement, the beginnings of involvement, or continuing involvement, but differently. The Yoga-practitioner told a narrative about doing less yoga than before, whilst the Dog-trainer told a narrative about her increasing involvement in dog-related activities. Several people told me about first encountering the occupation, and several told about the twists and turns of their leisure career, such as the Horn-player's move from one instrument to another until he found the right one. These were meaningful moments, often having a profound impact on the individual's self narrative, trying to re-establish a coherent sense of self.

The Horse-rider told a long narrative, a short excerpt of which is included in Figure 7-29.

Figure 7-29 Horse-rider HR9 'giving up was tough'

> **Stanza 12**
> *and I'd worked all season towards this,*
> *it had been going really well,*
> *and whenever I took him off practicing,*
> *even the show-jumping,*
> *he was fine*
>
> **Stanza 13**
> *but he used to pick up on my nerves for events*
> *and get nervous too*
>
> **Stanza 14**
> *we'd gone round the ( ) a number of times,*
> *and as soon as you go in the ring,*
> *of course, they ring a bell,*
> *and there's a loud-speaker that introduces you*
>
> **Stanza 15**
> *and I could feel him tense up*
> *and he refused three times*
> *and we were eliminated*
>
> **Stanza 16**
> *and I thought 'he's not enjoying this –*
> *and I'm not enjoying this bit'*
> *I mean to be honest, to be eliminated wasn't nice ((both laugh))*
> *I thought 'this is probably telling me something,*
> *I should be listening'*
> *and that's when I decided it was enough*

Here she tried to explain to me how difficult it was for her to give up show-jumping, what the key issues were in relation to the decision-making, and what the incident was that finally made her give up. The meaning of the narrative was easy to identify because she verbalised her reflections. The excerpt conveys some of the emotional power of this turning point in her leisure career and her self-narrative.

Changes in occupational engagement often came about because of other life changes. The Bridge-player told about his progression upwards in his bridge career (Figure 7-30).

Figure 7-30 Bridge-player BP2 'and then I met Mary'

Stanza 2
once I'd played for England, effectively the goal . .
I hadn't got a goal anymore
because I'd done it

Stanza 3
so I changed the goal
to play for Britain.
That happened the following year,

Stanza **4**
so then I said – right – I've done what I wanted to do,
I know I'm good at it,
and then I met Mary. **(Evaluation)**

Stanza 5
During the time when I played for England and Britain we just met,
Mary she was coming to the bridge club
to learn to play bridge.

Stanza 6
She was getting divorced.
That's how I met her,
because I was one of the teachers there . . .

Stanza 7
and . . then we had kids
and I gave up bridge for 11 years.
I never touched a card

He was giving an impressive account of his agency and competence, when he used a shock tactic as a dramatic device in stanza 7 which made me understand the powerful impact of meeting his future wife. In this narrative it was difficult to ascertain the evaluative phrase when identifying the Labovian structure. The Bridge-player was a subtle communicator, often

telling a seemingly simple tale, but with emphases on words which conveyed several messages. In this narrative, I took '*and then I met Mary*' to contain an internal evaluation, conveyed by a slight emphasis. The meaning of the narrative is that meeting Mary, his future wife, was a significant enough contingency for him to interrupt a well-planned and successful bridge career. His relationship with bridge was transformed.

7.5 Conclusion

The occupied self has been argued to consist of three dimensions: the active self, the located self and the changing self. These dimensions, with their sub-divisions, accounted for all the meanings of the narratives analysed.

Each participant constructed his or her identity in the social situation of the interview by emphasising certain dimensions and facets of the occupied self. This chapter has illustrated the various parts of the framework described in Chapter 6 with samples and extracts from the narratives. The ways in which meaning is effectively created by the combined forces of the narrative content, form, structure and performance have also been illustrated. Whilst not every part of the framework has been discussed in detail, the aim has been to make the substantiation of the framework convincing and relevant.

There is a danger, however, in reducing a complex, integrated, phenomenon such as the occupied self into parts. Throughout this chapter it has been noted that each part should be understood to interact with other parts. In many ways, the framework offers a deceptive simplicity. That occupation and identity are both complex conceptualisations in themselves was noted in earlier chapters. In the next chapter this will be kept in mind while the framework's utility as a tool for understanding identity and occupation are considered.

8   The framework: illustrating its utility

stanza 2
and, when we were in the Red Sea in April,
we went out along one of the reefs
and we left the reef
and we went right out
into open water

stanza 3
and a manta ray came,
and just kind of looked at us,
circled around us,
glided around a bit
and then disappeared

The Scuba-diver SD2

The framework, as presented in the last two chapters, provides a structure for organising the meanings that people made in their narratives about their engagement in occupation. It is a construct which enables a systematic approach to understanding the occupied self. The individual, engaged in action, located in context and being transformed, has various facets within these dimensions which contribute to the construction of the self, and the socially-situated self, the identity. But the framework is more than a theoretical construct. It provides a tool to articulate the occupied self in all its complexity, and which can be used to view particular problems, theoretical positions and empirical evidence in a different way. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate these claims.

In the first section two case studies will be presented based on the narratives of two of the research participants. These will show how the framework highlights and respects the complex process of the construction of identity as revealed by narratives about occupation.

In the second section, the framework will be used to address two puzzling questions. The first arose from the study data. When listening to and reading the narratives some of them stood out as being powerful in the effect they had on me, the audience. The stanzas about an encounter with a manta ray, above, are from one such narrative. The framework offers a way of understanding this effect, as will be illustrated. The second puzzling question arose from the review of literature, in which it was suggested by some authors that leisure occupations have a special part to play in the construction of identity. This introduced a slight tension with my claim that leisure occupations can be used to represent all occupations. The framework provides a systematic approach for examining this puzzle.

In the third and final section of this chapter the framework will be used to provide a different perspective from which to view some recent literature describing empirical research and theory development relating to human occupation.

8.1   Utility in showing complexity

A framework such as this provides a useful overview and organisation of knowledge, but a word of warning, influenced by Jenkins (2004) and by the social constructionist ontology of this work, must be inserted here. Humans and occupations have complexity. Whilst there is value in trying to see the parts, it is important not to lose sight of the whole. By reducing such complexity into its parts, there is a danger that the focus will shift away from processes to structure (Jenkins, 2004). Describing a 'collection of properties' (Polkinghorne, 1991, p143) would be to oversimplify the concept of identity described in chapter 3, and this thesis began with an aim to study occupation in all of its contextualised complexity. A similar warning has been made by Hasselkus, in her discussion of Wilcock's simple tri-partite definition of occupation; a profession which prides itself on its holistic viewpoint must take care not to reduce complexity into parts without some critical awareness (Hasselkus, 2002). The challenge to researchers, with regard to occupation, is to understand this complexity (Kroksmark et al., 2006).

The framework allows a systematic approach to be taken towards understanding what people are saying about their 'selves' as they re-play experiences. In this way a fuller picture of the identity of the individual, as it relates to occupation, can be developed. Any of the participants could have been used to illustrate this. I have selected as examples two people who used narratives readily in their discourse, and whose narratives give examples from various parts of the framework.

8.1.1 The Dog-trainer

The Dog-trainer was introduced in section 1.1.2, and her demographic details are summarised in Appendix A (participant profiles). She told a total of 13 narratives with fluency and enthusiasm. Six were analysed and will be drawn on to illustrate the discussion below.

Dog-training as an occupational form
A range of dog-related activities are mentioned in the narratives. The Dog-trainer has been involved in walking, pet dog training, competitive obedience training, dog agility training and

rare-breed club meetings and events. Apart from the walking, which is done alone or with a friend, these are sociable occasions based around groups of people coming together with a common interest. Each club or group is associated with different types of activities, which can occupy a significant amount of an enthusiast's time, as described in Figure 8-1.[4]

Figure 8-1 Dog-trainer DT3 'all related to the dog'

Stanza 4
we go every Friday night
and then on the, erm,
during the summer we do this,
it's a non-competitive club,
but they do displays at agricultural shows during the summer.

Stanza 5
So we've been doing that in the summer, as well,
at weekends,
which takes up about 8 – 10 weekends
8 – 10 displays they do, throughout the summer,

Stanza 6
Yes, and then I got asked to be secretary of that club so..
and so until recently I've been going to two obedience clubs a week
and an Agility Club,
and then rare breed events whenever they're on

Stanza 7
and they're all over the country,
I've been up to Angus Glen in Scotland, year before last
and down to last September we were in Essex,
on the coast there, doing rare breed things

Stanza 8
so that's all the different –
they're all related to the dog **(evaluation)**

Being involved in these clubs makes the Dog-trainer more than a simple dog-owner. It would be normal for a dog-owner to feed and groom a pet, take it for walks and visits to the vets. She does all this *and* attends meetings and events, involving training, competing, showing her dog and agility displays to entertain the public. She has taken on club duties such as secretarial work and edits the national rare-breed newsletter. There is a social world

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[4] In some of these narrative excerpts parts of the Labovian structure are shown, where they are relevant or interesting in the context of this chapter

associated with this leisure activity (D. R. Unruh, 1980) made up of strangers (e.g. the vet), tourists (the general public who attend displays), regulars (dog club members) and insiders (like the Dog-trainer, who devotes additional time and energy to keeping the club going). Fundamentally, though, the dog is central to these activities; '*they're all related to the dog*' (DT3, stanza 8). To perform this occupation involves having at least one dog, training with it and socialising with other dog owners and their dogs.

Agency and morality in the active self

The Dog-trainer encounters more than one contingency in these narratives, and proves herself to have a strong sense of agency. Three narratives involve having to find solutions to problems. She has an energetic dog in narrative 2 which she has to find suitably challenging classes for. In narrative 3, with her friend, Mary, she finds an alternative dog-related activity when Foot and Mouth disease stops them walking. In narrative 4 she must find another alternative activity for a high energy dog that is going blind. In her engagement with this occupation she shows agency, but she also shows morality, in that she displays a strong ethic of care for her dog. In fact, in each of these three examples, her agency and problem-solving is about making life happier for her dog and therefore for herself (Figure 8-2).

Figure 8-2 Dog-trainer DT2 'it's a two-way thing'

> **Stanza 5**
> *and you end up with a dog that is using up all his excess energy*
> *with the extra stimulation*
> *so you end up with – it's a two way thing –* **(evaluation)**
> *your dog's a lot happier,*
> *he's a lot calmer the rest of the time*
> *and it's really satisfying for <u>you</u>, to achieve more*

Her use of the second person 'you' in this stanza indicates that she perceives this as a shared experience with generalised 'others'.

Location in time, place and society impacts on the active and changing self

The meanings of these narratives depend on the listener understanding the position that dogs have in modern Western society. In narrative 2, the Dog-trainer explains that his high energy indicates that her dog should have been a working dog. Yet he isn't, he is a pet, albeit one who is engaged in a range of challenging activities. She has this relationship with a dog because she is located in a society where this is an accepted norm. The listener (me) and the

narrator both understand this and so can construct meaning together. The Dog-trainer frequents a world of agricultural shows and dog agility courses set up in equestrian centres. Being outside in the countryside is a daily event for her as she walks her dog, although she did not foreground this 'locatedness in place' in her presentation of identity to me. The social, physical and temporal contexts converged for her, however, with a 'fateful moment' - the Foot and Mouth epidemic of 2001. Being located in the beginning of the 21st century and in the socio-cultural context of a government invoking laws to restrict cattle movement and access to the countryside, her pattern of activity had to change and she began her association with the dog agility club. Time, as a context, also relates to the *amount* of time available in the day, week or month and how it is used. Figure 8-1 indicates how time was filled for the Dog-trainer after joining the club. The contingency of Foot and Mouth disease changed her leisure career (her engagement with the occupation). In this way, changing circumstances play their part in the reconfiguration of identity (Mishler, 1999).

Moral identity and group membership

The social world of the Dog-trainer has been mentioned above, indicating that she affiliates with a particular group of dog-owners who meet regularly to train their dogs. She constructs her identity in several ways in the narrative below (Figure 8-3, overleaf). She uses a dramatic device, telling me what most agility clubs are like, then presenting a contrasting image of her club, which she refers to as 'ours', showing her affiliation. She is deriving some part of her own identity from the group's identity (Tajfel, 1978); she wants to be seen as friendly and fun. In this sense she is displaying locatedness in a particular social context, but she is also illustrating that the active self engaged in dog agility training can be either fun and friendly or (as implied) the opposite, serious and unfriendly. To emphasise this, she introduces a character into the narrative from a club of the 'other' type, and she characterises this visitor, through content and manner of speaking, as unfriendly, a little snobbish and patronising. In this way the Dog-trainer's moral identity is displayed for the listener, through the skilful use of the structure, content and the performative elements of a narrative.

Figure 8-3 Dog-trainer DT5 'about having fun'

Stanza 1
because when they're doing comp – **(orientation)**
most clubs, most Agility Clubs
have got people who compete in agility
so they want a big complicated course
to practice for competitions

Stanza 2
so what they normally do
is they'll set out a different course every week
covering the whole area
and come in and queue up to run that course
and then they go and join the back of the queue
and you know, you could be waiting a long time

Stanza 4
and I had one woman who came **(complication)**
and I said 'so do you want-'
           at the end of the night
'do you want to be put on the waiting list?'
and she said "ºI don't think it's for me reallyº' **(resolution)**

Stanza 5
and she'd competed before
but she'd just moved into our area
and she said 'very nice to know things like this go on, though' ((DT laughs))

Stanza 6
and I don't know, it's –
ours is quite a friendly -
it's all about having fun with the dogs, **(evaluation)**
the display's about you and your dog enjoying yourselves

Social locatedness and impression management

In most of her narratives the Dog-trainer was clearly conscious of how she was presenting herself to me. Being located in a network of social relationships means that impressions have to be managed, to facilitate interaction (Goffman, 1959). She carefully crafted her speech but she was not, as some others were, concerned that she might sound 'sad' or 'false'. It emerged that this is something she has given thought to previously. The idea that a leisure enthusiast might appear to be 'sad' or 'anorak'-like was developed in an insightful narrative which she told when I asked her about the public image of dog-trainers. She told, with humour, two narratives juxtaposing two recent situations she had been in. In the first she recounted her

sister's ready reply following her (the Dog-trainer's) description of the possible consequences of getting a second dog (Figure 8-4).

Figure 8-4 Dog-trainer DT11 'this doggy person'[5]

> **Stanza 3**
> *and I said ' but I don't want to become a <u>doggy</u> person!*
> *Once I get <u>two</u>, then you turn up*
> *and it's not Chrissie and her dog, you're like –*
> *this doggy person with all these dogs!'*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *and she said "ºI think you've past that stage alreadyº"*
> *she said 'don't worry about <u>that</u>'*

In the second narrative (Figure 8-5, below) she gives a description of her dog-related behaviour at work, following it with an unflattering social comparison.

Figure 8-5 Dog-trainer DT11 'this doggy person'

> **Stanza 5**
> *because I'm taking the dog to work in me van*
> *and then training in me lunch breaks,*
> *because otherwise it's dark before and after or –*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *I exercise him*
> *I take him for a walk in my lunch breaks*
>
> **Stanza 7**
> *so I've got my messy tr – my muddy trousers in the ladies loo,*
> *and I get my box of sausage, in the fridge at work*
>
> **Stanza 8**
> *and they all have like, erm they all go into this rest room thing*
> *and sit and chat,*
>
> **Stanza 9**
> *and I'm outside with me dog*
> *walking round and doing my bits of training –*
>
> **Stanza 10**
> *they all go 'o::h no' –*
> *there's a bloke who's a trainspotter in the other office*
> *and I start telling them things,*
> *and then I see their eyes glaze over*
> *and I say 'do I sound like Simon?'*
> *'yes'*
> *so I shut up* (laughs)

The Dog-trainer equates her own behaviour and conversation, potentially boring to others, to that of another serious leisure enthusiast, Simon, the train-spotter in the office next door. Being a train-spotter, in modern parlance, is a metaphor for '*a person who obsessively studies the minutiae of any minority interest or specialized hobby*' (Pearsall, 2002), so, whilst Simon *is* literally a train-spotter, Dog-trainer and her colleague are also evoking the shared cultural meaning of the metaphor. The Dog-trainer is doing several things here. She is showing me that she is aware that her interest in dogs goes beyond what society might consider normal. Serious leisure is marginal in society (Stebbins, 1996). She is showing that she knows that other people might find her conversation about her dog-related activities boring and that she can control her tendency to talk too much about them. Finally she is showing that she can laugh at herself in this complex process of self-observation and self-management which contribute to identity construction.

In analysing the global coherence (Agar & Hobbs, 1982) of these narratives the question 'what was her overall plan in juxtaposing these two stories?' helped to reveal what meaning she was conveying. In two short amusing stories she reveals impressive skills in impression management and knowledge about her social identity. She owns the image of being eccentric and dog-centred reluctantly, and is amused by her ownership of it. She is not, apparently, alone in this. In a recent study of kennel club activities there was some discussion of commonly circulated internet jokes revealing the typical dog enthusiast's awareness of their public image as being crazy and obsessed (Gillespie et al., 2002).

Both the Fisherman and the Runner also took a moment out from their narratives about their enthusiasm for their hobbies to comment that they thought they sounded 'sad' (which I take to mean, as the Oxford Dictionary does, pathetically inadequate or unfashionable). Publicly circulated narratives (Lawler, 2002), such as the idea that those who engage in activities with a lot of enthusiasm are 'sad' or 'anoraks', can constrain people's occupations, or what they reveal about them to others.

Social locatedness and the changing self
The most emotionally charged narrative was told by the Dog-trainer when I asked her about her most powerful memory. She gave me a short account of getting a puppy for the first time. This narrative (Figure 8-6) highlighted for me what was evident in all her narratives, and those of the Horse-rider, that an animal can be part of the matrix of social relationships within which identity is constructed.

Figure 8-6 Dog-trainer DT12 'I couldn't believe'

Stanza 1
I think the thing – that, er,
the thing that I always remember
is picking him up as a puppy –

Stanza 2
that was –
I couldn't believe –

Stanza 3
I'd always wanted a dog,
and I'd never been able to have one,
and now I could have one

Stanza 4
and I picked exactly,
I found -
I did all my research
and found exactly what I wanted

Stanza 5
and er, going to collect it
and I just, er, I remember just er,
her handing him over –
I spent ages choosing him,
and then you know, walking away with him

Stanza 6
and I couldn't believe,
<u>I couldn't believe</u>,
that she was just going to let me walk away with him,
and he was <u>all mine ((both laugh))</u>
and he was gorgeous so that's the thing

The whole narrative has been included because it displays several features which help the importance of the moment to be conveyed. These short phrases are not typical of the Dog-trainer's speech. They help to build the drama and the emotion of the occasion. Each stanza builds the drama, taking the listener step by step through the stages involved in getting just the right dog. In effect, the whole story is told in a 'preview' in stanza 1, but then the listener is required to suspend knowledge of the outcome, and travel the journey from wanting a dog, to being able to have one, then doing the research, finding exactly the right type, going to the

dog-breeder's (I assume), choosing the puppy, having him handed over and then walking away with him. She knows at that point that her choice is right because he is '*gorgeous*'.

I emphasise the building of drama in this narrative because it is used to help the listener share an intensely emotional experience. This was a narrative about transformation through occupation, and it is also a narrative which has a special quality, as a particularly powerful and effective piece of communication between speaker and audience. This was one of several such powerful narratives. These will be considered in more depth in section 8.2.

8.1.2 The Railwayman

The Railwayman (introduced in section 1.1.2) told 15 narratives, of which five were analysed. His demographic details can be found in Appendix A.

Railways and trains as occupational form

The Railwayman's involvement with trains began as a child when, with other boys, he would watch trains from a nearby bridge. This developed into train-spotting. When he reached his teenage years the opportunity arose for involvement in a society set up to preserve a local steam railway. This is not a small scale hobby. The society is an organisation whose membership must have the skills and knowledge necessary to build and maintain a safe, working and financially viable railway, offering a train service to the public. Members are trained to perform tasks such as laying tracks, fixing engines, stoking fires, tidying station flower-baskets and selling tickets. A regular timetable of trains is run, as well as special events such as the annual 1940s 'war weekend' and the 'Santa Specials'. There is an emphasis on recreating the era of steam trains, and so the conductors, station-master, engineers etc wear period costume. Societies such as this exist across Britain, and so there is a national level of community as well as local.

Locating the self in an era: time, place, culture and identity

One of the frustrating things for me in the early part of the interview with the Railwayman was that his stories were often impersonal, focussing on railway history. I came to realise, however, that for him his identity is tied up in the historical features of his leisure pursuit. His tale is that of the little man's fight to preserve the old railways and so must be contextualised. The path of his leisure career must be understood against historical events concerning drastic changes to the national railway network.

Figure 8-7 Railwayman RM1 'steam engines come to life'

> **Stanza 5**
> *.... 1968, or leading up to 1968 Dr Beeching's axe fell*
> *and the problem with that was that*
> *not so much that the railways were going to be modernised*
> *which was fantastic, that was great, because it needed it*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *the problem was that,*
> *when the steam engines*
> *these monstrosities that had ruled the railways for so long*
> *when the axe fell, steam engines went for scrap*
>
> **Stanza 7**
> *and there was very much er, er an over or shall I say an unwritten .. edict*
> *that other than stuff that went to the National Railway Museum in York,*
> *a lot of stuff was not to be sold to Joe Bloggs, Fred, Harry and this that and*
> *the other*
> *and even then steam engines, <u>used</u> steam engines were quite a price*
>
> **Stanza 8**
> *the irony of it was*
> *that British Railways had said*
> *'none of these locomotives are to remain,*
> *other than in the National Railway Museum'*
>
> **Stanza 9**
> *which, you know – the National Railway Museum was alright*
> *but, they were static exhibits . .*
> *and steam engines come to life when they are in steam*
> *and moving*

The Railwayman was in the right place, at the right time, to identify with and join a movement which would find a way to keep the trains moving. His first narrative (Figure 8-7) showed the Railwayman located in a certain era which enabled this occupation to develop in a particular way. His leisure occupation, which had been childhood train-spotting, was, by his teenage years, shaped by historical circumstances. In his active involvement with trains, the moral and agentic aspects of his identity changed as he grew from a young observing hedonist to an older altruistic activist. In this process we see the changing self.

This narrative shows that facets of his identity stem from his feeling of location in a particular time and place: an era. His leisure occupation is also closely associated with the steam engines '*these monstrosities that had ruled the railways for so long'*. The audience for

the narrative is not only exposed to the era, but also to a vivid image of these monster-like machines which are very much of their time in history. This is an example of the way in which culturally derived tools (the steam engines), used in human activities, help shape human identity (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). He embeds himself in an era which represents the culture of a certain time. Another feature of this narrative is the way in which the Railwayman refers to '*Joe Bloggs, Fred, Harry and this that and the other'.* This is not the only time that he makes references to the 'man in the street'. An aspect of his identity that he is foregrounding here is the idea of group membership, or social locatedness, in a way that facilitates social action. It is possible that, as well as the culturally embedded image of *'The Titfield Thunderbolt'* (section 7.3.4), the period of industrial action of many trade unions in the early 1970s might have set an example of what organised group action could bring about.

High levels of competence in doing serious leisure

Three of his narratives described the progression of the Railwayman's leisure career, and they also made me aware of the level of skills required by involvement in this occupation. In one narrative (Figure 8-8) he described his increasing involvement with the railway society whilst still a teenager.

Figure 8-8 Railwayman RM4 'living the railway'

> **Stanza 2**
> *and you were into quite back-breaking work,*
> *laying railway lines, putting sleepers down,*
> *running the engines, coaling them up, cleaning them,*
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *generally learning about <u>railways</u> more than trains,*
> *you <u>were</u> <u>railways</u>*
> *and you were trying to put yourself over as an acceptable railway*

He goes on, in this narrative, in 8 out of 19 stanzas, to list other jobs, skills and knowledge that he was (and is) associated with. Being seriously involved in a leisure occupation means that his levels of knowledge and ability are considerable, so here, he presents his 'competent self' to me. There is something in this extract also, it seems, about the moral self. Bishop and Hoggett have suggested that '*the values and traditions of any activity link quite directly to wider values.*' (1986, p43) The intriguing use of the phrase 'an acceptable railway' (line 3, stanza 3) suggests that there is a standard of acceptability to which

the enthusiasts are aspiring, although whose standard (the enthusiasts, the authorities, the public), we are not told.

The meaning of this narrative, derived largely from the Labovian structure, is taken to be a line from stanza 16 '*but I was living the railway*'. The meaning is enhanced by several dramatic devices used in the delivery of the narrative, two of which are captured in the short extract in Figure 8-8. He delivers both of these stanzas in the second person, effectively drawing me into the experiences he had, as he lived the railway. The second and third lines of stanza 3, in which I am made to understand how all-absorbing the railway and its culture were, are particularly powerful. He was not just living the railway, he <u>was</u> the railway. A direct identity claim is made in this statement. A further dramatic device is his use of rhythm in stanza 2 which, as an oral performance, almost mimics the sound of a train on the tracks.

Contingencies, constancy, adaptability: the agentic self

Perhaps the most dramatic line in narrative 4 came in stanza 9, after the Railwayman had just been listing all the jobs they had to do and the progress they were making with the railway, developing their expertise (see Figure 8-9). In the middle of all this activity and progress, for him it finishes, when he is expected to prioritise his education.

Figure 8-9 Railwayman RM4 'living the railway'[6]

> **Stanza 7**
> *you're talking a lot of money and expenditure*
> *you have to have the right insurance,*
> *you have to have the right licenses to be able to pull passengers,*
>
> **Stanza 8**
> *so, you know, this thing becomes more and more complex*
> *as you come to figure out*
> *as you go along*
>
> **Stanza 9**
> *and er, that's kind of where it finished.*
> *Because I got my 'O' levels* **(complication)**
>
> **Stanza 10**
> *and er, we'd got to Castlecroft,*
> *we'd got to the stage*
> *where the railway was running every weekend*

[6] Place name not changed, with agreement from the participant

By stanza 13, just as the railway was becoming operational, the Railwayman went to study for a degree near London. Being part of this local railway preservation society meant that his hobby was geographically fixed, and he had to leave it (with regret) for three years. Yet his leisure occupation has a built-in flexibility. Railways are ubiquitous, and the Railwayman does not miss opportunities. By stanza 17 he was using his commuter ticket to travel to Clapham Junction to go train-spotting and to develop an interest in diesel trains.

His next narrative followed the progress of his leisure career after he got his degree, leading us to another dramatic complication, delivered with meaningful effect (Figure 8-10).

Figure 8-10 Railwayman RM5 'they are always there'

> **Stanza 2**
> *got a degree*
> *felt flat on my face trying to find a job, as you do*
> *9 months later someone said*
> *'would you like to go to Bahrain, in Saudi Arabia*
> *and work for such and such'*
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *mum said 'go'*
> *she said, 'if you don't you might regret it for the rest of your life'*
> *so I <u>went</u>.* **(complication)**
> *12 years later I came back* ((laughs))

After his intense involvement in the railway society, his laugh here shows that he knew that this line, announcing his 12 year absence, would shock the listener. Just as in narrative 4, he brings his story to a dramatic complication, but the drama in both cases, involving being removed from his home base and his beloved railway, is resolved by finding alternative forms of the hobby (Figure 8-11 below).

Figure 8-11 Railwayman RM5 'they are always there'

> *so, I wouldn't say I lost contact with the railways,* **(resolution)**
> *I wasn't <u>in</u> contact in the same way,*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *when we were in Saudi –*
> *there's only one railway line in Saudi –*
> *the one that came from Turkey*
> *it was a military railway line from ( ) to Riyadh*
> *When we were parked in that area I used to go and see it*
>
> **Stanza 7**
> *when I was in Thailand we went to see the Bridge over the River Kwai,*
> *and a lot of our travelling used to be by rail*

This is a man who will not be deterred from continuing to pursue his leisure occupation, despite the contingencies and other priorities of life! In both of these narratives he was active in finding opportunities to be involved with the railways. He tells us something of himself and the agentic facet of his active self. Yet his agency and proactive decision-making must be understood against the other factors in his life. The construction of identity involves *'an encounter between the cultural resources for identity and individual choices with respect to fidelity, ideology and commitment to a vocational path that takes place in human action.'* (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p84/85) In this quote, the phrase 'vocational path' applies well to the developing leisure career.

Cloud nine

The Railwayman used metaphor in several of his narratives, as shorthand to convey a particular meaning. The use of metaphor in narrative 2 helped him to convey the decimation of the railways in 1968 (when Dr Beeching's '*axe fell*') and the glory of the steam engines ('*these monstrosities*'). A simple metaphor, '*on cloud nine*', is one which is commonly used to refer to happiness. In the narrative in Figure 8-12 below, included in its entirety, the audience (and the reader) is privileged to be given access to a moment when the Railwayman was on cloud nine.

Figure 8-12 Railwayman RM9 'being part of a railway family'

> **Stanza 1**
> *I was talking to a psychologist*
> *not this sort of conversation ( )*
> *and she said 'well how do you relax?*
> *Can you remember the last time you <u>really</u> enjoyed yourself?'* **(abstract)**
>
> **Stanza 2**
> *and I said ' yes I can,*
> *I can remember getting off the train,* **(complication)**
> *I was being relieved I think,*
> *anyway I got off the train,*
> *it was a summer day* **(orientation)**
>
> **Stanza 3**
> *we had a steam engine on the front,*
> *a <u>wonderful</u> steam engine, a big one, ( ) (a good one)*
> *we'd driven up and down that line 10 times, whatever*
>
> **Stanza 4**
> *and just everybody had a smile on their face,*
> *everybody you interfaced with was enjoying themselves,*
> *it was one of those days where it was just euphoria for everybody*
>
> <div align="right">cont….</div>

Cont….

Stanza 5
the children were fantastic
they were just stunned by it
it was something they'd not seen before

Stanza 6
the enthusiasts were enthusiastic,
in a nice way about it

Stanza 7
and I can remember getting off the train
I was really on cloud nine
Thinking 'that was <u>superb'</u> **(resolution)**
no (laughs) *it was great,*

Stanza 8
and I'll be honest with you
I'd been wo^rking!
But I'd been working at what I enjoy doing, you know
well, you know – normally it's (desk) something different than that ( )

Stanza 9
and what I got out of it was **(evaluation)**
actually, being, part of a railway family
being associated with the steam engines,
with that era,
with the children that had come,
with the families that had come,
with the people that had come,
and being able to not only enjoy myself
which was fantastic
but to see them enjoying it as well, you know

He used the narrative to try to analyse the constituent parts of this feeling. He appeared to be striving for narrative coherence. For the Railwayman, being '*on cloud nine*' meant, on this occasion, the temporal (this particular day; the era of steam trains), socio-cultural (the happy public, his fellow enthusiasts, the artefacts associated with the era) and physical (the station, the track, the fine weather) contexts coming together to represent the era of the steam railways. These contexts converged with idealised memories of what those days could be like: happy, sociable, sunny and purposeful. Engaged in this occupation, he had been doing unpaid work, and he had helped people to enjoy themselves, sharing an appreciation of what he himself finds so fascinating and rewarding: the railway. In this narrative he tells of his 'self'

experiencing being located in a range of ideal contexts, being actively occupied, allowing his competent, agentic and moral selves to be enacted. This is the occupied self showing and integrating many facets.

One is drawn to examine the dramatic devices which he has used to create the power of this narrative. The content of the story would convey very little without the effective narrative form and structure and the interactional process (Mishler, 1986b). He uses superlatives (wonderful, euphoria, fantastic, superb, great), he introduces a paradox ('*I'd been working*'), he uses repetition in a rhythmic way (in stanza 9) and he creates a powerful visual image by giving detail. Perhaps one of the most effective things he does, though, to make this story meaningful, is to reverse the order of the temporally organised events. From his location in an interview with me, the Railwayman looks back in time to a conversation he had with a psychologist. From that conversation he looked back in time to a particular moment when he was disembarking from a steam train. In that moment he looks back in time again, to how he has spent his day. The focus moves downwards as he takes me with him to explore 'cloud nine'.

The railway as a facet of the self

Here I will give the Railwayman credit for inspiring me with another one of his metaphors. In narrative 15, (quoted at the head of Chapter 6) he describes the railway as a major facet of himself which makes him whole. This is a metaphor which is reminiscent of diamonds and one which helped me to gain a new perspective on identity, which can be seen to be made up of aspects, or facets. The various facets of context, action and transformation make up the occupied self. The facets are shown to others in the world, in the form of identity.

8.2 Utility in addressing particular questions

The above examples show how the framework provides a structure which can be used for systematically exploring the different dimensions and facets of the self. Because it facilitates a different perspective, it is also a useful tool for examining puzzling questions which arise about occupations, their meanings and identity. The potential for this application cannot be fully explored in this thesis, but two examples are presented here.

8.2.1 Powerful narratives

The first puzzling question arose from the data. It has previously been stated that some of the narratives stood out amongst the others due to their powerful impact on the audience. On every occasion of re-listening or re-reading they have been impressive in their ability to convey a meaningful moment with vividness and impact. During analysis I listed eight (out of the total 78) narratives as powerful, or 'my favourites', but struggled to identify what united them. Some, but not all, came in response to a question about powerful memories. Some were about encounters with nature, some were about a first encounter of some kind and they were *all* told with emotion. Some of these narratives have already been highlighted:

- The Horn-player narrative 2 '*an amazing moment'* in Figures 7-3 and 7-18
- The Mountain-biker narrative 7 '*got away with that no problem'* in Figures 7-6 and 7-12
- The Fisherman narrative 5 '*A wild animal sitting next to me'* in Figure 7-19
- The Scuba-diver narrative 2 '*fabulous, it really is!'* at the head of this chapter.
- The Dog-trainer narrative 12 '*I couldn't believe'* in Figure 8-6
- The Railwayman narrative 9 '*being part of a railway family'* in Figure 8-12
- The Bird-watcher narrative 6 '*I've not felt anything so strong before'* in Figure 8-13 discussed below
- The Horse-rider narrative 8 '*we coped'* in Figure 8-14 discussed below

    The Bird-watcher described his spotting of the Great Grey Shrike (Figure 8-13 below). It felt like I was standing next to him when it happened, just as it felt like sitting with the Horn-player when he first heard a big band playing jazz. These were moments when the richness and delight of an experience were felt and conveyed by the narrator in an emotional and sensory way. The rhythm and repetition in stanza 5 build an air of expectation as the Bird-watcher replays the moments leading up to the discovery, and stanza 6 erupts into a incoherent rush of excitement. Later the Bird-watcher tries to explain the depth and quality of the experience, for the audience, and possibly for himself. He picks his way through an array of feelings: excitement, calmness, privilege, trying to establish what made this moment so special. He wonders (stanza 10) if he sounds false; he is not a man used to putting these feelings into words. His final line in stanza 10 is an understatement, considering what has gone before, but it shows us his pleasure. The content of the narrative, the way it is told, and its meaning, '*I've never felt anything so strong before',* combine to create its power.

Figure 8-13 Bird-watcher BW6 'I've not felt anything so strong really'

> **Stanza 5**
> *I remember on - that were on the East coast, (Spurn?) Point,* **(orientation)**
> *I were with me father and me wife,*
> *and I were just scanning the air with my binoculars,*
> *and I just looked up onto this bush,*
> *and there were a bird on it* **(complication)**
> *and I got my binoculars on it,*
> *and it were a great grey shrike.*
>
> **Stanza 6**
> *And – it almost levels you to a childlike state ((gently laughs))* **(resolution)**
> *because you'll shout like – 'mum, mum!' ((I laugh))*
> *you know, you're like 'woa -a great grey shrike!!'*
> *you'll just say it, and not –*
> *no thoughts running through your head*
> *apart from ( ) 'a great grey shrike!.'*
> *You can't beat that – that for me is excitement*
>
> **Stanza 8**
> *Er, but definitely for me, it's more –*
> *not just the excitement,*
> *because it is exci- it can be exciting,*
> *I mean, it really is –*
> *but for me, the biggest things I get out of it is the calmness,*
>
> **Stanza 9**
> *er, I feel privileged insomuch as I've actually <u>found</u> this,*
> *and I'm privileged to actually sit there, stand there, whatever,*
> *and see it.*
> *Knowing full well that someone else might be in the gym, pumping iron, or. .*
> *I'm just so glad that I've found this*
> *and I'm the only one here ((chuckles)) –*
>
> **Stanza 10**
> *it's just great*
> *absolutely marvellous, I mean, things like that –*
> *that stands out in my memory more than anything –*
> *there are probably some people are searching their whole lives to get*
> *and I know that sounds really – false,*
> *but I can't imagine,*
> *I've not felt anything so strong, really,* **(evaluation)**
> *in just, like . . . ((sighs)) . . you know, in just taking it in –*
> *I really do, really nice, yes*

In Figure 8-14 the Horse-rider was out on a hunt (before legislation banned hunting with dogs) with her husband and others. She had always had a fear that she would get separated

from the rest of the hunt and need to find her own way back. In this narrative this fear is realised when her horse lost a shoe. They had to jump a hedge together to leave a field:

Figure 8-14 Horse-rider HR8 'we coped'

> **Stanza 9**
> *and we got on the road*
> *and it was Christmas*
> *it was Boxing Day.*
> *there was snow on the ground,*
> *and I ended up just wandering along the lanes with him*
>
> **Stanza 10**
> *and everybody was inside,*
> *their Christmas trees twinkling in the windows*
> *and there was me and him all on our own*
> *just moseying along the lanes around Kirby Lonsdale*
> *and the countryside was absolutely beautiful*
>
> **Stanza 11**
> *I felt a huge sense of achievement that we coped,* **(evaluation)**
> *he hadn't got distressed about having to off on his own*
> *which was another thing*
> *and I felt an enormous sense of well-being then,*
> *we'd coped with something I didn't think we would cope with*
> *either of us,*
>
> **Stanza 12**
> *I thought he'd get anxious*
> *and I thought I'd get anxious . . .*
> *and actually it was really pleasant.*
> *I probably enjoyed that more than anything else*
> *so – that's a high*
>
> **Stanza 13**
> *those are the sorts of things that give you pleasure*

The Horse-rider painted for me, the audience, a Christmas card scene, a winter rural idyll, which contrasts with the prior anxieties of the hunt and losing the shoe. The final line of this narrative has much in common with lines from the Bird-watcher '*absolutely marvellous, I mean, things like that – , that stands out in my memory more than anything –*' (Figure 8-13 stanza 10, lines 3-4 above).

The Railwayman (Figure 8-12) shared what it felt like to on cloud nine, surveying the crowds of families on a sunny steam railway day out, knowing that he had helped to make it

happen. In his narrative he took the mundane, the taken-for-granted and dissected it so that he and the audience can have a clearer understanding of the emotions, the sights, sounds and smells and the events that make up this one moment of contemplative pleasure. In a less detailed narrative, the Fisherman uses narrative detail and sequencing to bring us to the fragile, ephemeral moment when he has a little robin standing close to himself, and he stops to appreciate the wonder of it (Figure 7-19).

In all of these cases a particularly effective fusion of performance techniques, interaction and narrative meaning enabled the speaker to convey a special moment of immersion in occupation, as if the personal and private experience of the occupied self is glimpsed. In each, the narrator told the tale well, with drama, and 'painting a good picture' which helped me to share the experience. The audience is taken into the action, to feel what it feels like to be occupied in this way. The dramatic way in which these particular narratives were told, by the performative self, undoubtedly contributes to their effectiveness. The drama of the performance, however, would be nothing without significant and relevant narrative content, which, in turn, has meaning to the speaker and the audience.

> ### *Reflection on the powerful narratives*
> *As the person conducting the interviews, and also the person carrying out the analysis of the material, I could not help but pick out some narratives as particularly enjoyable, moving, exciting or interesting. Some of these were selected out for analysis, some were not. Some were long and some were short. Most were told by different narrators. An intriguing issue concerning the list of special narratives is the extent to which it might be related to my own subjective taste, interests or personal self-narrative, or whether they might also be considered by others to be special. When asked to read them, colleagues, friends and some seminar audiences have appeared to find them as powerful as I do, by no means a rigorous testing, but one which gives some affirmation of the narratives' effectiveness.*

McAdams (1997) has described nuclear episodes as being particular scenes in the telling of a life narrative which are singled out for telling, as they represent self-perceived moments of continuity or change.

> *'As an affirmation of continuity, a person may give high priority to a particular event that encapsulates in a narrative nutshell as essential and enduring "truth" about the me. Thus the event may be a symbolic proof that "I am what I am."*
>
> (McAdams, 1997, pp 67/68)

In these narratives the narrators are not telling their life stories, yet perhaps these narratives are enabling the narrators to tell about the very special significance that these occupations can have for them, as unique individuals. In several ways, some of these narratives share features in common with what Maslow has called 'peak-experiences' (Maslow, 1968), or perhaps with 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or with 'being' (Wilcock, 1998b), but this debate is outside of the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to say here that the occupations which people engage in often involve overcoming challenges, increasing skill and appreciating the moment. Such experiences leave a powerful memory which contributes to a sense of identity (Thompson & Blair, 1998), or perhaps these experiences in some way encapsulate an important representation of identity.

The framework described in chapter 6 can help to elucidate this. These narratives are particularly meaningful. The meanings are conveyed by narrative content, form and performance; they are a skilled identity performance. By telling us about *what they do*, the narrators are telling us something of *who they are*. By examining each of the powerful narratives systematically, using the dimensions and facets of the framework, it can be seen that this appears to have been accomplished when the dimensions of the active self and the located self are vividly portrayed. An emphasis on locatedness in time, in physical setting, in social setting and embodiment, combined with an emphasis on agency, competence and/or morality made these narratives powerful. In only one was the changing self foregrounded. The majority provided an occasion for the narrator to tell about a moment in time. Particular meaning was made whilst being active and aware of locatedness, including being aware of one's own bodily and emotional presence. In order to convey the meaning of a narrative, the narrator must attempt to effectively transport the audience to the time, place and setting where the activity took place, and to the phenomenological experience of the protagonist. In this way the audience has a little exposure to the deeply personal inner narrative of the self.

8.2.2 Leisure and identity construction

Earlier in the thesis a potential theoretical contradiction was introduced which has implications for the rigour of the method. It was argued, on the one hand, that leisure occupations could be used as an exemplar for other occupations (section 2.4.2), but, on the other hand, literature was reviewed (section 3.4) that suggested that leisure might offer particular scope for the construction of identities (Christiansen, 2004; Green, 1998; Kelly, 1994). At a theoretical level it was suggested that there may be little to gain in separating occupations into categories according to purposes such as work, leisure or self-care. It might

be more useful to consider to what extent any occupation possesses certain qualities such as freedom of choice or pleasure. The second puzzling question relates to this issue of whether those occupations that are commonly classed as 'leisure' might have factors associated with them which influence identity construction in a way that other classes of occupation do not.

Leisure, work and self-care: blurred boundaries

Before this is addressed it should be noted that there was evidence in the content of some of narratives to support the idea that the categories of work, leisure and self-care are not completely distinct, and so theorising about a class of occupations labelled as leisure may be erroneous in itself. The categories might have blurred boundaries, might shift from one to another, or might be enfolded in each other, as suggested in the literature. The Railwayman, for example, while engaged in leisure, said that he had been *working* (Figure 8-12, stanza 8, above), the Bird-watcher shared his ornithological knowledge with customers at work, and the Canoeist's leisure activity was closely entwined with her work with young people. Regular rehearsals and meetings, data collation, editing newsletters and keeping accounts were some of the activities which overlap with the world of work, but which were intrinsic to various of these leisure activities. Further, if work is defined as activity involving effort used as a means of earning income (Pearsall, 2002) then sometimes leisure can become work or work can become leisure. The Artist wondered if she could sell some of her creative products, the Soul-singer wanted to become a professional singer, and the Bridge-player had been a bridge teacher in the past, and had also made money from gambling '*in 1977 I won about £6000 Tax free. As a student, it's a lot of money. .. lot of beer tokens there*' (BP4). Similarly, leisure was not always distinct from self-care or family-care occupations in the narratives. Several narratives, such as those of the Gym-member and the Yoga-practitioner, indicated that their leisure occupation was a means of caring for their physical or mental health. The Fisherman took the opportunity whilst on holiday, to teach his grandchildren how to fish, and the Horn-player shared his interest in brass band playing with his son. Leisure is often separated out from other domains of activity, such as work or family, but in fact these domains may have much in common in relation to meanings, outcomes and motivations (Kelly & Kelly, 1994). Serious leisure enthusiasts, in particular, have recently been argued to have many similarities to those who have a strong and positive attachment to their work (Stebbins, 2004). Given that categorisation systems for occupations are shown to be flawed, and that subjective categorisation (is this work, or leisure, or self-care?) can change across time, people and

circumstance, this research lends support to the argument that occupational therapy should shift its gaze towards a focus on the meaning of occupations.

The second puzzling question

Despite these blurred distinctions, and accepting the commonalities suggested by Kelly and Kelly, the study was originally based on a sample of people who met the criteria for being serious leisure enthusiasts as defined in Chapter 4. The question to be addressed here is whether or not the meanings of the narratives about serious leisure occupations might have been as likely to be derived from narratives about non-leisure occupations or narratives about casual leisure. The theoretical argument summarised above can be re-considered in the light of some of the empirical evidence from this study, using the framework as a tool. Limited space does not allow a completely detailed analysis, but attention will be given to some of the interesting and relevant findings about *the active self*.

Competence

Amongst the requirements of serious leisure are a high degree of commitment and a high usage of resources such as time, energy and money (Stebbins, 2001). It is not surprising, then, that most of these research participants told about high levels of knowledge and skill, without which they could not operate in their serious leisure worlds. I learned (superficially), from the narratives, about musical instruments, bridge-playing, railway history, yoga postures, dog agility courses and important choral works, for example, and was made to understand how much time and effort had gone into the attainment of this level of expertise. Leisure, particularly serious leisure, clearly offers the opportunity to develop and display an identity which features competence as a component.

Yet leisure occupations are not unique in offering this. An individual may display competence in self-care (such as personal grooming) and also in work occupations. Consideration must be given, however, to which arena of life the individual values most, with regard to achieving and displaying competence. While one person may wish to be seen as highly competent in their work role, and put effort into achieving this, another may not, preferring to build a reputation as a highly skilled bird-watcher, scuba-diver, singer or cyclist. The narratives available in this research do not enable us to see whether those who foregrounded competence in their narratives of leisure would also foreground it in narratives of other occupations. There is an argument that people can exercise more choice with regards to leisure occupations than others such as work or self care. For those who have jobs which

allow little opportunity for the development or display of competence, leisure becomes important for this facet of the self.

Agency

In the case of leisure, and particularly in the case of serious leisure, agency is closely associated with the motivations which drive one to continue such a high level of commitment. Serious leisure participants, such as those in this study, may have particularly agentic selves, given that they have become relentless pursuers of their chosen leisure occupation. The research participants told tales of hardship, troubles, bickering, dangers and accidents. This prompts (and indeed, in the interviews, did prompt) the question 'why carry on doing it?' Unlike paid work, there is no contractual obligation to continue. Yet the Amateur Operatic performer went on stage with an injured foot, the Horn-player continued to turn up to band practices where the atmosphere was unpleasant, the Mountain-biker continued biking after being seriously injured in an accident and the Scuba-diver overcame her fear to learn to dive.

Stebbins introduced the idea of agreeable obligation in serious leisure (Stebbins, 2005) regarding it as arising from pleasurable memories and rewards from being involved with the activity. He suggested that a cost-benefit analysis weighs towards continuing (Stebbins, 1996). In a study employing ethnographic and phenomenological approaches to explore social and personal aspects of kennel club membership, however, it was argued that no rational assessment of costs and benefits takes place (Baldwin & Norris, 1999). The main costs uncovered in the kennel club study were money, time and negative emotional experiences. Baldwin and Norris concluded that any concerns with costs would be over-ridden by valuing the lifestyle and strong identification with the activity. Similar findings emerged from a study of football fandom (Jones, 2000). Once the activity is tightly associated with '*who I am*' then the costs do not weigh so much on the balance.

This study supports this argument. There was little evidence of rational weighing of costs and benefits, but for some, the leisure occupation was aligned closely with identity, as shown through the use of pronouns in the narratives, narratives of group affiliation, and, for some, moments of recognising that this occupation was the perfect occupation for them. For some people, their chosen leisure occupation and their identity have been closely linked since childhood (such as the Fisherman), whilst others consciously opted into an activity which they have selected thoughtfully (e.g. the Bridge-player). A third group seemed to have a 'moment of epiphany', a sudden revelation that they had come upon exactly the right leisure occupation for them (Figure 8-15). There is some accord here with the findings of Reynolds and Prior,

who found that people either drew on long-standing interests or found textile arts almost by accident (Reynolds & Prior, 2003a).

Figure 8-15 Encountering the ideal occupation

> *It was erm it was, it was an <u>amazing</u> moment*
> *I thought 'oh, I like – I <u>really</u> like this'*
>   The Horn-player HP2
>
>
> *and for some reason that really took my imagination*
> *and I thought '<u>I</u> want to do that'*
>   The Scuba-diver SD1
>
>
> *she heard about this Agility Club*
> *and I said 'oh I've always fancied a go at that'*
>   The Dog-trainer DT3
>
>
> *and then, I'd seen a book, and I'd seen a magazine,*
> *and I thought 'oh I wouldn't mind having a go at that'*
>   The Yoga-practitioner YP5

The word 'I' takes on a significance which ties the desired occupation to the self as if it is a part of the self which is just discovered, though not yet tried. These 'I' phrases seem to bring together an emotional reaction, a sense of recognition, a determination or agency and the beginnings of transformation. Mishler, in his study of craft artists, heard narratives of similar revelatory moments, which he noted were often chance events, when an individual happened to see or experience something which changed their lives (Mishler, 1999). He called these 'accidents of "self-discovery"' (p60). In terms of the continual reconstruction of identity, much work goes into maintaining a sense of continuity, but sometimes chance events cause the individual to reach a turning point. For the four people quoted above, chance encounters with a big-band, a TV programme on diving, a suggestion of a different form of dog-training and a magazine article on yoga all had this effect. It was as if these individuals had found the occupation that satisfied some specific requirements, unique to them; as if their self-narratives, developed thus far, could now move forward in a more fulfilled way.

For each of the participants who had a moment of 'epiphany' this was followed through with a decision to act, in order to participate. Another person might have noted the moment and then decided that the activity was not accessible to him. Leisure is not entirely about freedom of choice. It may also be about recognising an occupation which offers something to one's own ongoing life narrative and identity and displaying agency enough to carry it

through. It could, of course, be argued that other areas of occupational performance, such as work and self-care, also offer this kind of moment and opportunity, but engagement in these two areas of activity is, to some extent, driven primarily by necessity rather than pleasure.

Morality

Commitment, loyalty and obligation compel people to engage in serious leisure regularly, despite mood, tiredness or other obstacles. This is the moral self in action. In some ways this undermines the idea that leisure is freely entered into. Although it might be argued that a particular leisure activity is (relatively) freely chosen initially, the serious leisure participant soon has that feeling of freedom eroded. To stay involved one must do what is required. This caused problems for some of the people interviewed for this study. The Horn-player is an example. Because of work commitments, and because he was increasingly dissatisfied with his fellow band members, he wanted to discontinue membership of the band, but was driven by guilt and obligation to continue with them for quite a long time. The Choral-singer wanted to miss some choir rehearsals in order to have singing lessons, but was not allowed to, by the choir rules. Whilst Stebbins (2005) does admit that there is sometimes a 'dark side' to agreeable obligation, he argues that participants usually regard the benefits as outweighing the costs. My study gave some evidence of a more unpleasant 'dark side' than Stebbins described, in the narratives of the two cases above, and others. Despite what I would call 'disagreeable obligation', however, the Horn-player stayed with the band and the Bird-watcher persists in attending socially challenging meetings suggesting that moral obligations are amongst the drivers that maintain engagement in these leisure occupations.

In terms of the dimension of the occupied self which the framework calls the active self, it can be seen then that leisure offers opportunities for the development and display of agency, competence and morality. Serious leisure, it could be argued, offers particular scope for these three facets to be at the fore, because of the higher levels of skill and knowledge, motivation, commitment, loyalty and sense of obligation needed to participate. Serious leisure appears to require some unique qualities. The enthusiasts who make up a serious leisure community create a culture of commitment to the activity which has its own set of values, hierarchies, ethics and behavioural expectations (Gillespie et al., 2002). In their study of the serious leisure world of dog sports, Gillespie *et al* found that these may conflict with the values and expectations of the dominant social institutions within which the individual also operates. Further, the serious leisure participant must negotiate a way through these conflicts. So, whilst

the narratives of engagement in serious leisure in this study might well exemplify the way in which identity is constructed in relation to <u>all</u> occupations, it must be remembered that the serious leisure world itself may not be typical of the 'real world'. Its lack of typicality, though, *may not arise from any distinction between leisure, work and self-care*, but from the *degree of intensity* with which it is engaged. The agency, competence and moral values associated with serious leisure may also apply when engaged 'seriously' in other occupations, such as work and self-care. There is some parallel here, with the idea of the engaging occupation (Jonsson et al., 2001), which, as was noted in 2.2.2:

- consists of a coherent set of activities is engaged in intensely
- involves membership of a community
- often goes beyond personal pleasure
- is infused with positive meaning
- and is particularly meaningful

The suggestion that serious leisure is a sub-set of engaging occupations which was made in section 2.4.2 is held to be the case, supported by the findings of the study. The framework illustrates the important part that such occupations have in constructing identity.

8.3 Utility in reviewing relevant literature

The framework offers a perspective on the relationship between the individual, their occupations and their identity which is organised around the conceptual dimensions of the active self, the located self and the changing self. This perspective can be utilised to enable a different reading of the theoretical and empirical writings of others. In this section attention will be given to three topics which were discussed in general terms in chapter 2: the meanings of occupations, transition and adaptation, and participation.

8.3.1 Meanings of occupations

Much has been written about the meanings of occupations (see section 2.2.2), although only a relatively small amount of empirical research has sought to explore this topic. Here the findings of three studies are re-examined from the perspective of the framework.

Craik and Pieris have recently reported on their investigation into the meanings and the value of leisure for people with enduring mental health problems (Craik & Pieris, 2006). In this study a theory-led thematic analysis of the interview material from 10 participants was carried out, three themes being reported in this particular paper. Of interest here is that the

authors found that there was some focus on the issues of time in relation to leisure occupations, with participants expressing ideas around freedom, a sense of control and having time and space to oneself. There was a theme of valuing leisure occupations for their ability to connect the individual with the world, in the absence of work. The focus on temporal, spatial and social contexts is noted here as an important manifestation of the desire to establish some of the facets of the *located self*, whilst it is also noted that the *active self*, in terms of agency (sense of control) was being expressed.

In an earlier study the value of sea-kayaking for people with a spinal cord injury was explored (L. P. S. Taylor & McGruder, 1996). They found that their participants valued the social and physical aspects of the occupation, which, in terms of the framework shows them, again, describing their *located selves*, located amongst other people, and also located outdoors, in water and a range of weather conditions. The participants also talked about valuing the chance to develop higher level skills, which in the framework would be classed as the competent, *active self*. It is of note that studies about the values of occupations tend to emphasise the role of competence and agency in their value, but are less likely to mention morality. Using the framework as a tool for systematic scrutiny makes this omission apparent. In their descriptions of the values of sea-kayaking, the participants did, in fact, talk about supporting others as an aspect of social interaction, but this was not given as much attention as agency and competence in the analysis.

In a third study exploring the meaning and functions of art for women with chronic illness (Reynolds & Prior, 2003a), the meanings of the art occupations were placed on a continuum ranging from body focused strategies for coping with pain to socially focused ways of contributing to society. Each of the meanings on the continuum can be found a place in the framework of the occupied self. One theme, for example was about increasing choice and control (the *active, agentic, self*), one was about 'enabling the revising of priorities' (the *changing self*), and another theme was about building new social relationships (the *socially located self*). The *active moral self* could be found in the theme 'contributing to others and making a difference' (Reynolds & Prior, 2003a, p788).

8.3.2 Continuity and adaptation

Occupation has an important role to play in providing continuity during transition, and adaptation following disruption (Blair, 2000; Clark, 1993), as discussed in section 2.3.1. This suggestion has been supported recently in a phenomenological study based on interviews with 33 caregivers for family members with dementia (Hasselkus & Murray, 2007). In this study

occupational engagement was found to be an indicator of well-being, not only for the care-receiver, but also for the care-giver, and in addition, provided a continuity which helped to mitigate against biographical disruption. Disruption can occur in the *active self*, the *located self* and in the *changing self*, all dimensions of the occupied self. With the cognitive and functional impairments associated with dementia, for example, identifying oneself as located in a particular time or place may become problematic and one's conceptualisation of oneself as competent or in control may become less certain. The care-giver, also, experiences the self as changing, as routine engagement in occupations might change to accommodate a new life-style. Where resistance against such changes is desirable, stability in occupational engagement can be a goal. Occupations which are personally meaningful can help maintain a sense of continuity of identity (Armstrong & Blair, 2006).

A recent small study by Vrkljan and Miller-Polgar has built on their previous work exploring the relationship between occupation, meaning and identity (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007). Using a single case study design based on interviews with an older man and his wife, about driving cessation, this study makes the case that giving up a valued occupation impacts on well-being. Most importantly this is not only because of the loss of function and participation, but also because of the ensuing changes in occupational roles, meaning and identity. The loss of a driving licence is an indication to society of a deterioration of the *competent self*. It also has serious implications for the way in which the *located self* is constructed, given that the ability to move easily across distances, visiting familiar places, is disrupted. The *agentic self*, the *socially located* self and other facets may also be affected.

8.3.3 Participation and community locatedness

The framework serves to draw attention to the range of facets associated with the dimensions of the occupied self. Occupation is essential for participation (see section 2.3.1), the ability to be involved in life situations (Gray, 2001). Much of occupational therapy and occupational science literature, perhaps because of its Western locatedness (Iwama, 2005) has been concerned with the individual and his ability to be competent and agentic in social and physical locations. In a mental health care setting, for example, the occupational therapist might work with a client who has depression, to improve a sense of agency through occupational engagement. In a physical rehabilitation setting, the ability to competently prepare a meal or reach cupboards might be the focus of intervention. Yet participation can also be outward looking, involving engagement with community and civic life (Gray, 2001). Recent writings in occupational therapy and occupational science have emphasised the

socially located self in its broadest sense. Being socially located can mean being able to function with strangers, in groups, or with friends and family, but it can also mean being a functioning member of society and culture. When this is considered alongside of the idea of the active, moral self, links can be made between occupation, identity and engagement in community. In a theoretical paper Whiteford has recently written about how occupation connects people with others, giving a sense of continuity and being shaped by context (historic, cultural, political). Community engagement, she argues, is about occupation connecting people in the community and she gives examples such as a group of grandmothers in South Africa who formed a collective to fight the effects of AIDS, and a man keeping a daily diary on the internet, where it is available for others to read (Whiteford, 2007). In terms of the framework of the occupied self, being occupied in ways that contribute to the good of the community is engagement of the moral self, aware of social locatedness. The occupational therapist's concern with occupation can have political implications (Hammell, 2008).

The framework, and the focus of this thesis on leisure occupations forges a link between Whiteford's ideas and a discussion paper about leisure as a space for the social self and civic engagement (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). These authors have argued that the latter half of the twentieth century has seen a dominance of consumerism and individualism in leisure. The moral facet of the occupied self might influence how the individual engages in occupations according to certain values, but the individual who conceptualises herself as moral and socially located will, through participation, contribute to the community. The Horn-player, above, was an example of this, whilst the Bird-watcher was an example of someone who saw himself as moral and located in a physical environment, and so he was pro-active in trying to protect wild-life. For Iwama (2005), locatedness in the social and physical environments plays a greater part in the construction of identity in Eastern, collective societies, whilst the agentic, active self is of more importance in the West.

8.4 Conclusion

The framework provides a schematic representation of the dimensions of the occupied self, and their facets. The chapter began with a caution that a representation such as this could over-simplify and reduce to parts a concept which is, in fact, complex and made up of interconnecting and interacting parts. The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate that the framework enables a systematic approach for understanding the relationship between identity and occupation: the occupied self. The first part of the chapter showed how the framework, in use, can embrace and illustrate complexity. This was done by discussion of two case studies,

the Dog-trainer and the Railwayman. In both cases it was shown that the active self, the located self and the changing self are multifaceted dimensions of the occupied self.

The second part of the chapter illustrated that the framework can be utilised as a tool to address puzzling questions about occupation and identity. Two examples were used for this purpose. The first example involved some narratives which had arisen in the interviews which were notable for their power and meaningfulness. The framework was used to formulate an understanding of how their power and meaning had been created, particularly by their focus on the active, located self. The second example was a puzzling question which had arisen in the background literature to this study relating to whether leisure has a particular role in identity construction. Again, it was demonstrated that the framework could be used to systematically approach this puzzle, showing the ways in which the three key facets of the active self are engaged. This drew attention to the possibility that serious leisure is a sub-set of 'engaging occupations'.

The final part of the chapter showed how the framework could be used to re-frame other literature about occupation and identity. Examples were given which focused on the meanings of leisure, continuity and adaptation, participation and community locatedness.

The framework has been shown, in this chapter, to have some utility, but its applications may go further. Further exploration of the utility is beyond the scope of this thesis, although the implications of this contribution will be considered further in the next, and last, chapter.

9 Conclusion

> *and that was near the end of the day,*
> *and a lot of them were flagging*
> *and I got my bike to the top*
> *before the editor of the magazine.*
>
> *So I shot back down again,*
> *half way down,*
> *got his bike,*
> *carried his bike up*
>
> *and everyone was like*
> *'where does that little scrawny thing get his energy from!?'*
> *You know, because they just couldn't wear me out at all*
>   The Mountain-biker MB15 (continued from Chapter 1, p1)

This thesis began by introducing a problem. If it is believed that occupations contribute to the construction of identity, then *how* do they do so? Taking identity to be a socially-situated manifestation of the self, the narratives that the Mountain-biker (above) and the other leisure enthusiasts told about their occupations were used as a means to investigate this question.

Occupation and identity were introduced as complex constructs in the literature review, and their relationships with action, narrative and personal and social meanings were discussed. These relationships provided a basis for the methodological approach used in the research, working within a social constructionist epistemology. When people tell stories to others about their experiences, these are told as narratives, presented with particular features in order to convey meaning. The meanings of narratives about occupations contribute to the expression of identity.

This study has featured 17 people who have tried to convey the meanings associated with being occupied by certain leisure activities. They have demonstrated that these occupations contribute to their personal sense of who they are and to their socially-situated identities. As the Railwayman (RM15) put it '*It is a major part of my life'*.

The analysis of narratives has allowed the complexity of the occupied self to be acknowledged and respected, whilst being explored for its various aspects. The study adds empirical evidence to the idea that identity is constructed through occupation, and suggests a way to conceptualise the relationship, in the framework of the occupied self.

The aim of this chapter is to develop the discussion started in Chapter 8, which asserted that the framework has utility and makes a contribution to the theory and practice of

occupational therapy. To this end the first section of the chapter will consider the extent to which the aims of the study have been met, assessing the contribution of the research to professional knowledge within the context of current debates and writings. The second section will provide a critical overview of the research process including its quality and the limitations of the study. The third section will give attention to the implications of the findings in relation to theory development and practice and the fourth section will make some recommendations for future research, based on what has been found here.

9.1 Research findings: context and contribution

The aim of the research was to investigate how narratives told about occupations contribute to an understanding of identity. The aim has been met to the extent that a greater understanding has been gained of the ways in which occupations contribute to the narrative identity and the narrated identity of the individual. The relevance of this understanding can be better understood alongside recent and current work in similar areas of interest.

9.1.1 Location in the wider professional context

Occupation defined

Occupation has been defined in a variety of ways as discussed in Chapter 2. It has not been the purpose of this thesis to develop or challenge current definitions of occupation, but it worthy of note that some of the facets of the occupied self identified in this study do not feature prominently in current definitions and descriptions of the nature of occupation. In such definitions (e.g. Creek, 2006; Hinojosa & Kramer, 1997; Townsend, 2002), socio-cultural and temporal locatedness have been given more prominence than the location of the occupied self in the body, or in place. While ability and skill are mentioned by some (e.g. Hinojosa & Kramer, 1997) in general definitions do not include reference to occupation requiring agency or an expression of morality. That occupation might change the self and that the relationship with an occupation might change are also not included. Of course, definitions cannot be totally comprehensive; they are usually required to be succinct. Also, though I am noting some areas of neglect in definitions, I cannot claim that these properties of occupation are neglected completely in the occupational therapy literature, they are not. Definitions of key terms, however, might be taken as an indicator of the hegemony in the current practice climate (amidst public narratives), rather than a theoretical underpinning based on empirical evidence.

The definition which has particular resonance with the findings of this study is the conceptualisation of occupation as 'doing, being and becoming' (Wilcock, 1998b). Given that the analysis of narratives in this research resulted in clusters of meanings around the active self, the changing self and the located self, it can be seen that there is some reflection of Wilcock's definition, in that some narratives were tales of 'doing' (the active self) and some were tales of 'becoming' (the changing self).

A recent paper by Hammell (2004) suggested that Wilcock's definition of occupation should be developed and conceptualised as 'doing, being, becoming *and belonging'*. She based her argument, in part, on a study involving an occupation-based community service in Northern America (Rebeiro, Day, Semeniuk, O'Brien, & Wilson, 2000). In Rebeiro et al's research it was found that people with mental health problems who used the service had their needs met in terms of being, belonging and becoming. Hammell argued, from this, that an occupation can have meaning in relation to belonging within a network of social relationships. Wilcock has developed this idea in her more recent writing (Wilcock, 2006).While Rebeiro et al do, in their paper's discussion section, place emphasis on *social* belonging, it is relevant here that, within their results section, they describe 'belonging needs' as the need for '*a place to go, a place to gather and a place to belong.*' (Rebeiro et al., 2000, p497). The physical location, as well as the social location, according to this, might provide a sense of belonging. Hammell's argument supports what has been found in this study, that people talking about their occupations powerfully indicated that locatedness is a dimension of the self. Locatedness, however, does not just relate to social locatedness, but encompasses, also, the contexts of time, place and the body. All of these are facets of the occupied self. The dimensions of occupation (apart from 'being') suggested by Wilcock and developed by Hammell are validated and given structure and meaning by the framework which has emerged from the data in this study.

As well as doing and becoming, Wilcock's definition included a third dimension: being. She links this term with the 18th century Romantic school of thought (Wilcock, 2006) and in earlier work she described it as '*being true to ourselves, to our nature, to our essence, and to what is distinctive about us to bring to others as part of our relationships and to what we do*' (Wilcock, 1998b, p250). She cited Maslow's idea of 'being' as related to a peak experience, when time almost stands still, and the focus is on the here and now, stillness and contemplation of the inner life. Rebeiro et al have also suggested that being is about rediscovery of the self and even a basic affirmation of the right to exist (Rebeiro et al., 2000).

Occupational therapy has tended to focus on purposeful doing, but sometimes an activity can be meaningful without having purpose (Hammell, 2004), focussing on pleasure and an appreciation of the taken for granted, as when watching a robin close by. Although Maslow linked his idea of peak experience to identity (Maslow, 1968), the construction of the framework in this research did not encompass a similar concept. Perhaps the powerful narratives discussed in section 8.2.1 were moments of being (as it was suggested that they might be peak experiences or moments of 'flow'); this is a possible focus for future research.

Occupation and identity

Christiansen has said that occupations are '*opportunities to express the self, to create identity*' (Christiansen, 1999, p552). Two perspectives can be taken on this linkage between occupations and the expression of identity. The phrase 'occupational identity' (Kielhofner, 2008) offers a macro-perspective, identity being conceived of as one's occupational biography, encompassing all of the occupations engaged in throughout a life. Developing this idea, and using a secondary analysis of interview material from a previous research participant Unruh (2004) reflected on the themes of continuity, the contributions made by work, leisure and self-care and the public and private aspects of occupational identity. Interestingly, she did this with little reference to mainstream sociological and psychological theories of identity which, although they do not place occupation centrally, certainly give due regard to action or everyday activity. The participants of the study presented in this thesis told narratives which focused (usually) on one occupation, albeit with variations, out of the constellation of occupations making up their whole life's repertoire. In contrast to the whole biography underpinning the occupational identity, my study offers a micro-perspective enabling a clarification of the processes linking an individual occupation to identity.

The framework allows us to see that each occupation offers an array of dimensions and facets which will enable the individual to construct a complex and ever-changing identity. Those who find themselves occupationally deprived will have poor opportunity to construct an identity which has development in each of its dimensions and facets.

Occupational engagement offers the individual opportunities, then, to develop various facets of the self, and the framework indicates what these facets are. A recent quantitative study (Passmore, 2003) showed a positive and significant relationship between engagement in leisure occupations and the mental health of adolescents (n = 850). The leisure participation appeared to have this effect through positive influences on self-efficacy, competence and global self-worth. The definition of leisure in Passmore's study was broader than the one used

here, including leisure occupations orientated to achievement, socialising and time-out. The 'achievement leisure' (most congruent with my definition) was the one that appeared to have most impact. In the terminology of the framework, the agentic and competent selves were being shown to be developed by leisure occupations, in adolescents. Whether global self-worth has a relationship with the moral self can only be conjectured, though one might assume that assessing one's own value might have some relationship with what one perceives as 'good' or 'bad' in societal terms.

Christiansen's work is worth returning to at this point, given that he has played a significant role in drawing attention to the theoretical association between occupation and identity (Christiansen, 1999, 2004; Christiansen et al., 1999). As described earlier, Christiansen summarised the relationship between the meanings of occupations and the formulation of identity as a life narrative, giving particular attention to self-consciousness, social interaction and agency. My study clearly supports these ideas, and, indeed, has been influenced by his earlier papers. It must be noted, however, that his emphasis on social interaction with regards to occupation and identity formation detract from the part played by occupations as they are phenomenologically experienced, reflected on and absorbed into the self-narrative. Whilst identity is socially situated, there is a case to be made that what is woven into the inner narrative of the self may be comprised, also, of non-social experiences which may have personal and social meanings. The Fisherman, the Bird-watcher, the Canoeist and others told narratives about solitary happenings which had an impact on the occupied self. Some parts of these happenings might be shared socially in conversation and interviews, but some may not. The findings of this study suggest that the relationship between identity and occupation goes beyond the social locatedness emphasised by Christiansen's viewpoint. This study has been influenced, and in turn, supports those who suggest that the physical and temporal contexts, and the embodied self should also be given attention in the conceptualisation of identity (Gover & Gavelek, 1996; Rojek, 2005), as should human engagement in activity (Christiansen, 1999; Kuentzel, 2000; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

Occupations and their meanings

Agreement with Hammell's (2004) argument that occupational therapists would be enabled to focus on the meaning of occupations, rather than their purpose, with a shift away from the tri-partite categorisation of work / leisure and self-care has been asserted elsewhere in this thesis. Considerable evidence is accumulating that the distinction between these categories is flimsy (Bateson, 1996; Jonsson et al., 2001; Primeau, 1992, 1996) and this study adds to that

evidence. To focus on the meanings of occupations, however, presents a challenge to researchers. The body of evidence is yet to be built that will give a confident foundation for understanding meanings. A taxonomy has been suggested that divides the meanings of occupations into three main groupings: concrete, symbolic and self-reward (Persson et al., 2001), but it is difficult to reconcile this with the meanings which emerged from the analysis of narratives in this study. At a superficial level, leisure occupations might be thought to be self-rewarding, but the narratives reveal this as too simplistic a view. Symbolism, derived from social locatedness, is clearly a source of meaning, and as Persson et al point out, this provides a link to identity. The framework of the occupied self presented by this thesis offers a more complex picture of the clusters of meanings expressed. In contrast to the meanings in Persson et al's taxonomy, which appear to be related to meaning-as-motivation, the meanings in this study relate to what is meaningful in the construction of one's narrative identity.

A much more interesting link can be made to recent work by Jonsson (2008), in his proposed categorisation (and gradation) of occupations by the way in which they are experienced. This categorisation, described in section 2.2.2, suggests that occupations are engaged in with different degrees of commitment and intensity (from 'engaging' occupations to 'basic' and 'time-killing' occupations). There is a suggestion made, in Jonsson's paper, that some types of occupation might be considered more indispensable than others, and that some might have a greater significance for well-being. Engaging occupations fit into both of these categories. This thesis suggests that the association between engaging occupations and well-being may be related to identity construction.

Narratives as a research tool

Mishler, following analysis of several long interviews with five craft-artists, presented a challenge to four key assumptions made in traditional identity research (Mishler, 1999). These have been described in section 3.1.1 and have been supported by my findings. Our approaches, however, were different. Mishler's study was much more concerned than mine with the content of what the participants said. Although he has been a strong advocate of giving attention to interactional processes (Mishler, 1986b), and he does this to some extent in the craft-artist study, he does in fact appear to approach the interview material from a realist, post-positivist ontological position. By focusing on content, and by using longer, more structured interviews, he was able to map out the career trajectories of the craft-artists. In effect he treated the whole interview as a narrative, which I chose not to do. I chose to make the distinction between short self-contained narratives (small stories) and non-narrative

discourse. In order to understand the identities of his participants Mishler looked for identity claims in the text, and then looked for other evidence to support them. He did not, as I did, build a picture of identity based on the meanings of narratives, accessed through analysis of Labovian structure, performative features, plot and coherence.

This study offers an example of an approach to narrative research which has been, surprisingly, neglected in occupational therapy and occupational science research. The narratives selected for analysis here have been 'small stories' as opposed to 'big stories'. Big stories are normally biographical or 'whole life' narratives or narratives relating to critical life events, while small stories are about small incidents (Bamberg, 2006). It has been more common, in occupational therapy and occupational science, for narrative analysis to focus on big stories (e.g. Braveman & Helfrich, 2001; Gould et al., 2005; Jonsson et al., 2001; Price-Lackey & Cashman, 1996). This has been emphasised most recently in a paper discussing how the philosophical underpinnings of narrative research (mainly life stories) impact on research about human occupation (Josephsson, Asaba, Jonsson, & Alsaker, 2006). Research focusing on small stories and perhaps mundane events has been less common. Although a Labovian analysis of a multidisciplinary team's use of stories to build an image of a patient (Crepeau, 2000) and of a manager's dilemma (Bailey, 2001) have been carried out by occupational therapy researchers, these have not focused on occupations.

'Big stories' have come under critical scrutiny in a recent paper (Bamberg, 2006). Big stories, collected in order to explore the lives of people, or at the very least, life changing events, are usually elicited in interview situations designed to encourage reflection and disclosure. These circumstances, Bamberg argues, are almost quasi-experimental, given that big life stories are not everyday phenomena. Further, the narrative analysis in such cases often focuses on the referential function of the narratives (the content), without due regard to interaction and co-construction. Bamberg also expresses concern that big story analysis may concentrate on seeing people's lives as fixed, rather than showing the tensions and contradictions which often arise in small stories. The use of small, everyday stories enables narrative analysis to *'foreground the action orientation or discursive function that is inherent in all language use'* (Bamberg, 2006, p74). The use of active, conversational interviewing enabled the research reported in this thesis to move close to replicating ordinary conversational accounts of everyday activities. Whilst the interview setting can never be said to be totally natural, the focus on the mundane, rather than major life events, will have facilitated the achievement of the aim of the research. The 17 leisure enthusiasts were not afraid to tell, with spontaneity, seemingly 'trivial' narratives about their occupations; stories

that may well have been told to friends and relations. Further, a focus on small stories here has allowed uncertainties, tensions and contradictions to be expressed without the participants being concerned about creating an overall coherence, as might be expected in narratives covering larger life segments.

There is scope for further usage, given that small stories are, essentially, about action and therefore usually about occupations, and that, given the right interview conditions, they can be captured as relatively natural performances. In the context of a paucity of information on how to carry out the analysis of short narratives, this thesis contributes a practical approach to a systematic method.

9.1.2 The contribution of this study

This study offers a framework through which the relationship between occupational engagement and identity might be better understood. The framework, emerging from the narrative analysis and the meanings of the narratives, and influenced, to some extent by *a priori* theory, enables a conceptualisation of the occupied self. Whilst *engaged* in an occupation the individual experiences being an active, located and changing self which contributes to the reflexive project of the self: the life's narrative. In *telling* about the occupation, the individual conveys meaning by foregrounding certain facets of the occupied self. This foregrounding is the process by which the individual conveys a preferred identity. It is not just what we do but also what the occupation means to us that contributes to the construction of identity (Price-Lackey & Cashman, 1996; Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007).

The framework has an infrastructure which includes facets of identity which the individual may choose to place greater emphasis on in narratives which are, in essence, presentations of self to an audience. By telling narratives about his or her occupations the individual is telling about being active and, as a consequence, may foreground facets of:

- The moral self
- The competent self and
- The agentic self

The individual also tells about being located in four contexts, one or more of which may be foregrounded:

- The temporal context
- The physical context

- The sociocultural context
- The body (including mental processes and emotion)

Finally the individual tells about facets of the changing occupied self:

- Changing of the person
- Changes in the engagement with the occupation

The framework allows these parts to be explored, but also allows for the full complex relationship that someone may have with an activity which is meaningful to them personally: an occupation. When the Railwayman describes how essential it is for him to be part of a railway family, with all that that entails, a reductionist perspective cannot convey a simple formulation linking occupation to identity. The framework enables a systematic approach to understanding the complexity of this relationship which, in turn, has implications for the relationship between occupation and well-being. A perspective is gained on the individual's self-narrative and social identity in relation to adaptation, participation and functioning in everyday life. The framework has been shown to have utility as a tool for articulating the occupied self, and also for examining specific scenarios and problems.

The framework is the main contribution made by this study to the current knowledge base about occupations. The implications of the contribution can be further understood when it is located in the wider professional and academic context as discussed above (9.1.1). The implications are summarised here:

- The framework draws attention to a range of facets of the occupied self some of which are given little attention in current definitions and descriptions of occupation. Occupation is a meaningful activity which allows expression of competence, agency and moral values. It also enables the identification of the self by location in body, time, place, society and relationships, and it causes change in the self, as well as being subject to change in the relationship with the 'doer'.
- Whilst the social context for the development of identity is clearly significant, the framework draws attention to the development of the self through experiences which themselves may not involve social contact. Locatedness in place or one's own body, for example, can contribute to one's sense of self, which may later contribute to one's social identity, or perhaps may not.

- The framework gives validation and structure to Hammell's development of Wilcock's idea or occupation as 'doing, being, belonging and becoming' (Hammell, 2004). This was achieved by focussing on the meanings of occupations, in relation to self and identity rather than on meanings in relation to motivation.

- The framework offers a 'micro-perspective' on the relationship between occupation and identity, in contrast to the whole-life constellation of occupations perspective framed by the concept of occupational identity.

- The methodological approach has demonstrated the value of using narrative analysis, focusing on small stories of mundane occupations, to further understand occupation and the occupied individual. Further, the practical stages of a useful method have been developed and demonstrated.

The contributions of the study, as detailed above, must be considered against an honest and transparent assessment of the methods by which it was constructed, and also against its usefulness, professionally and academically. These two issues will be addressed in the following sections.

9.2 The research process: a critical discussion

Despite every effort to design and implement a systematic and minimally flawed research project, reflections and evaluation throughout the process give evidence that there were limitations and scope for improvement. Some of this has been touched on in other parts of the thesis. This section provides some further critical consideration of the research process.

9.2.1 The use of narratives as data

The framework which has emerged from the analysis of this study is based on using a narrative conceptualisation of identity and a narrative-based methodology, and its structure and parts are clearly influenced by this. The rationale for a narrative approach was argued in Chapters 3 and 4, but here it is noted that a different approach to investigating the relationship between occupation and identity might have led to a different result.

Taking the narrative as the unit of research in order to focus on situated action meant that, once the narratives had been extracted, little further reference was made to the non-narrative material of the interview, or those narratives which were not selected for analysis. The point of the research was not to carry out a comprehensive study of the identities of these

17 people, but was to understand what narratives could reveal about identity. So, whilst the narratives appear to have been considered away from their interview context this has not detracted from the purpose of the research. In fact, it was observed that the short narratives were particularly sensitive at reflecting the general impressions from the whole interview.

Riessman has discussed the common criticisms levelled at the use of narratives in research (Riessman, 2002, 2008). My focus on self-contained, small narratives to elicit meaning addresses a concern that she has noted that long, interview-length narratives should not be assumed to be a source of meaning. Also, she noted, there have been criticisms of the trend to over-personalise the personal narrative, giving insufficient attention to historical, class and cultural contexts. Influenced by Lawler (2002), and as far as the scope of this research would allow, each narrative was analysed in relation to such socio-cultural influences. A further criticism which has been levelled at narrative research are the West-centred assumptions about the importance of agency and the autonomous self (Riessman, 2002). This mirrors Iwama's observations (above 8.3.3) about the Western focus of occupational therapy. The narrative analysis in this study did focus, to some extent, on agency and the achievement of goals by the actors in each drama; the action theory approach encourages this perspective. This may be a shortcoming of this work, limiting its applicability outside of the West.

9.2.2 Limitations and possible improvements

Research ethics

It is desirable to treat the participant with respect and to be as open as possible about the agenda in the research project (Mishler, 1986b; Seale, 1998; Stanley & Wise, 1990). To this end the participants were given an information sheet supported by a verbal explanation, but some information was kept back. Participants were told that the project was about leisure and identity, but they were not told that the analysis would focus, in part, on their manner of speaking and structuring narratives. By not giving these details of my approach I maximised the likelihood of a natural interaction, which was fundamental to my analysis of the narratives. The participants with whom I shared the results, whilst not assumed to represent all the participants, did not see this as problematic.

Whilst there are benefits (associated with convenience and establishing trust), there are possible drawbacks regarding the use of mutually known gatekeepers to help recruit participants. Participants must be assured of confidentiality, and there is a further complication, in that each gatekeeper may have given an impression of the research (and of

me) which may have influenced how the interviewee responded. The co-construction of identity, in this case, involved a third party. Ideally, participants would be recruited from networks further removed from the researcher than these were.

The interviews

There have been suggestions that narratives collected in interview situations are less likely to have the natural performance characteristics of those gathered in natural conversation (Bamberg, 2006; Cortazzi, 1993). The use of active interviewing in this study aimed to achieve a relatively normal conversation pattern, which the transcribed narratives give some evidence of achieving. The use of a question schedule in the interview, however, often prevented narratives from emerging. This can be seen on several occasions, where I posed a question which could only be answered with description or explanation. The questions in these cases reveal my own inexperience and agendas influenced by my assumptions, by prior early analysis or by recent reading. Were the research to be done again, a less structured interview, with no prompt sheet, would facilitate the natural flow of the conversation and therefore the production of narratives.

Interviewing someone in their own home has many advantages in that it is conducive to the participant being comfortable and feeling in control, but there were some problems caused by *my* being out of control (see the reflections about snoring dogs and shouting babies in section 4.4.2). This might have been avoided if I had made a special request for quiet surroundings. There are, however, ethical issues regarding what one can demand in someone else's home.

Transcription and analysis

Although the interviews were relatively short, considerable time was taken in transcribing the whole of each interview. This helped me to become familiar with the content, structure and modes of speaking, but it may have sufficed, in later interviews, once experience had been gained, to listen several times to the tapes, identifying, then selecting narratives for transcription. The narratives used for analysis comprised, usually, less than 20% of the total interview.

As a novice researcher, my attempt to analyse the narratives for meaning was approached in several ways, incorporating Gee's poetic structuring, Labov and Waletzky's functional analysis, Agar and Hobb's attention to global, local and thematic coherence, and the social action approach with its dramaturgical emphasis. This method draws together structural,

linguistic and performative analyses in order to ensure that narrative content and form are understood in the contexts of surrounding discourse, the interaction between narrator and audience and socio-cultural influences, a confluence which many narrative studies neglect (Riessman, 2008). These multiple approaches, however, made the analysis complex and time-consuming. A single approach, such as a Labovian analysis, might have made the analysis easier, but then some of the analytic richness would have been lost. It is noted that other narrative analysts have combined two approaches, for example, Crepeau has used Gee's poetic layout with Labovian analysis (Crepeau, 2000).

Truth in the narratives

It is worthy of note here that this social constructionist, relativist research was carried out with little concern about whether the participants were giving me true and accurate accounts of events that have happened in their lives. The realism of their accounts was not rejected as totally irrelevant; indeed the content of their narratives formed some of the basis for the findings. Analysis, however, also focused on the narratives as culturally derived tools for conveying meaning and impression, and for situating the individual in their own unique cultural background. The individual has had an experience (or says he has) and, in the interview, interprets it for this specific audience in a way which has meaning for both. As Seale argued, it matters less if the story is true than that it is told, and why (Seale, 1998).

Discussing analysis and findings with the participants

Although returning to my participants with my findings would have been respectful, it was not appropriate. Within a relativist ontology member-checking is not a 'quick fix' to ensure validity (Mason, 2002, p193), and so I decided not to do this. Three participants were visited, however, some months after their interviews, in order to discuss particular ethical issues related to their narratives, and I did discuss my findings with them. I explained that I was not asking them to validate my interpretation. In fact, without exception, they expressed their agreement with my perspective on what they had said. They were also intrigued by the way I had reframed what they already knew about their engagement with their leisure occupations, and in one or two instances gained a new perspective on themselves. I pointed out to the Choral-singer that her use of almost biblical language in narrative 6 (see section 7.3.4) made me more aware of the cultural embeddedness of her own leisure occupation and those of others. When I pointed out her *'lo and behold'* in stanza 4 she could not stop laughing, but then went on to reflect on the historical links between her leisure occupation, social class and

the church. Returning to all participants in this way would enhance the credibility of the findings, and perhaps enable a collaborative approach to interpretation, but it could not be said to validate them (Finlay, 2006a).

9.2.3 Rigour and quality

In section 4.3 the ways in which the quality of this research would be enhanced and demonstrated through coherence, evidence of systematic and careful research conduct, convincing and relevant interpretation and the role of the researcher were outlined. The thesis has been presented from an ontological, epistemological and methodological position grounded in social constructionism, with the intention that this would provide a touchstone for coherence. An attempt has been made, without overburdening the reader, to give sufficient detail about the implementation of the research design to convince that it has been appropriate, rigorous, systematic and trustworthy. With the acknowledgement that the interpretation of the narratives, and the sorting of their meanings has been one person's subjective (if informed) judgement, it is the intention that the reader will find the interpretation convincing and relevant to the discipline of occupational therapy. Finally, the thesis has been written in a style which has included first person interjections and reflections, with a view to ensuring that the role of the researcher in the co-construction, the re-presentation and the interpretation of narrative accounts will be kept in mind. In any piece of research the researcher makes choices during the doing of it and the writing about it (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). An attempt has been made, within the limited space, to make such decision-making transparent.

My location in the research

As noted above, the interpretation and analysis presented in this thesis reflects the subjectivity and personal location of the author, in terms of knowledge-base, ideological and political stance. A systematic approach, allowing some creativity and intuition in interpretation combines subjectivity with rigour (Rose & Webb, 1998). My location in the research has been emphasised by including personal reflections throughout.

The experiences of occupations that the participants had were interpreted by them, for me, in the interviews. This thesis is my interpretation of their interpretations. As several authors have suggested (e.g. Holliday, 2007; Riessman, 1993), social constructionist work such as this is a *re-presentation* of the words of the participants, in a way which has impact on how they are heard. The inclusion of verbatim narrative extracts, however, allows the reader

to make a judgment on the trustworthiness and significance of the interpretation. In effect, if the thesis is a narrative in itself, then in Labovian terms, its evaluation, or meaning, is the product of the author, not the participants.

9.3 Implications of the research

The qualitative researcher should be able to make the case that the research findings can be generalised, or shown to have wider resonance (Mason, 2002). In research such as this generalisations are not made from the sample to the population, but from the particular to the generic (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Theory-driven sampling was used and the nature of the process which relates occupation to identity is pervasive. The framework may, then, be applicable in relation to other occupations and other people than those used in the research. The fact that other research can be reframed using this framework (section 8.3) lends weight to the generalisability and relevance of the findings.

The implications of the research for theory and practice can be examined in two parts: the implications arising from the framework itself, and from some of the peripheral discussions.

9.3.1 Implications arising from the framework

Whilst current descriptions and understandings of occupations offer a range of attributes making up these complex phenomena, the framework provides a systematic structure to understand how a single occupation can contribute to the construction of identity through the dimensions of the active self, the located self and the changing self. Each of these dimensions enables a theoretical or a practice focus on a range of facets, all warranting further attention. The idea that the occupied self has various facets, and that these can be foregrounded in different ways, by different individuals, helps the occupational therapist to further understand the powerful therapeutic potential of occupations.

Reconstructing and constructing the self

In the reconstruction of the disrupted self following illness or trauma, or in the use of occupations in the promotion of well-being, the framework enables a broad view of the self and identity to be taken. The therapist can give attention to the therapeutic value of an occupation in helping the individual to develop or re-establish each facet of their self. The analysis of occupation is thus facilitated, with attention drawn to some facets which do not currently appear to be at the forefront of occupational therapy thinking. The extent to which

morality might be a personally defining facet for a client might, for example, be considered. Given that the narratives showed that people foreground particular facets more than others, the framework can only be useful within a client-centred approach. For some people the moral self may be very important, for others, the competent self. For some, the body as a context for the occupied self is important, whilst for another, time and continuity over generations may be important. The individuality of the meanings of occupations is underlined by this research. Particular challenges may be presented by clients with certain conditions or functional problems. The relationship between occupation and the moral self, for example, may be a central focus for the occupational therapist working with people in a forensic psychiatry setting. The body as a significant location for the self may be a useful concept when working with a client with anorexia nervosa.

Attention is also drawn to the changing self, by the framework. The research participants sometimes told narratives which conveyed that they understood that they themselves were changing or had changed. Other narratives were told that showed how, over time, gradually or suddenly, the nature of their relationship with their occupation had changed. This is important in understanding the extent to which people understand and bring about their own processes of adaptation. Occupational therapy service-users can be knowledgeable collaborators in their own therapy.

Locatedness

Occupation locates someone in time, space, relationships and body. The occupied self is derived from being active in these contexts. The fact of being located is a factor in considering one's relationship with the contexts in which one belongs. By giving attention to the connectedness between occupation, identity and environment, then the relationship between individuals, society and environment is highlighted. This has some commonality with the view that giving attention to the embodied self, emplaced in physical, social and temporal locations in the world, focuses attention on the well-being and health not only of the self, but also of others in the world, the physical environment, culture and heritage (Rojek, 2005). There are implications then, from this research, with regards to the role that occupational therapists can have in relation to a wider remit than the health and well-being of the individual. The relationship between the individual, his or her occupations and the health of society, community and the physical environment is within the scope of the occupational therapist.

The research also lends support to the already acknowledged broadening scope of occupational therapy in working with those who have needs unrelated to ill-health. Well-being and identity can be disrupted by other traumatic life-events. These range from, at a personal level, divorce, bereavement and migrating to seek asylum (for example) to societal disruptions such as droughts and earthquakes. In any of these circumstances, well-being and identity are influenced by the disruption of context. In terms of place, disruption might involve finding oneself in a foreign land, having one's farm destroyed or living in a different home. The social context may be altered: one might have lost friends or family, or be trying to establish oneself in a place which is politically safe. In terms of temporal context such changes bring about disruptions in continuity, predictability, routine and a sense of permanence. The framework brings these contexts to the fore, and then presents the challenge, to the occupational therapist, of how occupations can be used to enable the individual to re-establish the various facets of his or her self, through occupation.

Current popular models of practice

Although a thorough analysis has not been undertaken, the framework appears to sit comfortably with the conceptualisations of occupation embedded within the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance (Townsend, 2002) given its focus on the interactions between person, occupation and environment and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2008), given its dynamic systems perspective. Volition, habituation and performance capacity, the three human components described by Kielhofner, may warrant closer examination from the perspective of the framework. Indeed the concept of narrative identity is integral to the Model of Human Occupation, and is incorporated in the assessment process. There may be scope for the framework described here to contribute to structuring such an assessment. The ideas about occupational engagement held within the framework are not unfamiliar within occupational therapy practice, but they are organised in a new way, which focuses attention on the relationship between occupation and identity.

Iwama recently presented an interesting discussion in which he compared Western with Eastern philosophical positions with regards to the relationship between individual, deities and social and physical contexts (Iwama, 2005). In his discussion Iwama argued that most models for occupational therapy practice are based on the Western philosophical viewpoint regarding the self as autonomous and separate from context, reigning over the world and with responsibility for it. The ideal outcome of therapy would be independence and autonomy. Systems theories, used in a model such as the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner,

2008) place the individual central to and separate from other elements of the system. Eastern culture (and Iwama is basing his writing on his knowledge of Japanese culture primarily) places more value on horizontal rather than vertical hierarchical relationships between the individual, deities and the physical and social contexts. The occupational therapist, striving for a practice which is culturally adaptable, would give due attention to the close relationships which the human being can have with the contexts in which she or he is located. Whilst the framework which has emerged from this study is clearly influenced by Western notions of agency, individuality and the differentiation of the self, it enables a perspective on the individual as located in their own body and mind, in a social world, a physical world and in the continuity of time, whilst engaged in occupations.

This thesis does not give specific guidance to the practicing occupational therapist, but it does contribute to the evidence-base for practice, offering a framework to enable a broader perspective on occupation as a therapeutic tool in the reconstruction of a valued identity.

9.3.2 Other implications

Serious leisure, engaging occupations and well-being

People are motivated to engage in leisure for many reasons. It has, however, become apparent in these narratives that some of the participants have reflected on the association between the activity and their own well-being, in physical and psychological terms. Some of the narratives in this study indicate that people may recognise the therapeutic value of their own leisure occupations. In a study focusing on textile art (Reynolds & Prior, 2003a) it was suggested that this group of activities help women to cope with chronic illness, and another study, a literature review, has argued that leisure activities help people to cope with negative life events by distraction, by generating optimism for the future, by helping to reconstruct continuity in a life story and by acting as vehicles for personal transformation (Kleiber et al., 2002). My research clearly concurs with these studies. When a leisure activity is viewed as an occupation, however, and it is noted that one class of occupation may not be so clearly differentiated from another, then the question must be asked of Kleiber et al's paper – would work occupations have the same impact on negative life events? Would an interesting and stimulating job provide the necessary distraction, optimism, continuity and transformative potential to transcend negative experiences? If serious leisure is, in fact, a sub-group of engaging occupations (Jonsson et al., 2001), then any occupation, engaged in with commitment and enthusiasm, might have the same effect. This research suggests that the

distinction between occupations is not so clear that leisure can be singled out as especially efficacious in this way.

9.4 Recommendations for future research

The research findings and the arising unanswered questions suggest several possible directions for future research. As above, these arise either directly from the framework itself, or from other issues that have arisen.

9.4.1 Recommendations in relation to the framework

Disrupted lives and occupational therapy

It has been suggested above that the framework has implications for the work of the occupational therapist. There is scope, then, for further research to investigate the extent to which practice would benefit from this conceptualisation of the occupied self. Occupational therapists who are working with people who have experienced disruption of identity through illness, disability or other trauma would be a possible population to test the framework's usefulness. This line of research suggests either a qualitative, exploratory approach, asking therapists to recall past or current clients, or an approach in which client's themselves are interviewed about the various facets. Life disruptions which are not health-related such as house-moving, divorce, seeking asylum, bereavement would offer further potential for exploration of the framework.

Occupation and identity: locatedness and morality

Further research, not necessarily using narrative analysis, would be required to develop the ideas suggested in this thesis, that contexts other than society are important in the construction of identity. There is a growing interest in the complexity of the contextual background for occupational engagement as evidenced in a recent paper employing the time-geographic method to study the complex interactions between activity, time, space, social interaction and subjective experience (Kroksmark et al., 2006).

Those interested in occupation have given little attention to the relationship between occupation and morality. I have a personal interest in this, and, when combined with the idea of the located self as an important dimension of the occupied self, there is much to explore in the ways that occupation provides scope for the beneficial development of community and

civic engagement. The occupational therapist can be concerned with the well-being of the individual *and* of the community.

The framework and non-leisure occupations

A further avenue for research would be to listen to and analyse the narratives of people about other occupations, such as those popularly called work, and self-care, and also, passive leisure. Theoretically, those narratives should reveal meanings which confirm the framework as applicable to all occupations. The dimensions and their component facets may be different in relation to other types of occupations. It will be noted that the framework of the occupied self offers an organisational structure for what have been called the dimensions and facets of the self. Yet it has also been suggested that each facet has a range of forms, and there is scope for further research to establish a system of organisation for these.

9.4.2 Other recommendations

Experiences of 'being'

In her definition of occupation Wilcock did not claim that 'being' is the same as flow, and yet it seems to share similar features. Further research is needed to ascertain whether the events described in the powerful narratives (section 8.2.1) can be classed as peak experiences or 'flow', or, indeed, as challenge-skills or mindfulness (Wright, Sadlo, & Stew, 2006).

Narrative research and occupations

There are good reasons why those interested in occupations should consider narrative-based research, given the close relationship between activity, the retelling of that activity and what this can reveal about the meanings and other aspects of the occupation. Narrative research is a way of gaining access, not to the occupation itself, but to the experience of the occupation, mediated through the individual's perspective and mode of telling. The use of short narratives and a focus on narrative structure and performance is a method which reveals much about the individual, in terms of experience and meaning. This indirect approach to exploring meaning may well give access to deeper layers of understanding than a more direct qualitative approach which asks research participants '*What does leisure mean to you?*' (Pereira & Stagnitti, 2008, p41). The use of longer sections of narrative material can be used to look at life histories and occupational careers. Whiteford (2007) has suggested digital storytelling as a potential future methodology for occupational science research, and, indeed, this may be a way of accessing content and detail about occupations, though it would not give access to oral

performance of identity. The way that people write narratives may not yield the same information as those that are spoken in face-to-face interaction with an audience. Identity, as presented in written and visual forms in 'cyberspace', is a representation of the self which could be subject to narrative analysis.

Returning to the participants in this study offered nothing to the analysis and findings (other than affirmation and increased credibility), given that the parameters of the investigation had already been set. A further development would be to do an initial analysis and take this back to the participants in order to enter a collaborative phase, exploring and expanding the meanings identified initially. The narrative analysis would thus move from a researcher-centred, theory informed, subjective interpretation to a partnership approach with the participant, who could then contribute new material.

9.5 Conclusion

Whilst the research process had some limitations, this thesis, as a narrative account of the process, has been designed to demonstrate that it was carried out with rigour, coherence and openness. Given the current understanding of the relationship between occupation and identity as evidenced in the literature, a unique contribution has been made, which develops this understanding.

Occupational therapists claim that we are what we do; that occupation contributes to a sense of identity. The framework, based on a narrative understanding of identity, adds to the current base of knowledge, by offering a detailed and structured conceptualisation of *how* occupation enables the reflexive individual to construct identity.

APPENDIX A

- Research Governance and Ethics Sub-Committee approval
- Information and consent form for participants
- Participant profiles
- Interview schedule

Research Governance and Ethics Sub-Committee approval

Information and consent form for participants

Leisure and Identity Research

Information for research participants.

- Thank you for considering whether to take part in my research.
- Below are some questions and answers which I have written, to tell you more about my research, and how I would like you to contribute to it.
- If you have any more questions, then please ask me.

1) What is the research about?

I am interested in trying to find out whether <u>the activities which people do</u> help to make them <u>who they are</u>. In other words, do our activities of every day life contribute to our identities – the way we see ourselves, and the way others see us?

In this study, I am particularly interested in **leisure activities and identity**.

2) Why am I doing this research?

Two reasons.

- It will contribute to my PhD studies.
- It will help to expand the knowledge that we have about identity, and its relationship with everyday life activity.

3) Why have I asked you to participate?

Because you are someone who is enthusiastic about a certain type of leisure activity. I am approaching you because someone who knows you has suggested you.

4) What does that mean?

- By enthusiastic, I mean that you have been doing it a while – over 3 years.
- Also the activity costs you time, and maybe money, so you are committed to it.
- It counts as leisure, because
  - ▹ you **do not get paid** to do it
  - ▹ you **choose to do it**, in your free time

> ‣ you are **actively doing** something (I am not including TV watching, for example)

> ‣ your main reason for doing it is because usually (perhaps not always!) it gives you **pleasure.**

5) What will I ask you to do?

I would like to interview you for between 30 and 60 minutes. The interview will be tape recorded, so that I can type it up afterwards, and use it to help with my study. I will be doing several interviews, with different people, with different leisure activities.

6) Anything else?

I might ask you to answer some follow up questions at a later date. Also, I might ask you to give your view on how I have interpreted the interview.

Some important things you need to know

I'm not going to ask you anything too personal in the interview, but it is important that you feel as comfortable as possible.

For this reason the following safeguards are in place:

Confidentiality and anonymity:

- Anything you tell me will be treated as confidential, and I will not discuss it with others in any way which will identify who you are. Although I will write down your name and contact details, I will store this information separate from the interview tapes and notes, in a locked drawer. Anything in the interview which identifies you will be changed or removed during typing up.
- The material from the interview will be used in my research and this means that it might be quoted when I write my research report. The above safeguards will ensure that you cannot be identified.

Consent:

I will ask you to sign a form (below) saying that you agree to take part. Please ask any questions at all, if you have any doubts.

Withdrawal:

It will not be a problem if, at any point in the proceedings, you decide to stop being involved. This can be before the interview, during it, or after it. **You do not have to give any reason**. I will make sure that all your information is destroyed.

Researcher's contact details

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……………………………………………………………………………

Consent Form

I have read the information above.

I understand what the study is about.

I expect that my contribution to the research will be treated as confidential, and that my identity will not be revealed.

I understand that I can stop being involved at any point in time, without having to give a reason.

Signed …………………………………………………………….

Date …………………………..

Participant profiles

Table 1 Participants categorised according to Stebbins' (2001) amateurs and hobbyists

Hobbies – art, craft and DIY	*Railwayman*
	Mountain-biker
Hobbies – sports and games (without professional counterparts)	Yoga-practitioner
	Fisherman
	Running
	Mountain-biker
	Canoeist
	Gym-member
Hobbies – other rule-based, non-competitive activities	*Dog-trainer*
Amateurs – sports (with professional counterparts)	Horse-rider
	Scuba-diver
Amateurs – arts and performance	Artist
	Horn-player
	Choral Singer
	Soul singer
	Amateur Operatics Performer
Amateurs – nature and husbandry	Dog-trainer
	Bird watching
Amateurs – history and heritage	Railwayman
Amateurs – cards and games	Bridge player

Table 2 Demographic information

Participant profiles

		age[7]	m/f	work[8]	Family status	education	Ethnic / racial background
1	Horn player	44	m	Scientist (technical director)	Married, 3 children	doctorate	White Caucasian English
2	Yoga lady	71	f	Secretary, retired	Married, 2 adult children	Up to 14. elementary school	White English
3	Dog trainer	39	f	'Rights of Way' officer	single	Masters pending	White English
4	Railway worker	49	m	Environment agency officer,	Married, 3 children	degree	White English
5	Artist	30	f	Healthcare worker	Single parent, 3 children	degree	Bangladeshi
6	Fisherman	50	m	Builder, self employed	Married, 2 children	Left at 16	White English
7	Runner	24	f	Nurse, Critical Care	Lives with partner	Degree and Diploma	White British
8	Choral Singer	61	f	Retired Deputy Head Teacher	Married, 3 grown up children	MSc in Education and Management	White British
9	Bridge-player	45	m	I.T. Consultant	Married, 2 children	BSc	White British
10	Mountain-biker	40	m	Painter and Decorator	Lives alone	City and Guilds, 20 years ago	White British
11	Bird-watcher	30	m	Shop assistant	Married, no children	Left at 16	White British
12	Scuba Diver	55	f	Senior social worker, Hospice	Married, 3 grown up children	Degree	White UK
13	Amateur Operatics performer	35	f	Administrator	Married, 1 toddler	Night school to 21	White British
14	Soul singer	16	f	student	Single, lives with mother	16, GCSEs	Black Caribbean

[7] At the point of interview
[8] Work, family status, education and ethnicity were all noted as per participant description

Table 2 continued

15	Gym member	38	f	Outreach worker	Single, 1 daughter	Diploma	Caribbean / Jamaican
16	Canoeist	43	f	Teacher / trainer	Single, 1 daughter	Degree	Black British
17	Horse rider	48	f	Health service development worker - managerial	Married 1 daughter	Degree and some postgraduate studies	White Caucasian

A summary of participant diversity

Age distribution:

10-19	1
20-29	1
30-39	5
40-49	6
50-59	2
60-69	1
70-79	1

Family status:

Single no children	2
Single, children at home	3
Single, lives with parent (s)	1
With partner, children left home	4
With partner children at home	5
With partner no children	2

Gender distribution:

M	6	average age	43
F	11	average age	41.7

Highest education:

14	1
16	3
Post 16 vocational	2
Diploma	1
Degree	6
Degree and beyond	2
MSc	1
PhD	1

Ethnic / racial background:

White British / Caucasian / English	13
Bangladeshi	1
Black Caribbean	2
Black British	1

Interview schedule

I've asked if I could interview you because I'm interested in your main leisure pursuit – I'm assuming that you are particularly enthusiastic about it ……..

Career

*How did you get introduced to it? – tell me how it happened.

Does it occupy a lot of your life?

Why do you do it? What do you get out of it?

*What has you involvement been since starting – has it changed over time?

*Tell me about the high points and low points?

*Have there been turning points / changes in direction?

Is there a family history?

Easements and barriers

How easy it for you to pursue this activity?

Does it cost a lot?

*How does it fit in with the rest of your lifestyle? (Job, family, gender, age, culture, class?)

*How do you think other people view it? What do you think the popular image is?

Personal expertise

Where are you in the levels of expertise? (scale of 1-10)

How do you know?

*How did you progress to be where you are now? / How do beginners learn more?

How do you know when you are performing well?

What does that feel like?

Do you strive to get better?

Occupational community / social world

*What about other people who do it? Are they similar to you?

Do you have much to do with them?

Is there a feeling of a team or a community?

Do members of the community meet?

Communicate by other means? Annual events? Shows? Shops? Newsletters?

Is there a hierarchy?

How much is it a part of you?

*Have you ever thought of giving it up?

*Can you imagine life without it?

What do you think the popular image is?

What is the most powerful memory you have, of doing this?

Anything else which you think might be of interest to me?

*Revisions made following the reading of Stebbins work on The Barbershop Singer (1996)

APPENDIX B

- A list of conference presentations
- Email from Dog-trainer
- Transcription conventions
- An example of an interview outline – the Yoga-practitioner
- List of all narratives showing those selected for analysis

Presentations to peers

Taylor, J. '*We are what we do'. But how does occupation relate to identity*? Oral presentation at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the College of Occupational Therapists, 2008, Harrogate

Taylor, J. *Being occupied, being moral and making the world a better place.* Poster presentation at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the College of Occupational Therapists, 2008, Harrogate

Taylor, J. (2008) *Occupational engagement, emotion and morality* Poster Presentation at the 8th European Congress of Occupational Therapy, Hamburg, 2008

Taylor, J. Personal and social identities revealed in narratives of leisure. Salford Postgraduate Conference, University of Salford, 2007

Taylor, J. *Leisure, productivity and self-care: an unhelpful classification system for occupations?* Oral presentation at the 31st Annual Meeting of the College of Occupational Therapists, 2007, Manchester

Taylor, J. '*Imagine life without your favourite leisure activity'* Poster presentation at the 30th Annual Meeting of the College of Occupational Therapists, 2006, Cardiff

Taylor, J. *Unforeseen ethical issues: some reflections on research interviewing in occupational therapy.* Oral presentation at the 30th Annual Meeting of the College of Occupational Therapists, 2006, Cardiff

Taylor, J. *The Relationship between Occupation and identity.* Oral presentation at the 28th Annual Meeting of the College of Occupational Therapists, 2004, Harrogate

Taylor, J. *A Personal Account of Doing a PhD.* Oral Presentation at the 7th European Congress of Occupational Therapy, Athens, 2004

Seminar Presentations

Taylor, J. *Stories told about leisure: what use are they to occupational therapy?* Directorate of Occupational Therapy Seminar Series, University of Salford 2006

Taylor, J. *Unforeseen ethical issues: some reflections on research interviewing in occupational therapy.* Institute for Health and Social Care Research Seminar Series, University of Salford 2006

Taylor, J. *Occupational science, narratives and playing the English horn.* Directorate of Occupational Therapy Seminar Series, University of Salford 2005

Taylor, J. *Listening to the narratives of leisure enthusiasts: hearing identities revealed.* Institute for Health and Social Care Research Seminar Series, University of Salford 2005

Email from Dog-trainer

Extract from an email from the Dog-trainer, 9th November 2007

(included with her permission)

Hi Jackie

It's my day off work today, and I'm rushing to get the next issue of the 'xxxxxxxxx' – the dog club newsletter – in the post to the printer! Some things never change … will I ever get the house decorated! Anyway, I've just had a quick skim through from the highlighted bit to the end of the Dog-trainer's bit … no wonder I feel so upset at losing Bxxx*! <G> He really was my life, I know that – but others must have seen it too! It also made me laugh out loud in recognition too – yes, I think your interpretation is incredibly accurate … a bit scary really.

* name of Dog-trainer's dog which recently died, and which featured in her narratives.

Transcription conventions
adapted from Silverman (2004)

Table 3 Transcription conventions

( )	Talk which can not be transcribed (too quiet or indistinct). Best attempt might be included, usually followed by question mark.
[	Left hand square bracket – overlapping talk begins
]	Right hand square bracket – overlapping talk ends
°	Lower volume than surrounding talk
> <	Talk which is faster or slower than surrounding talk
..	Pause (more dots, longer pause)
-	Hyphen - a cut off word or sentence or self interruption
___	Underlining, when a word or phrase is emphasised
^	A marked pitch rise
:::	Colons show that the sound before has been lengthened (more colons, longer sound)
(( ))	Indicates something non-speech which happens e.g. ((laughs)) ((gets up from seat))
(23)	The number of minutes into the interview

An example of an interview outline – the Yoga-practitioner

22.1.04

Table 4 Interview outline: the Yoga-practitioner

lines	Gist of questions (JT)	Content	type of discourse
6-85	How did you start?	Started about 25 years ago Learned new aspects of self	Narrative 1 'It made me more tolerant'
88-102	Doing it all the 25 years?	Current classes – what they are like Teachers are afraid of insurance claims now	Description
103-135		Painful knees One of the ladies who goes is 81	Narrative 2 'there's more to my life than just leisure'
136-147	How big is the class? Social life?	About 20. The teacher is very busy, doing a lot of things, she is dedicated	Explanation
149-159	Do you remember Richard Hittleman?	Reminiscing about early yoga presenters on TV	Q&A
162-170		It is a social thing, and people who go are nice	Description
175-195	Expertise?	Average now, though better before knee became painful. Different postures. Everyone's different. Standing on your head	Description and technical knowledge
196-215	What if you couldn't do it?	Other things, like walking Liking to be on the go Yoga slows one down	Description
216-250	See people coming and going?	Yes, a lot	Narrative 3 'a mystery to me'
257-271	Would other people in the class help?	No. Need to practice yourself	Explanation

273-288	Do other similar things?	One day classes where they do Reiki, crystals, chanting	Technical knowledge
292-302	At home?	Used to much more	Narrative 4 'I'm not doing as much as I used to'
305-326	Any barriers?	The knee prevents some postures	Description
334-370	How do you know when you are performing well?	When it comes easier. Not the type of person to have wow moments Acceptance. Body is growing older	Q&A
371-393	Was there a time when at your peak?	When first started Would have scored higher	Q&A
402-425	What brought yoga to your attention?	Dad used to encourage exercise	Narrative 5 'because it was different'
426-453		Made a lot of friends Two old friends who moved away	Narrative 6
455-502	More fashionable now?	Yes. Mixing abilities in one class Reasons for going to yoga	Q&A
504		Husband comes in to living room	
518-536	Powerful memory?	Realising faults Made more tolerant	Explanation

Table 5 Selection of narratives

List of all narratives showing those selected for analysis

Key:

Those narratives selected for further analysis
Those narratives not selected after preliminary analysis

	Narratives	Reasons for inclusion or exclusion(78 chosen in all)
AMATEUR OPERATIC PERFORMER (AOP)		
1	'a big commitment'	Hypothetical narrative, one of only 3
2	'it's how well you get on with your colleagues'	One of only three
3	'you do what you have to do'	One of only three
ARTIST (A)		
1	'a bit of pride in the art'	One of only two
2	'a bit rebellious really'	One of only two
BIRD-WATCHER (BW)		
1	'at first I was overwhelmed'	Narrative structure.
2	It affects my work	Not chosen – similar to narrative 3
3	'like coming out of the closet'	The dialogue suggested the narrative, but the narrative structure is found in his ruminations.
4	The man who collates the data	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
5	'not confident enough to be a public speaker'	Classic Labovian structure albeit an habitual narrative.
6	'I've not felt anything so strong really'	Vivid picture, clear narrative structure
7	'people take it for granted'	A vivid picture, but the Labovian structure is weak
BRIDGE-PLAYER (BP)		
1	'I wanted to do different things'	One of only five
2	'and then I met Mary'	One of only five
3	'I did actually say 'I'm going'	One of only five.
4	'I wanted to play bridge'	One of only five. Difficult to discern evaluation
5	'we gave them a run for their money'	One of only five. It was a clear, if short, narrative structure
CANOEIST (C)		
1	'different challenges'	One of only three
2	'I saw the funny side'	One of only three
3	'I could have died'	One of only three
CHORAL-SINGER (CS)		
1	Ceremony of carols	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
2	'very, very special'	Strong narrative structure
3	'that was that'	Clear narrative, elusive evaluation
4	Carmina Burana	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
5	The tenor was ill	Not chosen – not as personal as narrative 3
6	'they thought I was upset'	Emotional, clear structure
7	'am I actually going to lose my	Clear structure

	voice?'	
8	Moving to the semi-chorus	Not chosen – no strong evaluative comment
9	'it was awful for her'	A complete, if very short narrative

DOG-TRAINER (DT)

1	First puppy and obedience training	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
2	'it's a two way thing'	Strong evaluation, emotional
3	'all related to the dog'	Clear structure
4	'a bit out of hand'	Emotional, strong narrative structure
5	'about having fun'	Clear narrative structure and strong evaluation
6	We all help each other at our club	Not chosen – similar to narrative 5
7	Getting critical feedback on your dog	Not chosen – a bit general
8	People complain	Not chosen – a bit general
9	Friends I have made	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
10	A prize for the newsletter	
11	'This doggy person'	Complex, with two narratives, but both serve the same purpose and reinforce each other
12	'I couldn't believe'	Emotional, self-contained
13	Coming home	Not chosen – I decided to keep the number of DT's narratives down to 6

FISHERMAN (F)

1	'I were off then'	One of only five
2	'once you get married that's it'	One of only five
3	'she still remembers it'	One of only five
4	'the time goes just like that'	One of only five
5	A wild animal sitting next to me	One of only five

GYM-MEMBER (GM)

1	'since then it's all been out there'	Clear narrative, emotional, evaluation difficult to identify
2	'I loved it so much'	Clear narrative, albeit 2 different parts
3	'it affected me so much'	Short narrative. Clear, compressed structure.
4	I stopped for a while	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
5	'all my years of just having fun'	Clear narrative, good structure, diffuse evaluation
6	When I lost my faith	Not chosen - may not be a narrative
7	When we tried salsa	Not chosen - not a strong narrative form
8	'I couldn't even imagine'	Short, sharp, clear narrative with emotion

HORN-PLAYER (HP)

1	'I was always behind'	Clear evaluation, narrative structure
2	'an amazing moment'	Emotional, strong narrative structure
3	Going to a wedding	Not chosen – similar to narrative 2
4	'if you don't turn up your name's mud'	Emotional, lacks cohesion in part, but narrative structure is apparent
5	'I own it rather it owning me'	Emotional stand-alone narrative
6	'a nice place to be'	Strong narrative structure
7	The brass quintet	Not chosen - not a strong narrative form
8	Going to a concert from school	Not chosen – a little descriptive

9	anticipating the future	Hypothetical narrative, evaluative device is apparent, narrative structure.
HORSE-RIDER (HR)		
1	1. 'bitten by the bug'	Clear narrative and evaluation
2	'it was in the interests of the whole family'	Short narrative with strong structure
3	'it does me good'	Hypothetical and poetic.
4	How I selected the horse	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
5	Having polio as a child	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
6	You can try too hard	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
7	A ride round the park	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
8	'we coped'	A strong narrative structure. Very visual.
9	'giving up was tough'	An emotional narrative, important to HR, Labovian structure clear
10	I could still go to the Badminton trials	Not chosen – hypothetical
11	You can push your luck so far	Not chosen – extremely short
MOUNTAIN-BIKER (MB)		
1	'I didn't even think'	Well structured narrative
2	Me and my mate	Not chosen – similar to narrative 3
3	'that's when the addiction started'	Good Labovian structure, clear narrative
4	Going racing	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
5	Biking has gone macho	Not chosen – a little descriptive
6	I record all the routes I've planned	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
7	'got away with that, no problem'	Dramatic and emotional with a good narrative structure
8	Biking in Utah	Not chosen – similar to narrative 12
9	The climbing club bought bikes	Not chosen – a little descriptive
10	The time-trial day	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
11	I planned a route for a magazine	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
12	'he was certain that I wouldn't do it'	Strong Labovian structure
13	Cycling alone	Not chosen – a little descriptive
14	Offered a job in Moab	Not chosen – trying to keep numbers down
15	One day in the desert	Not chosen – similar to narrative 12
16	Getting rid of old bikes	Not chosen - Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
17	'so I should be quite alright really'	Good Labovian structure.
RAILWAYMAN (RM)		
1	'steam engines come to life'	Long complex narrative with a reasonable Labovian structure. Strong use of metaphor.
2	Joining the Yorkshire group	Not chosen – a little descriptive
3	Not train-spotters	Not chosen – similar to narrative 1
4	'living the railway'	Dramatic narrative, with a Labovian structure
5	'they are always there'	A clear narrative with a good structure and evaluative

		section
6	A job for life	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
7	When I returned there had been changes	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
8	Desert sickness	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
9	'being part of a railway family'	Clearly a story. Labovian structure not easy to apply. Highly emotional.
10	People come from a long way	Not chosen – hypothetical and descriptive
11	Having a day off work	Not chosen – hypothetical and descriptive
12	Hierarchies and training	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
13	The war weekend	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
14	Not train-spotters	Not chosen – not a strong narrative form
15	'without my railway, no no'	Hypothetical narrative, no clear Labovian structure, but highly emotional.

RUNNER (R)

1	'I'd given myself a bit of a rest'	One of only five
2	'that was probably a bit of a low point'	One of only five. (strictly two narratives, but they serve a purpose together to form a contrast)
3	'you know yourself how you're running'	One of only five
4	'like I achieved a lot'	One of only five
5	'a part of my life'	One of only five

SCUBA-DIVER (SD)

1	'absolute magic'	One of only four
2	'fabulous it really is'	One of only four
3	'an interest in common'	One of only four
4	'the most recent dive would always be the best dive'	One of only four

SOUL-SINGER (SS)

1	'it was like mad'	One of only four
2	'none of it's fair'	One of only four
3	'wow, it's got something to it'	One of only four
4	'it wasn't nice'	One of only four

YOGA-PRACTITIONER (YP)

1	'it made me more tolerant'	One of only five
2	'there's more to my life than just leisure'	One of only five
3	'a mystery to me'	One of only five
4	'I'm not doing as much as I used to do'	One of only five
5	'because it was different'	One of only five

APPENDIX C

- Stages of analysis summary table
- Example of stage 2 analysis – Dog-trainer narrative 5
- The questions asked of each narrative
- Pro-forma (blank) for the stage 3 analysis
- Example of stage 4 analysis – Bridge-player narrative 5

Stages of analysis summary

Table 6 Stages of analysis

	Process	Function
Stage 1	• Transcription • Extraction of narratives	• Written representation of verbal and non-verbal discourse and interaction • Footnotes about personal reactions • Identifying narratives for analysis
Stage 2 The structure for stage 2 arose from a synthesis of the literature. The process was guided by a pro-forma, to ensure consistency of approach for each narrative.	• Poetic structure laid out • Labovian structure identified • Dramatic elements identified • Strategies for global, local and thematic coherence were identified	• Closer reading • Accessing meaning by raising awareness of language, structure and cognitive processing • To examine narrative structure, highlighting meaning in the evaluative device • Attention given to plot • Interactive and dramatic devices were identified • Accessing beliefs and world view of the narrator, and narrative goals
Stage 3 The structure for stage 3 was an analytic line of thought arising from stage 2. It was designed to bring together the narrative analyses for each individual.	• All narratives for each person and stage 2 analyses re-read to formulate an integrated overview of each person on a stage 3 pro-forma	• Narratives of each person were compared and contrasted • Each individual's common modes of interaction were noted • A framework for understanding identity was drafted
Stage 4	• A simple one page summary of each narrative.	Summarising: • The plot and meanings of each narrative • The contexts in each narrative • Significant issues related to co-construction

Example of stage 2 analysis – Dog-trainer narrative 5

Completed pro-forma - Dog-trainer: Narrative 5 'about having fun' (Lines 330-351)

Abstract	well, it's not the way Agility Clubs normally go
	stanza 1 – most agility clubs focus on preparing for competitions
Orientation	because when they're doing comp –
	most clubs, most Agility Clubs
	have got people who compete in agility
	so they want a big complicated course
	to practice for competitions
	stanza 2 – members wait a long time, queuing to use the course
Orientation	so what they normally do
	is they'll set out a different course every week
	covering the whole area
	and come in and queue up to run that course
	and then they go and join the back of the queue
	and you know, you could be waiting a long time
	stanza 3 – interested people sometimes come to look round
Orientation	and it, you know, so we have had people who've come –
	because, being the secretary I'd -
	and it's also a tricky place to get to so I'd –
	er people who enquired about the club
	and wanted to come and visit us
	I'd meet them in the pub car park in the village
	and they'd follow me up to the equestrian centre
	and then we'd take them in
	stanza 4 – one woman didn't want to join
Complication	and I had one woman who came

Resolution	and I said 'so do you want-' at the end of the night 'do you want to be put on the waiting list?' and she said "ᵒI don't think it's for me reallyᵒ" **stanza 5 – we weren't doing what she wanted** and she'd competed before but she'd just moved into our area and she said 'very nice to know things like this go on, though' (laughs) **stanza 6 – our focus is on having fun and giving enjoyment** and I don't know, it's –
Evaluation	ours is quite a friendly - it's all about having fun with the dogs, the display's about you and your dog enjoying yourselves and displays are about letting other people enjoy watching the dogs as well, because people do like watching dogs do agility because it's it's –
Coda	I don't know if you've seen it on the telly..?

Dog-trainer / narrative 5 / 'about having fun'	
Setting	In the equestrian centre, the dog agility club and the car park of the pub. However, the narrative also reaches out to other clubs and their competition layouts. Crufts dog show on TV
Time	We don't know how long ago this happened, but it all happened in one evening. The club meets in an evening. Stanzas 1 and 2 focus on habitual present tense (what other clubs normally do). Stanza 3 habitual past tense – what I used to do as secretary. Stanzas 4 and 5 are simple past tense, telling the story, and then in stanza 6 we return to the present.

Actors	
Protagonist	The visiting woman who thinks the club is very nice, but not what she has been used to (there is an inference that she sees it as a little inferior, or just playing at it)
Others	Other agility clubs where they are geared up to allow members to practice for competitions
	This club which is geared more towards fun than competition
	DT who shows her round as club secretary, offers her a place on the waiting list and is then rejected in a superior manner
	People who have come to look round the club in the past
	People who like to watch dog agility displays
Sequence of events	Told in chronological order. Because this woman visited the club and said this, DT realised how friendly her own club is.
	This club is different → other clubs like to encourage competition → we often have visitors to show round → I was club secretary → I showed people round → this one woman looked round → at end of night I asked her if she wanted to go on waiting list → she said no → very nice to know it goes on though
Action / Plot	The woman wants to join an agility club, having just moved to the area. She comes to look round DT's club with this in mind. She doesn't join because it is not a competition orientated club, it is all about fun.
Consequence	This story is a vehicle for DT to tell me that other dog people might look down on their club, but they have fun and they give enjoyment to others. People who compete might think they are superior, but we have fun. Unsure where the transformation is. It might be that DT has come to realise that there are (at least) two types of agility trainer, those who compete, and those who want fun – and she is of the latter group.
Framing	I chose to end this narrative at this point because it felt as though the evaluation had been made. It is followed in the interview by detail about what Agility displays comprise.

Why was the narrative chosen?

Clear narrative structure. General proposition plus general description of the state of things, followed by a specific illustrative instance and an evaluation of what the story meant.

Coherence / lack of coherence

Local coherence:

DT has a very hesitant way of taking. She talks with some pressure and enthusiasm, so sometimes she starts a sentence and then has to back-track a little, throw in an explanation or elaboration relation to help the listener to follow. She does this in line 2, stanza 1, lines 2 and 3 in stanza 3. It sounds lacking in coherence, but in fact she is carefully crafting her speech. Stanzas 1 and 2 serve the purpose of illustrating what other clubs are like. Habitual present tense, - generalising about other clubs and what their common practice and attitude is. They focus on competition and therefore members will spend a lot of time just standing around so they can have their turn doing a full competition sized course. These 2 stanzas serve as a contrast to what her club is like, and what it represents.

Stanza 3 takes this comparison one step further. It prepares the listener by showing that the club gets visited by other interested people who might join.

Stanza 4 -DT's club was visited by someone, with a view to her joining. In this short stanza the point of the story is conveyed. DT reveals that it is a popular enough club to have a waiting list, but this woman does not want to join and says so in a patronising manner 'I don't think it's for me really'. In this sentence DT makes it clear that there are two types of agility club person, and this woman is of the 'other' type.

Stanza 5 – takes it a little further – the woman becomes more patronising. In this stanza we are told that she is a competitor and she is being careful about which club she joins, being new to the area. She trivialises the DT's club in a superior way. By this the DT conveys that people who are not part of her in-group may be more snobbish and serious.

Stanza 6 – serves to explain the point she has made in the narrative, and emphasises the qualities and values of those who she mixes with , and their form of the leisure pursuit.

Global coherence:

DT sets out to tell why their club is different – the general proposition she states in the abstract. She achieves this by contrasting her club with others which have layouts designed for competition practice, but then goes on to add a more subtle difference, which is that the

attitude of members of other typical clubs is not such fun and friendly as the attitudes to be found in her club. Her club members are nicer people.

Themal coherence:

Dogs must have fun, and so must their owners.

Fun and competition don't really go together.

The situation of the dog-owner moving to a new area is mirrored in the situation that DT herself finds herself in at the moment, moving to Yorkshire and having to find a new club for her and the dog.

Is there a link between the narrative and the preceding / succeeding non-narrative talk?

She tells another story which is similar, in which her club tells certain individuals, who are not members, that they cannot use the club equipment to practice for competitions during the coffee break, because this is valuable time for dogs to rest and not be distracted. The dogs' welfare and enjoyment are put before the need to succeed in competition. The narrative is preceded by a bit where she describes how her club lays out the arena into 4 small arenas, so the course isn't so big for each dog, but they all get to have a go regularly.

Claims to identity.

We're[9] not like other Agility clubs

We're friendly and like to have fun, and we give the dogs a lot of time on the course.

They think they're a bit superior, they are too serious and they focus on competition to the point of depriving themselves and the dogs of having fun.

She casts herself in the role of bemused observer, and defender of her fellow members.

What values / beliefs does the speaker express explicitly or implicitly?

Fun is more important than success in competitions.

Dogs should have fun.

Our club has fun and entertains others.

You shouldn't put on airs and graces.

---

[9] She identifies with the club to the extent that claims for the club can be seen as claims for her own identity (as Tajfel's work on social identity)

How do these values / beliefs relate to the values of the prevailing culture and cultural metanarratives?

Is there a cultural metanarrative that says that competition is good, fun is bad? I think this is the prevailing societal value (particularly given recent survey that showed that people are more selfish nowadays). If this is so, then she resists this value, with the other members of her club. The visitor's comments suggest that she found this club a little quaint and against the norm. The description of the way other clubs lay out is supportive of this. Other clubs have large layouts, so you have to wait a long time to put your dog through its paces. Our club breaks the layout down, so we all get the chance to do a bit regularly.

Am I using my own knowledge / understanding of our shared culture ('expansion') to help elicit meaning?

I understood the implication of what the woman said and the way DT spoke it, in a patronising way. I understand this to mean that she was trying to belittle DT's agility club. ('Very nice to know things like this go on, though') We both understood 'things like this' to be derogatory.

Impact of research interview as context?

She tries to bring me in at the end of this, as one of the people who might enjoy watching Agility displays. She wants to convince me of what she has said.

Impact of other aspects of the interview environment?

What does this tell me about what this occupation means to this person?

Agility training offers DT the opportunity to have fun, and to mix with people who are friendly. It offers also, the opportunity for her dog to have fun. They can help other people to enjoy themselves as well.

The questions asked of each narrative

Narrative structure, form, content and interaction are analytically distinct, interdependent, and all are essential for interpretation of meaning. The following questions focus on these either singly or in an inter-related way.

1. Identify the Labovian structure.
2. What are the parts of the narrative?
    a. the setting (where does it take place?)
    b. the time (when did it take place? What period of time does the narrative cover? Does the narrative include links to the past, the future? Are there flashbacks?)
    c. the actors (who is the protagonist? Who is the self and who are the others (Bagnoli, 2004) ? What are the main acts by the actors?)
    d. the sequence of events (are they told in chronological order? Is there clear causality? Is there contingency?)
    e. the action (What does the plot appear to be? what is it that happens? Does the protagonist have a goal? How is it attained? (Polkinghorne, 1991)
    f. the consequences (is there a moral point to the story? Has there been a transformation? What is the story a vehicle for? The core narrative should illustrate the point being made, which is usually in the evaluation. Why did the protagonist do what they did?)
3. How are the beginning and end decided? (are there any issues about this?)
4. Local coherence? (Go through each stanza. Why has it been included? Do we see occasion, elaboration, contrast, explanation or consequence relations? (these are involved in the reconstruction of the speaker's set of beliefs) Does the speaker use metaphor? What effect does this have? Do we see repetition of words or phrases - to what effect?)
5. Global coherence? (What is the narrative plan? Are there contradictions?)
6. Themal coherence? (Are there any themes between narratives? Or between this narrative and the non-narrative discourse? What do they reveal about the person's beliefs? Is there an integrated world view? Are there conflicts?)
7. What does inconsistency, poor coherence reveal?

8. Is there a link between the narrative and the preceding and succeeding non-narrative talk? (Does this narrative link to others? Is it really an episode in a bigger narrative?)

9. What claims to identity are made? (Mishler, 1986, 1999) (Are there direct claims? E.g. 'I am …', or indirect claims? 'They're not like me …', How are these claims expressed, confirmed and validated? What pronouns are used? I, we, you? Who is included in plurals? What role does the speaker cast themselves in (Riessman, 1993, p2) (e.g. victim, innocent bystander, villain, passive observer etc)?

10. What values does the speaker express explicitly or implicitly? (Is any emotion shown? What does the speaker care about?)

11. How do these values relate to the values of the prevailing culture and cultural metanarratives? Does the speaker adapt, resist or selectively appropriate? (Mishler 1999) Do we learn anything else about the speaker's culture? (Riessman, 1993, p5)

12. Am I using my own knowledge / understanding of our shared culture ('expansion') to help elicit meaning? (Are we assuming shared knowledge? What doesn't the speaker explain to me?)

13. What impact has research interview as context had on the above? (What role do I play in the story telling? The manner of the storytelling? Why does the speaker tell the story in this way? (Riessman, 1993, p2)

14. What impact did other aspects of the interview environment have on the above (e.g. physical setting, other people etc)?

15. What does this tell me about what this occupation means to this person? (What does this occupation offer to the person?)

Pro-forma (blank) for the stage 3 analysis

Stage 3   Intra-subject analysis

Steps to take

1. re-read each narrative, make adjustments, given increased experience
2. fill in intra-subject analysis sheet which summarises the key areas for the whole person – this is hermeneutic
3. whilst doing this give particular attention to ensuring that all the main points are represented in the last section – 'what the occupation offers the person'
4. this should expose links between occupation, narrative and identity.

Questions to ask about the whole person

Participant:

Narrative name	Point or meaning of the narrative.	Transformation

Leisure, space and identity.

Summary:

- What places are important in the stories of leisure?
- Near, far?
- what kind of environment? Inside, outside?
- Private? Public?

Claims to identity in terms of the emplaced self

What the occupation offers in the spatial context

oO0Oo

Leisure, time and identity.

Summary

Includes

- other occupations (leisure / life balance)
- The relationship between project , career trajectory and Erikson's conception of identity as fidelity, ideology and work
- Self emplaced in time, connecting with the past, with the future
- How much, how long?
- Romanticising the past (childhood and bygone eras)

How is time shared with other occupations? (leisure / life balance)

Claims to identity in terms of the self emplaced in time

What the occupation offers in the temporal context

Transformations (changes over time)

oO0Oo

Leisure, the embodied self and identity (mind-body)

The agentic and competent self (causal links / contingency)

Causality

Attainment of goals

Claims to identity in relation to the agentic self

What the occupation offers in the personal context in terms of agency

The sensual self

Claims to identity in relation to the mind-body self

What the occupation offers in the personal context in terms of sensuality

<center>oO0Oo</center>

Leisure, the social context and identity

'Others'

Communality

    Categories of people in the narratives:

Social identity:

       (how speaker says they present to others, and how they present to me, includes active

       on-the-spot impression management)

Social comparison:

       Qualities which are valued -

       Not valued -

       (being the same as others, being different from others)

Group membership:

       (being with others, identifying with the group, being alone)

What the occupation offers in the social context, in terms of communality

The moral self

(emotion / foci for caring / what is valued / ethic of care for self, care for others)

Values:

What the occupation offers in the social context in terms of morality

The leisure social world

What the occupation offers in the social context, in terms of social world:

Culture and society

Relationship with cultural artefacts and tools

Relationship with animals as cultural tools and as social beings

The individual's interpretation of the occupation as a socio-cultural entity

Adapting, adopting and resisting societal metanarratives.

How do we know what dominant cultural values are?

What the occupation offers in the social context, in terms of broader culture:

Claims to identity in terms of social self (including morality / culture)

oO0Oo

Leisure, the interview context and identity

Narrator:

Use of metaphors?

Active meaning-making:

Interaction with me:

Reflections on my approach to the interview

The interview environment

oO0Oo

The occupation offers the …..:

Maybe specific to him / her:

Maybe shared with other …:

Example of stage 4 analysis – Bridge-player narrative 5

BP5 'we gave them a run for their money' (full narrative analysis)

1) **Content and form, including evaluation and emotion, to expose meaning, and the contexts for the narrative.**

   - BP and his partner gave the world champion and his partner 'a run for their money' – this metaphor means that they were not easily beaten.

   - BP takes great pride in his ability to win, to be excellent at bridge, yet this story is one of being beaten, but by only a narrow margin.

   - The victor recognises the skill of his vanquished opponents. (there is a mythological quality about the story). It is a powerful memory.

   - He is respected by the world champion – he congratulated them.

   - BP is not considering himself an individual here – he is one with his bridge partner of 25 years ('we').

   - It is a tale of *displaying* **competence**, rather than *gaining* competence. Displaying the competent self.

   - The esteem of BP and his partner is **enhanced** in this narrative, both socially and personally (**social esteem and self esteem**). His worth is acknowledged at a world class level. His failure is, in fact, a success.

Context for the tale

   - The temporal and spatial contexts seem less important here, except that we are clearly in an international venue.

   - The broader sociocultural context takes us into a world of world-class bridge – a card game internationally recognised as intelligent and tactical. The orientation to the narrative is an illustration of the mix of people who play bridge – and this is picked up elsewhere in the interview.

   - The local social context takes us to the relationship between competing players, and also the relationship between player and partner. There is an implicit sense of respect between players, and a unity between partners.

   - **An aspect of bridge-playing is to want to win. BP lost, but he was more than happy with this outcome.**

2) The co-construction processes which occur in the interview setting – identity performance

- He tries to explain the game to me in the interview, in order for me to realise the level of skill we are talking about. This causes him problems, which we both acknowledge. Other leisure enthusiasts shared this problem – in fact they all did, but in this interview I am more aware of it.

- Like the Gym-member the Bridge-player does not aim to present himself as modest. In some ways this narrative is the justification for this.

- He is a dramatic and subtle story-teller. Stanza 5 line 1 – 'we lost'. Line 2 'we lost by only 20 points.'

- In this narrative and in narrative 3 he uses the word 'actually' to dramatic effect - he uses it to mean *'something exceptional happened'*

- In stanza 1 he puts me in my place as someone who may not know much about bridge.

Context for the telling - In his own home.

Abstract	JT	if I was to ask you what is your most powerful memory ( ) – have you got one?
Orientation 1	BP	**Stanza 1 – I could tell you about a match with someone you'll have heard of** I suppose one that you probably will relate to was beating Omar Sharif (?at the Manchester Congress?) ((JT 'wow!')) Probably because he's a well known name– well, if I'd have said PC you wouldn't have known who it was. **Stanza 2 – I'd rate Sharif as a bridge player and footballer, but not an actor** That's ( ) Omar Sharif is a erm, film star, he's not an actor, he's a bad actor, he's a film star ((both laugh)) but, he's an excellent bridge player, he's been on the Egyptian national team for over 30 years. And he's also, by the way, played in the Olympics at Egyptian football (???)( ) **Stanza 3 – but the best bridge players are not so well-known** however that's by the by – people know him but they don't know any better players -so
	JT BP JT	no a well known person outside of bridge but he's not the one ( )
Orientation 2	BP	**Stanza 4 – the number one of the world is American** probably not, no, because the best is the American player – world champion, basically, number one of the world, spectacular skill,
Complication **Resolution** **Evaluation**		**stanza 5 – although we lost, he acknowledged that we were good** and we lost, we lost by only 20 points and he actually congratulated us ( ) well we nearly won, they were worried ((laughs)) so we gave them a run for their money

APPENDIX D

- The table of the facets of the self, with key
- The framework of the occupied self applied to two cases

Table 7 The facets of the self

The table of the facets of the self, with key

The key to the forms that facets could take (indicated by lower case letters) can be found below the table

Dimensions / The located self / The active self / The changing self — Narratives ⇩		In time	In place	In relationships	In body	Agency	Competence	Morality	The self is changed	Occupation changed
Amateur Operatic Performer (AOP)										
1	'a big commitment'	a		e				a	f	a
2	'it's how well you get on with your colleagues'			h,f			c			
3	'you do what you have to do'					b		b	f	
Artist (A)										
1	'a bit of pride in the art'			i			a		c,f	f
2	'a bit rebellious really'			b				f	c,f	f
Bird-watcher (Bird-watcher)										
1	'at first I was overwhelmed'			g,f,j			c		c,d,f	f
3	'like coming out of the closet'			i,h			a		c,f	
5	'not confident enough to be a public speaker'			j,g			c	b	f	
6	'I've not felt anything so strong really'		c		a,b	c	a	d		
7	'people take it for granted'			k		c	b	g		
Bridge-player (Bridge-player)										
1	'I wanted to do different things'			k		d	a			b,d
2	'and then I met Mary'			e		c		a	f	a
3	'I did actually say 'I'm going''			e				a	c,f	a
4	'I wanted to play bridge'			b,e		d	a		c,f	f
5	'we gave them a run for their money'			i			a		c	
Canoeist (C)										
1	'different challenges'			a		d		g	f	b
2	'I saw the funny side'				d	c,b	b			
3	'I could have died'		a		d	c,b	b		f	
Choral-singer (Choral-singer)										
2	'very, very special'			f		d	d,a		d	b,d
3	'that was that'			g		b		a	f	f
6	'they thought I was upset'	b		e,b	a	c			f	
7	'am I actually going to lose my voice?'					d	d		a,f	a
9	'it was awful for her'					d	c,a		a	a

Dimensions (The located self / The active self / The changing self)	In time	In place	In relationships	In body	Agency	Competence	Morality	The self is changed	Occupation changed
Dog-trainer (DT)									
2 'it's a two way thing'			m		b		c	b,d	f
3 'all related to the dog'	a		m,l		c,b				b,f
4 'a bit out of hand'			m		c,b		c	f	f
5 'about having fun'			f,k				c, h		
11 'This doggy person'			h,k		b			f	
12 'I couldn't believe'			m,j		d			d	e
Fisherman (F)									
1 'I were off then'	c	b	c,d		d,b	b,d		a,b	b,d
2 'once you get married that's it'			e				a	f	a
3 'she still remembers it'	d		e		c		c		
4 'the time goes just like that'			e				b	f	
5 A wild animal sitting next to me		c	m	a	c				
Gym-member (GM)									
1 'since then it's all been out there'			c,b		b	a,d	f	b,d,f	d
2 'I loved it so much'	c		k,b		c,a	a		f	a
3 'it affected me so much'			h	e	c,b			b	f,b
5 'all my years of just having fun'			e		d	a	d,c	c,d,f	f
8 'I couldn't even imagine'				d	c,a			a	a
Horn-player (HP)									
1 'I was always behind'			j,k		c,b	c,d		f	e
2 'an amazing moment'	e			b	c		c	d	f
4 'if you don't turn up your name's mud'			a,g		c		b	f	f
5 'I own it rather it owning me'			d		c,e			b,d	f
6 'a nice place to be'			i,f		c	a		b,c	d,f
9 'I hope I'll be big enough'	f		a,k	d		c	a,d,c	a,b,f	a,f
Horse-rider (HR)									
1 'bitten by the bug'	c		e		c				e,b
2 'it was in the interests of the whole family'			e				a,c		b
3 'it does me good'			m			a		d	
8 'we coped'	b	a,c	m	b	c,b	b		b	
9 'giving up was tough'			j	a	b	c	c,e	e,f	f

	Dimensions — The located self / The active self / The changing self	In time	In place	In relationships	In body	Agency	Competence	Morality	The self is changed	Occupation changed
	Mountain-biker (MB)									
1	'I didn't even think'	c		d,k		c				e
3	'that's when the addiction started'	e,g		l	e	c,d	b,d			b,f
7	'got away with that, no problem'		A		d,b		b			
12	'he was certain that I wouldn't do it'			i,k		c,b	a	h	c	
17	'so I should be quite alright really'	f		k	d				b	a,f
	Railwayman (RM)									
1	'steam engines come to life'	e		c,a,d		c,b		g	a,e	
4	'living the railway'		D	f,b			a		f	f
5	'they are always there'		C,d			c,b				f
9	'being part of a railway family'	e	C	a,f	a,b			c		
15	'without my railway, no no'					c,b			b,f	
	Runner (R)									
1	'I'd given myself a bit of a rest'							d		a
2	'that was probably a bit of a low point'				d	c,a	c		a, f	a
3	'you know yourself how you're running'	g			c		b			
4	'like I achieved a lot'					b	a			
5	'a part of my life'	a	D			d				
	Scuba-diver (SD)									
1	'absolute magic'		C	k	b	d			b	e
2	'fabulous it really is'		C		b	d,c			d	
3	'an interest in common'			e		d				
4	'the most recent dive …always be the best'			k		e				
	Soul-singer (SS)									
1	'it was like mad'			c			a		b	b,d
2	'none of it's fair'			k		a	a	f	e	
3	'wow, it's got something to it'				c	c	a,d		a	d
4	'it wasn't nice'					a,b		f	e, f	
	Yoga-practitioner (YP)									
1	'it made me more tolerant'			k	e,c				a,b,e	e
2	'there's more to my life than just leisure'			k,b			a	d,h	f	
3	'a mystery to me'			k			b			
4	'I'm not doing as much as I used to do'		B			b			f	a
5	'because it was different'	c		k	e					

KEY TO THE TABLE OF FACETS

'The active self':

Agency

a) **Feeling helpless**

   Feeling in control and effective

b) Overcoming obstacles

c) Reacting to contingencies

d) Setting and achieving goals

e) Feeling in control

Competence

   Having competence

a) Social display of competence

b) Personally experienced competence

c) **Lacking competence**

d) **Developing competence**

Morality

   Care for others

a). Loyalty (choosing the focus of loyalty, loyalty not rewarded)

b). Fulfilling obligations

c). Helping others (ethic of care for others),

g) Social concerns / conscience

   Care for self

e) Ethic of care for self,

d). **Pondering selfishness**

   Adopting / rejecting cultural values

f). The influence of an external moral authority (e.g. religion)

h). Own reputation is displayed, by contrasting with behaviour or attitudes of other people (Seale)

'The located self':

In time

    a) Amount of time occupied

    b) A special time, a season, is featured

Continuity

    c) The impact of childhood (continuity)

    d) A connection across generations (continuity)

    e) Identifying with an era (continuity)

    f) Looking to the future (continuity)

    g) Time measures ability

In place

    a) Risky and safe places

    b) The amount of space occupied (widening or diminishing spaces)

    c) A special places (e.g. nature, the elements, a particular place)

    d) Where the occupation can be done

In body

Sensory / emotional / physical experience

    a) Emotional

    b) Sensory

    c) Awareness of the body

    d) The body as vulnerable (to risk, illness, age)

    e) Caring for the body / mind

In society and relationships

Relating to wider community / culture

    a) Having social responsibility (community)

    b) Dealing with family and cultural expectations (family, culture)

    c) The developing social self (family, friends, community)

    d) Having the right equipment (socio-cultural tools)

Relating to family

e) Affiliation with family (family)

Relating to the leisure group

f) Group membership as positive (group)

g) Group membership as problematic (group)

Relating to 'others'

h) Social image / looking foolish (others)

i) Gaining esteem (others)

j) Feeling socially inadequate, self doubts (others)

k) Comparing self with others (others)

l) Relating to friends

m) Relating to an animal

'The changing self':

Changes in the self

Physical / psychological / social change

a) A physical change

b) A psychological change

c) A change in social status

d) Satisfaction / fulfilment

e) Something is learnt

f) Being pulled two ways

Changed engagement in the occupation

Change in quantity

a) Doing less (quantity)

b) Doing more (quantity)

Change in quality

c) Doing worse (quality)

d) Doing better (quality)

e) First special encounter with the occupation

f) Doing it differently

The framework of the occupied self applied to two cases.

The Runner

The changing self	Self is changed	Occupation is changed	
	• she was physically changed (R2)	• did less for a while (R1) • couldn't run (R2)	

The active self	Agency	Competence	Morality
	• felt helpless (R2) • achieved a lot (R4) • rose at 6am on holiday to train (R5)	• being unable to run (R2) • knowing you're running well (R3) • I won the difficult race (R4)	• feeling guilty at doing less (R1)

The located self	Time	Place	Body	Society/ relationships
	• running 25 mins ahead (R3) • running is part of my life (R5)	• I can run anywhere (R5)	• physical vulnerability (R2) • Knowing one's body (R3)	•

The Scuba-diver

The changing self	Self is changed	Occupation is changed	
	• Overcoming fear (SD1) • fulfilled (SD2)	• 'I want to do that!' (SD1)	

The active self	Agency	Competence	Morality
	• Determined (SD1) • Achieving a lifetime's ambition (SD2) • Determined (SD3) • Unafraid to be different (SD4)	•	•

The located self	Time	Place	Body	Society/ relationships
	•	• Love being in the water (SD1) • In the Red Sea (SD2)	• A sensual experience (SD1) • Being there, the colour, the movement (SD2)	• I wanted to be like the Hasses (SD1) • Strengthened our relationship (SD3) • I'm not like others (SD4)

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