THE GATELESS GATE OF HOME EDUCATION

DISCOVERY: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SELF OF ADULTS UPON DISCOVERY OF

THE POSSIBILITY AND POSSIBILITIES OF AN EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE?

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the moment of discovery of educational alternatives and in particular contemporary discovery of elective home education by parents and other adults in England. The discussion highlights an empirical and theoretical context for this discovery. Questions involve whether there is a moment of ontological conversion in the self of people discovering another way of educating from mainstream authoritarian schooling. The research data presented suggests that a moment of 'gestalt switch' conversion exists between what can be called different 'worlds' of education, following Thomas S. Kuhn's framework of scientific discovery. By finding the existence of such a moment, the data indicates that education hegemonically conflated with mainstream authoritarian schooling is illegitimate: education is a paradigmatic field wherein all differing paradigms of educational theory and practice have equal legitimacy, irrespective of resources and participants. The moment of discovery investigated is characterised by surprising elements. Discovery of an alternative way of educating children seems to have a strong positive impact on both the adults and the children involved. The study shows that parents want information on various educational modalities to be widely available and provided by the government in the process of choosing education for their children.

DEDICATION

To the Other, everywhere. Beautiful, powerful Other.

"No person who has learned that to exist as the individual is the most terrifying thing of all will be afraid of saying it is the greatest" (Kierkegaard 1985, pg 102)

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CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION

'Religion would then be found to have its natural place in every aspect of human experience that is concerned with estimate of possibilities, with emotional stir by possibilities as yet unrealised, and with all action in behalf of their realisation. All that is significant in human experience falls within this frame.' (Dewey 2008, pg 39)

"In short, I think we can say that in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in being as subject" (Foucault 2001, pg 16)

'A conversion is not in the first place the illumination of a soul, but the twisting of a body called by the unknown.' (Rancière 2003, pg 116)

Introduction

Education is modal. This simple sentence is at the heart of this thesis but is itself a realisation which comes out of a realisation: it is part of a 'shift' or 'switch' which is the focus of this study. What follows is an investigation of an act of discovery – involving a movement of the self - in the personal lives of adults, concerning education; for children and with regard to themselves. Because education is so central to present times and 'matters immeasurably' to young children (Alexander 2009, pg 3) and others, understanding it in all its diversity and implications is of paramount importance (e.g. Apple 2000b; Harber 2004; Meighan et al. 2007; Curry 1947; Biesta 2006; Ecclestone and Hayes 2009). Moreover, being able to understand education of particular kinds on its own terms, rather than terms

borrowed from forms of education which bear great and significant difference is a necessary conceptual task: education is modally diverse and each modality belongs to its own epistemological and ontological world. How is this to be known? It is suggested that identifying a moment of movement between such worlds allows us to understand that firstly, these worlds are sufficiently distinct that a 'switch' between them is required; secondly, being worlds 'apart' and being known as 'apart' allows for understandings to emerge which are concerned with appropriate and effective – and commensurate, to a degree – transference 'of ideas from one context of practice to another', which whilst 'not straightforward' (Conroy, Hulme, and Menter 2010, pg 416) is hopefully facilitated by the theory applied herein to the problem of the incommensurability of mainstream educational ideas and 'alternative approaches' (ibid).

The present study is concerned with *what lies in the space between* two different forms of education, with their differences of theory, practice and purpose and is, in some senses, an investigation of that space in order to establish if it has anything to tell us about education and our relationship to education and possibly also what it can tell us about ourselves as human beings. The two forms, or 'worlds', of education here identified are broadly characterised as mainstream authoritarian schooling (MAS) and alternative educational modalities (AEM). MAS is seen to be hegemonically representative of techniques of learning and becoming which involve compulsion, hierarchy and authoritarianisms, operating within the social setting of the education and the operational functioning of the learning methods for ends ultimately suited to economic structures (Bowles and Gintis 1976; Willis 1981). AEM is conversely characterised as being non-coercive, egalitarian and

democratic and unconcerned with engagement with social structures in an explicitly instrumental way (Neill 1968; Miller 2008; Sheffer 1995).

The discussion below follows a vision of education as a field of study and practice, presently understood illegitimately *as* MAS education. A delineation of education instead as, in fact, modal and paradigmatic is made by showing that education has paradigm features in line with Kuhn's philosophy in 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' (Kuhn 1962). Kuhn showed that the nature of the creation of new paradigms out of 'old' follows periods of crisis in sense-making, after which new understandings emerge of previous 'anomalies'. The new and the old understandings are seen as separate and separated worlds, 'suffering' in their difference, from factors of incommensurability each with the other (Kuhn 2000). MAS education emerges, within the empirical data that follows, as a *conceptual paradigm* full of anomalies and crisis, out of which surfaces the discovery of alternative modes of educating and being educated. MAS is thus shown to be conceptually required to make space for AEM forms of education such as elective home education (EHE) or democratic schooling modalities (DSM) as having an *equal* epistemological and ontological part of and in the territory of education; if not in terms of resources and 'participants', but in terms of educational *legitimacy*. This claim is based on an understanding of education as paradigmatic at the core of its function as a discipline of application in the lives of humans.

This feat of attempting to reconfigure education as a conceptual understanding – or perhaps rather clear away some clouds of illusion about the nature of education as *not* MAS (Thomas and Pattison 2007; Illich 1971) – comes about by virtue of listening to the data in chapter 5 which clearly shows that it is possible and sought for by adults to epistemologically and

ontologically grasp and follow through on the idea of education as modal. To do that, these adults seem to have been prepared to undergo a 'transformation' of the self, which allows them to 'jump' into another world of education from the one that surrounds them as 'normal' in the sense of MAS, and instead embrace another, alternative, way of doing things (otherwise, they simply just want more information and advice about education as modal, as we see in the street survey data). The movement of the self identified in the interviews – even at the level of language - seems to follow uncannily the same pattern of discovery that Kuhn identified as occurring within the domain of natural science. That 'discovery', in this Kuhnian sense, is actively happening within education, would indicate that education consists of paradigms and not just at the level of methodologies. When we start talking about education in this differently structured way, this opens education up to genuine Copernican style revolutions (Kuhn 2000b). The implications of this 'discovery of discovery' are discussed below, particularly in chapters 6 and 7.

The use of the discovery of EHE, as a location for this movement, predominates in this study. Most of the participants for the semi-structured interviews were connected to EHE discovery in some regard, with their preferred style of EHE being mostly of an autonomous style (see Thomas and Pattison 2007, and explained briefly below). Adjunct to this focus is an awareness that DSM, such as can be found in Summerhill and Sands School, UK or Sudbury Valley, Massachusetts, USA (Neill 1968; Gribble 2001; Sudbury-Valley-School-Press 1992), seems to be the same in nature when it is discovered in terms of the effects in the self that it has. Therefore, DSM is always hovering around in the background of the discussion linked predominantly to EHE; indeed, four of the 29 interview participants were concerned with DSM discovery. Along the way to presentation of the data in chapter 5,

concerned as it is mostly with EHE discovery, contexts for understanding EHE discovery are given and in this regard DSM does not feature greatly. In establishing a framework of social, political, educational and personal action within which discovery finds its being, EHE is subject to forms of treatment which are products of empirical investigation: the use of relevant EHE literature is made, as well as numerous examples of EHE featuring in the media and aspects of EHE as a community are invoked in order for better understanding of what discovery of EHE is and could mean for education, as well as no small amount of discussion of EHE itself as deserving attention. But despite such a strong empirical emphasis on EHE in this text, this angle of approach is not seen, ultimately, as the primary focus or outcome for an original contribution to knowledge, although there is plenty that is new in this study that is for and about EHE. The primary focus instead to be found in the *product* of the time spent investigating what happens in discovery of EHE (and DSM): a renewed understanding of education as involving various modes, with the beginnings of a theoretical underpinning at a base level for that understanding and a better awareness of the specific nature of AEM education which is hereby offered a contribution to its own theoretical underpinning, able thus to be better assessed on its own terms rather than the terms of MAS.

This understanding is not wide-ranging in scope but as a small re-wiring of a vast terrain involves wide-ranging ramifications if taken seriously and extended beyond this study. This work of reconfiguration of the terrain of education is done at the level of theory but is done at this level using and with empirical data. It is also achieved (within an AEM ethos of the democratic) by virtue of the voices of the participants, such that new understandings emerge out of what they say rather than what the present researcher can say which is, ultimately, an organisation of the knowledge they so expertly supply (with aspects of interpretation and

configuration in that organisation where necessary for clarity) such that the hidden aspects of what they tell us is happening can be brought into the light and discovered. Added to this presentation of the data, in democratic measure, is the researcher's voice. The *thesis* herein is the researcher's own.

That our current understanding of education, limited by and conflated with MAS education, is false is seen herein as an issue, which needs both problematizing and clarifying. We do not yet know what education can be, having efficiently and blindly boxed it into buildings and systems that started in around 1870 with Prussian efficiency (Ramirez and Boli 1987) and has not changed in its fundamental theoretical underpinnings since. Perhaps the renewal and newness of understanding that the data and theory herein can afford and add to other voices that speak of similar calls to change (Miller 2008; Mintz and Ricci 2010; Robinson 2010), is aptly afflicted with a constant repetition by the research participants of the verb 'to see'.

EHE (and DSM) discovery is an extremely complex subject but perhaps EHE is especially so, linked as it is so closely to various social, political, personal/familial issues of contemporary debate. To attempt to manage the topic, certain boundaries have been set around EHE as the key empirical focus. With regard to politics in particular the debate has been largely limited to England in and around the Badman Review (Badman 2009) period, discussed in further detail below. What is clear is that the complexity of questions connected to discovery of EHE requires both careful awareness and acceptance that sometimes epistemological 'edges' must remain blurred. The title of the thesis as incorporating a 'gateless gate' gives a sense of why this is the case. These matters are all discussed and explained below.

The *extent* to which the discovery of EHE (and DSM), has important implications for so many different areas of life and experience – for all people, not just home educators - has come as a surprise to the present writer. It was envisaged that it would be an axis or nexus point into key areas of discussion about education and offer in-roads into new territories of questioning in various domains such as politics, psychology, philosophy, history, etcetera. What was not expected however was the sheer force and power of the data in its implications for education as a whole, including therein all that education does and can do. Also, gathering the data was an experience that affected the present researcher: the memories and reactions of individuals with regards to the discovery of EHE and also, more generally, to DSM, were overwhelming in their intensity for the researcher to experience. One by one the stories of individuals and families emerged from seeming insignificance or were nudged from perceived normality into the light, and one by one they showed themselves to be alive, characterful, forceful, important and special. At times researching this 'moment' of discovery of an alternative way of education to MAS has been an existential explosion on multiple levels of awareness in ways that were and are ineffable. It is hoped that the force of what will be called a 'switch' or 'shift' is able to be as fully portrayed and communicated as it was experienced in the research journey. In order to do this we must listen to the participants because they are, it seems, telling us about something that is not ordinary.

The discovery of the possibility and possibilities of EHE and DSM, it turns out, is a spiritual, emotional, social, political, philosophical, existential, familial trauma of renewal. It is a renewal of an understanding of what is *possible* for the human in its relationship with its self and others, through and because of the medium of education. Not only is this discovery

profoundly affecting and challenging in certain cases or situations on a material level, but on a spiritual or psychological level (depending on belief and ideology) it seems to realign the 'self' (discussed in more detail below) to work along different lines of being from those followed by others who do not seem able to appreciate what the discovery of home education can and does create. To experience discovery of EHE and DSM is to set oneself – in a certain and benign sense – apart. Why? Because, it seems that those who can appreciate the possibility and possibilities of EHE and DSM become alive to what it can do for them and with them. In thus recognising this 'alive' quality in the confrontation of the self with education as a particular mode, they seem to be able to achieve forms of personal equilibrium by virtue of being more profoundly connected to everyday life (Davies 2009; Safran 2008; Meighan 1995; Thomas 1998). In living more 'joyfully' (McKee 2002) than they did before they made the discovery, they add a new dimension to their lives than those who have not made the discovery – because of its particular nature, as requiring, it seems, a 'conversion' – cannot share. In this sense, the discovery of EHE and DSM is not only a founding act of faith in a form of education *that is a product of discovery,* but also an entrance into a new world and the living of a new kind of life (see Neuman and Avriam 2003). The only other place where such language happily applies at the moment is religious discourse. To suggest, or imply, a connection between conversion into a religious way of life and the discovery of an educational modality as a similar form of conversion is challenging.

This thesis does not claim in any way or at any time that discovery of EHE is a religious conversion: at least not in the traditional sense of the use of the words. Perhaps the closest that it can come to some kind of sense making is through the use of alternative frameworks: the ones utilised are Kuhn's paradigm revolutions and Foucault's care of the self, set within

an overarching background atmosphere of 'gatelessness' that Zen 'mu' philosophy 'understands' (all further discussed below). Of course, other writers and philosophical presentations could possibly also work just as well to offer a way to approach the strangeness and bountifulness of the data (e.g. Deleuze and Guattari 2004) in the terrain to be explored. There is no central point from which a voice can emanate: there are necessarily many voices, many moments, many interpretations and many possibilities. This is both the beauty and the challenge of the arena of this research.

The confrontation of educational modalities with self that is threaded through this thesis is not straightforward and certainly not based on a system of binaries. The discovery of EHE (and DSM) has little pattern, other than as moments characterised by realisations, joy and wandering towards some kind of 'light': a word also used a couple of times in the data to describe a direction towards or a moment of realisation. Discovery is seen as part of a *journey* involving EHE (and DSM) and it is suggested that when 'genuine' (a phrase discussed further below) and deep-seated within the self, discovery happens suddenly, closely according to Kuhn's thesis (Kuhn 1962). In being part of a journey, this discovery itself is an arrival or an entrance of a particular kind: it is a 'gateless gate'. This seemingly non-sensical phrase symbolises and describes the nature of that discovery:

> *"The great path has no gates,*
> *Thousands of roads enter it.*
> *When one passes through this gateless gate*
> *He (sic) walks freely between heaven and earth." (Reps 2000)*

> *Joshu asked Nansen: "What is the path?"*
> *Nansen said: "Everyday life is the path."*
> *Joshu asked: "Can it be studied?"*
> *Nansen said: "If you try to study, you will be far away from it."*

Joshu asked: "If I do not study, how can I know it is the path?"
Nansen said: "The path does not belong to the perception world, neither does it belong to the nonperception world. Cognition is a delusion and noncognition is senseless. If you want to reach the true path beyond doubt, place yourself in the same freedom as sky. You name it neither good nor not-good."
At these words Joshu was enlightened. (ibid)

In essence this thesis offers a problematisation of education. Touching upon a wide spectrum of issues, it does not aim to be an expert in all of them but rather to highlight, through a form of Freirian conscientization (Freire 2005; Friere 1972) of freedom from identification with the dominant mode, that education is theoretically and empirically not a closed model involving MAS and 'MAS-ian' adjuncts as 'poor cousins'. It is not one model at all. Just as the mechanistic world-view of science has been overturned by the entrance of quantum theory, so too, a mechanistic 'Prussian' model of education mentioned earlier (Ramirez and Boli 1987) - based epistemologically on mechanistic Newtonian and Cartesian lines of thinking – is false in its hegemony, its application and its intentions. If the 'physical' world does not operate as a machine which when the parts are working together makes a whole but instead is a 'whole that determines the behaviour of the parts' (Capra 1983, pg 76), then a mechanistic educational modality (learn x and y will happen) such as that found within MAS is inadequate to the world *as it actually functions*. This might explain why there are so many problems with such schooling as a model, which so many news story reveal (Milne 25/05/07; Curtis 05/06/07; Kelly 20/03/09; Maddern 20/02/09, 27/11/09; Bloom 24/04/09; Milne 21/03/08; Lipsett 29/07/08). The perceived model of education *as one mode* that we currently have is false and therefore dysfunctional. Discovery of educational alternatives to such modes has importance on many levels. Furthermore, it is important that we understand that this *kind* of discovery is of a 'gateless' form and involves other ways of thinking than those underpinning MAS.

Untangling the weeds of terms

Proceeding with a thesis on EHE in particular, within the context of AEM, requires a certain clearing of the patch. EHE as a site of research is called by different names in different places and can mean different things to different people. Home education discourse in England is beginning to show a common use of the preface term 'elective' because of government use of 'elective home education' (Badman 2009; Ivatts 2006; DCSF 2007; Bhopal and Myers 2009; Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009; Coventry_City_Council 2009) to denote education that happens at home as a result of choice. Home education can also be a term for Local Authority tutoring, at home, of sick children still on a school register. This is not the kind of 'home education' that is considered here because it does not use, in any large measure, the application of AEM theories of freedoms of the self (discussed below) as a part of the pedagogy involved. This thesis moreover, uses the term elective home education (EHE) to refer to *autonomous* styles of pedagogy such as those described in research by Thomas and Pattison (Thomas and Pattison 2007) or recorded in autonomous EHE narratives of practice (Bergeron 2009). These are characterised by a pedagogical 'informality', which allows children to set the pace of their own education and determine the pathways to learning they will take, rather than it being dictated by outside expectations, be they teachers or parents. It emerges as education by 'spontaneous conversation, both incidentally and sometimes at great depth' (Thomas and Pattison 2007, pg 7) and is more like an 'open-ended cultural apprenticeship' than a pre-defined curriculum (ibid, pg 14). The spirit of this kind of education is post-modern (Lyotard 1984) in its antithetical and incredulous relationship to MAS as a meta-narrative of education. Home education (and DSM) that is a product of choice and that uses autonomy

for the child in its educational mode of operation is called many other names around the world: natural learning (Luvmour and Luvmour 1993), life-long learning (Needle 2000), de-schooling (Illich 1971), unschooling (McKee 2002), holistic learning (Miller 2010), life-learning (Preisnitz 2008) etc. In this text, wherever EHE is referred to, it largely means – or wishes to mean – an autonomous style of education not carried out in a school, where the child is not registered with a school. It is however important to note that for EHE to be deemed 'autonomous' in style no prescription is intended beyond the idea that the children have freedoms to determine their own learning to a significant extent. EHE, whatever the pedagogic style, is as unique within each family as the individual self is unique and describing or measuring the modality of EHE in operation is largely untenable given the extreme flexibility and fluidity of the practice. This is especially true for the autonomous style (Thomas and Pattison 2007; Preisnitz 2008).

Another area where 'clearing' is needed for clarity is with regards to 'discovery'. Discovery here is considered as *'a coming upon that delivers new awareness'* which is close in sense to definition Number 2 in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: 'The action or an act of finding or becoming aware of for the first time; *esp.* the first bringing to light of a scientific phenomenon etc' (Shorter_Oxford_English_Dictionary 2007). Discovery is also as unique in its manifestation as it is in the approach to it and is context specific: past, present, future, likes, dislikes, tendencies, educational background, relatives, food eaten that day, etc. all play a part in both the nature of discovery and reaction to it. With this in mind discovery is both *'a coming upon that delivers new awareness'* and *'an experience in the self that is unique to that individual'*. Specific to the use of Kuhn (1962), a difficult decision has been made, to agree with Kuhn on the idea that the key sense of discovery presently discussed

involves a 'gestalt switch' and happens suddenly (see chapter 6 for further details). When the thesis discussion refers to discovery, it involves both the possibility of a gestalt switch 'discovery' and the notion of a slow, incremental discovery. However, slow 'discovery' is posited as always eventually involving a sudden 'switch' at some point for discovery –in the sense meant 'of an alternative' - to be genuine. Thus, key to this duality in terms of pace and nature of discovery is the idea that 'genuine' discovery of EHE (and DSM) –whereby incommensurability, different worlds and the whole Kuhnian philosophical paraphernalia applies - has to *necessarily* involve a gestalt switch form of discovery for other seeming 'kinds' of discovery to entail validity as meant here. The existence of a gestalt switch is a key (albeit immeasurable) 'test' of whether discovery has occurred. It is suggested that the 'gestalt switch' form of discovery is not as easy to see or identify as occurring, as the slower aspects of discovery can be noticed when looking back upon events leading to a change in educational outlook as an incrementally built 'whole' picture. Nevertheless, as the data in chapter 5 will show, these switches are 'entities' to be found and unearthed and can be seen as tangible experiences that are identifiable by both the participants and within a research framework as important 'gates' into another way of education to happen. It is suggested that these gates, although by nature 'gateless', do manifest as a 'proof' of discovery – as presently defined – as a particular type of educational and personal event with significant implications. A fuller exposition of the Kuhnian philosophy applied to the present discussion is outlined in chapter 6 and implications of this 'switch' are explored in chapter 7.

What is meant herein by the Self?

'Self' is a term that will be much used in this thesis. 'Self' as a concept is various and inchoate, unless a guiding definition is employed. Self is here seen to be that which is constant in the awareness of the human of their existence, from birth until death. It is the named element of the human, which responds to its name when called. As Roger Smith suggests, language relating to the self 'has a historical character and is not fixed' (Smith 1997, pg 49). We can acknowledge that the self (small 's' used throughout) has been referred to in many other ways: from the all embracing 'Imani bhutani, idam sarvam yad ayam atma' of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1980), where the self is found to be everything, everywhere in all things, to the presentation of self as a recognisable physical appearance (Burke 1997). Not only has the self been considered to be many and various things that can be said to pertain to the human, but it is also described as various in character or substance. What the self is exactly is a question of an order different from that of 'what can we call the self?' Again, we could turn to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad for a comprehensive and extreme 'explanation' of what the self is:

> Idam brahma, idam kshatram, ime devah, imani bhutani, idam sarvam yad ayam atma "This source of knowledge; this source of power; all these worlds; all these gods; all these beings – All this is just the Self (Anon 1980).

Alternatively we can offer the ideas on this matter of a more modern philosopher such as Michel Foucault, who considers that the self is something which can be taken care of and is part of an individual person, rather than something that belongs to other people (Foucault 1996a), although this is not to be interpreted in any essentialist manner. It can be added, within the context of the present thesis, that the self as a concept has much to do with the

Other. A further instance of where this is considered is in the philosophy of John Macmurray, who suggests that although such a self is impossible to know and is a 'metaphysical fiction' (Macmurray 1961, pg 20), the idea of a sense of self is not 'gratuitous' (ibid) and this is especially so if we bring in the idea of the other, where meaning for the term 'the self' is found in community:

> 'The self is one term in the relation between two selves. It cannot be prior to that relation and equally, of course, the relation cannot be prior to it. `I' exist only as a member of the `*you and I'*. The self only exists in the communion of selves' (Macmurray 1933, pg 137; quoted in Fielding 2000).

For both Macmurray and Foucault (Foucault 1996a) the self is only free to be itself when it considers and cares for others without domination and with due recognition of other as a personal experience. AEM forms of education such as considered here tend to privilege an idea of the self that takes account of its relationship to others (Curry 1947; Neill 1968), rather than favour any present vogue for 'atomistic individualism' (Fielding 2000). Similarly the self can be seen to be a product of the ways in which people talk with each other:

> 'A Self consists only within "webs of interlocution" and all self-interpretation implicitly or explicitly "acknowledges the necessarily social origin of any and all their conceptions of the good and so of themselves"' (Mulhall and Swift 1996; in Christians 2005, pg 154).

This combination of the idea of the self as historically situated, a-temporal, developmental, personal, linguistic and communal is coherent if we adopt an idea of the self as many things to all people, in different ways, at different times and therefore as a concept both indefinable in a quantifiable manner, or susceptible to examination of a scientific kind. Despite the difficulties of determining what the 'self' is, it is here considered as the individually named

entity that is recognised by that individual as its own experience of living in a given body.

What this thesis is and what it is not

This thesis is an empirical and philosophical consideration of education as modal, using empirical data to illustrate and explore a point about education as modal that without that data is merely theoretical, rather than *also* theoretical. The empirical data is offered as a 'lucky find', even if looking for it was intentional because it is both data about the discovery of an educational alternative and bears significance for important philosophical points about education beyond that focus. However the 'luck' is not fulsomely joyous. The discovery involved connected to EHE, has also highlighted suffering. In uncovering aspects of the discovery of EHE in particular, what was found were aspects of the educational landscape that are serious future research issues for the well-being of individuals to take into account, as a result of this research. And so, this thesis is about EHE in the sense that the research found data to support claims that EHE needs to be made known as a viable educational option and that not doing so is causing serious and unnecessary distress to certain tax-payers who find that a schooling modality does not suit their child/children. With regard to everything else that pertains specifically to EHE in this text, this thesis is also about EHE.

However, it would be a mistake to consider that the discussion aims to expertly reconfigure our understanding of EHE as educational practice or as a 'social movement'(Apple 2007) and furthermore even discussion of discovery *as a part of a growing movement* is limited. There is little detailed consideration of the principles of the pedagogy of EHE in the research data and there is no detailed empirical research to extend our knowledge of how EHE

functions as education in practice. What *is* offered, is a way to appreciate how and why EHE is discovered as different from MAS *because* of the existence of a point of conversion between the modalities of MAS and AEM and the ways in which this might present problems for communication and understanding about this difference. Furthermore, the original empirical research data is also *used* to aim to reposition education as we currently perceive and conceptualise it, because education as we currently *understand* it as MAS is proving to be an inadequate, 'broken system' according to experienced teachers who work in MAS settings (Vaughan 08/10/10) or 'broken model', according to some academic educationists (Robinson 2010; Meighan 2005). The 'proof' of a modal 'switch' presented, is offered as a fertile seed of change at the level of the concept of education, with a presentation timed in 2010 for what would seem to be the right epistemological and ontological 'weather' for healthy growth (Robinson 2010). Just as Foucault developed 'genealogies' of historical materials to substantiate his thought regarding the place and status of the subject's social and personal experience as a context of freedom (Dumm 1996), this thesis is a problematisation of education so that it might find new freedoms within which to operate. There is no better source for a problematisation of education than EHE (in particular at the time of writing) and DSM and therefore, whilst this thesis is not claiming to be exhaustively expert on these vast areas of AEM and MAS, it does claim to present a focused way forward to better understand their place and status in the light of MAS hegemony; both from an empirical and philosophical perspective.

The Research Questions

The research questions are:

- What happens to the self of parents and other adults, when they discover the possibility in law of the pedagogical *possibilities* of AEM, but especially EHE in its autonomous style?

- Is there a moment/s of 'ontological conversion' in the self of an adult upon discovery of AEM (and in particular EHE) and, if there is, why does it happen, how, and what significance could a 'conversion' have for our conception of education and the creation of a world-view developed through education?

Subsidiary research questions are:

- How do parents discover EHE?

- Why is EHE so little known about amongst parents and others?

- Why is EHE not actively and positively advertised or 'offered' by the state as an educational possibility for parents to consider?

- Do any effects on the self reported upon discovery of EHE (and DSM) signify a split *of some kind* between those people who attend and support MAS and those who discover AEM?

- If there is a split, what is it and what might it mean?

A note regarding the nature of the references

Because of the nature of the field as identified as an *emergent* paradigm, more than the usual number of texts cited are non-academic, including a number of references to contemporary media reports. The media reports used are predominantly newspaper articles and are relevant for their 'immediate' nature, as much of the territory discussed with regard to EHE discovery concerns recent changes not yet widely addressed within academic literature. When cited they are utilised for their ability to report either events or opinions but are not used as factual source materials. There are also a number of books cited which are recent publications from the global movement of AEM activism and its literature. Often these are by individuals with kinds of experience of AEM relevant to this thesis and not presently addressed by peer-reviewed writings. This is necessary to make certain points where these texts provide evidence and there is a concomitant void in the academic field at this moment to provide relevant peer reviewed materials.

The structure of the thesis

The thesis is comprised of eight chapters of varying lengths. The main focus, as stated, is on discovery of EHE. Throughout the thesis, data will be presented where pertinent, although the main presentation of data is in chapter 5.

Chapter 2 is an overview of the social, political and 'emotional' scene of EHE, particularly but not exclusively during what can be called the 'Badman Review' period of January 2009

– May 2010, which emerged during the pre-designated period for conducting the research on discovery of EHE (and DSM). Because of the coincidence of timings, the data has gained a richer context than it otherwise might have had and this chapter attempts to offer an understanding of what was going on during the time when the research participants were being interviewed. This chapter discusses various empirical background issues to do with the perception of EHE and ways in which EHE discovery happens within a given political, social and educational context.

Chapter 3 attempts to outline the relationship of EHE discovery to its broader theoretical and empirical context. Issues to do with MAS effects on EHE discovery – for example, school failure in some cases, to cater for special educational needs (SEN) - and political issues connected to EHE discovery are highlighted. The current state of theory relating to AEM as a MAS educational 'alternative' is outlined.

Chapter 4 is an explanation of the methodology used, which presents itself as based in a philosophy of trust. The use of trust as a methodology is explained as 'of a piece' with the nature of AEM in terms of its 'technologies of the self', as utilising trust in interpersonal relations as a fundamental part of the ways in which the pedagogy of EHE and DSM function effectively. Research approach and methods are also discussed.

Chapter 5 is a presentation of the interview data and the street survey data. The interview data is split into three sections. The first section concerns data that discusses the discovery of EHE (and DSM) as a personal 'life event'. The second section looks at the 'how' of discovery. The third section is a theoretical consideration of the data as having types of

philosophical meanings beyond EHE as 'simply' social, political, personal and pedagogic practice. The fourth section is a presentation of data from a street survey. This data serves both as triangulation of the interviews and also offers some insights that are specific to its own methodology.

Chapter 6 looks at philosophical themes from the data through the lens of theory and specifically in this chapter, at Thomas S. Kuhn's theory of gestalt switch mechanisms, paradigmatic worlds and incommensurability of communication between those worlds as an explanatory theory applying to EHE (and DSM) discovery and the philosophical 'status' of EHE (and DSM) subsequent to discovery. Some data is presented in this chapter as a part of the discussion.

Chapter 7 is a further explanatory chapter, considering the data through the lens of what discovery is of and for: why it is seemingly so meaningful to those who experience it. An analysis of the theories of Michel Foucault in his later phase of technologies and care of the self is made, considering the implications for such theories for our understanding of the data on the discovery of EHE and DSM as discovery of something particular in relation to the self. Some data is presented in this chapter as a part of the discussion.

Chapter 8 is a summary of conclusions drawn as well as a restatement of the overall contribution of the work undertaken and presented. A reflection on possible future directions for the work to take and future areas wherein this work highlights potential developments to be explored is the final section of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS FOR THE DATA ON DISCOVERY OF ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

'Discussions around home education excite quite visceral responses on all sides...' (Conroy 2010)

Introduction

This thesis considers a particular moment of special importance in education: it is a 'small' moment of personal discovery of elective home education (EHE) or democratic schooling modalities (DSM). For the individuals who experience the 'event' of discovery, it is of great significance and importance within the world of their personal lives, family and lifestyle, as we will see later in the data in Chapter 5. Despite its tiny, individual size relative to mass educational endeavours in England, this 'tiny' moment has big implications. Intimate and deep-seated events of discovery of another way of educating from mainstream authoritarian schooling (MAS), happening in the personal self of parents and other adults, was the original research topic for this thesis. However, during the period of the research, 'big' events in the arena of EHE were occurring: the Badman Review of Elective Home Education in England (Badman 2009) was threatening to fundamentally alter the landscape of education in England. Furthermore, the impact of the Badman Review was placing discovery of EHE in

England – in particular - in a whole new context. As has been explained in Chapter 1, this thesis looks at discovery of an alternative to MAS with a 'smudged' boundary between EHE and DSM, with the primary focus of the thesis on EHE for practical research reasons. It is therefore important to consider the complexities of the contexts of the discovery of EHE.

The research period on discovery of EHE (and DSM) coincided with the Badman Review, perhaps the most significant threat to EHE in England in its history, since the 1944 Butler Act legally enshrined it as an option. It is therefore behoven on a study focusing mostly on the discovery of EHE to consider the contexts pertinent to EHE at the time of the data collection in 2009. The diverse contexts will stretch from approximately 2002-2010 and together paint an overall picture of the background to discovery of EHE during this contemporary period.

Why research discovery of EHE within England: the rationale

As has just been explained, the Badman Review set EHE discovery in a political climate that was unexpected for the researcher. Prior to this, a research decision was taken to focus on England rather than the UK as a whole, in order to avoid complicated local legal and political variations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Whilst often what is said regarding EHE in reference to England also refers to these other educational arenas in the UK, being specific about differences would take too much time and space from the main focus of the thesis. All references to government situations refer only to England and data used – such as newspaper articles – are from sources located primarily in England. There is perhaps potential to transfer the findings of this thesis to locations in various parts of the

world but material specifics of a socio-politico-economic nature are limited to a small territory of action, wherein we will see that such a context can have a profound effect in some regards on the nature of the discovery of EHE. Ways in which discovery is not limited to a specific territory will be explored in the chapters on empirical and theoretical findings.

Information for discovery: a context

A legal choice: history and development

Elective home education (EHE) is a legal choice for parents in England. In 1944, the 'Butler Education Act' established that children could be educated "either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" and this enshrined the possibilities for home educators in law, in England, to pursue their chosen method of education. Since this time EHE has been through a series of local acrimonious court cases due to a lack of understanding of EHE on the part of local authorities. The Harrison case in the late seventies/ early eighties is perhaps the most famous example, where the parents of school aged children chose to home educate them in an autonomous style. Threats from the local authority ensued, including the threat of taking the children out of the family. The debacle subsequently ended in a court battle to ascertain whether these children were receiving 'efficient full-time education suitable to their age' (Case_law 1981; Harrison 2010). Connected to this situation of a local authority threatening a family with judicial measures due to a desire on the part of those parents to home educate, EHE started to emerge from the shadows; Education Otherwise (see www.education-

otherwise.org) – the most well-known EHE charity, was founded by Iris Harrison and Dick Kitto and set up as an advocacy and information service for parents wishing to home educate. This charity has grown over the years at the same time as other organisations relating to EHE have emerged throughout the UK. The proliferation of web-based EHE organisations is discussed below with reference to the role of the internet in discovery. Thus, the legal choice to home educate has also seen challenges that were technically outside the law or, in being made, challenged its boundaries and significations. This often took lengthy and painful wrangling with the authorities to establish the right to home educate.

Court cases such as the Harrison case have now become unusual in England: parents are no longer threatened with their children being removed from their care, *solely* because the parents wish to home educate. However, unfortunately it is not yet the case that safe-guarding issues - emerging mainly from social services concerns for the physical, emotional and mental well-being of children - and EHE as educational practice are rationally divorced, as Conroy discusses (2010) with reference to the Badman Review (Badman 2009). Anecdotal evidence from home educators suggest that a situation still exists in England wherein tremendous ignorance regarding home education causes significant and difficult problems for parents who have discovered its possibility in law, especially in dealings with some individuals invested with official powers such as social workers. The conflation of EHE with safe-guarding is still – despite substantial numbers, in the millions, of home educators existing – a global problem (see Eddis 2007), with a case with connections to parental choice about home education of a child being taken into care happening in 2010 in Sweden (Johanssons 2010) and political asylum being granted in the USA to a German family on the grounds that they were being persecuted and threatened with the removal of

their children into care (Moore 08/03/10; Frean 24/03/10). These matters are further discussed and elucidated throughout the thesis and appear prominently in the data.

With the introduction of statutory guidelines to Local Authorities in 2007 showing signs that EHE was, after a fashion, an accepted feature of the educational landscape (DCSF 2007), it would be expected that improvements in England in relation to conflation of EHE with safeguarding were in place. As this thesis will hopefully show, EHE as a concept is taking a long time to be understood.

Despite various government commissioned enquiries and reviews since 2006 (Kendall and Atkinson 2006; Hopwood et al. 2007; Atkinson et al. 2007) home education is still disadvantaged as legal educational practice by interpretations of the law and calls – perhaps a need? - for better definitions of aspects of its legal possibility. Involved in the Badman Review was a call for a review of the terms 'suitable and efficient' education, with reference to EHE (see page 55). This is because case law offers broad definitions of the terms that have been used to circumscribe understanding of what EHE is or ought to be but these definitions require conceptual understanding of EHE as practice, if interpretations by local authorities and others are not to involve a conceptual dispute with home educators (Badman 2009, pg 5-10). The reasons for such disputes are highlighted in the data in chapter 5 in particular, and hopefully set within an explanatory framework, in terms of Kuhnian incommensurability, in chapter 6.

In 2009, it was clear that conceptual problems relating to EHE persist, with the announcement and publication of the Badman Review (Badman 2009). Those in England with an understanding of the concept of EHE witnessed the extent to which suspicion and ignorance about home education persisted. A failed attempt (aborted before the 2010

General Election) to introduce registration and monitoring systems for EHE that used a framework of investigation linked to safe-guarding issues, caused tremendous controversy for their insensitivity with regard to EHE as a legal choice. The Badman review started with an implied – if unintentional - call to distrust EHE parents on the grounds that they were operating educationally beyond the long arm of regulation and might be abusing their children or forcing them into early marriage (Frean 20/01/09).

The conduct and presentation of findings of the Badman Review were criticised in a subsequent House of Commons Select Committee review (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009), suggesting lessons ought to be learnt. However, the continuing and misguided conflation of EHE *as education* with welfare issues continues with EHE seen as a possible way to hide child abuse. This situation has emerged despite rhetoric that 'parents are the prime educator within or outside of a schooling system' (Badman 2009, pg 2-3).

The Badman Review of 2009

It is now important to focus in more detail on the Badman Review as a context for discovery of EHE. As previously mentioned, this 'independent' review by Graham Badman, former head of children's services at Kent County Council, conducted on behalf of the government, aimed to address concerns within government circles about EHE being used as a 'cover for abuse' (Frean 20/01/09). From the start the manner of the review (objected to by home educators on grounds of spurious, injurious assertions) and execution (objected to on grounds of haste) was controversial. This review set out to consider the question of

regulation and monitoring of EHE in the light of fears that children were being kept without appropriate socialisation opportunities, were not being sufficiently and effectively educated in a full-time manner, or were being abused in some way, under the pretext of being home educated. Specific concerns included that the law, as it then stood, disabled local authorities from making appropriate checks. This was outlined in relevant guidelines (DCSF 2007) which made clear that entrance into the family home and the right for authorities to demand to see the child/ren being home educated was outside of the law. The review set out to establish 'a balance between the rights of the parents and the rights of the child' (Badman 2009, pg 3).

Following publication of the review in June 2009, there was a significant negative reaction on the part of home educators. Academic contributors to the review itself also criticised it for its lack of robustness and 'populist' pandering (e.g. Conroy 2009). The Commons Select Committee for Children, Schools and Families investigated the way in which the review was managed and the robustness of quantitative data that was used to come to the recommendations in the review report. The UK home education community seemed to go into full gear to try and thwart, in particular, the recommendations to register on a yearly basis (dependent on the LA's permission to do so), the LA to have legal right of entry to the family home and the interviewing of children without a parent present. They saw these recommendations as especially intrusive but were generally distraught about the manner, timing, conclusions and recommendations of the review as a whole. Whilst there was a significant minority in the home education community who made themselves very loudly heard in protest through various tactics, the fact that normal submissions to a consultation, post-review, are said to be in the region of 100 and this review's consultation took over

5,000 submissions, gives an indication of the generalised wide extent of the response and of the level of concern.

For the purpose of this thesis' focus on discovery, two aspects of the review stand out: firstly, there was no *explicit* detailed consideration of the significance of rising numbers of those home educating, from any standpoint, although a loose figure of between 40-80,000 home educated children was suggested (Badman 2009, pg 22). It is clear from various reports by home education groups and EHE research that numbers of home educators are increasing. Rising numbers of home educators are, of course, connected to discovery of EHE.

Secondly, it seemed from the emphasis on home education as a possible threat, 'abusive' scenario and scene of possible educational neglect, that the review process wanted to, or was not afraid to, 'blacken the name' of home education. Certainly, as soon as the review was announced, *all* newspaper articles about EHE in England changed in tone. There were, subsequent to the Badman Review debacle, few positive media articles on EHE as a 'wonderful' way for education to happen, which had been the consistent tone of newspaper articles prior to Badman (see below). It is therefore of interest now for us to consider the context of discovery of EHE through the media in greater detail.

The media's relationship to EHE

As a result of some of the presentations by government to the media of EHE as a potential site of various forms of child abuse, the media picked up on a good deal of the claims made

about possible links to EHE as abuse to create a picture of EHE as destructive and detrimental to the well-being of children. This is a stark contrast to the various media reports that preceded the Badman Review, when EHE was almost universally painted as an interesting, beneficial and possible educational modality and option (Phillips 13/08/04; Blair 24/02/07; Rogers 26/06/05; Argument 27/02/07).

Interestingly, although it is suggested here that the Badman Review's negativity had an impact on discovery of the possibility of EHE by parents because of the negative media copy it generated, it was perhaps not in the direction of a move away from seeing EHE as an option, rather the opposite. According to informal reports from EHE charities shared with the present author in both 2009 and 2010, regarding the negative headlines, awareness and enquiries about EHE were augmented on days and during periods when even negative media reports such as 'Children educated at home twice as likely to be known to social services select committee told' (Shepherd 13/10/09) or 'Home-educated children 'four times as likely' to become NEETS as schooled peers' (Vaughan 16/10/09) were made. Such 'spiked' interest is linked to the appearance of media articles on given days and is not sustained in intensity for long. However, it does give credence to a phrase that was said to the present researcher by a member of an EHE charity when talking indirectly about discovery that because of this 'effect' it seems 'there is no such thing as bad publicity'. Another member said that enquiries to their information helpline are affected by media stories: "We always get a lot of enquiries when it's in the news". It was also confirmed again that the negativity involved in the Badman period was no obstacle to discovery:

Sophia: "Ironically there was an upsurge of interest because more people became aware that home education existed... paradoxically any publicity is good publicity in terms of raising awareness" (Sophia May 2010)

Discovery of EHE happens whatever is in the news and whatever the government does it seems, with interest towards discovery increasing via both good and bad publicity.

In fact, when it comes to discovery, increasing interest had been shown by the media itself as a 'discoverer' of EHE particularly since around 2004, when articles highlighting EHE in England showed a strong increase in volume. The reason for this year being the approximate starting point of a boom in media portrayals of EHE is not possible to gauge. It seems to have been generated from the news-worthy idea that EHE in England is 'a growing challenge to the system' (Cook 10/12/02). It is clear in the United States that 'the growth curve undoubtedly is increasing' (Apple 2007, pg 114) and the number of home schooled children has increased in recent years to past the mark of one million. (Stevens 2003a; Phillips 13/08/04; McDowell and Ray 2000), although there also the EHE movement has happened largely 'under the radar of the academic world' and 'monitoring of these students is also patchy' (Phillips 13/08/04). There is a sense that what happens in the USA (and its media) affects the UK (and its media). News of the boom in EHE numbers in America seems to have increased interest in England due to its 'shock factor'. This creates a phenomenon of 'snowballing' discovery, as discussed by Paula Rothermel (Rothermel 2003): as more and more people become aware of home education as a possibility, through exposure to these ideas and their legality in the media, more and more people seem to be choosing to home educate. This then creates news-worthy articles about increases in take-up of EHE practice, which itself further perpetuate a cycle of discovery, take-up and news.

As no one can know for sure how many children are being educated through EHE, the idea of its rapid growth is exciting as a media story. It also seems to have been some kind of convenient 'unusual' features filler in many publications, with articles between 2004 and 2009 often speaking in a strangely simplistic way of EHE as joyful and wonderful, with little analysis of wider or complex issues. Articles analysed between 2002-8 with discovery in mind, when it could be said that media coverage was unencumbered by demands to relay up to the minute news about legislation, overwhelmingly portray EHE as a successful alternative to schooling and include numerous comments from home educating parents about how EHE makes them and their children 'happy'. The overwhelming tenor of those stories was positive and sometimes glowing. Headlines such as: 'Education: Amazing what you learn in a kitchen' (Newlsy 20/04/03), 'A happy, fulfilled life free of school' (Barnes 24/02/07) and 'Top GCSE grades for boy taught at home' (Donovan 05/09/06) portrayed EHE as a magical 'find' for parents and their children. Individual journalists covering EHE stories seemed to be themselves finding it mysterious and fascinating, rather than 'just another' form of education. Such 'reverential and rather romantic' media positivity as a phenomenon related to EHE has also been remarked upon by writers on EHE such as Michael Apple (Apple 2007) and by John Holt, the American pioneer of home education (Gaither 2008, pg 198). As we will see from data presented in chapters 5 to 7, this is possibly part of a common quasi-mystical 'effect' of the discovery of EHE.

Academic work to inform discovery?

Academic literature on EHE is split on the whole, between three mainly English *writing* geographic regions: North America and Canada, Australasia and Europe. Work on EHE is

multi-lingual, of course. Spanish language countries (Columbia and Spain for example) are beginning to actively emerge with some literature discussing EHE (i.e. Asociacion_Para_La_Libre_Educacion 2009). European countries such as France have a few published books (i.e. Martin-Rodriguez 2008). Even Germany has a few publications on EHE practice despite its status there as illegal (i.e. Lazan 2009). There is no doubt a substantial body of work in various languages other than English on EHE – especially European language countries, where home education is prevalent and discussed but mostly non-English language writing is tending to be for non-academic audiences, as with those publications just cited. Because of academic publishing contingencies creating English as a dominant language of discussion, much work debating national contexts is itself published in English (i.e. Spiegler 2003). Discussions of EHE (and thus any academic development of the concept) therefore tend to be limited to wealthier nations with ready cultural access to English as the dominant language of discussion.

This gives us some indication that not only is EHE classified at present as excluding street learning of the Delhi slums or peasant generational farming in rural China, but that by being located in industrialised, wealthy nations the current definition of EHE has two core features: it is home based (with the emphasis on a 'home' rather than a house) and it is bound to a standard of living which excludes third-world poverty. In this regard, EHE might be considered to be a modality of education that is secure and operationalizable only when a certain level of economic, educational and social capital is in place. Academic research does not discuss this overtly however, seeming to assume a westernised vision of the home as well as discussing issues seen through western eyes, using western arguments. Academic reactions and connections to EHE include analyses of racism (Levy 2009), outcomes for the

home educated (Webb 1989), legislation battles and the law (Tyler and Carper 2000; Petrie 1998), developing a 'home educator' persona (Safran 2008), the question of socialization (Medlin 2000), EHE and feminist issues (McDowell 2000; Sheffer 1995), transitions between EHE and MAS (Jackson 2007), the politics of home education and its regulation (Monk 2009; Cooper 2007; Monk 2004), EHE and special educational needs (Ensign 2000), the increasing take-up of EHE (Lyman 1998), the Local Authority relationship (Atkinson et al. 2007; Kendall and Atkinson 2006), EHE as a fundamental change in lifestyle (Rothermel 2003; Neuman and Avriam 2003), European EHE (Taylor and Petrie 2000; Petrie 1995; Beck 2002), communities of home educators (Stevens 2003a) and so on.

These are all substantially matters of concern regarding EHE which involve parents and others who might have discovered or be discovering EHE and who have money enough to be able to consider issues beyond basic nutrition and shelter. In this sense, academic work on EHE that might inform and create discovery of EHE has a certain, mostly English speaking affluent, audience. As we will see later discovery happens in many ways but it is worth noting that during the course of the data collection no-one amongst the participants cited an academic article on EHE as a source of discovery.

How many people in England have already discovered EHE?

As most EHE relevant academic writing makes plain, numbers of extant home educators are unknown. Because the law does not currently require registration of home educators, only those who had previously registered at a school or voluntarily register with their council are 'accounted' for (Hopwood et al. 2007). The Badman Review, with all its recourse to public

data, itself had to estimate wildly from a known number of around 20,000, guessing at around the 80,000 mark. Comparison of media articles between the years 2002-8 shows a not surprisingly similar lack of information about how many people home educate in the UK or England. Articles do not always state their sources, nor specify whether figures are for England or the UK (i.e. Vaughan 29/01/10), opting often to report casually without referring to authorised figures. The figures they give are variously: 12,000 to 84,000 (Cook 10/12/02), 85,000 (Peters 23/11/03), 10,000 to 150,000 (Holmes 12/04/03), 12,000 to 21,000 (Rogers 26/06/05), 170,000 (MacIntyre 05/02/05; Staff_Writer 29/07/04; Blair 30/07/04; France 17/04/05), 16,000 (Blair 24/02/07; Press_Association 23/02/07; Douglas 04/03/07), 7,400 to 34,400 (Jeffries 18/02/08; BBC_News 23/02/07), 34,000 (Henry and McClatchey 04/03/07), 7,000 to 35,000 (Hill 14/04/07), 40,000 (Davenport 26/06/08), 50,000 (Curtis 08/02/08; Blackhurst 21/06/08; Blinkhorn and Whitcroft 25/05/08; Shepherd 19/08/08; Cartledge 03/07/08; Smithers 19/06/08; Sack 05/07/06), 55,000 (Harris 28/10/07; Purves 01/10/07) 40,000 to 170,000 (Meikle 10/05/07), 100,000 (Tingle 14/09/07), 150,000 (Scott 02/07/06; Newlsy 20/04/03; Douglas 11/09/02; Argument 27/02/07).

As we can see the media's grasp on figures relating to EHE practice in the UK is as unreliable as government attempts. Nor does the home education community know with any certainty a close figure to the truth. Numbers for England alone are, in 2010, then not in any present way possible to state authoritatively. This situation is the same in all countries, with figures for North America being also an estimate at around 2 million (Kunzman 2009).

Academic writing on EHE over the past few years has displayed a somewhat (necessarily) repetitive recourse to comments about how a lack of formalised ability (through government

data for example) to ascertain exact numbers of those practising EHE means that only estimates can be made. This repetition, it is suggested, occurs in most articles because most articles either implicitly or explicitly suggest part of the rationale for their writing is a need to know about EHE more *because* of a rise in discovery. The following wording, with its emphasis on intelligent guesses or other means of trying to obtain 'close' to accurate numbers, is common phraseology, found in one form or another in most articles on home education issues:

> '...grown exponentially as a force in recent years, though accurate numbers are notoriously difficult to obtain... Under a Freedom of Information Act request, the UK television station Channel 4 uncovered local increases averaging 61 percent between 2002 and 2007.' (Conroy 2010, pg 330)

> 'Homeschooling is enjoying newfound legitimacy in Canada. Independent estimates suggest that homeschooled children represent nearly 1% of the student population (Bauman, 2002; Hepburn, 2001; Sokoloff, 2002), while homeschooling associations provide much more generous figures (e.g. http://www.life.ca/hs/).' (Davies and Aurini 2003, pg 63)

Obviously this situation of a lack of numbers relating to EHE creates current restraints on the 'scientific' accuracy of any attempts to discuss EHE and a concomitant embargo on quantitative discussions of discovery. A lack of known numbers in global EHE is becoming, with the increasing rise of practicioners, a significant issue not only for the ability of researchers to speak with validity regarding certain claims, but also is starting to highlight a need for numbers - at least for researchers - if research is indeed to help a wider audience to understand EHE and its rise better as an educational, social and political 'event', which would inevitably include dealing with government research bodies such as the Department

for Education, who at a conference presentation in 2010, suggested that 'numbers' rule when it comes to policy decisions (Bartholomew 2010).

Schools in England and EHE discovery

It is widely suggested that a decision to home educate comes about due to either dissatisfaction with school pedagogies, or lifestyle choice (involving alternative decisions about pedagogies) either for broadly humanistic or religious reasons (Rothermel 2002; Knowles, Marlow, and Muchmore 1992; Waal and Theron 2003; Davies and Aurini 2003). Increasingly the desire to escape forms of schooling as violence and oppression (see Harber 2004), is also given as a key rationale and as a 'reasonable' (Cartledge 03/07/08) reason to opt for escape from schools (Scott 02/07/06; Blackhurst 21/06/08; Villalba 2003).

Nevertheless, the picture of motivations for home educating in England is complex (Rothermel 2003; Morton 2010) and cannot be said to be solely a product of schooling as violence and failure, even where dissatisfactions with schooling dominate. Some emerging research suggests that for certain sectors of the home educating community – namely parents with children who have special educational needs – school failure to cater for their children's specific requirements in a school setting have created home education that is often not 'elective' in any sense, being forced on parents as a last resort (Parsons and Lewis 2010). The role of bullying in the discovery of EHE is also increasingly documented (Fortune-Wood 2005, 2007). Another emerging factor in EHE discovery which could be said to be non-elective, is parents who do not get a preferred school choice place and therefore decide that EHE is a better option for their children than a local authority allocated school. This

phenomenon of EHE discovery as a 'problem' in response to a school placement 'problem' was an anecdotal feature of the research data for the present study. Brief snap-shots emerged from stories told by some research participants about seeming worries on the part of politicians to do with disgruntled parents without a place at their preferred school thereby raising the EHE tally because of school lottery systems (such as operates by Brighton and Hove local authority). Such stories were strengthened for the present writer in substance by an answer from a researcher presenting at the British Educational Research Association conference 2010 on school choice advisors (Exley 2010). The researcher stated that in the course of her research some school choice advisors have noted that parents are suggesting EHE as an alternative to schools offered by authorities which parents deem unacceptable. This phenomenon needs further research.

Negative, excuse and positive discovery

Is then non-elective EHE discovery a form of negative discovery? Where non-elective discovery happens, it seems that eventually most parents adapt and find benefits in EHE practice (Parsons and Lewis 2010). Therefore, it cannot be said that being 'forced' into EHE by forms of school failure is necessarily a bad thing for either parents or children. It is not therefore negative but perhaps more involuntary. There is however a growing awareness of certain specific and deeply unfortunate situations that involve discovery of EHE as negative. This thesis focuses on what the data shows to be overwhelmingly positive experiences of discovery of EHE, each for its own unique reasons. These positive experiences are all within positive scenarios: families who care for one another; people who are relatively healthy,

happy and reasonably financially solvent. What however has also been happening in recent years are isolated instances where EHE has been in the media spotlight as a source of 'negative discovery'. The Birmingham, UK based Kyra Ishaq case, which saw media attention during the period 2008 – 2010 (Radford 2010; Glendinning 28/05/08) is a case in point. In this case, the discovery of 'home education' was (indirectly) consistently reputed to be a factor contributing to the child's death: the partner of the child's mother somehow discovered that home education meant in law that children did not have to attend school and that the connected state of the law was such that unwelcome visits into the home from inspecting social workers was also prohibited; a point of fact with which he seems to have been well acquainted (Mrs_Justice_King Friday 6th March 2009). Seemingly, he passed this information on to the mother (Radford 2010, pg 53) who chose to verbally state to the school and others that she was home educating her children. It does appear that she did not actually directly deregister her children from the school, but unusually instead in a letter to Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (Radford 2010, pg 52). When the home education of the Ishaq children was inspected by the Birmingham 'education otherwise' (*not to be confused with the 'Education Otherwise' charity*) inspection team for regulation of EHE, a show of books and a room arranged to look like a 'school room' seems to have been enough for the inspection team to agree that an appropriate education was taking place. This judgement was subsequently criticised in the Serious Case Review as a lack of 'professional curiosity' (ibid, pg 58).

Without going further into this case, which is outside of the remit of this thesis, two factors stand out: firstly, the discovery of EHE was in fact not discovery in the profound sense of a life event and a journey into another world of education and lifestyle - as highlighted in the

data of this thesis, outlined in chapter 5 - but was instead an extreme and dark form of 'excuse discovery' which we will call here 'negative discovery' to delineate it from other forms of 'excuse discovery' discussed below. This is a negative form of discovery of EHE that has nothing to do with EHE practice: which is as we will see later a full and life-changing discovery that has to do with a deep commitment to an educational way of life and being that is other from the mainstream. It was instead a discovery that *related solely to the legal framework* connected to EHE practicing status and not to any other aspect of this educational choice such as community networks, educational philosophies and styles, reading and research undertaken, charity support groups and internet forums joined etc. In the Khyra Ishaq story, *no real aspects* of EHE practice have come out of the coverage of this case. They are entirely absent, despite as a minimum of common ground, commonalities of lack of co-operation with authorities that can be seen in many cases of genuine EHE practice (Eddis 2007). Something else was going on there. Despite strong ties to EHE being implied in both the serious case review (Radford 2010), court case account (Mrs_Justice_King Friday 6th March 2009) and various media reports (e.g. Shepherd 27/07/10), there was more to do in this case with an abuse of the law for the sake of perpetrating child abuse than with extant EHE practice (see Thomas and Pattison 28/07/10, for an eloquent defence). This case is a prime and extreme example of *negative discovery* of EHE: it involves harm to a child, no care about what EHE is or means as an alternative educational pathway and aggravating factors such as the use or excuse of the law to avoid contact with officials. In the context of this thesis' consideration of discovery of EHE as a personal event in the self, it is outside of the framework created here of what discovery of EHE means, having no identifying features according to that framework, characteristics of which are discussed in chapters 5 to 7.

Such dark 'negative discovery' aside, it can be noticed that less sinister 'excuse discovery' is another form of discovery outside of this thesis' theoretical framework of what EHE discovery is or can be. Such 'excuse discovery' is where parents 'discover' EHE as a way to avoid fines and prison threats. Such discovery generally happens of course as a part of the larger picture of genuine discovery via discovery factors such as word of mouth, TV and print media coverage, although in these cases, some unusual circumstances of discovery surface that could be called 'irregular'. Whilst some parents claim EHE and deregister their children from school when they are being challenged by Education Welfare Officers (EWO), some are, it is suggested, perhaps even offered a pre-typed deregistration form by a council official (BBC_News 30/03/07). There seems to be no contemporary research on such matters. However, normal practice is that an EWO can and does suggest to certain parents with children out of school for truancy or in the case of Travellers sometimes work (Bhopal and Myers 2009), that unless they send or ensure their children go to school, they will personally face the consequences as legally responsible for the child's education through fines and possible imprisonment. When such parents claim EHE practice, it might seem as though the legal 'loophole' that applied in the Ishaq case to allow avoidance of contact with such officials is being invoked: parents who claim home education is being undertaken create a different set of legalities applicable to them from a parent's 'child-truancy' relationship with the Education Welfare Service (EWS). Thus, with an EHE claim the parents can enjoy legal protection for what was previously considered 'truancy' within an EWS remit and need only be concerned with home education inspection, which is on the whole minimal in comparison and open to various discussable interpretations. A claim of EHE is, as the Badman Review highlighted, more difficult - as a legal atmosphere within which to manoeuvre - if EWO wish to pursue parents for what they see as inadequate proof

of an appropriate education taking place. We see perhaps in the existence of 'excuse discovery' of EHE a clearer picture of why the law regarding home education has been sought to be tightened. This thesis of course defends the rights of even such parents to claim home education (via formal deregistration), imbued as this text is with a background in research literature that offers schooling as something that one might wish to escape by any means legal given its often darker side (Block 1997; Harber 2009; Olson 2009). It is hoped that the present research might also highlight why there are many visions and viewpoints on an educational situation of truancy, such that it might be a sane and rational response rather than something meriting punitive action (Carlen, Gleeson, and Wardhaugh 1992). For this reason, excuse discovery is a fascinating area, requiring further research. Whilst 'negative' and 'excuse' discovery are complex arenas of interweaving issues, which in their fullest treatment lie outside the focus of this thesis on the more personal stories of 'positive' EHE discovery, it is important to make a distinction between different kinds of discovery of EHE. If this distinction is not made, the consequence is the kinds of negative press coverage and potentially even policy (Shepherd 27/07/10) that follows extreme examples of EHE 'discovery' not even connected to what is actually signified by the term EHE as 'elective' home education. Reportage and policy focusing on the reality of EHE as positive elective practice, where the idea of genuine motivations to home educate as a fully understood and reflective choice apply, becomes a damaged side issue.

Another reason for a need for a distinction to be made is in consideration of the second issue of concern with regard to the Khyra Ishaq case in particular: the way in which EHE has been picked up by 'populist anxieties' (see Conroy 2010) as a site of potential abuse of children. The astonishing innuendo to which, in particular, media coverage, of EHE has resorted at times is disturbing - one example will suffice amongst many:

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'Labour proposed a system of registration to monitor home schooling, which affects up to 80,000 children. Parents resisted it, and the Tories sided with them, not kids at potential risk. Education Secretary Michael Gove claimed that registration would "stigmatise" home educating parents. Not if they're doing the job properly, it wouldn't. What have they got to fear?' (Routledge 30/07/2010)

Subsequent to negative discovery stories, calls for new regulations have served to show a number of interesting factors connected to discovery of EHE with regard to the ignorance and lack of information 'informing' media copy and official attitudes connected to EHE. As discovery of EHE is happening to a significant extent (the interviews will suggest this, as does common sense about how most people are informed regarding 'news' and 'new' ideas) through the media, it follows that discovery of EHE is often based on poor or partial information and that this situation has not been helped by the Badman Review.

Aware of the media furore concerning EHE and home educators themselves that arose out of the conduct of the Badman Review, more care was called for by the Select Committee Enquiry:

'The way in which the Department has handled the Badman review has been unfortunate— from the way in which it framed the review, through to its drafting of legislation prior to publication of the related consultation findings. We trust that the Department will learn from this episode as it takes forward other such reviews in future.' (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009, pg 4)

Subsequent to the Badman Review, many comments about home educators feeling burnt out, bruised and exhausted were posted on EHE internet forums. There was also a great deal of anger throughout the Review period on the part of home educators. Many of them seem to have considered this Review as a 'darkness', which suggests an unfortunate conflation in the Review agendas - in terms of discovery - between those 'discoveries' of EHE that bring 'light' (as discussed by the interview participant Pippa, for example; see page 157) to families and those that are negative.

Government information about EHE: the status quo

The UK government (as it relates to England) is well aware of the historical precedents within England of and for EHE practice as legal and socially embedded practice. It is clear that attempting to prohibit EHE altogether would be met with significant opposition on grounds of civil liberties within a democracy and implications that would be too weighty for other areas of statute. The Badman review was careful to clarify that the right to home educate would not be interfered with (Badman 2009, pg 8). Despite such 'support' for EHE, the support is not and has never been *active*.

From the perspective of consideration of discovery as a parental 'right' to information as a part of state choice advise provision, EHE is not 'advertised' in any way, especially not in the same way that school attendance is promoted. Statutory guidance to local authorities

merely suggests providing information on home education is necessary for local authorities to fulfil their duties:

> 'The DCSF recommends that each local authority provides written information about elective home education that is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position, roles and responsibilities of both the local authority and parents. This information should be made available on local authority websites and in local community languages and alternative formats on request.' (DCSF 2007, pg 5)

In a letter sent 25th May 2009, by the present researcher to Ed Balls, then Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, the following question was posed:

> 'Do you think that parents of children of school starting age are fully informed by the State of home based education as a viable and valid form of educational choice, that they could consider when deciding how to approach their child's education?'

The reply, dated 19th June 2009, from an aide to Ed Balls, Claire Stephenson, states:

> 'We have made no assessment of the extent to which parents feel fully informed about their right to educate their children at home. In the guidelines for local authorities that we published in November 2007 about home education we recommended that they provide written information and website links that inform parents about their right to home educate.'

There is then a disparity between what is legally viable as an educational choice and what is known because what is known needs to be *discovered*. This is not the case with schooling. This means that discovery of EHE is entirely the responsibility of parents, which suggests an attitude on the part of the government towards EHE as being an educational option that they do not actively endorse. What this situation clarifies – if clarification were needed- is that the current state 'version' or 'vision' of education is schooling.

Confusion and misinformation

The statutory guidelines for local authorities, published in 2007 by the then 'Department for Children, Schools and Families' offer advice about EHE assessments:

> 'Local authorities should recognise that there are many approaches to educational provision, not just a "school at home" model.' (DCSF 2007, pg 5)

Despite these clear guidelines about the 'attitude' needed to be taken by the authorities towards EHE, a look at various local authorities' websites, where information about home education is provided, shows that some local authorities do not necessarily understand EHE in line with DCSF recommendations. Coventry City Council is one example of an urban region dealing with a concentrated population, where home educators practice. Coventry has been chosen here to look at in some detail because it is the present writer's current home town and the only place from which she was entitled to obtain the local authority literature referred to was Coventry. It is also considered a fairly standard town, with no extraordinary features such that they would need to be taken into account and has furthermore commonalities with much of the rest of England in terms of its demographic features. Coventry provides all home educators known to the local authorities with a questionnaire to be filled out. This sets forth a timetable, a table for listing resources (in line with National Curriculum subjects), boxes to tick for monitoring record keeping, a section for filling out what the child is expected to learn during the coming twelve months and so on. Whilst some families find this 'assessment' approach useful, others home educate in an autonomous way which is antithetical to such 'assessment' (see Doll 1993, pg 172).

The approach and attitude shown in Coventry City Council's desired relationship with home educating parents does not *officially* admit of knowledge on their part of any form or modality of education other than a formal schooling modality; it does not include the conceptual, theoretical or practical possibility for autonomous style home education (Thomas and Pattison 2007; Bergeron 2009) to be valid within the framework it offers for a 'suitable' and 'efficient' education to take place in EHE. This phrasing of an appropriate education being 'suitable' and 'efficient' (and full-time) comes from Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and was focused on in the Badman Review as not being 'defined in law' (Badman 2009, pg 6). Whilst the attitude of local authorities does pay some lip service to the idea that 'there are many approaches to educational provision' (DCSF 2007, pg 5), by suggesting to *all* home educating parents that they fill in a timetable sheet, it also shows a lack of understanding of EHE as an *alternative* educational modality. None of this is news to home educators, some of whom, in their desperation at poor quality local authorities intervention and 'support' and background knowledge of the fulsome variants of educational modes employed in EHE, have even published on line at the time of writing a hall of shame and fame to inform home educators of who in local authorities' EHE teams deserves interacting with or avoiding (Matt 2010).

Comments by home educators during the Select Committee's Badman Review Enquiry about local authority officials' interactions also indicate that home educators find a lack of appreciation on the part of some officials of the different modalities in play in EHE, as a problem for that interaction. Despite the 2007 guidelines (DCSF) asking local authority officials to be aware of the differences of modality, problems are easily identified:

'Some of the parents present recounted difficult dealings with their local authority... One family commented that most local authority officers who staff home education teams have come through the school system, have often worked in that system, and typically have no knowledge of home education.' (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009, pg 60)

'Schoolhouse', the Scottish EHE organisation, noted continuing awareness of this problem a year later:

'too many parents are still being routinely misinformed by their local authorities... Local authorities are accountable to parents on behalf of their children, not the other way around. It is therefore disappointing to note the ongoing reluctance of some public servants to provide parents with accurate information about the law relating to home education in Scotland, or even to direct them to the government's guidance which makes it clear where the responsibility for children's compulsory education lies.' (Schoolhouse 6 September 2010).

As we will see later, the intractable differences of modality between schooling and EHE pose problems that are far too significant to be solved by a line of government guiding advice. As will be suggested later in Chapter 6, if discovery of the alternative modality of EHE has not been *personally* experienced as an entrance into a new way of thinking, it seems issues of incommensurability of communication, interventions and interaction will persist between those officially charged with monitoring and regulating EHE practice and the practioners themselves. This all suggests that discovering EHE through council websites is not likely to lead to much in the way of a different kind of education from a school based national curriculum. At least not at first... (see Thomas 1998, pgs 5-11).

Inaccurate discourse

Apart from an inaccurate *attitude* on the part of some officials and the media, home educators are having to deal with false and misleading *information*: inaccuracies that support a schooling paradigm as the sole educational modality of validity abound, such as the following text, again from Coventry City Council's website:

> 'If your child has never been to school, you do not have to take any action prior to starting home education but the LEA should be informed of your decision so that the home education arrangements can be monitored.' (Coventry_City_Council 2010)

The exact same text appears on the Newcastle City Council website (Newcastle_City_Council 2010). This is a commonly occurring example of discourse that is out of step with the actual spirit of the law in 2010, as set out in the present DCSF guidelines:

> 'Parents are not required to register or seek approval from the local authority to educate their children at home.' (DCSF 2007, pg 5)

There is clearly a training issue here which was clarified to be a problem by the Select Committee's response to the Badman Review after speaking with a number of witnesses on both sides of the 'Badman' fence (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009). However, given that local authorities are charged with being accurate sources of information for the public, there is also a need for national standardisation of *accurate* information: Coventry or Newcastle are likely to be just a couple of examples amongst many others who fail to provide accurate factual information regarding EHE based on the actual relevant law.

Official 'silence' about educational alternatives to schooling

Whilst there is certainly not 'radio silence' about EHE in this country there is, in 2010, a strange state of affairs. People are 'doing it for themselves' when it comes to discovering EHE, yet those who opt for schooling provision are helped from early years through to school leaving age.

Prior to the Badman period, information about EHE which was contributing to the discovery of EHE as an educational possibility happened largely on the 'free market' of media decisions about what made a good story. What is clear is that such stories fuel an increase in discovery due to the information they themselves provide but also increase demands for further information of a nature that could be argued falls within the remit of government. Such a situation raises serious questions about the relationship of the state to educational modalities that fall outside a MAS model.

As we have seen in above sections, the state is not taking *active* responsibility for helping parents interested in understanding EHE as alternative educational provision. Because of the rise of discovery, EHE charities are remarking that they are finding an increase in enquiries for information about EHE and the charity member spoken with also suggested that they are acting as some kind of in-depth educational and sometimes even personal counselling service. A comment by a leading charity member concerned with EHE, highlights the problem:

> Sophia: "Some people now haven't got the same 70's idea. They are just: 'Tell me where the action is!' like someone else will do it. There's a culture clash sometimes. They might have a lot of baggage about how badly things went at school... We say to them: 'when you see the person from the council it might be

strategically best to not go on for ages about how you were badly treated by the school...'" (Interview, May, 2010)

See also interview transcript with Leanne on page 196.

As we will see in the data in Chapter 5, the extent to which the rise in discovery of EHE is posing an urgent need for a renewed appreciation of EHE as an educational option, taken up by parents as tax-payers, is of interest with regard to the making of future policy and is of concern for future research. Any such renewed appreciation will need to take into account the role of research experts of EHE in helping to formulate suitable attitudes and approaches to EHE policy and designing EHE appropriate research models. This would be a development on the attitude of Graham Badman towards EHE research, which dismissed much extant research on the grounds of bias (Badman 2009, pg 36) showing in the process a lack of understanding of EHE as a research field.

EHE as educational provision doesn't *officially* exist

A typical example of official silence regarding EHE as educational option is found in the copy of Coventry City Council's hard copy brochure sent through the post to all parents of new school-age children. It makes no mention of elective home education as an option. It has school-based options and advice but has no information on alternative pedagogical approaches (Coventry_City_Council 2009)b). This brochure is the only public agency information sent to such parents regarding educational choice. In making an enquiry in August 2010 about why Coventry City Council send out information about schooling but not

EHE as an educational option, the admissions officer responded that it is information about *schools*. So why then is the title 'Primary Education in Coventry', and not 'Primary Schooling in Coventry'? Whilst the admissions officer's response is fair with regard to what is required by councils in terms of information dissemination about schools, following the schools admissions code, a lacuna remains within which EHE is found: is there an *educational* options code that councils must abide by? Why are they not under any obligation to provide *educational* choice advice to home educators? Or, more broadly, why are councils not charged with advising on a range of educational options legally open to parents? Why are only those parents who send their children to schools entitled to education choice advice? The effect created is again, of course, to give and maintain the impression that education for children of around 5 to 11 years of age in Coventry in 2009 is school-based. Creating this default 'understanding' forecloses education, turning it into a falsehood: that education is one – formal schooling - modality.

EHE information for discovery: a public service?

The lack of any campaign on the part of the state regarding the possibility of EHE as an educational option raises important questions and issues. Amongst these is: do tax payers have a right to be made aware by the state of various choices regarding educational *modality*, location and philosophy for their children, in the same way that NHS patients are offered a choice of hospitals when they need to book an appointment? National truancy levels are at an all time high with a government report in March 2010 of a 44% increase since Labour came to power in 1997 (DCSF 2010a). Not only that, but 'the number of parents prosecuted over their children's truancy has soared to 9,506 in 2008 from 1,961 in 2001 (Shepherd

25/03/10). Bullying levels in schools are also far from minor, with over half (54%) of children in a DfES and Childline survey saying they thought bullying in schools was an issue, adding also that it was a 'big problem' (Oliver and Kandappa 2003). Given such challenges, ought EHE to be given as *a positive option* that is available through government funded advice centres and if not, why not? Is it wrong to discover EHE in such circumstances? Although evidence was given during the Select Committee's enquiry into the Badman Review by Local Authority officials, condemning Head-teachers as irresponsible who suggest to parents of children facing exclusion or similar difficulties that EHE is an option, is it really such bad advice? Why is this advice seen as outside of the responsibility of a Head-teacher? Participants in the street survey of this study showed both sides of the opinion divide: some thought that 'such' parents should not be told about EHE because they are 'bad' people of some kind. Others expressed a desire for Head-teachers to offer information about EHE as an option in cases where there are difficulties with school; one woman said "it could be a recommendation" (Respondent 32) and had no problem with the idea that an educational professional would share with her knowledge of various educational options for her child and for her as a parent with responsibility in law for the child's education. So why does the government maintain a stance which is anti-information? This stance is a clear context for the discovery of EHE.

Conclusion

As we can see, contexts for the discovery of EHE are politically, socially, legally and personally complex and wide-ranging. Moreover perceptions of EHE play a large part in

determining both discovery and the information that might lead to discovery but perhaps in surprising ways. It is clear that dissatisfactions with schooling – for whatever reasons – are a key factor in discovery, if only because discovery keeps happening whatever the profile EHE publically has. Issues around school dissatisfactions are further discussed as 'school exit' factors in the next chapter. Ascertaining a clear path through the various contexts of discovery is no easy task. Understanding what is right and wrong about discovery is difficult. This thesis sets the context for 'genuine' discovery within positive family scenarios. As we have seen however in this chapter, discovery of EHE by families blessed with positive features is still a challenge for them because discovery of EHE remains a socially and politically problematised act (if no longer legally) in ways which manifest as unnecessary forms of theoretical and potentially practical interference. The difficulties of discovering EHE are not, it seems, a problematisation inherent to EHE practice itself as a necessary feature for its healthy development.

It does seem that official understanding of EHE needs improvement and in order to achieve that appropriately, more respect for those whose personal and professional lives involve significant contact with EHE is required. A fresh look at education as a state provision, to mean not *just* schooling, is open to national active debate and challenge. Such debate is long overdue and would improve understanding of educational alternatives. As we will later see, in the data, there is dissatisfaction with the current status quo of MAS and also of MAS as the only state 'offered' option. Much can be done – if the willingness is there – to recast education as a parental responsibility and a state function that is modal in nature: involving both MAS and AEM practice. It would seem that where discovery of EHE is concerned, a rebalancing of priorities, understandings, policies and proposals in required. Whatever the

case, regarding renewal or lack of change, discovery of EHE seems unhindered and grows exponentially whatever the weather. We will see in chapters to come how and why that might be facilitated and how it actually happens, with or without government assistance.

CHAPTER 3: THE ROLE OF DISCOVERY IN RELATION TO EHE (AND DSM), IN EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Introduction: a new attitude to education?

The world is fast changing (Giddens 2000). With it come a number of challenges. Key to the present thesis on discovery of EHE (and DSM) is the idea that the 'enthralled'-to-MAS mindset (Robinson 2010) that once expected and accepted MAS as education, might be itself changing along with global developments. There is a new 'trend' that is in tune with the idea of people educationally 'doing it for themselves' which is termed 'co-production'. This is a new theme in public policy research; a phrase coined to capture new ways in which various social phenomenon are operating (Boyle and Harris 2009), and is, it seems, at the heart of the Coalition government of 2010's 'big society' policy ideas. 'Co-production' is seen as having 'arrived in the UK' (ibid, pg 3) as a new way for public services to function and as also a new mentality. This new sensibility for self-regulated control can be seen in varying sectors: television shows which demand and receive audience vote-in participation and thereby actively change the nature of the television (Harkin 20/11/08; Lawson 20/11/08), media articles published online that solicit reader 'comments', the proliferation of 'Weblogs', 'wikis' and even websites, the use of 'people-power' to design created products (Sample 24/11/07), or personal 'In Control' budget schemes for healthcare or elderly care (Duffy 30/01/08; Revill 09/12/07); and even devices designed to operate and function off the

physical movements of individuals such as their heartbeat or dancing, to create kinetic power, (McKie 30/11/08). The ways in which an individual is being asked to be 'empowered' are growing.

This is not always seen as an unmitigated boon, with questions being raised about the extent to which individuals might be being taken for granted as free labour or to reduce the cost of the welfare state, for example (Henley 15/04/10). 'Activism', or people taking action into their own hands, is also gaining ground (Vidal 23/11/07): to rally to ensure other 'ordinary' people stand up for their beliefs with collection action is becoming 'fashionable' and perhaps even expected. As one pertinent example, in the wake of the Badman report and fears of its implementation, a group of home educators demonstrated publically with a protest march in London in September 2009 (Sugden 14/09/09), although, of course, protest demonstrations are not new. It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss in greater depth this interesting situation of 'co-production' elements in society and what it means for the future of both society and also inevitably education. However, extending the focus of this situation of 'co-production' briefly into the educational realm shows some interesting activities pertinent to EHE discovery. What the following considerations show us is that the empirical and theoretical context for EHE (and DSM) discovery is complex and diverse in its affects, sources and solutions to problems.

Educational DIY?

For some time in rural areas of developing countries, people are taking it upon themselves to start schools, which even the poorest can afford, because they have decided (even illiterate

parents) that state educational provision is inadequate (Tooley 2009; Bray and Lillis 1988).

The Conservative party, in the run-up to the 2010 election promised as part of their election manifesto 'free schools' that parents could start with state funding should those parents decide there was a need. A recent drive to promote school councils, whilst failing to secure compulsory legislation, has seen an emphasis on student voice relatively new to the last ten years. Students are being consulted, as part of good practice, in the recruitment of new teachers (Barker 07/12/07). All of these new initiatives, taken for and by parents and students in schools, are recent changes of attitude connected to schooling provision, parallel to 'co-production' scenarios in other areas of society, mentioned above. A major factor of this new 'democratic' seeming ethos is its nature as a product of the internet, which has irrevocably changed the world towards rapid proliferation of such attitudes (see for example Copenhagen_Futures_Institute 2009). The impact of the internet is seen also in new forms of web-based education such as virtual schools through home computers (Harris 28/10/07) and new technology experiments with virtual worlds creating dedicated educational 'islands' in web 2 environments such as Second Life, where old rules of desks, chalk and talk and top-down hierarchies of power do not apply (Twining 2007).

The context of these changing modalities of the experience and interaction of people with the world is affecting drastically, it is suggested, the *conceptual* possibilities for people to discover AEM and especially EHE. However, in terms of really understanding the radical democratic difference of modality that EHE and DSM presents, a long way is needed to go before the concepts of freedom inherent to EHE (and DSM) are prevalent in society. As the leading member of the home education charity already mentioned remarked in an interview with the present writer:

Sophia: "[people calling the charity for first-time information about EHE]...they are saying the same thing over and over again. People can't get over the idea that nobody is watching you and nobody is telling you what to do. People can't get their heads around it." (Sophia April 2010)

Thus discovery of EHE is not just luck or chance but is also a learning curve, depending – as previously discussed – on the extent to which 'genuine' discovery happens. As we will further see in the interview data where many of the participants were 'believers' in home education and some were established and experienced home educators, 'genuine' discovery of EHE is complex and personally involving. It is also an entrance into a world of self-regulated independence and educational DIY.

A special role for the internet in discovery of EHE?

There is, it seems in 2010, little extant research on the special role of the internet in the lives of home educating families, although one study on support for home educators found that the internet played a large role (Atkinson et al. 2007) and there is recognition in the history of EHE in the USA of the internet's role in the rise in numbers (Gaither 2008) as well as understanding of the internet as a facilitator of networks (Apple 2007). More particularly there seems to be no research yet that focuses on the development of the internet in the subsequent rise of the discovery of EHE. Anecdotal evidence for this correlation abounds in casual comments in various home education website blogs, threads and other discussion spaces. Proof of such a tendency to inform about education through internet resources can be seen all over the world-wide web. An example of the kind of rationale that informs this trend is given here:

'New technology and rapid globalization have changed the way we think and act as individuals. As the power of the Internet grows, our ability to conduct research and to educate ourselves becomes more meaningful. Students worldwide are taking advantage of the resources available and using the information to mould the future success of their personal, academic and working lives...' (www.applyesl.com 2010)

The number of web sites dedicated to home education information supply and retrieval is tremendous. Well known internet sites for providing information to people who are based in England, wishing to discover EHE are very easy to find via browsers like 'Google'. This is a noticeable source of discovery in the data in Chapter 5.

The ease with which discovery of EHE now happens because of the internet is reflected in what is said to be the dates of web access becoming more mainstream. Ease of use of the internet could be said to have become socially mainstream through 'The People's Network' project when public libraries, in 2003, installed computers for library users to utilise via an in-house free for all booking service. This mass access to web-based information coincides in England with the proliferation of articles on the 'phenomenon' of home education: more articles appeared discussing home education from 2003/4 onwards than ever before. It is possibly too tenuous a link, given a present lack of in-depth research – to maintain true correlation between the rise in media articles (reporting the news-worthy phenomenon of rising numbers) and the emergence of the web with regards to this study of discovery, but there is no doubt that internet usage and the discovery of EHE have a relationship. This relationship is considered as a combination of a lack of active EHE-appropriate (i.e. *not* disappointing in its legal, philosophical or educational accuracy) information provision by government and a new social trend towards people 'doing it for themselves'. Casual comments made to this researcher by home educators and their numerous posts in blogs and forums on the web give rise to a strong understanding that internet technologies suit an EHE

paradigm: freedoms, flexibilities, difference through celebration of subjectivity and community interactional ease, all form part of how EHE functions as education and life-style, different from more rigid frameworks of living (Neuman and Avriam 2003). On the other hand, government devised 'brochures', information packs that dictate actions outside of their legal remit, using language incommensurable with EHE philosophies and practice (see DCSF 2010b, for a good example), all serve to alienate people looking for a 'world' away from a schooling mentality. The internet is perfect for people actively searching for new ways of doing things and such people are those who, according to the education charity mentioned, are committed to EHE discovery in its fullest sense as leading to long-term practice:

> Sophia: "The ones who stay [home educate in the long-term] are the ones who don't labour to get informed [only through EO] as they are already committed in deeper ways" (Sophia, April 2010)

There are issues with even this 'freedom' to discover EHE, which are to do with cultural capital. The charity member describes how many people calling their helpline not only do not have good internet access but more importantly have never received educational input suitable to be able to do the most basic of internet functions such as using a common browser:

> Sophia: "We have a lot of people making inquiries who don't have access to the internet... don't know how to Google..." (ibid)

Discovery of EHE then becomes a privilege, not a right or an opportunity, because of issues connected to social, economic and cultural capital. Education as schooling is universally *available* in England; EHE is not. Apart from operational issues such as work commitments,

etcetera, the *prima facie* reasons for this would appear to be issues connected to inequality in opportunity of discovery. This is reflected in the data, especially in the street survey.

Much has been said directly or indirectly about the reproduction of social inequality in and through a MAS setting (for example Reay 2001; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). What has not yet been adequately addressed in educational literature is the vast territory of inequality that permeates the choice towards alternative educational modes and educational equality *outside* and unlinked to a schooling system; even including its various remits such as absenteeism. Despite Rothermel's research, which showed that working class parents do take up EHE in significant numbers (Rothermel 2002; Rothermel 2003), there is still a disparity in discovery between 'classes' according to the street survey data discussed in chapter 5. Furthermore, little is currently known about differentials in long term outcomes for different backgrounds in and through EHE, although there are indications that differentials are smaller in home education (Rothermel 2002) than in school provision where disparities in achievement unfortunately match background, with the working class and disadvantaged coming off worst (Goodman and Gregg 2010).

Differences in levels of discovery between class groups seem to be linked to levels of cultural capital, at some *deep* level of inequality because, superficially, the various avenues of discovery of EHE showed that it is happening through broadsheets read by those supposedly high in cultural capital as well as women's tabloid-style magazines for those whose cultural capital is apparently more limited. This deep level disparity is shown in the street survey data in chapter 5, which shows a strong bias towards middle class (seeming) participants having greater levels of awareness and knowledge compared to working class (seeming) participants. As that data shows, there was a great deal of interest amongst the working class (seeming) participants to know more about EHE as an educational option and strong and

common vocalisation amongst them of a desire to be told more by educational authorities. What has also emerged from both anecdotal evidence and the street survey data is a tendency for some middle class people to think and feel that working class people should not know that EHE is an option. The reasons they give are generally that 'such' people would not do a good job. This is a disturbing finding, which not only bears out strong classist attitudes in society with regard to educational options, such as those highlighted by McCulloch (1998) and Willis (1981), but that these attitudes are still working against working class people even outside schooling as a concept, such that discovering EHE is more rare for this group than for the middle classes. The fact that some middle class participants' attitude was to not share information about EHE awareness, shows that keeping discovery of EHE on an informal, word-of-mouth basis is a class issue requiring redress through democratically minded equality of opportunity reflected in governmental policy. Given that the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is for human beings irrespective of class, with the emphasis therein in Article 26, section 3 stating that 'Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children' (General_Assembly_of_the_United_Nations 1948), class tensions in England around who should or should not know that EHE is a valid and legal option for the education of children, suggests a government failure. Where this human right *of choice* is not being delivered to all, greater government provided publicity towards the discovery of the concept of modal educational options could ease the matter.

A human right to discover EHE (and DSM)?

There are many complicated issues connected to the discovery of EHE (and DSM) which touch upon human rights issues, the interference or lack of support of the state, welfare of

children, socialisation, and the right to 'schooling' experience (in a MAS style). Areas where these issues are important, vibrant and current are within Traveller/ gypsy communities and the services that deal with them (Ivatts 2006; Warren 1991; Bhopal and Myers 2009), truancy (Carlen, Gleeson, and Wardhaugh 1992; Gilbert 21/10/09), school phobia (Fortune-Wood 2007; Pilkington and Piersel 1991; Yoneyama 2000), religious parenting (Kunzman 2009; Stevens 2003a), school violences against the person (Meighan 2004; Block 1997; Olson 2009; Harber 2009) and so on. In all of these issues one key element is common: human rights. The following example of the tensions involved illustrates the point: despite the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, Article 26.3, previously mentioned, clearly stating that 'Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children' (General_Assembly_of_the_United_Nations 1948), other aspects of the declaration such as Article 26.2 'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...' (ibid) mean that interpretation of the discovery of EHE is subject to different pressures. One English example would be the afore-mentioned situation where a parent who freely decides and chooses to avoid truancy fines and court case appearances because of the non-attendance of their child at school, and by deregistering their child under the law that covers EHE thereby avoids prosecution of any kind (at least for a while). This is an 'excuse' discovery scenario with regards to the thesis' description of 'genuine' EHE discovery as event: it is not a fully free choice and some kind of 'school' *may* actually be a preferred option. However, questions arise about the rights of such parents to discover a way out of difficulties with MAS (whatever they might be) and into other forms of education. Whilst such discovery perhaps starts as an 'excuse', it might emerge as fruitful and positive given time and it could be argued that such parents (and children) have a human right to EHE

discovery on these grounds. Extant research shows that a 'turn-around' of this kind is possible on the principle that identity and knowledge within EHE can evolve (Safran 2008; Parsons and Lewis 2010).

In other European countries a human right to discover EHE is ignored. Germany – and perhaps also now Sweden with recent introduction of new legislation – are key sites where a 'human right' to discover and practice EHE is an especially problematic question, due to the legal frameworks in these countries regarding EHE making it either illegal or very difficult to justify to the authorities (Reimer 2010; Villalba 2009). Thus, we see that where discovery is concerned, the idea of a human right to discover EHE (when schooling – MAS or DSM - is the only option on offer) *involves* the possibility of legal practice of EHE. A human right to discover EHE without the possibility of practice is not a right but an emptiness.

Deeper questions about the above mentioned issues of human rights and related matters connected to parental choice regarding educational provision need to be raised with regard to discovery of EHE (and DSM): who has the right to decide how, when and why discovery of EHE (and DSM) is acceptable? These philosophical questions, with their complicated relations to questions and debates outside of education, form part of a new terrain in the theory of education which addresses education not as an aspect of MAS, but that starts to outline forms and modalities of education which demand new theoretical foundations and 'rules of the game'. Education becomes in this new terrain not a matter of a human right to learning and teaching but of a human right to unlearning, de-schooling, no-teaching: in essence a kind of 'mu-education' (discussed on pg 18 and below), acting as a negation of previous discourse. 'Mu education' is linked, in this sense, to the theme of this thesis that 'education', as a term hegemonically conflated with the idea of MAS, is not applicable. What results is a 'term' that is both education but also not education 'as we know it': it is a

form of becoming through being educated that goes against a foreclosed understanding of education (as MAS) and reformulates our understanding of education into something more open because the dominance of MAS as education has been undermined.

Also, 'mu education' relates here to the thesis of this text that discovery of EHE and DSM is a discovery away from the world of education (as MAS) we assume will be discovered (in the form of this or that MAS school) and is a shift – a necessary 'shift', according to Ken Robinson (2010) - into a new educational world, through a gateless gate: discovery of such a fixed 'social' kind belonging to an easy binary logic of a = b is set aside. In educational 'discovery' terms the binary mentioned translates as education = being at school (or some other teaching and learning institution). Contrary and other from this binary is a non binary or 'fuzzy' logic which is so 'fuzzy' it makes no sense according to the binary premises of logic: in fact, a switch has occurred away from any form of logic. In *alternative* educational discovery terms this means that those who discover EHE and DSM do so despite and without the standard education as schooling conflation to aid them or direct them forward to a *given* destination. In fact, they are using an entirely different 'path' towards a 'gate' of discovery that is no gate. It is 'gateless' but, nevertheless, they pass 'through'. At the same time, there is nothing to pass through. The educational discovery of alternative education is not within a recognisable landscape of gates, doors, paths and buildings towards which one 'progresses' in a way recognizable as the present educational logic but is instead 'fuzzier' and the landscape is made up according to the individual's circumstances at the moment of perception. This is a new, 'tree-less' 'logic' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004), attributable to the epistemological and ontological premises of any form of education that does not coerce towards something predetermined (such as full-time school attendance) and which according to Biesta, following Rancière's methodology, is a logic of emancipation (Biesta 2010). Thus,

passing through a gate of discovery of EHE and DSM is possible because there is a vague picture that something is happening but, due to its nature, we cannot logically define what is happening and instead must rely on a new more intuitive and responsive kind of thinking to suggest that yes, discovery of education happens but cannot be defined as we define discovery of education as schooling. This raises interesting questions about the philosophical landscape of such 'mu education' and 'gateless' discovery. What would the theory of education that looks at such ideas and 'educational' questions look like? This is a significant new area of education (and its theory) for exploration. It comprises a number of emerging theoretical domains such as complexity theory (Davis and Sumara 2006), the relationship of continental thought to such 'mu' educational ideas and its epistemology and ontology (Olsen 2000) and, as will be discussed in chapter 7, the becoming of a self which subjects itself to a hermeneutics of the self rather than a hermeneutics of authority (Foucault 2005). Whilst largely outside the proper scope of this thesis – focusing as it does on a combination of issues encompassing both empirical and theoretical responses to discovery and the moment that signals that discovery has occurred – it is a territory deserving significant future exploration and especially so for its importance for human rights questions. Some aspects of these issues, key to the present thesis explorations, are considered in chapters 6 and 7.

Ignorance about EHE as inhumanity and dehumanisation

The problem of ignorance about EHE is widespread and serious when it involves agencies with significant power, peopled by staff who can change – and ruin - people's lives with a decision. The current author has herself encountered serious issues at first hand, with an

adoption service regarding potential adoptive parents who consider EHE as positive education as 'unorthodox' and the suggestion of EHE itself as a form of 'abuse' and a 'denial' of school attendance to an adopted child, on the grounds that children from the care system need school: a contestable claim which will deserve future research attention. Internet home education message boards abound with threads relating to the actions of social services, having received 'referrals' from Accident and Emergency hospital departments, when home educated children attend with broken bones after having had a fall. One of the participants for this study related that such an incident had occurred to her following an innocent remark by her child whilst attending a hospital appointment. The consequent attentions of social services focused strongly on her and her family as home educators. A 2010 newspaper article reported a family situation where social services moved to take away a couple's children because they did not eat meat or dairy products for health reasons; the fact that they home educated these children was a factor in the punitive attitude towards the family judged, again, as 'unorthodox' (Foggo 18/04/10). People are finding themselves embroiled in dangerous, painful and unnecessarily destructive battles with governmental powers because of widespread ignorance about EHE, such that it is a significant and unreported area of serious concern regarding the upholding of Article 26 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights mentioned above, to which the UK is a signatory. In this regard discovery of EHE can be damaging to one's family and one's well-being, such that those who have discovered it and understand it can pay a high price for their new and embraced knowledge in certain circumstances. This situation is not an ideological exaggeration but unfortunately a very real experience of too many people who have discovered EHE but must deal with those on the other side of the 'incommensurability bridge' (discussed in chapter 6) who have not. These difficulties require urgent research and

policy attention of a theoretical and legal nature. Were it properly challenged in a court of law, there is a strong possibility that what seems to be at present a hidden prevalence of ignorance about EHE would come properly to light and be appropriately denounced, just as other forms of prejudice such as racism, have been in the past. This possibility is seen in the wake of the successful High Court challenge made by Summerhill School against Ofsted in 1999, when they claimed that Summerhill – as a democratic school with a well known educational method of significant difference from MAS - was a failing school and deserved to be shut down (Grenyer 1999). Summerhill subsequently received a full vindication of its right to be educationally 'different' and to be judged according to a different framework of inspection from other schools (McCarthy 2007; Summerhill_School 2000; Cunningham 2000). The Summerhill School case and the consequent outcome that the modality of their DSM (AEM) practice would be respected, sets a useful and potentially significant precedent for EHE as part of AEM.

Where is the training that creates difference?

Should EHE in England similarly not find for itself some level of institutional protection from agency judgements based on ignorance of its difference as a specific educational modality, the situation could become not only close to illegality, as has been the situation in the 1970's, in the Harrison family case for instance, where the parents were threatened with having their children taken away and fled to a remote Scottish island. It could also destroy, because of ignorance of EHE as a *valid* educational modality and lifestyle, an educational situation that is proving, globally, to be of benefit to many and which research backs up as being effective and beneficial (Thomas 1998; Thomas and Pattison 2007; Rothermel 2002;

Rothermel 2003; Neuman and Avriam 2003; Sheffer 1995). This change would be best met with 'genuine discovery' of EHE on the part of any person in a position of agency power, who comes into contact with families. Training about EHE is a serious issue for needful provision as both the Badman Review (Badman 2009) and the Select Committee enquiry into the Badman Review (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009) identified:

> 'The Badman Report does recommend that officers receive training in this regard. Indeed, it makes specific reference to training in relation to "the essential difference, variation and diversity in home education practice as compared to schools". It also suggests that, wherever possible and appropriate, representatives of the home educating community should be involved in the development and/or provision of such training (recommendation 9). Some home educators, though, questioned the adequacy of a mere training session to address the attitudes of local authority officers... Given the concerns of some home educators that, on occasion, local authority officers are unsympathetic to more unstructured educational approaches, we welcome the Badman recommendation that officers receive training in this regard. However, we emphasise the need for thorough training that will equip officers with an understanding of a range of learning theories, child development and educational philosophy. We point to the difficulties of, for example, assessing without such knowledge the progress of a child who has moderate or even mild learning difficulties.' (ibid, pg 45)

> 'Another parent concurred that it "took years to understand home education". In his view it was not possible to learn about home education merely by taking a training course.' (ibid, pg 60)

What these quotations show us is that training which would create difference might need to demand of those undergoing the training, a willingness and openness to discovering EHE. As the data in chapter 5 shows, these events of discovery in the personal are sought for, wanted and embraced and are the necessary precursor to the 'years' it takes to begin to understand the practice. Can such conditions and effects really be achieved in an atmosphere of coerced learning that is often part of a training course?

Discovery as school exit

The term 'school exit' is not new, having been used to denote school leaving in various research documents in the USA (Llloyd and Mensch 2006; Papay, Murnane, and Willett 2008). It is used in these American texts to denote issues concerned with school leaving age or leaving school as a permanent removal from education as an activity. This term is used here differently because the specific use of 'school exit' is to signify a phenomenon. That phenomenon is, it is suggested, new in that it is facilitated by a rise in global awareness – *or discovery* - of the possibility of education through an EHE modality. Philosophically, this use of the term could also be extended to include 'school exit' from MAS into AEM, albeit in 'school' settings, but for now let it suffice to relate to discussion of exit from school into 'home' for the sake of educational pursuits.

'School exit' denotes as a term a turning away from MAS as a source of educational development. It is in this sense possible to include in such a term the idea of truancy or possibly even school refusal and phobia. However these are complicated issues intricately bound to MAS. It is wished to divorce 'school exit' as a term from such misalliances by signifying that 'school exit' is *the choice* by parents and children to remove themselves from the pedagogic, social and material technology of MAS (and usually schools) as a way to become educated as a human being. A principle theory of 'exit' will be used to underpin this term, taken from the world of marketing.

Based on concepts of behaviour that Albert O. Hirschman proposed, a theory can be constructed which fits very well onto a schooling paradigm, as seen from a perspective of choice such as that facilitated by knowledge that education is not compulsory in the UK.

Hirschman suggested that members of any organisation, be it a business, a country or a group of individuals with common ground in an institution either receive some measure of space and facility in their communal arena to *voice* their opinions about how things are done or they will exit if there is an actual or perceived deterioration in practice. In effect their choices are stark: voice or exit (Hirschman 1970). Exit is associated with self-selecting action and the free market, whereas voice is associated with political agitation of some form. Loyalty plays a part in this dynamic, for if there is loyalty to a firm, country or organisation (and its paradigm of practice) then voice is more likely to be opted for as a solution to difficulties. Exit need not be a movement of the body; it can be mental and emotional, which, in the case of schooling, might be seen in the disaffection from learning participation amongst some school students (Marsh, Rosser, and Harre 1978; Harber 2008; Willis 1981).

What it is suggested is happening and is facilitated to happen by a conscientization on the part of parents of their right in the UK to electively home educate (this infers discovery) is an increased and increasing movement of exit 'of the body'. This is 'school exit'. Whilst there has always been considerable levels of mental and emotional 'exit' within schools (ibid), there are now significant signs that a rise in the number of home educators, as 'bodily' exit, is occurring at a fast pace, as previously mentioned. Much of 'school exit' into EHE is a co-created scenario whereby organisations such as schools must take their part in a responsibility towards failures to thrive, resulting in dissatisfaction and exit. Such a stance has already been mooted in research literature (Yoneyama 1999; Pilkington and Piersel 1991; Carlen, Gleeson, and Wardhaugh 1992). This debate might be an axis point for developments with regard not only to education but also social measures and government behaviour. One example of such potential development could be a reinterpreted analysis of

truancy, school refusal or even school-based disaffection – as forms of Hirshmanian exit (Hirschman 1970) from schools: considering schools as blameworthy (see Harber 2008; Carlen, Gleeson, and Wardhaugh 1992; Pilkington and Piersel 1991; Yoneyama 2000; Fortune-Wood 2007), thereby taking an onus off truants, refusers and the disaffected whereby reasons for 'bad' behaviour are found to be not necessarily the fault of the malefactors. This is a theme in line with various ways of thinking exemplified in the alternative educational movement (Neill 1968, 1932; Lane 1928). This could create situations where what is wrong with schools is actually addressed at its deepest levels. Many commentators could agree – within their stated framework of analysis- that complex debates concerning 'school exit' as a product of EHE discovery has links to above mentioned MAS-based matters and a deflection of the blame onto malefactors is an abnegation of responsibility by MAS to address many of the true causes of exit (Flint and Peim 2007; Parsons and Lewis 2010).

Undue influence?: education *as* schooling

The concept of *real* choice relating to *education* as a compulsory responsibility of parents is denied by the lack of a common *concept* of education as not involving school. By failing to make the concept available to parents in a full manner, is the government supporting, perpetrating and advocating a myth: namely that education is schooling and MAS at that?

The discovery of EHE, by omission of conceptual awareness, is denied as a right to parents when they are thinking about their child's education as a modality of becoming through education. Such a situation would be despite tremendous rhetoric on the part of politicians regarding choice, and parent power, including a founding act of parliament (Sallis 1987)

which clearly, at the time, did not consider the idea of the discovery of EHE as within the needs of parents. The data from this study suggests it is.

The strong effects of an ignorance within a population mostly very interested in the education of their own children - to hegemonically and persistently believe that education *is* schooling - is an interesting prevalent phenomenon of lack of awareness concerning the law, their rights as parents and of education as an activity. In the context of this thesis it serves as a backdrop to what is explored: the discovery, by parents and others, of alternative pedagogy, but particularly home education. Because of the backdrop just outlined, the discovery of home education in England has interesting features, not usually associated with finding out new information about established law and possibility of action. These are connected to a Foucauldian analysis of power and also of the self. They are also connected to the nature of home education as an activity affecting the self, as well as bearing upon the nature of education provided in MAS. It is to this latter aspect that we now turn with reference to the decision by parents (with responsibility in law for their child's education) to 'exit' the MAS system.

What is 'Education *as* Schooling'?

> HL: "Did you know that children don't have to go to school?"
> Respondent 58: No. That's the normal thing to do. I thought everyone had to go to school"
>
> HL: "Did you know that children don't have to go to school?
> Respondent 29: No! That's ridiculous. How are they going to learn?"

Perhaps ever since Luther and Calvin, amongst others such as Frederick the Great and Fichte, spoke about a need for compulsory education and the Prussian model of authoritarian compulsory schooling took a hold in Europe and then America (Ramirez and Boli 1987) -

there has been a feeling abroad in society (even if subconscious) that to become educated to some degree was a social necessity and inevitably involved schools as a technology to that end. Nevertheless, education since Luther and Calvin has not always existed with a sense of compulsory school attendance, as historical accounts of widespread voluntary involvement in schools show (Zhang 2004). Since the introduction of 'compulsory [school] attendance' in 1870 (Forster 1973), schooling has gradually become an increasingly accepted normative and enframed position (Carlen, Gleeson, and Wardhaugh 1992; Peim 2006; Illich 1971). When a child is born, the thought that parents have regarding their child/ren's education usually involves (MAS) schooling as a default path taken towards becoming educated – as will be suggested through the street survey data, presented in section 4 of chapter 5: it is seen as 'normal'. Of course, there are many practical reasons of an economic and social nature for this, but these are outside the scope of the present argument on discovery of educational alternatives in the context of a conceptual issue.

It is the contention of this thesis that a drive towards 'universal' *school* education in the UK was never, and is not presently, in the best interests of all (see Bowles and Gintis 1976; Willis 1981; McCulloch 1998; Meighan 2004). School is however *hegemonically and normally* presented by those advocating compulsory education as 'good' for children and society. Rather than this being a 'mobilized' hegemony, in the Gramscian sense of it being a domination over other ideologies (Gramsci 1994, pg 320), it is suggested here that the hegemony of education as schooling is an ignorance and a lack of reflection: a sleepwalking. The reasons for school attendance given by advocates of schooling as *necessarily* hegemonic mostly focus on various kinds of well-being, but critics such as Henry Giroux and others in a critical pedagogy framework of analysis suggest that this is a cover for reasons most linked

to productivity and economic balances (Brown et al. 1997) rather than say, effective and authentic 'social justice' (Giroux 1983). The force with which economic well-being of the individual and thus of the state, plays a role in the idea that education is schooling, is a part of what 'education *as* schooling' entails. Many ordinary people *believe* that education is school because they have been told, through various channels, both formal and informal, that school is where education happens and that education is personally good for them. Moreover, most people have never (or rarely) been *told* that education for children doesn't have to happen in schools or that education is not schooling or MAS. We see proof of this throughout examples offered in this study such as the Coventry brochure on 'educational choice', discussed on pages 59-60, and it also emerges in the data discussed below. This 'double lie' is 'education *as* schooling': school is not the only way to become educated, nor is it always appropriate or 'good'. It can be damaging and unsafe (Harber 2009, 2004). Furthermore, a conflation of education with schooling over a lengthy period of time and with regular affirmation through hegemonic use of schooling *as* education leads to a situation where education *becomes* schooling. The resources, the discourse, the bodies in place, doing, being and becoming... All this creates a truth of a kind which is itself a mask for a limited version of the truth, or an overlooked variety of options (depending on one's perspective). It then follows from this 'constructed' situation that any education that is not schooling does harm to society by implication, because it does not contribute to society's goals which are maintained through schooling. Any form of education that is *not* MAS then becomes a form of learning that is not 'education' as *conceptually* understood as such schooling. It takes on a pseudonym (rather than synonym) which excludes it from becoming education as the activity proper. It emerges conceptually then as a substitute or side-industry such as evening classes or work experience or 'learning' (see Biesta 2006) or as 'marginal', or 'alternative', as

Professor John Furlong put it (see page 91): conceptually classified within a paradigm of 'education *as* schooling' as external, adjunct, posterior to and less than 'education' and never prior, parallel or equal. Certainly rarely more or better than.

The issue of *belief* is, in this situation, of prime importance. Without a belief on the part of the general population that MAS *is* education, education loses its character as part of a controlled social project amenable and applicable to and benefiting all members of that society. A loss of belief results in what I am calling 'school exit', as discussed above. The idea of belief being involved might explain the unusual prevalence of language in the research interview data of a religious 'bent', which is discussed in chapter 5. Belief is clearly shown, from this data alone, as a part of adherence to a particular schooling modality. What happens in discovery of EHE is often the loosing of belief in the constructed 'truth' of education as schooling. Again, this moment of loss of belief is seen clearly in the street survey data in chapter 5: "Oh my God! I really didn't know". (Respondent 2). Of course, as this thesis sets out to show, such loss of belief - or a discovered 'incredulity towards the meta-narrative' (Lyotard 1984) of schooling as education - becomes a freedom that can get one upon the path which leads to the 'gateless gate' of home education.

Given the above considerations, is it likely that a conflation of education with schooling will dissipate or change? When the government was concerned in 1987 about ignorance concerning the spread of HIV/AIDS, a television campaign was launched 'actively informing' the general population about the risks. The 2009 scare concerning swine flu saw information leaflets being delivered to every household. Such large-scale information campaigns are used by the government in the case of emergencies as well as for various

other ends (Weiss and Tschirhart 2007). However, smaller scale campaigns such as those for various health issues or social problems are also used by government agencies and are funded by the state (Fletcher et al. 2005). Why would such campaigns not be used to advertise to parents (who are the same tax payers at the receiving end of other initiatives for their own good) their various options as responsible for the education of their children? Is there a deliberate silence about education as modal (open to various ways, means and manners) or is it an innocent ignorance that takes, as this thesis will suggest, a conceptual revolution similar to scientific discovery revolutions in order for a conception of education as 'various' within one paradigm, to change to a *new* concept of education as possessing multiple, diverse, *equal* paradigms? (Kuhn 1962).

In the case of EHE discovery, we must ask questions about the willingness of a nation state to allow parents to 'do it for themselves' when the mechanism of schooling is so established and efficacious in its ability to control (Foucault 1977). From seemingly benign matters such as vaccinations (Salmon et al. 2005), to more curious additions to school experience such as circle time (see Ecclestone and Hayes 2009), to potential inculcations via the curriculum with subjects such as Citizenship (Crick 1998), school experience is a long-standing technique of state aid or interference (depending on one's political viewpoint) in the lives of subjects or citizens. Such interventions are not always successful for people as they experience themselves as humans rather than machines of performance and can alienate (Marsh, Rosser, and Harre 1978). This raises questions for EHE discovery. Does the state really want to promote educational provision such as EHE, which from a perspective of either control or maintenance of a system is a negation of state provision? The Badman period would suggest that it does not wish to actively support EHE discovery, despite

rhetoric concerning better funding allocated to EHE experience (Badman 2009). But on what grounds and with what theoretical underpinning is epistemological and moral support such as is required for EHE discovery lacking? Is that lack deliberate or a product of ignorance in 2010 about EHE practice? This is probably where 'educational incommensurability' between an EHE understanding of education and a school-based one comes in as a phenomenon within the educational and political landscape. These matters are further discussed in chapter 6, especially.

'Education *as* schooling' does not just happen directly because of the hegemony of discourse about schools and a relative silence in official documents about alternatives as an option. It also happens indirectly through a haphazard standard of discourse surrounding home education, as discussed in chapter 2. Information leading to mis-information about home education as a pedagogy of difference from the mainstream serves to support 'education *as* schooling' even in the places where it is supposed to be possible to break free from such conceptual conflation as we saw in the analysis of the Coventry City website information about EHE discussed on page 57. This happens indirectly through provision of information that hides key aspects that might be attractive to parents seeking an education of *difference* because the mis-information slants the difference of EHE as an experience and a pedagogy towards a schooling identity, thereby underpinning 'education *as* schooling' by suggesting that there is little actual difference available.

EHE discovery and democracy

As already mentioned, discovery of EHE is growing exponentially around the world. England is experiencing its own fast paced growth in numbers. Yet, despite this clear sign that significant numbers of people in the UK, with voting rights for the British government, are choosing this form of education, the attitude on the part of government is still not only characterised by punitive ideas of regulation, monitoring, disapproval and suspicion, but also seems to persist in believing it can ignore EHE as a valid part of English educational provision except to regulate and monitor it. There is little official active interest of a positive kind. The dismissive reaction on the part of the then incumbent Labour government (Alexander 24/10/09) to the Alexander Review (Alexander 2009), with its integrated openness to alternative educational ideas (Conroy, Hulme, and Menter 2010), is a case in point. Teachers liked it (Alexander 27/04/10), but the government dismisses it. This raises significant questions about the relationship in a democracy between what is democratic when it comes to educational provision and the people who form a part of that democracy and are expected to behave in democratic ways in line with hopes for an active 'citizenry' (see Biesta 2008). In this sense any need for EHE discovery is not democratic or a part of a democracy, but rather goes against what purports to be a dialogic relationship of citizen and state because it is being left outside that conversation.

EHE discovery as anarchism?

Of course EHE is *ironically*, despite (or because of?) its supposedly democratic context, also possibly the greatest anarchist style 'people power' scenario relating to education there is,

being as close to anarchist education (see Suissa 2003) as it is possible to tacitly or inadvertently get, without outwardly declaring anarchist politics (which many home educators spoken with during the course of this research have mentioned sympathies for). Biesta points out, in his analysis of Jacques Rancière's egalitarian politics, the nature of scenarios which avoid top-down 'vertical relationships' as having – according to Rancière - anarchist tendencies (2010, pg 41). EHE is a classic example of the dissolution of the kind of top-down relationships that are found regularly in MAS (Dowty 2000; Sheffer 1995; Thomas 1998), although for this AEM difference of relationships to occur, many other factors need to be in place such as a democratic forum of some kind, tendencies towards autonomous educational attitudes, freedoms of movement and expressions etc. There is indeed a history of home educators being labelled as anarchist (Curtis 27/08/02), despite the fact that the majority of home educators probably do not identify with such politics in an active way. Negating state provision with regard to education has much in common with the sentiments of anarchist thinker William Gibson about taking a different approach (Gibson 1951, pg 432-436). Discovering EHE is, in this sense, an 'anarchist' action.

This thesis does not consider that the discovery of EHE is anarchism and that view is informed by the research participants' lack of formal identification of the act of discovery with anything political; for them it was and is a personal, emotional and perhaps, in some cases, a spiritual event (albeit without being in the context of any known creed). As the research findings will show in more depth, discovery of EHE is a mixture of people taking initiative, looking for a new way to do things, desperation at an untenable school situation, a philosophy of education and other motivations such as luck. It is not a new political movement yet, within England. Whether it has the power to galvanise new political agendas and sentiments is another matter and outside of the scope of this thesis to question. Certainly

there are clear signs that those who have discovered EHE are politically active and know what they want and how to achieve it: a situation highlighted by the lobbying, campaigning and oral and written presentations of home educators (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009) before MPs during the Badman period (culminating in what they considered was a success with Schedule 1 of a controversial Bill for home education regulation being thrown out in the pre-election 'wash-up'). The nature of home educators as highly capable of overturning government intentions that go against their wishes is also noticeable in other countries (Stevens 2003a). This makes EHE discovery a potential political force in yet another way, currently and perhaps perpetually indefinable or without label.

The current state of EHE (and DSM) theory

> *'Why not just take your kids out of school and teach them at home?' (Holt 2003, pg 7)*

A certain type of international philosophical background to EHE is found in historical accounts of how EHE has emerged as an alternative educational practice. These accounts are mostly found in books written in the last thirty years by advocates of EHE such as John Holt, who was based in the USA or Roland Meighan, based in England, and are offered as a kind of 'home-spun' philosophy that has never presented itself as educational philosophy within the 'academy' community of educational philosophers or theorists (Holt 2003, 1977; Meighan 1992/2005). Histories of EHE are rare, although current exceptions include 'Homeschool: An American History by Milton Gaither (Gaither 2008), wherein Gaither sets a historical-philosophical tone for a consideration of EHE. Other historical investigations are to be found that incorporate more recent genealogy (Carper 1992; Carper 2000; Knowles,

Marlow, and Muchmore 1992). More recent writings on EHE are proliferating with the global rise in EHE numbers: a market is emerging and books are beginning to meet that demand. Examples include books on deschooling (McKee 2002), autonomous education (Thomas and Pattison 2007), gender and self esteem (Sheffer 1995) and 'teenage liberation' (Llewellyn 1993). All of these books offer forms of philosophical outlook, but are not intentional or 'technical' philosophical works of a philosophically 'community' academic kind mentioned above, although the recent book by Thomas and Pattison is an academic investigation.

There has now been a significant body of academic research done on EHE, manifesting in journal papers and also reports, both in the UK and abroad. However, amongst this literature, which focuses mostly on social issues, there is very little in the way of philosophy of EHE as an aspect of metaphysical, transcendental, universal, existential, post-modern or any other philosophically involved educational theory, although a special issue of Theory and Research in Education, in 2009, is an exception. Consequently, EHE, it is suggested, is yet to be substantially philosophically theorised *as philosophy of education* and is yet to find a substantial place within philosophy of education as a discipline, if philosophy of education can be called such (Chambliss 2009). One of the reasons for this seems to be the marginal position of alternative educational modalities within education as an academic arena. A question posed to Professor John Furlong of Oxford University at the Birmingham University School of Education Student Conference in 2009 concerned EHE. His reply was that he could not answer the question because he didn't know any background to the issue and furthermore was not supposed to, nor needed to know about the issue raised (the Badman Review of EHE): 'I don't need to know about alternatives because they are

alternative', he said. Whilst from his perspective this may seem reasonable, it is also telling in that it exposes a generally widespread (albeit not exclusively thus) attitude of ignorance and dismissal amongst prominent educational academics to alternative *educational* modalities. It is a contention of this thesis that this is a failing of education as an academic discipline, which is required to know its own theory. In other words, a lack of a strong body of educational theory of EHE indicates that it is not conceptually *known* as education.

So what is the philosophy of EHE if it is not 'home-spun', historical or social? Obviously the scope for determining the feel and nature of such philosophy is open and excitingly so, due to the epistemological and ontological differences inherent in EHE that are there to be explored. We bear in mind at this point that progressive education itself, as a broader church, has never really been able to fundamentally assert its own philosophy. An instance of this would be the failure on the part of John Dewey and his associates in the Progressive Education Association to 'agree on a consistent philosophy of progressive education' (New and Cochrane 2007, pg 668). Dewey wrote 'Need for a Philosophy of Education' (Dewey 1964) to address the issue of progressive education having to have 'its own foundation and frame' (Doll 1993, pg 182) but whether this has ever been achieved presently remains a moot point.

Returning to our focus on EHE, it is suggested from nascent investigations of a philosophical kind into this area, that the philosophical basis for home education is far from the Anglo-American analytical tradition and has greater affiliation and commonality with a Continental philosophical outlook. Theoretical conditions of post-modernism such as openness or incredulity towards 'metanarratives' (Lyotard 1984) are in tune with the practices of EHE and there seems no reason why developments in post-modern thought such as complexity

theory - and even quantum theory and connected areas - cannot have much to say to help philosophize and illuminate EHE as a specific educational modality of extreme interest both to itself and of interest to MAS educational theory, practice and research.

This thesis seeks to explore and make a contribution to the philosophy of EHE within the context of discovery. That philosophy and theory of EHE does not yet exist in a significantly developed form has an impact on these explorations in terms of the 'conversations' that can be had within the text. However, that does not mean that some conversation is not possible nor that a 'monologue', if set in a context of the production of original knowledge that itself creates philosophy for conversations, cannot be of interest for the expansion of horizons.

This is facilitated in the UK by recent developments relating to the Badman Review of EHE, which itself poses interesting philosophical questions, although far from directly (Badman 2009). Amongst these are the definition of 'suitable and efficient' education (see page 55), EHE as an educational modality requiring or denying monitoring, the status of autonomous education within EHE and education more broadly, the outcomes for the self of EHE and how these relate to citizenship, the family and EHE and how such families relate to the concept of community, the ontological status of EHE (and the 'mainstream') as a product of self-removal from a 'mainstream', and so on.

Conclusion

The 'theoretical scene' for discovery of EHE is comprised of a lot of work commenting socially and politically on EHE as a phenomenon of empirical note. Pedagogic research is

also there and contributes to the 'theoretical scene' but much more needs to be done, especially because of the tremendous difference between the autonomous EHE style (see Thomas and Pattison 2007; Bergeron 2009; Preisnitz 2008; Miller 2010) from MAS. All of this work contributes to a theoretical understanding of EHE but is not itself philosophy in that it does not aim to develop the concept or our understanding of the concept of EHE through its capability to be developed. In terms of this 'entwicklungsfähigkeit' (developmental capability – present writer's translation) - which is in Georgio Agamben's mind (quoting from Feuerbach) the best possible definition of philosophy that we can hope for (Agamben 2002) - Agamben states: "If a work, be it a work of art, or science, or scholarship, has some value then it will contain this philosophical element. Something which has remained unsaid in it and demands to be unfolded and worked out" (ibid). This idea of philosophy applied to EHE highlights how our concept of EHE is still in its earliest stages and the present research bears this out if we consider the high levels of conceptual ignorance which abound in response to EHE realities. This 'philosophical' ignorance also bears upon the issue of discovery. How is discovery possible if a concept is philosophically underdeveloped? Does the state of philosophy of educational practice have a bearing on the nature of discovery?

These are interesting questions which in some respects will be touched upon in chapters 5, 6 and 7. If an educational concept has general low levels of development (by that is meant development amongst the population as a whole rather than just specialists – seen here as mostly extant home educators) it therefore follows that EHE needs and demands philosophical development for a greater *general* appreciation of its educational practice and part in a democracy. Such development would also impact heavily on other areas because of

the challenges it could create for epistemology using binary assumptions, the role and nature of knowledge as formulated by educational practice and its forms, modes of 'being and becoming' in a global society, the uses of technology and their role in education, etc. The list is endless because of the significant role and important effects that a mode of education can have. This then suggests that philosophical work in AEM is not just interesting but also important and may have profound new truths for us to consider about what it means to be human and the part that education - and this particular paradigm of education and its modalities, identified presently as EHE and DSM - can play in that understanding.

We shall now turn to consideration of the methodology used in the empirical research for this thesis.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCHING THROUGH TRUST - A METHODOLOGY, PART 1

'People may also differ in their capacities that make trust possible. Some people tend to trust, other to mistrust.' (Kohn 2008, pg 47)

'Returning to England after 20 years of teaching in a variety of countries overseas, the one characteristic of [school] education here that strikes me is the almost universal distrust'. (Spice 03/04/10)

'You have to be able to trust people, don't you! We all get upset that we've trusted someone and it didn't work out, but that's life.' (Illona, Interview, July 2009)

'Why do we need the evidence? Why is trust not enough?' (Conference attendee question at Henk Blok presentation, Netherlands Home Educators Conference 2008: http://home-education.podomatic.com/player/web/2008-08-11T04_32_45-07_00)

It is likewise an act of trust that leads Irene out of the frame, displaces her...it is that the walker is always right to walk, that one is always right to go out, go see something to the side, continue to walk wherever one's steps – and not those of others – lead.' (Rancière 2003, pg 122)

Introduction

The subject of this thesis is discovery of and entrance into a different world of education than one characterised by 'universal distrust'. If the above quote by Spice is true, then MAS

education is imbued with distrust; but what does this mean in actuality? It is a complicated issue but one where some key identifying features can be found. Firstly, we can identify a problem with regards to teachers: they are distrusted themselves on many levels. From the introduction of the National Curriculum as a means to regulate teaching content, to CCTV installed in schools and even in some classrooms (Hope 2009), distrust of various kinds permeates the fabric of the building and all its functions: requiring ideologies of control (ibid). The distrust of such measures is mutual and cyclical, with teachers distrusting the distrust in return (Lipsett 18/08/08). As a consequence teachers are disabled from actions which are unique expressions of individual teaching styles and instead 'enframed' within a technology of delivery and assessment (Flint and Peim 2007). Ofsted 'no-notice' inspections, that involve turning up unannounced, are another way to highlight how schools are places where distrust is found (Kelly 20/03/09). The *sine qua non* of school distrust, at a personal level, is the obligation for all adults on a school site to have a Criminal Records Bureau check. This form of distrust in schools has now reached such a peek of absolutism that even visiting authors to schools must undergo checks, much to their horror. Some prominent authors have chosen to boycott school visits as a result (Green 16/07/09). The recent introduction – following American trends – of weapons searching and even daily screening for weapons in the bags of students, is another element in a growing atmosphere of distrust towards children (Milne 25/05/07; Maddern 18/09/09). The responsibility for the 'diminution of elementary trust' in school environments is placed both at the feet of the restructuring of education (Woods and Jeffrey 2002) and less directly in changes of how social fabrics are interwoven because of a lessening of a comforting 'personalised touch' both within and outside schools, despite rhetoric about learning 'personalisation' (Ruano-Borbalan 2006). The removal from schools of the unique approaches of individual adults to

curricula and teaching styles and their replacement with standardization is a move towards systems which are unavoidably impersonal:

> 'Abstract systems depend on trust, yet they provide none of the moral rewards which can be obtained from personalised trust, or were often available in traditional settings from the moral frameworks within which everyday life was undertaken. Moreover, the wholesale penetration of abstract systems into daily life creates risks which the individual is not well placed to confront; high-consequence risks fall into this category. (Giddens 1991, pg 136)

Thus, trust, whether in a school or elsewhere, comes at too high a price. The abstraction of the individual personal (rather than an abstract 'personalisation') from a network of interactions and its replacement with depersonalised but hoped-for more efficient systems across the board, undermines feelings of security in the localised environment and introduces the idea of risk, which must be encountered with mechanisms of distrust. Schools, full of risks and potential difficulties became places where trust is a bad idea and even anti-educational: i.e. the National Curriculum's aim to replace haphazard standards belonging to 'trusted' people with homogenised high standards where those people don't and shouldn't be trusted because that is counter to the function of the abstracted system.

Education in schools is aiming to function in ways that are able to accommodate large numbers of people, with primary schools involving a national average class size of 26 and secondary schools having an average of 21 in a class (DCFS 2008). EHE and DSM, on the other hand, seek to ensure that attitudes of depersonalisation and abstraction, resulting from the necessities of dealing with large groups, are avoided (Miller 2008; Sheffer 1995). The very premises of AEM are also oppositional to standardisation: testing, assessment, homogenised educational experiences, are all counter to the philosophy of alternative

educational practices of working on a very personal level with children and allowing children to be free to work in their own way (e.g.Holt 2003; Neill 1968; Thomas and Pattison 2007). As a result of strong differences between the world of EHE and DSM and MAS, differences of pedagogy are magnified and impact upon other connected areas such as lifestyle (Neuman and Avriam 2003), personal interactions (Sudbury-Valley-School-Press 1992) and so on. One of the substantial differences of EHE and DSM is that trust is a key mechanism of the pedagogy involved as well as its connected elements (Small 13/03/04; Greenberg and Sadofsky 1992; Thomas and Pattison 2007).

It makes sense when researching an arena, and becoming involved in its characteristics, to understand how that arena functions at an ontological level. Matching the ontological outlook of the arena (how the participants experience their 'being-in-the-world') with a research methodology that 'fits', creates a number of research effects: the research is researching the arena on its own terms and not imposing terms from another way of seeing things. In research that looks at ways to avoid such epistemological and ontological 'colonisations', taking account of other ways of 'seeing' is considered an ethical stance:

> 'It should develop educators' awareness of how different social/cultural groups interpret reality in different ways, emphasise the partial nature of these perspectives and prompt a critical examination of the implications of these differences in different contexts. This kind of learning should develop a self-reflexive attitude that would help educators situate their own perspective in social-historical contexts. It should also increase their capacity to relate to 'difference' in an ethical way...' (Andreotti and Souza 2008, pg 33-34)

Thus, a methodological approach characterised by trust, is a fit of research methodology with research arena: because the participants operate in a world where being is conducted according to trust. By creating such a fit, there is more scope to explore other issues outside

of problems imposed by a 'mismatch', in that little unnecessary friction is created by the entrance of a research agenda.

In the field of home education in particular, according to the chosen research methodology, this is done through an appreciation of the role of trust in this arena. Such an approach bears interesting fruit: it creates an understanding that the extant premises of most educational research are conducted in an atmosphere of scholarly distrust, where 'proof' is constantly required. This thesis sees this distrust not as 'scientific' in line with Popper's falsifiability (Popper 2004) or philosophical in terms of forms of Cartesian scepticism (Descartes 2008) but as a detriment to certain forms of research and, in fact, a detrimental way to research qualitatively in certain fields and circumstances. EHE, tending towards an autonomous style, as well as those elements of DSM included here, is one such research field. This need for verifications 'infects', it is suggested, the researcher/participant relationship with an unhelpful and disturbing risk (see Giddens, 1981, above) and because of the prevalence of (trusted and therefore understood as) *honesty* in this field, is not necessary either.

The theoretical background of the methodology of trust

According to writing *problematizing* the logic of emancipation in education, setting people free to think for themselves as an enlightenment project of emancipation - following Kant (Kant 1992) – "is based upon a fundamental *distrust* of and *suspicion* about their experiences" (Biesta 2010). This is so because it is assumed that those who are led in the teaching and learning game of 'enlightenment' are ignorant in comparison to the educator

who leads; Kantian enlightenment is seen as patronising and ignorant of the possibility that all might have equal intelligence (Rancière 1991).

Because this thesis project deals with forms of education that seek to avoid the 'coercion' (Kant translated in Biesta 2010, pg 5), such as is found in schools, necessary to Kantian projects of emancipation, it makes methodological sense in choosing a methodology for this present research to adopt the theory and philosophy of another way to approach learning: one delineated by a number of writers but exemplified by Jacotot's ignorant schoolmaster (Rancière 1991). That attitude is characterised by trust: trust in human intelligence, trust in people as equal with other people and trust in all being equal as thinkers and individuals able to learn, speak, decide and understand without direction or the patronage of a superiorly educated person. How and why this applies to research and in particular to the research of this study will be delineated in this chapter.

But is it true that trust is a part of EHE philosophy and practice and the discovery of it deserves to be approached via a methodology of trust? There are two sides to this question. Firstly it is important to clarify what is meant by 'trust'.

What is trust?

After substantial examination of the concept of trust, Kohn lands upon 'trust' as actually something to do with situations where people have choices: 'The idea of trust depends on the assumption that agents really do have choices' (2008). It is claimed herein that the prevalence of trust within EHE as a community of practioners is inherently connected to the

fact of lives led and educational modalities followed that are characterised by choice. The freedoms inherent in EHE somehow seem to *create* trust. If true, whether this is because of less stress and more relaxing experiences and interactions or another factor, is an interesting area for research, but in full measure outside the scope of this text. Nevertheless, comparing freedoms inherent in EHE with situations in schooling, where teachers and pupils are not wholeheartedly trusted and have limitations put on the extent to which they can be trusted by factors external to inter-personal relations (Avis 2003; Cook-Sather 2002), suggests that EHE has greater natural access to trust as a concept that functions as a lived experience because of freedoms of choice.

It is this lived experience of trust that, it is suggested, answers our question here in the context of EHE regarding what trust might be: it can be defined as an expectation of human action without expectation of problem. Furthermore, it is an inter-relational agreement with no conditions other than forms of care. This formulation is to be found again and again in testimonies and accounts of the lived experience of forms of education that do not coerce:

> 'The gift of complete trust is expected to create adults who feel in control of their own lives; adults who have a high level of trust in themselves. At Sudbury Valley, trust implies responsibility...for all decisions relating to their own education' (Greenberg and Sadofsky 1992, pg 5)

> 'Underlying it all is a faith both in their children and the form of education which they are undertaking.' (Thomas and Pattison 2007, pg 144)

Trust is however and perhaps surprisingly, not necessarily or always especially inclusive. Boundaries of trust can be set which exclude outsiders, although some thinkers on trust suggest that this is not trust:

'Generally, I trust you not because of you. I do not check if you deserve to be trusted, since it would not be a trust, but a suspicion. There is no trust without risk of betrayal. The trust is an embracing of a risk. The trust is my trust; it is a state of my mind rather than the property of our relationship. The trust begins *before* the relationship occurs. And since the trust resides in me, I cannot deny it to anyone. Trusting one person involves the risk of trusting anybody, everyone. If I trust, there is no door any more, and s/he who wants to enter will. If you think about it, an exclusive trust is an oxymoron.' (Sidorkin 1995)

It may be that the inclusiveness of marginal communities that educate in an alternative way mitigate against inclusion of those who hold differing views: communities that fight together stay together and build up trust within boundaries that exclude (Kohn 2008, pg 19). Such an effect, if it exists, is considered in this study as operating as a protectionist strategy within the EHE community of England. The present researcher has noticed such boundaries as a key feature of EHE community practice: those who speak our language are those with whom we talk. After the Badman Review, with its inability to understand the strong differences of EHE from a MAS model (see chapter 2), this reticence within EHE to assume a naive assumption that all outside the community of practice are friends to be trusted and confided in is not surprising and looks like a strategy to cope with miscomprehension. There is of course a fine line in England between maintenance of the purity of one's vision and excluding others to the extent that the possibility of those who do not understand will never get to understand and those who do 'understand' will never admit of useful challenge. The English EHE 'community' seem to have yet in 2010 to organise themselves to create 'bridges' across incommensurability (see chapter 6) that can widen understanding of their difference and thereby broaden an idea of trust truly to include 'outsiders'. Perhaps they would say this is not their responsibility. But, another issue is incommensurability and distrust *within* the English EHE 'community' itself in terms of differing factions. This is recognised as an inter-'community' issue by observers outside of the enclosure of EHE practioners as being the

case (Badman 2009), as well as being visible on EHE internet forums. However, what we must bear in mind in this regard is the findings of this thesis that discovery of EHE is a 'gateless gate': a way towards something by which no one path is the same as another's. In such a context, why would EHE be an all-inclusive and cohesive community? This thesis will not be exploring these matters of the boundaries of trust. Instead, when it comes to trust, our focus here is on the methodology of the *feeling of trust* that pervades EHE in general as a mechanism of interpersonal communication and of effects from the pedagogy of its practice. Trust is seen as usual in EHE as a means of understanding inter-*personal* relations. As we will see below trust plays a large positive part in the theoretical underpinnings of this educational arena itself, both in terms of the absence of trust in MAS and its strong presence in AEM.

A fundamental distrust of EHE

On the one hand EHE is largely premised on a distrust of schooling: schools are often perceived as not being able to provide an appropriate education for their children and are even considered as likely to do harm (Meighan 2005). Indeed, research suggests that seeking an alternative to a schooling scenario can be a sane response to a situation of dangers of various kinds (Carlen, Gleeson, and Wardhaugh 1992; Harber 2004; Yoneyama 2000). This assessment of distrust of MAS by EHE is backed up by many voices within DSM, performing schooling along different lines from authoritarian models, who agree with both the assessment of EHE practitioners of MAS and its solutions of forms of 'exit' from such schools, based on a distrust that schooling of the authoritarian kind will ever be an effective

and suitable education for their children (Curry 1947; Neill 1968; Sudbury-Valley-School-Press 1992).

Whilst EHE is distrusting of MAS alternatives to *its* practice, the mainstream is distrustful it seems of EHE's *alternative*. The 2009-10 'Badman period' saw the interplays of distrust in action. As already mentioned the review was started with an implied – if unintentional - 'call' to distrust EHE parents on the grounds that they were operating educationally beyond the long arm of regulation and might be abusing their children or forcing them into early marriage (Frean 20/01/09). Whilst there may be a possibility that some people somewhere may have seen the law as it related to EHE in 2009-2010 as offering the possibility to hide such abuse, EHE as educational and lifestyle practice is not related to such action and the way in which the review was announced is the key indicator of ignorance and mistrust: there was very little in the way of proof to substantiate such a claim, only distrust widely applied. The EHE community in England has a long history of being distrusted and has responded by being distrusting of those who distrust them. However, it is of course a vicious circle. This stance was historically - and remains - a seemingly necessary mechanism of protection on the part of both individuals and groups within EHE whilst the kinds of ignorance alluded to in the research data in chapter 5 persist. Fascinating issues for further research – outside the scope of this thesis – came up during the Badman period, to do with distrust of EHE as pedagogy and practice and also relating to distrust of research on EHE (see Badman 2009, pg 36).

A fundamental trust in EHE?

Against this background of practitioners or aficionados being distrusted and then distrusting as protection, is 'an inner world of trust' common to EHE. The inner world nature of this is

exemplified in the interview comment by Lynn on pg 204. Research interactions with EHE practitioners for this study have been experienced by the present researcher as characterised by trust: agreements to participate often happened in people's homes and were agreed to without hesitation and with a friendly manner, conversations were had that were natural and free-flowing and often of a very personal nature, expressions of emotion such as tears were common and were not held back by any sense of defences needed against the researcher personally. There were clearly high levels of trust and the present researcher felt trusted in deep ways and in large measure. This had a significant impact on a personal level for the researcher, not used, as trained teachers are, to such fulsome trust. This is discussed further below.

Despite the research process being characterised by interpersonal trust, it is however, to be noted that the research was carried out previous to and during the Badman Review and most of the research interviews were done in the earlier stages of the Review's 'impact', perhaps before anger had had a chance to sink in. A subsequent presentation to practitioners of some of the ideas connected to this study a year after the Badman Review was published (in July 2010) was met by a couple of audience members at the presentation with high levels of aggression and distrust, despite a (necessary?) introduction by the convener of the presentation, at the start, of the researcher as presenter being an 'ally' of EHE. That was not the first time the present researcher had been 'attacked' by EHE practitioners for 'daring' to create knowledge and discussion on EHE (attacks are usually online via EHE forums but can also be – as the present researcher experienced – face to face. The nature of comments made is also very personal and offensive and far from a spirit of discussion). Other researchers of EHE have also been vociferously criticised (e.g. Daniel Monk: Monk 2004) by certain

practitioners in the EHE community who seem to be trying to 'protect' what they perhaps see as 'their' territory, when they don't 'approve' of what is written. This is creating a difficult research arena for EHE and throws a cloud of a lie upon the supposedly democratic premises of such education: only those who say nothing negative or controversial to the ears of some home educators about EHE are 'left alone'. Graham Badman himself reported during the Select Committee the personal effect that attacks by home educators had caused him:

> "I have to say, Chairman, I have been somewhat surprised by the reaction of a vociferous minority - and I do think it is a vociferous minority; I can actually count the number of people who have done it. I have found the remarks of some of them offensive..." (Select_Committee_Evidence Monday 12th October 2009)

The Select Committee, in making their enquiry into the Badman Review also remarked:

> 'On this matter we would note our unease at the reluctance of some to speak publicly on the Badman Report due to fear of harassment from sections of the home educating population.'
> (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009, pg 11)

This is a problem for EHE. It will mean that the abuse handed out to researchers and 'investigators' – as well as other home educators - may well result in those researchers researching other issues. Also, investigators could turn from a positive attitude of advocacy about this form of pedagogy to a 'worry' more closely aligned with politics and concerns about democracy such as that voiced by Michael Apple: wherein the effects of EHE discovery and consequent mobilised networks on equality of educational outcomes for all children due, in large part, to the affluent effectiveness of EHE-ers as a 'movement' to secure their own rights, is seen as anti-democratic (Apple 2000b, 2000a). A situation where researchers are 'alienated' away from developing knowledge about EHE for those outside of

EHE, will leave more general accurate and advanced knowledge of EHE behind. This would allow it to remain in its current state of pervasive, quasi-political miscomprehension, open to myriad unnecessary attacks based on persistent ignorance. In their distrust of free intellectual debate, enquiry and exploration of new ideas associated with EHE, some home educators are becoming the enemy of EHE from within. What is most curious is that these very few individuals seem to think that *because* they home educate they have a right to be rude to those who disagree with them: an interesting educational and lifestyle effect. Such situations can possibly be explained by fears about political power imbalances and the threats to EHE that such power can cause. However, a fine line of advantageous outcomes for EHE in dealing with those outside their 'world' is sometimes dangerously blurred by sheer anger and thoughtlessness of these few, to the detriment of all, including those home educators who have not spoken or those who speak without negativity. The confidence that EHE can create needs to be set within a context of 'otherness', looked at from their own marginalised perspective so that even the 'other' of the 'non-other, non-marginalised and powerful' is respected. There is no forum or entrance into positive development or influence on EHE research through rough treatment of researchers of any kind, who necessarily work within arenas that demand careful, open (and necessarily professionally polite) discussion. A small minority of home educators must be careful they do not become themselves the bullies that they suggest are out to get them.

The key site of 'pure' trust in EHE is therefore strongly found perhaps only in the pedagogical style of autonomous EHE and the inter-*personal* affects it produces, untainted by political events. Educationally in EHE (and DSM) trust is a big issue because without it the education does not work (Schwartz and Maher 2006). As previously mentioned, it is the

autonomous style of education in EHE that is being referred to here, with other forms of EHE being excluded from the premise of EHE as 'difference' from MAS. And so, when we speak of trust in EHE (and DSM), we are referring to effects in the personal created by a pedagogical mode.

Being 'on their side' as a researcher

As previously mentioned the present researcher has been for the most part perceived as very much a 'friend' or ally of EHE during the research. This was not however as a result of deliberate advocacy, as if EHE practioners needed an advocate. This would have been a position which assumed their status as educationally and socially marginal affects their ability to advocate for themselves, and that they require 'champions' to intervene where they are subordinate to a dominant order: this is not the case and would have been playing to an idea counteracted and denied in this thesis that AEM practioners are a marginal part of education *as* MAS, requiring de-marginalisation: they are only seen to be thus due to absence of paradigmatic features being taken into account. Being an 'ally' or advocate of EHE is as tenable and valid a position in social science, as would be a position where the researcher found themselves 'against' their subject for whatever reason: there is no 'hierarchy of credibility' that puts an allegiance with practioners on a scale of acceptability for research (Becker 1967). Thus, aspects of advocacy for EHE (and DSM) are, it is suggested, a coincidental combination of interest and belief in alternative educational modes, combined also with a growing awareness, throughout the present researcher's journey for this study, of errors of judgement from those without an awareness of the ways in which AEM is paradigmatically different from MAS. These have resulted in the EHE 'community'

experiencing some unnecessary prejudice bordering on persecution. Being a friend or advocate, however, creates research issues at the level of freedom of opinion. These are discussed in the section at the end of this chapter on 'research limitations'.

A 'status' as 'friend' or ally comes more substantially perhaps, from a belief and chosen vision on the part of the present researcher, that AEM forms of education are most suited to human learning and interpersonal flourishing. Being therefore a friend of EHE (and DSM) was not a 'move' in order to research but came out of inter-*personal* research trust *as a result* of a previously formed shared educational philosophy and language. With reference to comments made in other chapters, the researcher and the participants all loosely belonged to the same 'educational church'. Thus, the research motivations, attitude and vision happened in large part to coincide with feelings and thought found within EHE (and DSM), although it should be stressed that there is little 'scientifically provable' homogeneity on which to securely pin one's research hat in EHE, such is the strong nature of EHE individuality, in particular. Incommensurability of communication as discussed in Chapter 6 was not a recognisable issue as a result of the above situation. Naturally, the researcher talking the same 'language' as participants is a benefit, as epistemological 'translation' is not required during the interactions themselves.

Often in research it can be an advantage to gain some measure of neutrality, by owning the 'perspectival' nature of one's research and 'showing one's hand' to attain a more scientific outcome (Altheide and Johnson 1994). However, as Kuhn's work on paradigms (Kuhn 1962) itself suggests, this is not really an epistemological reality: whatever knowledge we have or offer is open to deconstructions of various kinds (Derrida 2000), which create shifts in perspective to which we must belong in order to 'see', where others might not. In the

research undertaken herein, which was a request for information from the 'soul' of an adult relating to their discovery of EHE (and DSM), it was a distinct research advantage to be pro-EHE/DSM with regard to the researcher's personal views, when it came to both access to participants and the trust dynamic, as well as the consequent 'research product' as able to manifest paradigmatic coherence of subject with research perspective. This advantage had nothing to do with either a 'scientific' outlook, or a set 'positioning' of researcher knowledge: it was just fortunate. The researcher was able to be open and frank – on shared terms of reference - when she agreed (or occasionally disagreed) with some of their views and was thus able to participate in their understanding of an 'inner world' of trust, in which she found herself as both a researcher who was accepted for understanding 'their paradigm' and also as bone-fide pro-EHE/DSM. Partiality has been strongly criticised as invalidating EHE research with bias (Badman 2009) but, as this thesis shows there are epistemological and ontological reasons for EHE research involving home educators themselves to be able to *be genuinely* 'biased' or 'paradigmatically inclined', because such research is operating within differing worlds from schooling and the underpinning philosophy of MAS (Lees 2010). Speaking, in key regards, in an 'alternative' way, involving alternative structures of relationships and interactional dynamics is therefore necessary to enable proper understanding of this other world of EHE (and DSM) and present it without distortions that come from a different paradigm of meanings.

Nevertheless it is true to say that some extant empirical research on EHE conducted by pro-practitioners – but of course not all – is flawed by incommensurability factors, as research offered to a general audience: it does not speak about its position as being conducted from *within* the world of EHE and offers no views from outside of that world as a counterbalance

to strong claims, nor gives explications of strongly partial and particular viewpoints (e.g. Farris and Woodruff 2000). It is an urgent requirement in EHE research for greater academic discussion of the nature of EHE research to proliferate. A fuller *theoretical* background explanation of research activities needs to emerge (Spiegler 2010), with which a balanced underpinning of analysis outcomes can be made. Any unfair claims of bias need to have a theoretical counteraction *because* the grounds of the research are stated within an academic and professional context that has a responsibility towards a 'general' audience in the knowledge it promotes and has taken account of the need to defend its claims within a balanced context of varying viewpoints as a part of a picture of academic responsibility, rather than license (Betts 2007). There are, of course, many examples of excellent empirical research of EHE which take this ethos of inter-paradigmatic responsibility into account (e.g. Kunzman 2009; Stevens 2003a; Thomas and Pattison 2007; Safran 2008; Rothermel 2002).

Because of the communities of trust and assumptions of trust that operate within EHE as an inner world mechanism of inter-subjectivity and its 'truth', being 'on-side' when interacting with EHE practitioners, it is claimed here, is a research pre-requisite. This may not be true for certain kinds of study but for the deeply personal questions that were being explored in this study, it is suggested that not being genuinely 'on-side' would be unethical: no-one feels happy to share their deepest feelings and thoughts with someone who will then judge them negatively or appropriate their disclosures for purposes that work against them (Salmon 2007). For this study to be practically and ethically achieved then, the happy co-incidence of agreement between researcher and researched was facilitative.

What is the core focus?

This thesis seeks to investigate possible effects on the *inner* self of parents and others, who have discovered or are discovering the social, legal and political *possibility* of an alternative educational mode, and potentially with that the *possibilities* inherent in such difference of educational practice. By possibilities, it is suggested that forms of education that are outside the mainstream of school attendance have characteristics which afford a way of learning, being, becoming and of living, different in nature from that emerging as a product of the effects of MAS methods. The specific core focus is EHE of the autonomous kind but due to the diversity of EHE in practice this is not strictly delineated; rather more being subject to philosophical impositions of what an education of difference would be closest to. DSM is also tangentially considered as a part of discovery and its effects on the inner self of the research participants. The similarities, in discovery, that DSM displays as a pedagogy of difference from MAS with the identified features that pertain to EHE are striking. It has therefore been felt unnecessary to exclude instances of DSM that have, through a method of recruiting participants that relied on serendipity, emerged along with instances of EHE. This was a difficult decision based on the assumption that focusing on EHE alone would produce a clearer thesis. However, the focus is not on EHE as such but discovery in a context of alternative educational modalities (AEM) found within social, political and legal circumstances for which EHE is a unique and interesting example.

Thus, a focus has been chosen that is primarily on EHE in England. Where social and political factors emerge this is a useful geographic boundary to set due to variations throughout the UK relating to education law because of devolution. Where the data pertains to the personal and interpersonal, the idea that the research was carried out in England loses

its strong focus in this data. It is suggested that many aspects of the data presented here have a universal relevance. It could have been discovered almost anywhere in the world such is the current hegemony of a mainstream and alternative educational divide (Harber and Davies 1997; Harber 1997). The period of study is contemporary instances of discovery, which incorporates a number of interesting changes and challenges relating to EHE in England with regard to discovery and involves in the Badman Review period of 2009-10 (Badman 2009) a key site of contestation of differences.

Concerning discovery, the focus is mostly on the *moment* of discovery as it occurs within the self of the parent or other adult (either 'split-second' or as a journey or moments of discovery, but essentially the existence – or otherwise – of a sudden 'switch' or 'shift'). Adults are the focus because they are fully 'constructed' members of society due to their age and concomitant responsibilities and are set themselves – as children are not at the level of the inner self – within the kinds of webs of power of which Michel Foucault spoke (Foucault 2002a).

Literature reviewed as background

Literature examined includes official documents such as government reports, as well as research articles, with an emphasis on contemporary documents and research. Press articles are also included as relevant materials for the period, which is too recent to have garnered a significant database of up to date academic research pertinent to temporal matters, although Conroy is an exception (2010). Reference to this literature – of differing types - is spread out between and incorporated into various chapters: in this sense the review of pertinent

literature is presented in a diffuse manner. One of the reasons for this is that philosophical and theoretical treatment of *discovery* in education – and to a certain extent within the social sciences - is a new area without a significant literature base of its own, mostly relying on a vast literature within the natural sciences (e.g. Bird 2000; Simon 1973; Kuhn 2000b) to explain discovery phenomenon that might cross over disciplines.

Why this research focus: motivation and values?

Personal background

I am not a home educator. Nor was I home educated. I did not go to an alternative educational modality school. I attended a MAS co-ed comprehensive in Essex, having there a standard if relatively successful school career for the period and area. I did not question my school or the fact of schools and I was not aware that alternatives existed. Nevertheless, in the first week of secondary school experience as a Year 7 student in 1985, walking between C and A Block on the way to the next lesson (the weather was sunny and I was alone, carrying books or similar), I distinctly remember having the following thought: "This is awful. I will not send my children to school. I will home educate them and save them from experiencing this."

Following that memory there is no recollection of any interest or knowledge in or of alternative educational modes. Life, for me, did not include them. This clearly recalled and isolated memory is my first understanding of knowing that I knew about EHE as a

possibility. When I 'discovered' EHE was possible would have been well prior to this moment but outside of memory.

Nearly twenty years later I returned to that very same school to begin to train as a teacher on the Graduate Teacher Programme (a school-based training programme). Again, within the first week I understood the nature of schooling as 'awful' but this time I saw with the eyes of a questioning adult. Even so the full *personal* realisation to my adult mind of the 'horror' of MAS *as an educational modality* came as a *sudden* 'shock'. Within that week I had understood- to my own mind - the reason for dysfunctional societies: it was the coercion inflicted upon young people through the strictures of an authoritarian schooling model. During this period of despair at the schooling modality I had returned to and was signed up to perpetrate and perpetuate (see Harber 2008), I read Summerhill by A.S. Neill and remember telling teacher trainee colleagues I had 'found the blue-print for the way things ought to be'.

A subsequent interest in my research topic on the discovery of EHE is informed by this history. I believe investigating the moment of discovery of another way to do things can tell us a great deal about why the world is the way it is, or could be if we followed another path and were able to appreciate not only that other paths are possibilities but how to reach them. Since 2003 and the start of my adult educational career I have been exercised by intrigue in a personally created meta-question: can we break a chain of factors potentially inherent in the creation of a hegemonic epistemology and ontology created by mainstream schools and their functions that could be causing the world to be widely dysfunctional because of MAS attendance? Can another way of education cause the 'world' to be more peaceful, less war-like, more personally and inter-personally contented, less mentally ill, more socially co-

operative and kind, more trusting and less competitive and hateful? These are important questions to me personally which serve as a backdrop to my specific research questions.

Whilst I appreciate that others do not necessarily have the same values or motivation to research these ideas, I consider that this is an area wherein much can be learnt and which is little researched in the way that I approach it or in the specific places where I look for answers. This difference serves as both a motivation and value for the research.

What are the research questions?

The research questions are:

- What happens to the self of parents and other adults, when they discover the possibility in law of the pedagogical *possibilities* of AEM, but especially EHE in its autonomous style?
- Is there a moment/s of 'ontological conversion' in the self of an adult upon discovery of AEM (and in particular EHE) and, if there is, why does it happen, how, and what significance could a 'conversion' have for our conception of education and the creation of a world-view developed through education?

Subsidiary research questions are:

- How do parents discover EHE?
- Why is EHE so little known about amongst parents and others?
- Why is EHE not actively and positively advertised or 'offered' by the state as an educational possibility for parents to consider?

- Do any effects on the self reported upon discovery of EHE (and DSM) signify a split *of some kind* between those people who attend and support MAS and those who discover AEM?

- If there is a split, what is it and what might it mean?

What is the Research Methodology?

Quantitative or qualitative?

It is generally agreed that academic research uses, in practice, either qualitative or quantitative methodologies, or applies aspects of both of these together, in a mixed methodology, to address a set of research questions. A quantitative approach assesses data in terms of the numbers and statistics generated by research, whereas qualitative methods tend to use the spoken or written word as a basis for reaching conclusions about new knowledge.

The approach to the research questions set out above on the discovery of EHE by parents and others, is wholly qualitative in nature and method. No quantitative aspects will be used, except occasionally in a loose manner not claiming anything more than the generation of a 'picture' of tendencies in a fairly small sample. It is considered that only qualitative methods can truly access the intricacies and complexities of human discoveries and decision-making about the education of children and that quantitative methods do not illuminate such possibilities. Naturally there is a great deal of debate about how qualitative methods are used and presented. Key to the approach for this study is the use of qualitative methods to provide

rich answers to complex research questions (Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Clair 2005) such as those guiding this study.

It is also important to set out the reasons and rationale for a qualitative approach. Rather than subscribing to the idea that data is to be collected for scientific purposes of knowledge acquisition, qualitative approaches tend to be situated within a rationale that involves improvements in the lives of others and this is particularly so in the social sciences:

> 'The mission of social science research is enabling community life to prosper... the aim is not fulsome data per se, but community transformation' (Christians 2005, pg 151).

This linkage of a qualitative approach to social action is an appealing rationale for undertaking study and research within education. A qualitative methodology was appropriate for this research because of an interest in the interpretations of the participants and their personal stories as well as offering a research platform for their voice to be heard such that the researcher stops, to a certain extent, being 'author, authority' (hooks 1990). Generalizable 'facts' such as are garnered from quantitative analysis are difficult to present (Gorard 2010) but perhaps especially within the arena of pedagogy that aims to personalise such as AEM. Quantification does not work easily with the inner and subjective experiences that form the research data within this study. As pointed out by Denzin and Lincoln, a qualitative methodology is useful for certain kinds of work because it can help the researcher to get closer to the individual participant's world-view, securing rich descriptions in tune with a post-modern sensitivity (Lincoln and Denzin 2005). These are all qualities of this particular qualitative research paradigm that are necessary and suited to the investigation undertaken.

A quantitative approach is closely associated with the acquisition of knowledge which can represent outcomes, measured through numerical techniques such as representation in graphs or statistical tables. It is said that the power of numbers to appear reliable is 'special', yet it is also acknowledged that 'drawing causal conclusions from the quantitative data available to social researchers is fraught with difficulties' (Turner 2007). The main reason this study did not opt to use quantitative methods was located in the design of the research to be democratic in ethos. It is felt that a researcher achieving a set of numerical data is then burdened with difficulties of interpretation and manipulation that are antithetical to a democratic project involving in the fullest sense possible (within the boundaries of the research project as one person's main academic concern) all participants. It was felt that a qualitative approach is more open to democratic involvement than a quantitative approach. Other issues with regard to a quantitative approach are the inability for secure numbers in EHE to be ascertained due to a historical and present situation during the research of no formal registration system in England for EHE practice: we do not know how many home educating families there are in this period. Essentially, the research study is not about the kinds of data that quantitative approaches look for: it is a qualitative question researched qualitatively.

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCHING THROUGH TRUST - A METHODOLOGY, PART 2

What is the research approach?

A qualitative survey

Two surveys were used in this study: a series of 29 longer interviews with individuals concerned either with EHE (the majority) or DSM in some way, and a street survey of shorter interactions with 90 people.

Surveys in research are a method by which data can be garnered which shows trends. Usually survey data results in some form of quantitative model such as a graph, pie chart or percentage, where the data has been used to create a measurement in terms of numbers of x or y. The use of surveys in this research is, however, particularly qualitative in that it aims to largely avoid measurement, except by reference to quantities through use of 'many' or 'few', as in the street survey section 4, in chapter 5. Instead, what the survey is being used for is to garner 'voices' from participants so that people 'out there' in the survey field can be heard through the medium of the present writer's thesis. The survey method is being used to create a platform for voices to speak. The nature of the qualitative surveying done was semi-structured. Each 'survey' event was begun with some kind of agenda: in the surveying by interviews the aim was to investigate moments of discovery of EHE and this intention certainly guided the interviews towards and into such moments, although pointed and

focused questioning was largely avoided because it was felt that what the participant had to say of their own volition - loosely within the area of interest for the present researcher - would be more illuminating than discourse that emerged out of a fully directed approach. After all, if one is researching something that one doesn't know about, how can questions be completely the right questions? It was felt that the participants knew best what the right way to talk about such ideas relating to discovery would be. This open and semi-structured approach emerged as successful because the data gathered was extremely rich in both the interviews and the street survey.

There is an issue in asking participants to remember in the interview survey events which sometimes happened many years previous: their answers are open to distortion (Arvey and Cavanaugh 1995). However, the methodology of trust utilised in the surveys undertaken mitigates against this claim because the premise of trust means that the meaning of the research data is what is said in the present because what is said is trusted as being meaningful in the present.

There is thereby a flattening of research judgements that suits a democratic approach. One of the key elements of the surveys made was the fact that in all instances of data being recorded the researcher was personally present. Clearly the researcher's presence was an important factor in the resulting data but to avoid undue influence on data outcomes the researcher made sure of a number of aspects, such as trying not to interrupt, presenting a consistent demeanour of friendliness and happiness and respecting in tone of voice and response and further questions, the fullest sense of the participant's discourse, whatever they were saying.

A spiritual outlook for scientific research?

A qualitative methodology can seek to consider 'the return of the spiritual and the sacred to the practices of sciences' (Lincoln and Denzin 2005) and avoid the epistemological traps of the demands of a 'totalising master narrative' of 'social science' (Barone 2007). In the context of this research and the data it has uncovered, such a research attitude of an openness to the spiritual in research seems appropriate in terms of the problematisation of education as measures of assessment and progress that EHE – as one example of a mode in AEM – eschews. Qualitative enquiry is an opening into new territories. This research has been a journey of that very kind and it has uncovered spiritual ideas linked to alternative education modality discovery as well as being, in the act of research, a kind of spiritual journey for the present researcher.

Emergence of chance

This research is being approached with what can be described as a desire to qualitatively survey feelings and experiences, based on a choice of research subject open to whatever opportunities for contacts present themselves. Serendipity, such that anyone who might have had, or shows an interest in having, an experience of discovering alternative education was invited to participate in the study. The emergence of participants was dictated by nothing other than an attitude of openness to chance: one participant was encountered at a train station, where a conversation was had about her son being out of school and she was asked if she would agree to being interviewed; her telephone number was offered and the interview

occurred. Other participants were told about the research by a friend of theirs the researcher had met a party. The participants then called to enquire and it was arranged to meet and talk further and for them to participate in the study. A full overview of how interview participants were 'recruited' for this study can be found in the list of interviewees in the appendix. For the street surveys, chance in meeting the people with whom interactions were had was the 'recruiting' method, as discussed on pages 135-137.

Communities of trust as triangulation

Qualitative surveys are known to demand a greater array of skills from the researcher than formal work involving statistics, as 'the need for a degree of multi-disciplinarity is greater in informal work, which derives much of its internal consistency from "triangulation"' (Marsland et al. 2000). This internal consistency and the 'triangulation' which it can create is seen in this study to come from both interpersonal factors of the communities of trust (Sidorkin 1995) involved in the study and from the internal triangulation of the data through frequent repetition by different participants of the same idea. Very few of the participants were, to the present researcher's knowledge, well known to others in this study so in this sense, the opinions that triangulate key points in the data were not a product of agreements between friends or acquaintances. Further triangulation comes from the street survey data.

People skills?

As qualitative surveys are done, in this case, mostly through face to face contact between the researcher and participants, there is a need for people-skills and an ability on the part of the researcher to shoulder the pressures of ensuring smooth transactions of communication. This requires a variety of abilities:

> 'For informal work, the interviewer normally will need to be highly skilled in interview techniques and - often - to be familiar with a range of instruments. He or she will probably also be required to analyse the data at high speed, much of it in the field itself.' (Marsland et al. 2000).

There is also a need for the researcher to be aware that her behaviour is 'an influential factor in connection with an interview' (Kjeldsen and Nielsen 2000, section 10.3):

> 'When the analyses try to explore the persons' attitudes, motives, and characteristics, the reliability and validity of the surveys will be influenced significantly by the interviewer's behaviour.' (ibid)

This is particularly so if, as in the case of this research, the interviewer is asking the participants to remember memories of feelings and small, seemingly insignificant events that at the time were very likely to go unnoticed or remain under-privileged in their importance. There is a sense in which the researcher's skill at managing the interview in this type of delicate research is paramount and she may need to utilise conversational techniques that are deeply embedded in psychoanalytical skills, such as the deliberate use of voice tone to develop an atmosphere of enquiry with subject matter that is not normally understood as worthy of enquiry (Bady 1985; Laplante and Ambady 2003; Slipp 2000). Such interpretations of similar skills needed by the present researcher are not accepted as valid;

this research sees these 'management' attitudes as manipulation on the part of the researcher and considers them both patronising and imposing upon the natural flow of the research experience for both participant and researcher. If voice tone or behaviour changes are undertaken by the researcher it is a product of politeness for the moment of discussion, given the content of the conversation. An example of this in the research presented here would be the moments when participants cried about discovery of EHE or the difficult experiences they were having prior to discovery in their child's school. Such moments were delicate and required of the researcher a sensitivity and change in behaviour that was modified to accommodate the participant but was not part of a plan to extract any form of truth or achieve any kind of interesting data. Within the context of the methodology of trust used this would have created a distortion of 'truths' by being a technique working against trust and within this methodology of trust would have been unethical. When such moments occurred the present researcher aimed to *simply* respond (without fuss) as any caring and concerned human would in the given context.

A democratic ethos

The design and practice of the research was sought to be imbued with a sense of the democratic, as found in DSM and autonomous EHE practices. Participants were free to answer their own questions as much as the researcher's own or ask the researcher questions and were free to discuss and question the how and why of the research design and practice. Whether the openness to this was utilised depended on the nature of the interviews. On the whole interviews went very smoothly and it seemed they were friendly, interesting (for all

sides) and pleasant affairs. Had a problem arisen, the freedom to make an intervention in the course of the interview was there and interviews were undertaken with a spirit of ease in order for this openness to be maintained. The researcher was vigilant in looking for signs of fatigue or disinterest in order to respond wordlessly to possible wishes on the part of the participant to conclude; thereby opening a further channel to ending the interaction, which might have been blocked by feelings of politeness of a lack of confidence to speak out about wanting to end. No comments of a negative kind were made about the interactions but sometimes questions about the design of the research were asked: 'Who are you speaking to?', 'How are you doing it?'. An example of this are the questions received from participants by the researcher about why she, as an individual without children who has no experience of home educating nor of teaching in a democratic schooling environment, would be interested in undertaking this project. This question was always answered in full and with an opening into further questions on the part of participants should they wish to pursue their curiosity. The researcher was deliberately open and personal as part of a methodology of trust.

These exchanges often became the basis for a shared trust: the answer informs the questioner, just as their questions inform the researcher. Subsequent dialogue forms new understandings from which develop a democratically orientated manner and atmosphere. The approach aimed to avoid any dynamic that was one-sided or obtuse. Michel Foucault suggests that a 'specific' intellectual –drawn close to their subject through acknowledged common ground of struggle - is nearer to the problems she/he studies than a 'universal' intellectual, who is 'master of truth and justice' by being 'the consciousness/conscience of us all' (Foucault 1980b, pg 126). Conversations shared with participants about our 'common ground' served to heighten this nearness to the subject under investigation.

Wherein lies the validity and reliability of the research?

This is done through a democratic process linked to an openness about the reception of the research and its possible validation, or otherwise, by the community of receivers. The democratic character of which allows for dissent from and to responses on the part of all parties. It is a particular approach to research validity, found in a sense of dialectical 'mutuality' between fellow humans, rather than 'proof' external to their experiences of the present and the possible future:

> 'Given its cooperative mutuality, it serves "the community in which it is carried out, rather than the community of knowledge producers and policy-makers" (Lincoln 1995; Denzin 1997; in Christians 2005, pg 151).

Christians again supports a sense of research being valid through a democratic dialectic of effect:

> 'How the moral order works itself out in community formation is the issue, not first of all what researchers consider virtuous... In this perspective, research strategies are not assessed first of all in terms of "experimental robustness", but for their "vitality and vigour in illuminating how we can create human flourishing" (Lincoln and Denzin 2000; in Christians 2005, pg 155).

Thus validity ceases to be part of a spectrum of objective 'right and wrong' within a dogmatic moral order linked to research validated through particular criteria of interest to a world-wide community because of a requirement to be universally valid. It becomes instead localised, wherein the 'morality' of research as valid is answered through its ability to aid 'human flourishing'. The research serves the community it researches (and any outside that community who might be interested to benefit) rather than those who have no personal interest other than to impose 'acceptable standards' upon the research.

A more conventional understanding of validity as a concept within a research environment would ask that the research actually does what it sets out to do. This form of validity can be judged through analysis of the research questions, methods and outcomes of presentation of the data in response to the original research intentions.

Trust as validity and reliability

The reliability of the present research inheres in the concept of trust that forms a large part of the pedagogical framework of alternative education (Neill 1968; Stronach and Piper 2008). Trust is not here seen as a dangerous concept liable to fluctuations and betrayal but as something solid and reliable. Jacques Rancière discusses this idea in 'The Ignorant Schoolmaster' (1991): trust is seen as a pedagogical framework of human possibility; it uncovers what is true about the power of learning inherent to being human and is seen as effective not only as a pedagogical tool but as a mechanism to understand social equality. Within AEM there is a sense in which the concept of trust is important. Children are trusted to approach enjoying their learning and to manage it for themselves, as they see fit. Thus the reliability of this research is found in the idea that it is carefully constructed as being 'trustworthy' to the 'facts' of the data collected. This form of reliability can be triangulated *through the written text* of the research, where a reflective judgement on the honest and detailed disclosure of motivations, approaches and philosophies is seen to present a whole that can be considered as replete with sincere attempts at integrity and thoroughness of approach and to include a reflexivity also upon the possibilities of scholarly robustness within the presentation and the philosophical premises employed. The reader and observer of

the research is being trusted to trust it and is thereby brought into the circle of reliability and validity utilised.

Thus a response to the research as setting out its claims to reliability as a product of trust on the part of the researcher who trusts her participants to speak the truth and the participants who trust that the researcher will represent the data they offer in a 'trust-worthy' and 'careful' way, involves all parties to have recourse to an "intellectual unity and an ethic in conformity with a conception of reality that has gone beyond common sense and become, if only within narrow limits, a critical conception" (Gramsci 1971, pg 333).

Dialectical democracy

The reliability of the research is an open concept of dialectical democracy, where, if it fails to live up to standards of reliability expected, it is *open* to criticism as an open text, rather than setting forth its criteria of reliability as a truth closed to examination. As Christians points out, 'promise keeping' takes place in research (Christians 2005, pg 152) and it is this keeping of promises 'only under conditions of participatory democracy' (ibid) within a research framework, that can allow the structures of validity and reliability of the research to withhold the forces of questioning and critical examination that they may undergo.

What are the research methods?

The research methods are all linked to the idea of discovery. As mentioned two qualitative surveys were conducted (semi-structured interviews and a street survey) of the views of individuals who have either already 'discovered' ways of educating children through EHE possibility, or, who have no understanding or awareness thereof and become informed through discovery during the course of discussion with the present researcher. The methods used have as a common thread the notion of surveying opinions and feelings relating to the thesis questions, but each method works, in a personalised way, with individuals taken – through chance- from different backgrounds and perspectives, to ascertain whether there is something common to these people which can be said to be common to the discovery of alternative ways of educating. Due to the diversity of individuals surveyed, the methods are designed to suit their circumstance and capacities and also the moments of data collection interaction in the field. These various methods are listed below.

Who participated in the research?

The Interviews

In total the semi-structured interviews numbered 29, with varying degrees of length and recorded comments. More general comments about holiday plans or 'off topic' extracts were not included in the transcripts made of the interviews. Of the semi-structured interviews the length in terms of time of interaction between the researcher and the participant ranged vastly from a few minutes to over three hours, dependent on the serendipitous and practical

circumstances of the interaction, as well as the participants' liking for telling their story and the content of what they had to say, with certain participants clearly gifted for speaking about their experiences in affecting language, whether at length or in concise form. Most of the people interviewed were home educating parents or parents thinking about home educating pre-school age children. Four of the 29 participants were associated with university research, at various levels, to do with EHE and also DSM and were either not home educators or not parents. Fuller details of the nature of the participants' backgrounds can be seen in the appendix. The shortest interviews were kept as a part of the sample for their interesting, albeit brief comments. A surprise feature of the interviews was the extent to which all the people talked with had many very interesting comments to make, beyond the expectations of the researcher when setting out. This made the extent of the interviews transcript (and the categories it includes) larger than was at first envisaged and 'rich' in data that 'glows and shimmers' (MacClure 2010).

The Street Survey

The semi-structured interviews have been triangulated on several points by the street survey data, which has provided evidence that some of the comments made in the interviews are common experiences to be found also 'on the average street'. These interactions usually lasted between (approximately) 2 minutes to 10 minutes. Each interaction was unique to the background of the participant but common themes emerge. Ninety people in total were surveyed. These people, met by chance, varied widely in age and ranged from young people of 16 years and above to pensioners. The survey sheets (see appendix for an example) captured impressionistic features of the individuals, although no pointed questions about their personal self or circumstances were asked.

Why interviews to survey the arena?

Interviews have been chosen for this study as the core method because it is believed that the qualitative, face to face benefits of interviews lend the findings an inherent and democratic form of validity, based on trust and respect, each values and virtues of a democratic educational approach (Gribble in Bennis and Graves 2007, pg 35). These values and virtues are those that humans can give one another, and can be generated, through certain kinds of interaction to be found in interviews where the voice of the speaker, or speakers, is valued. It is considered that using semi-structured interviews is the most democratic form of researching for this research project, as it is an act of taking part in the premises and philosophies of democratic participation and can serve, through a portal of research publication, to open up spaces and a forum for voices which wish to speak of and share their experience. In this way the research is not just the voice of the researcher but also of others who can 'use' the researcher to gain a platform in the same way that the researcher 'uses' them to create a research project. Interviews were seen as the best research method to achieve this mutuality and democratic balance.

It is also a form of research which can *involve* others in the research process, thereby spreading the power of gathering and making information public, into the lives of others. Interviews privilege the idea of the human and its right to 'voice' and it is considered that a choice of such a method can privilege the idea of the inner and inherent dignity of the human. This happens in a way which is mirrored and reflected also within the ontology of alternative education practices and rationales. The sense of trusting the voice of the subject (especially children) within the realm of education has been slow to emerge but choosing to trust the subject's voice creates democratic modes of enquiry (Davis 2007).

It is not considered that such voices, in speaking, offer the researcher 'anecdotes' or 'ideology' –as could be the case in research considered weak (Feuer, Towne, and Shavelson 2002) – rather, the voices heard in interviews of a semi-structured kind are seen to be a natural expression of self, learnt as a medium of expression by modernised western people living in media-saturated and interview rich environments (Mitchell and Slim 2007). In using focused aspects of 'life stories' from different people, such as the moment/s of discovery of EHE, the study can find specifically any 'significant commonalities and significant differences' which the research questions sought to find (Atkinson 1998).

It can be argued that the use of interviews (and the production of transcripts of their words) reduce 'the risk of a researcher's appropriating the voices' of her subjects (Salmon 2007). This is an excellent rationale for the use of interviews in a study involving democratic ideas; a form of representation that cannot be achieved so rigorously with a method such as questionnaires because the mediation between researched and researcher is more obscure in a method that requires full interpretation before it reaches the reader. That the interviews are semi-structured is also part of a democratic rationale and mirrors the nature of autonomous EHE. A dialectic of voice mirrors the democratic, rather than the sole direction of proceedings coming from the researcher as in fully structured interviews.

Interviews can also be seen to play a part in creating another, alternative, version of events. As Salmon documents in her work with Aboriginal women, allowing their voice to be heard created a product of their real-life opinions written for the first time in the way they experienced them rather than filtered through 'government papers' that they saw as unrelated to their experiences and feelings and this had a directly democratic effect (Salmon 2007). Given the outcomes of the Badman Review, the use of interviews and the production of interview transcripts can serve to represent the participants' voice without misunderstanding,

even if the researcher herself is then considered to be responding to the data in ways unforeseen by the participants when they spoke, as is her right as the 'co-ordinator' of the research and the sole analyser of its implications.

Surveying to *create* moments of discovery

The street surveys were brief interventions – or mini interviews - on the streets of towns in the West and East Midlands or whilst travelling on public transport. An ethical condition of approach taken by the researcher was that the person surveyed could say no to a request for them to answer 'a couple of questions' and for it to be possible for the researcher to then move out of sight in order – in the researcher's perception - to 'leave them alone'. Also, the researcher felt an obligation to feel happy at the moment of approach. If the researcher did not feel happy and full of positive energy she did not undertake the research. This idea emerged from a couple of interactions when the researcher was low on energy and not in a buoyant mood such that the interactions did not flow. It was decided that with this kind of opportunistic surveying it was beholden on the researcher to offer the participant – albeit briefly – interaction with someone who was 'cheery' and who might lift their mood or at least not bring it down. Another aspect of the ethics of this method was that the researcher only approached people who seemed 'at a loose end' in some way: waiting for something, not busy with reading a book or talking to another person. They were approached in non-active down-time. One benefit if this aspect of the method was that people tended to be happy to fill otherwise empty time with something a little bit curious and personally engaging.

The interventions or interviews were conducted always by starting with the same question: 'Did you know that children don't have to go to school?' This was used as an ice-breaker question in a sense. The question was chosen because, although it is strictly speaking accurate in terms of the law, it captures, in being asked, the assumptions and foreclosed opinions about education that conflate it with school attendance. The use of this question as an ice-breaker was considered a success. It allowed the participants to display their level of conscientization, about education as open to various possibilities. It also enabled conversations as 'openers' between researcher and participant to emerge, often out of initial surprise at the question asked. Following from a brief answer or discussion in response to this question, further questions were asked. Although the sheets for the street survey had questions written in, the questions subsequent to the first question were mostly used one after the other in strict succession in interactions where the participants did not seem very open to wide-ranging discussion, but were simply prepared to participate in response to some straightforward, quick questioning. Where the text on the original sheets was written in and around the boxes in a flurry, this was usually a sign that the interaction was full of energy and a fuller discussion was being had with the participant. In this survey, the agenda was guided by a question box (see the appendix for an example with sample answers). In certain cases an information leaflet was provided so that the 'opening' of their consciousness about the possibility of EHE could be further followed up in their own time, should they wish. Out of the 90 exchanges about 20-30 information sheets were handed out, although records were not systematically kept of this. This was seen as an ethical measure, given the profound reactions some people were having to discovering EHE through this research exercise (see chapter 5, section 4, for fuller details).

There was no sampling framework used to determine who was approached to be surveyed and who was not. On the whole the criteria above of ethical approach determined much of the rationale behind who was approached. As an informal rule of thumb, people were chosen to be approached to be surveyed if the present researcher intuitively thought they would say yes. There was little that was formal about these exchanges, other than a sincere consideration on the part of the researcher for the participants' volition to take part in the exercise and for them to have a good experience of it. About 80% of the time people did agree to be surveyed, with about 10% not being able to for various reasons and the other 10% simply did not want to answer any questions. This is a surprisingly high 'rate of return'. Many of the exchanges were very pleasant affairs but without exception this method of conducting research was draining of the researcher's energy: 10 exchanges were about the maximum that could be done without a long break to 'recover'. By the end of the exercise the energy for this method was exhausted. The original target of 100 exchanges was not reached due to issues of energy but also because it was deemed unnecessary to continue. What is meant here by energy is that these exchanges were unusual, intense, sometimes very affecting for both participant and researcher and required a high level of inter-personal courage on the part of the researcher to undertake each time someone was approached, despite the success of them and their interesting content. The data gathered however was worth the effort and energy expended.

The answers received from these exchanges were written down at high speed on survey sheets so as to avoid boring the standing and waiting participant, with some data filled in immediately after the exchange was over. This is in line with BERA ethical guidelines on limiting the 'bureaucratic burden' of survey research (BERA 2004, point 19).

Interviewing for *existing* stories of discovery

This category of 29 subjects interviewed were those who were *already aware* of the practice and philosophies of EHE and/or DSM from a theoretical point of view or were parents already engaging their children in EHE, intending to do so or thinking about it. The sample ranges from a university academic whose special area of interest is democratic education, to parents of seven children, all of whom have been home educated from birth. See the table in the appendix.

The subjects were asked to talk about how they discovered EHE or DSM as a possibility and what that did to them 'internally': to their lives and particularly their sense of self. Participants were asked to describe the effect of the discovery of alternative educational possibilities on their sense of being and self as a philosophical experience of the everyday. Talk of many other matters also filled the interviews, some of it relevant, whilst other parts formed a conversation between two (sometimes more) people that was taking place in and as part of the interview data collection. See appendix for a list of questions asked between all 29 interviews.

Failed methods of data collection

In the first year of the project various research methods were considered. Of those seriously pursued the two discussed in this text proved successful and fruitful. Another three methods were however not fruitful and were finally dropped. The first was the request to two

participants recruited for the study with a tentative 'yes', for them to write out their story of discovery. This idea was based on the work of Ien Ang, who asked via an advert for stories of effects of 'watching Dallas', the American soap opera which she then used as a basis for her research on interactions and effects on the self from engaging with TV dramas (Ang 1996). One of the two participants did not send through a story and disappeared from contact, whilst the other eventually sent through her story. Although the story was interesting it was not especially rich in data except for a few images of when and where, but personal feelings were missing from the account. It was difficult to see how it would be possible with other such accounts to build around commonalities of experience relevant to the study's research questions. This is where the eventual method of semi-structured interviews and the street survey were better methods as they allowed for stronger boundaries to be set with regard to the research questions. Another failed attempt was along the same 'Watching Dallas' lines: an advert was placed in an alternative education organisation newsletter. No responses were received from this attempt. The last method that was briefly pursued was the placement on two internet forums: www.mumsnet.com and an EHE website based in Australia, asking for a 'call' for participants. The 'mumsnet' advert got one response and this turned into participant 'Sandrine', whereas the post on an EHE website – which gave the impression it was a free-for-all forum - unwittingly upset the administrators of the site who informed the present researcher that they wanted permission to be asked from them first, which was done after an apology for transgressing their protocols was given, but then got no reply.

Ethics

After the first two interviews undertaken it became clear that laying out in full the ethical conditions of the research at the beginning of the interviews was actually creating an atmosphere of formality unconducive to the kind of conversational, semi-structured interviewing that it was deemed was most suited to discussions with participants about their discovery of EHE. Because EHE and DSM are atmospheres of interpersonal ease and are far from formal, making a 'speech' about ethics at the start of the interview was not working as a part of valid research and valid outcomes. After these first two occasions it was decided to approach the ethical framework of interacting with the participants through an attitude of politeness, respect and careful observation of signs if it seemed that the participants might not be enjoying the exchange. Firstly all the participants spoken with were very helpful and kind to the researcher in their attitude towards taking part in the research (although, as previously mentioned above, that atmosphere might, subsequent to the main active empirical research period ending in late 2009, have altered.) As a gesture of thanks and respect a little present - usually biscuits or a bottle of wine according to the person and their circumstances - was taken to the interviews or if the interview was conducted at the home educator's summer festival (HESFES) it was attempted to buy participants a cup of tea or coffee whilst we sat and talked together. It was felt that this was something that was not only polite and a reciprocation for their time but also would facilitate an atmosphere of friendliness in line with 'good sense' (BERA 2004, point 20). Sometimes it was either not appropriate or possible to make such a gesture. People who took part in the interviews were –without exception – very generous with their stories, time and attitude. The exchanges were often really wonderful experiences and without aiming to flatter, the present researcher found that

sometimes the experience of researching with these people given the intimate and personal aspects of their stories connected to discovery, were affecting experiences that were life changing for the researcher in their power. This is probably something to do with her position as an 'outsider' to EHE, but also her feeling of there being a sense of having found a wonderful world to belong to, if only ontologically due to her status as a non-home educator. This was particularly the case in the examples where stories were either filled with joy, existential deliberations or where people cried (with either a sense of happy relief or joy; there was no crying of distress, except when remembering the pain of school experiences). Often the researcher came away from these conversations impressed by the special qualities of the people interviewed and humbled by their stories.

In some instances details of the interview participants cannot be supplied beyond what was observed of them and their first name. They are untraceable. Such 'untraceability' in the interviews is particularly linked to the serendipitous nature of the recruitment occurring at HESFES. This is in part explained by the informal ways that participants were recruited and also the status of knowledge about who does or doesn't home educate in 2009-10, whereby not asking for names, addresses and so forth is an ethical courtesy on the part of the researcher. The researcher did not want to conflate herself with any form of name-requesting 'official' in the climate of the moment.

Participants were assured of the intention to disguise their identities through all possible means of anonymity within the text. For the interviewees, names and any identifying data have been removed (other than where the data could refer to many people and it was of significance for the EHE context: i.e. the participant who talks about coming from Germany where EHE is illegal) and replaced with pseudonyms to obscure identification; for the street surveys, participants are allocated a number as their name or other personal details were

never asked. Were any of the participants to change their mind about appearing in the text, they were to be asked to offer a reason with a view to discussing their fears but this would have been done with a full intention of abiding by their wishes, whatever the situation and without causing them to feel that this would not be the case in any way. No one asked to not be involved after an original agreement to participate. On two occasions the recorder was asked to be stopped or was handed back because the participant felt either uncomfortable with what they were saying or reported embarrassment with the fact they had started to cry. On both occasions the option to withdraw was 'in the air', in line with BERA guidelines (BERA 2004) but was at these moments not a road taken by the participants, who were happy to continue after a brief pause and a repeated assurance of full anonymity or a friendly word of encouragement.

Limitations of the research approach and methodology

One of the difficulties with a research methodology based on trust is that the trust is based on something that in the course of research may be challenged: the researcher presents as trustworthy because they agree with the general options and opinions of the participants to do with EHE and DSM. However, what if the researcher, during the course of the research changes their opinions about EHE and DSM? Would the researcher then have to break the trust of the participant and at what stage is this done: during the research? During writing up of the research? Afterwards? This is a research risk because the methodology is premised on a need for the researcher's viewpoint to remain fairly consistent. Luckily the present researcher's opinion about EHE and DSM did not change. Nevertheless, greater

understanding of the political aspects of EHE and the impact of questions in the air during the Badman Review period has led to a deepening of understanding about EHE which has taken 'rose tinted spectacles'' away. An example of this would be the ways in which the EHE community has a few members who are eloquent, articulate and not afraid to speak out and seem to represent with their confident voice home educators as a whole. These members may not be representative of the many other home educators who do not have these skills. This was an awareness that grew during the research period and is a problem for representation of such a diverse community also reported in local authorities.

Naturally, as with many forms of qualitative analysis, there is the obvious fact that this is not a very large scale study, with the concomitant assurances that such studies can give against the 'vagaries' of subjectivity because large numbers can level out into 'reliable' averages of data. Nevertheless, commonalities were being sought, not averages, so this is not considered a serious limitation.

There are limitations inherent in the researcher's own abilities to create suitable and effective conditions for the research because of the unpredictable nature of environments and humans, without having recourse to manipulations (as discussed on pages 125-6). To minimize the limitations that can be involved in work with human participants, ethical protocols belonging to the University of Birmingham (University_of_Birmingham 2010) have been followed and the attitude towards using human research participants is in line with BERA recommendations (BERA 2004).

Perhaps the most significant limitation in the project is the vast scope of the possibilities of interpretation and the need to make choices about what is significant: this is a limitation on possibilities. Obviously another limitation is the extent of knowledge of the researcher with which to analyse and interpret the nature of this demanding and fulsome data.

Access to participants and other practical issues

As the participant 'Pippa' pointed out, parents of home educated children are *relatively* rare (out of 61 million inhabitants of the UK there are probably around 10,000 to 50,000 home educating parents). It is therefore surprising that people were recruitable to the study without difficulties and in fact with surprising ease; even to the extent that at a certain point enquiries on the part of potential participants to take part were politely answered by notice that the study had finished its active research phase. Two people, in the early days, who were initially happy to take part went 'email quiet' and considering their far away location and a desire not to 'badger' anyone, the contact was left to 'dissolve'. The research started by discussing participation with people even located in Scotland because there was a worry about getting enough recruits. However the fact that once the active research began there was no need to travel far to speak with people, suggests both their willingness to take part as well as the numbers of people who either have discovered or wish to discover EHE and DSM and are interested in discussion and story-telling.

All recorded interviews have been transcribed where discussions are relevant to the thesis' concerns and records have been kept of the street survey data sheets and all connected correspondence prior to and post-interview.

Conclusion

The nature of the data collected was in part expected. The research set out to find out if a different state of mind was present in a liking for, and interest in, different types of

pedagogy. What took the present writer by surprise was the very fulsome nature of the data. It was quite overwhelming at times, both in terms of how closely it matched what was expected but also the extent to which it expanded on, developed and enlarged every aspect of what retrospectively seems like a very great underestimation of the possible data to be found in this area of research. This is clearly a good and lucky situation for a researcher and feeling happy with the data was a regular feeling throughout the project. Often research moments would finish and the researcher would sit and be bewildered by how wonderful what was just said was and this affect was noted at the time as 'mysterious' and 'quasi-mystical'. The discourse was 'wonderful', both in terms of what was wanted for the research to run along the kinds of epistemological lines envisaged as suiting the study that wanted to be done, but also because the content of the data and the way the participants had expressed themselves with so much dignity, emotion, truth, trust and ability to interact with what was, essentially, a stranger. These were moments when doing empirical research seemed very powerful, worthwhile and beautiful. The researcher was very surprised by how often such moments happened. It made the process of empirical research a life event for the researcher; changing her perception of human beings at a deep level such that she developed a renewed and reinvigorated love for people. Because the data was so interesting and rich she also left the field with a deep feeling of gratitude to the people who had been so open with her and this feeling of gratitude and joy with and about people has stayed with her. Whilst this all sounds quite clichéd and 'mushy', it is a genuine report of a deep memory of doing this research that is still a part of the researcher's life. Furthermore, it is believed that this feeling is a product of elements of the spiritual, which it is being suggested are a part of this research field. Overall the methodology was seen and considered to suit the research questions and

functioned well and holistically to gather rich data open to analysis in line with the study's enquiries.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The following data was collected between 2008-2010, in England. It is the product of two separate research methods: semi-structured interviews and a street survey. The nature of these methods has been elucidated in Chapter 4. The interview data is split into three sections, each with their own category of focus and a fourth section discusses the triangulation data from the street survey. The first of the interview data sections looks at discovery as an important personal life event, the second considers how discovery happens and the third is a philosophical presentation of further aspects of the data that pose new questions about education. The triangulation data from the street surveys presents a picture – from the streets – of how ordinary people experience and view discovery of EHE; supplementing the findings from the interviews.

What are the main findings from the data?

> *'Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004)*

The research exercise undertaken has uncovered some significant data with regard to the discovery of elective home education (EHE). An overwhelming aspect of the findings is that

people who have discovered EHE consider discovery in very positive terms. Sometimes, it is to the extent of being evangelical about the positivity involved in their discovery, elevating it to a status in their life of extreme significance. This emerges in various ways.

Firstly, discovery of EHE is an important 'life event' for the people who have discovered it. With the various impacts (emotional, social, psychological, political etc.) of EHE discovery come a number of side effects shown in this data, often backed up elsewhere by other studies: changed lifestyle (Arai 1999; Neuman and Avriam 2003), changed family relationships (Arai 2000), changed perceptions of the politics of society, including a re-aligned attitude towards the formation of the democratic self (Meighan 1984; Arai 1999), changed ideas about community and, often, changed perceptions of education and of pedagogical practice in the life of the child and also the adults in the family (Earl 2006; Thomas and Pattison 2007).

Secondly, discovery of EHE acts as a highlighter of 'rights and responsibilities': parents come to understand that they have 'educational options' that extend far, in nature, beyond the idea of school attendance as a democratic or human right. They also appreciate with full force the responsibility they have taken upon themselves for the education of their children. When they realise this combination of ideas, it opens gates to other ideas about their place in society and the ways in which they might function as citizens of that society.

Thirdly, because the information for parents on EHE as a viable educational option in law is inadequately provided by the UK government at present – both qualitatively and quantitatively – to the extent that many people are still unaware that EHE is legal in this country, an 'underground/overground grapevine' of information operates. Whilst the various charities such as Education Otherwise and the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), do

their best to meet the needs of those who discover EHE and require information such as the ACE leaflet on EHE (ACE 2004) or referral to the Education Otherwise website, the extent of discovery is so great in terms of rising numbers, the needs of those discovering is so intense and possibly long term (longer than one telephone call or one leaflet) and the issues that are involved so complex (see chapters 2 and 3) even the thoughtful, careful and mostly very well informed advice that is on offer from such charities is officially *unofficial* responses to this complexity. It is also often augmented as well by internet forum contacts, made as additions to charity contacts by discoverees. This often anonymous or pseudonymous advice is externally unmonitored and functions as 'friendly advice'. The idea of 'trust' (see chapter 4) seems to operate within these contacts and facilitate them. This advice is dependent on varying levels of personal awareness, knowledge and attitude on the part of the advisors. It is the standard of 'organised' advice from charities which seems to be overall of the highest quality currently nationally available to people discovering EHE, given that those providing it are, in fact, nationally the 'experts' and their dedication to knowing both the law and other matters is impressive. Broadly speaking, this appears to apply also – without any formal qualitative comparisons having been made – to other English EHE organisations, of which there are a number: as Stevens has shown in the USA, home educators are characteristically well informed, actively involved with changing legislation and developments of practice and communicate effectively (2003a). Despite the astonishingly dedicated attitude such organisations have, discovery of EHE is also a serious and growing pressure on these charities and can also be a drain on extant home educating individuals, as the quote from Leanne on page 196 illustrates. A number of questions emerge from the research data in regard to this issue that pose challenges for the current status quo

relating to information and management of EHE discovery and the responsibilities of the state to its tax-payers.

A fourth issue emerging from the data is a veritable 'tsunami' wave of emotional pain that was witnessed and expressed during the interviews: parents are undergoing extreme personal emotional pressures if their child is unhappy at school. Not only is this pressure causing discovery because 'something needs to be done' but, because the focus with regards to unhappy school children is normally on those children, the trauma that parents themselves are experiencing at school failure 'fall-out' (e.g. Harber 2004; 2009, for a perspective where 'school failure' is the failure of the school, not the child or the parent) is, it is suggested here, an unrecognised injustice emerging from difficult schooling situations which affects whole families to the extent that it changes their lives. EHE discovery, in such cases, ought to serve as a catalyst for social change.

A fifth aspect of the data findings is the nature of the discovery of EHE. These features have implications for understanding and communication across divides of pedagogical difference. Connected to this aspect is the notion of 'genuine' discovery: for such discovery to be claimed, the data suggests that some form of 'gestalt switch' needs to have happened to the discoverer, with varying degrees but with the key characteristic of 'realisation'. Life changes, changes in perception of pedagogy and its aims and purposes, and personal emotional effects all follow as though discovery had symptoms that can be diagnosed similar to Kuhn's framework, as discussed in chapter 6. Compared to this is superficial discovery which is simple: it is awareness of EHE without deep interest in its features and possibly also degrees of hostility where it serves no personal purpose. This is not the 'discovery' researched here but rather a form of shallow awareness that may include detailed technological knowledge of the law, literature, etc. This dialogic framework positions

discovery as a good. Whether EHE is actually practiced after discovery is not an issue of importance, due as it ultimately would be, to individuals' personal circumstances. What matters in this regard is Freirian conscientization, whereby awareness and conceptualisation of an issue is heightened (Freire 2005; Freire 1996) of both education as modal and of possibilities of practice that happens at a deep personal level and does not 'remain distant' (Freire 1996, pg 36).

Sixth, a surprising feature of the data was the nature of the language used to describe moments of discovery: it bore resemblance to that often used in religious domains to describe religious 'conversion' from non-believer to believer. It is suggested that this indicates two things: discovery of EHE is a very personal event at a deep level of the self and also that it suggests that educational modal adherence could be a form of 'religious' belief (albeit it without being in the context of any known creed) similar to that indicated by John Dewey in 'A Common Faith' (1960), where everyday life is discussed as having enough material for the mystical.

A seventh aspect was the variety of ways in which discovery happened: it could be through chance, self-determination or word of mouth but rarely through deliberate supply of information, although home educators might play a conscious and deliberate role in 'spreading the word'. The 'methods' by which discovery happens is determined by internet access, acquaintances, interactions with media reportage, personal research, and any possible way that knowledge can be communicated, but not particularly via state information. Discovery, at the level of information, is also something that is discovered through such avenues in sudden or gradual ways. There is, the data suggests, currently no set pathway for discovery of EHE and DSM.

Finally, a meta-finding that emerges from the data is the package of questions relating to the structure of knowledge that we currently have, with regards to the nature of education. Not only does the data clearly indicate the significant extent to which education is still and hegemonically conflated with schooling, but also a current vision of education as one domain (even with its 'marginalised' practices such as EHE and DSM) or as having only one 'territory', is shown to be inadequate. Because of the existence – emerging from the data - of a need for Kuhnian (Kuhn 1962) gestalt switch mechanisms for entrance into the 'other world' of AEM, nascent talk in democratic education circles (Mintz and Ricci 2010) about 'paradigms' of education is here provided with research evidence that education is a paradigmatic field of study at the level of epistemology and ontology concerning the nature of education itself, not just methodology and where this includes also those aspects of methodology which involve epistemology (Alexander 2006). The implications of this are that MAS as education may be a 'scientific' paradigm of education that is susceptible to a 'Copernican' revolution and possible shift towards more acceptance and understanding of other educational 'paradigms' such as AEM. The idea of such a 'shift' or 'turn' as desirable and possibly in progress as part of the 'curriculum of the future', is opened up in the Cambridge Primary Review research surveys by James Conroy and colleagues, wherein, interestingly, home education is identified as a 'paradigm' (Conroy, Hulme, and Menter 2010).

THE DATA FINDINGS IN DETAIL: SECTION 1

Discovery of EHE and DSM is an important 'life event'

The data clearly shows that discovering EHE and DSM is a significant and power-laden entrance of knowledge into a person's consciousness, which affects them at a personal level and has consequences in social, emotional, political and educational directions. Because any form of discovery will involve aspects of how they made the discovery, the following interview extracts present both details of sources of discovery as well as information about the effect of that discovery. The extracts are split into two categories to indicate different foci.

Life Changing Discovery

Joan (all participants' names have been changed to pseudonyms) discovered EHE as an Education BA undergraduate, during a lecture, when a film was shown about home education. As a result of this discovery she decided to pursue a particular life direction:

> HL: "Did finding out about EHE change you in any way?
> Joan: Yer definitely, I think it has changed me. I think about things more...
> HL: Has it transformed your Self?
> Joan: ...It has transformed my Self in that I would possibly consider home education for my children... I probably wouldn't have thought of it before... my family are very conventional... has it transformed my Self?... Yes, because if I

hadn't read or accessed or had the lecture on home education or known about it so it wouldn't have got me on this path to know more about it [doing postgraduate study on EHE]" (Joan, April 2009)

Hannah spoke of how discovering that EHE was a possibility had a profound effect on her and required deep thought:

> Hannah: "I talked and talked and talked to these people at the home ed group and they all said it *isn't* easy *not* a bed of roses and think really hard about it and so I did think really hard. It was such a big step to take and it didn't seem like one you could go back on all that easy so obviously you could send them back but once you'd started along that route you're committing yourself to a whole new way of life and a whole new belief in the fact that school wasn't the be all and end all, there was another way to do it. So I thought it was a huge choice to make...It was as big a change to reject that [schooling] as to reject the faith of your family. It feels that way to me." (Hannah, July 2009)

Lynn discovered a new life when she discovered EHE and has been ever since a strong advocate of EHE practice and lifestyle:

> Lynn: "I was forced into this [due to unhappiness of son at school] but it so quickly became a life-style choice and I see that over and over again – why would you want to go back to that when you could have this? ...although we're not anti-establishment over everything we have stepped outside one box and see it for what it is: a box and we see other parts of it as other boxes, control boxes...
> HL: So if a person is in a box that gives them a certain feeling and if they are outside of a box, what's that feeling?
> Lynn: Freedom to be what you want to be; choose to be what you want to be..." (Lynn, July 2009)

Anna clearly stated how EHE had changed her life:

> *[Re Lynn's comment to her about EHE being 'good for the soul']*
> Anna: "Where do I sign? [everyone present laughs] It has completely changed my approach to society and people and living and my children.
> HL: I assume for the better?

Anna: Yes, well I think so definitely. Made me much more stroppy [we all laugh]. But I think that's good." (Anna, July 2009)

Various of the interviewees found discovering EHE or DSM a liberating experience in terms of the life-changing properties it offered and the strong affect it had on them, both in terms of their personal outlook on life and their views on education:

[speaking in context of going outside of classroom to go bird watching with some boys]
Tom: "That opened my eyes... seeing it is a different thing... I'll tell you something that really opened my eyes... [I took] these kids out bird watching... these kids *transformed*... they were just completely different as a result of this. Why? Because we had followed something they were interested in... It *really* made an enormous difference to them... their regular teacher said after a week 'My God! What have you done to them?'..." (Tom, March 2009)

HL: "So what does matter?
Illona: It's just simply being happy. Having a life you can just enjoy and look after yourself. I have a strong work ethic... This seems to free us up. We feel much freer all of a sudden. That we could go, go abroad for a couple of years.
HL: Your children not being in school has had an effect on you as a human being?
Illona: *Definitely!* [forthright]. I'm much more relaxed. [discussion re pointless homework assignments]... you start looking at education in a different light and you're saying well, what are they learning and it is all set down and in a box... whereas we can learn whatever we like! That is an incredible freedom as well!" (Illona, July 2009)

Sorena: "...it was just the idea of her going to school and being changed in any way and I had to learn to accept that, and I just thought there was something very, very wrong about having to be made to feel like that so, and when I realised that there was a choice and I didn't have to send her then I suppose it just – just everything changed! I wasn't depressed or anything about it because probably I realised quite early on [that you could choose to home educate]". (Sorena, July 2009)

Fred: "To be honest I found because I was in the middle of this umm no I wasn't it was just before I started this placement at a school near [names small town] and I felt that my practice had been transformed by that one day [at Sands School; a

democratic school in Devon, UK, similar to Summerhill School in ethos] that suddenly my relationship with the kids was totally different too and to any other school and I don't know how objective it's possible to be because it was a completely new school. I suppose if I'd been working in a school, had that experience, come back, and felt oh this is totally different um because it seemed to me I remember saying to the Head Teacher you're clearly doing something right here because this is by far the best school I've taught in and then just thinking actually the way I am being is different and it was... there was a sort of openness in me I think which partly being a supply teacher you can do because you know you've not got to get the results so there's a bit more freedom to be who you are and teach in the way that you want umm.

HL: You say that that experience at that school – just that one day – had transformed...

Fred: hmmmm

HL: What is it that it had transformed?

Fred: [long pause] I think I just got a bit more honest with the children about my position on education and the reason we do it the way we do it, it's not because it's the way I believe it should be, but it's what we're required to do and... but there's more an element of playing a game errr than me being a kind of figure, a sort of representative of this um system which I don't... erm when I was trained as a teacher there was one thing I was taught was *never* to undermine the education system you know you have to be a pawn of it and deliver it as though you really believe in it otherwise it'll just undermine everything and it'll all fall apart and I think after Sands I kinda thought 'Naaah, bollocks to that' ummm

HL: You mean you don't... like...

Fred: err... there's just a sense that we're doing this because this is what we have to do not because... I just found myself in subtle ways saying yer I know this nonsense but we've got to do it that's what we've been asked to do and then we'll get on with the fun stuff..." (Fred, May 2009)

HL: "When did you find out it was possible to do that [EHE]?

EHE Family Mother: Well, I had a book called Oxford for the under eights. We didn't know anybody who was home educating at all but I knew I had to do something. [Son] couldn't stay there because his whole personality was changing such an unhappy boy in school and so I knew I had to do something so I was going through the book and I found a contact for Education Otherwise and phoned the lady. There was nothing that I said that she hadn't heard before and she told me what I could do and just then at that stage because it's such an emotional time for anybody who's had a child who is unhappy in school for whatever reasons it affects the whole family and she said you can take your child out for a week, a month, two months, a term because at the time you just think what do I do? Um and so that's what we did and deregistered from the school straight away.

HL: When you had that conversation with her how did it make you feel?

EHE Family Mother: Oh the relief! That I think I probably slept better that night than I had done for weeks even though we had many sleepless nights afterwards because then the weight of the responsibility for the future... it's only recently

that I've thought well do I want all those advantages if they're not going to make me human? But the relief ahhhh, it was tremendous." (EHE Family, July 2009)

What these examples show us is that the discovery of educational modalities different in nature and life-style context from those offered by MAS is not a whimsical matter. Whilst many of the participants testified to the importance of such discovery, they also spoke of the deep reflection that accompanied it, both before and after. In each instance discovery is seen as intensely meaningful to the interviewee. A sense of release from tensions is also a strong feature of the data:

> Lynn: "I just feel that somebody took this weight... I'm here still [amongst home educators, despite her children being past school age] because I cannot repay what this community gave to me. This community caught my family when we were falling. This lot saved the lives of my children." (Lynn, July 2009)

> HL: "Well, you're sort of painting a picture for me for how you must have felt getting this kind of treatment as a parent [from the school] and I'm wondering: how did you feel when you read the article [about EHE] in the newspaper?
> Pippa: 'umm well that there was some sort of I guess some sort of light at the end of the tunnel, that there was an *alternative*... I suppose when I read the article I thought well, yes, homeschooling that seems like a good idea find out a bit more because it gave us an alternative to what was going to happen long term for him... you think ok there's something else to explore here, there is another possibility..." (Pippa, March 2009)

> HL: "Can I take you back to that newspaper article? Did something happen to you when you read that newspaper article?
> Pippa: Yes, the ten tonne weight sitting on my shoulder started to lift. I think, yes, when you can see other options, even if you don't know whether they are the right ones or not, even though you don't know whether they will work or if they're appropriate or whatever else, I think that seeing there are other ways which are legal and possible yes...and I think seeing that there were other ways, other possibilities yes, just started to lift that weight." (Pippa, March 2009)

What these examples point towards in terms of the life-changing properties of EHE and DSM discovery is not only relief but also volition. In some personal sense it is often also expressed that there is an area in that person's life that was not satisfactory to them prior to discovery and as a consequence they were actively seeking or wishing for solutions to a problem that they found eventually in an adherence to educational alternatives. The following comments are examples:

[Tom was talking in the context of a new experience of being a member of the labour party and other ideas and activities]

Tom: "That was another eye opener, onto another world, so I was obviously looking for these and of course the more you do it, the more you look so it kind of feeds on itself... it was a part of all that looking for other things.

HL: It seems to me from the way you're talking about that period and your life in terms of finding out about these different worlds...it seems that it was quite exciting.

Tom: Oh it was. Absolutely! Oh there's a new world... I think I was trying to save my self really... this is your sense of self coming out here because I'm facing all these contradictions... I'm trying to reconcile all of these things and the only way I can reconcile all of these things and the only way I can reconcile them is to come up with an alternative script [banging table] to all of this... so I have to find another script *for me* and the only way you can find that is by searching for alternatives... Certainly I was looking for an alternative script that could explain what I wanted to be and where I wanted to go and what was going on because I knew what I didn't like and I needed to find something I did: a new way forward...

HL: What is this force in you?...

Tom: I was uncomfortable. I wanted to restore the comfort I wanted to find a way through that I could be comfortable with. I think all of us are looking for some form of balance in ourselves... you got bored...[with the routine at university as a student]... actually you were looking for something else... I want some meaning, something meaningful to me". (Tom, March 2009)

[speaking in the context of day dreams of other lives]

HL: "Before that, did you have any dreams that were like that?

Elianne: Gosh I don't know... I still had an interesting life but I wanted something more... it wasn't just about being in the mountains it was more about life-style I think.

HL: What is that 'more' thing?

Elianne: Well... [she asks for the recorder to be turned off. It is. We have a chat about why she wanted it switched off at that point. We turn it back on with her consent.]
Elianne: Well, I think 'more' is something that is good... [talks about dreams]
HL: What was it that appealed?
Elianne: I think to me what appealed was that they [boys home educated in Montana, USA, she had read about] were able to achieve the same thing that they would supposedly have achieved if they'd been to school. They ended up going to Harvard and Yale and they achieved that without having to wear the uniform, line up, take the exams, get test answers wrong or right go through that whole deadly dry process that I couldn't stand, you know, not that I didn't like my uniform but you know the whole sort of restriction the whole sort of urrgh tightness of being [in] school." (Elianne, February 2009)

HL: "So when did you start to get interested in alternative education?
Betty: ...I'm basically looking for something else!...
HL: So when you heard me talking about home education was it a kind of 'oh what's home education moment?
Betty: Yes it was. I just wanted to find out more about it really... I did go straight to Waterstone's after we met to look at the book you mentioned... [speaking about home educated children, whispering like it needs to be kept secret that she has said it] they're just so lucky!" (Betty, September 2009)

Often remembering the extent to which discovering EHE (in particular) offered release from difficulties, caused interviewees to well up into tears which they were unable to stop flowing for a little while, until they regained their composure:

Sorena: "... I suppose it changed me in the sense that I just became freer I just thought to myself, Great! We don't have to do all those horrible things we can just continue as we're doing because we're just doing really well and we're all enjoying each other's company why would we want to change that? This is brilliant and I just can't wait for everyday (she starts to cry)
HL: You've just got emotional again didn't you?... I mean, it's a happiness isn't it?
Sorena: *Yeeeaah!"* [says smiling at me through her tears] (Sorena, July 2009)

[Speaking about an argument with a teacher who couldn't understand son had a need for special equipment]
Lynn: "It was the last straw but it wasn't the only one and it was at that point that I just went on the internet again and somewhere I must have heard something about Education Otherwise...

HL: Can I just ask you something [inaudible – wind] emotion because you looked like you were about to cry...
Lynn: Yea. My son wanted to kill himself. Yea. So I must have seen something about Education Otherwise. I didn't know anything about home education, something, newspaper, television, something must have gone in and registered." (Lynn, July 2009)

[speaking in the context of experiences of problems with son's school]
Pippa:"...but they were totally unrelenting in their 'this is their establishment they run it their way and if you don't like it tough basically'..." [talks about those who are outsiders being unable to be fitted in: she cries] (Pippa, March 2009)

As we can see, discovery of EHE (and DSM) has the potential and power to be affecting. Research has already been conducted on the ways in which adopting EHE as an educational modality is a holistic change for families (Neuman and Avriam 2003; Rothermel 2003; Arai 2000; Meighan 1995). What we see here which is new is the extent to which discovery is, in itself, an event. The nature of this event interacts with the self in ways that are transformative, emotional, liberating, serious and profound.

New ways to be and become

Part of what characterises the data that emerged from this research study were ideas connected to existential questions about what a person is living for?; what they want to be and how they want to act as a participant in a world community?; what is the meaning of a happy life?; what is education for? Discovery of alternative educational modalities of various kinds had served to open up possibilities of inner growth and development to them, similar in nature to aspects of self development highlighted by Michel Foucault in 'Care of the Self' (1984), discussed further in Chapter 7. The people interviewed often expressed that they

were working upon themselves in terms of their own self-development and understanding

and saw, furthermore, EHE or the freedoms of DSM as being able to facilitate that work.

The pedagogy of 'freedom' that was their chosen – and discovered – modality, was serving

them in ways extraneous to learning for themselves, their children or students. This came out

in the data as a focus on seeing, changing and challenging visions of being, and the

embracing of the possibilities that new, hitherto unexplored, ideas brought with them. A key

feature of such explorations of new ways of being and becoming were remarks about the

participants' experiences of feeling a sense of well-being, described in various ways:

> Nina: "...It's more like an equilibrium. I feel satisfied being in the right place doing the right thing. Most of the time. Not always but most of the time. Yep. Because when you are home educating you are more or less in control and whatever goes wrong it's your own fault. You can't blame it on anyone else but that gives you so much more choice...". (Nina, July 2009)

> *[Both Illona and Hannah talking about how they both wished they could have autonomous EHE-ed since the beginning]*
> Hannah: "School first and then picking up the pieces...
> Illona: I don't know if it's just that [EHE friend] is just an amazing person but her kids seem to soak up everything whereas the ones that are schooled first [and are then home educated] seem harder to involve in things I think... one of her daughters... I can't explain it any other way than that, but she knows who she is and she knows what she'll do and she knows what she doesn't do, she's not rude or naughty or anything like that she's just assertive... at five! Someone said it's because she hasn't been to school to have it all knocked out of her and I think that's possibly true.
> HL: How do you as adults feel now that [your children are out of school]?
> Hannah: ...mixed... the main thing is a huge sense of responsibility that his [son] future is down to me to direct and if he doesn't achieve his potential it'll be my fault if it's anyone's fault. And, the other it's just a great sense of enjoyment really learning alongside him which is just so nice, things I didn't bother with at school I'm now going wooooh along with him going oooooah and we go oooooah together! [laughs]. It's really nice.
> Illona: Yes, I think I'd say the same but the other way round. I'm not too bothered with it. I think he'll be fine. Whether other people think he'll be fine is something we'll have to cross when we come to it." (Hannah and Illona, July 2009)

HL: "Is EHE a change in life from before?

Lynn: It is a different life. The autonomous home educators tend to take on the whole thing...

HL: How does it feel though?

Lynn: I have a happy life. I'm much less stressed. I have a lovely life! Happy people live in my house. I don't have much money... we stopped chasing school and chasing that and rush rush rush – we have time together as a family..." (Lynn, July 2009)

Family Q Mother: "I think for me... I've been just amazed at how they learn and just fascinated by watching that happen... I don't know it just all falls into place... why interrupt that process?" (Family Q, September 2009)

All of these quotes are by people, following to various degrees, autonomous home education. As we can see from these comments such practice positively reduces feelings of stress and this seems to be related to the absence of measures, targets and assessments that impose needs (see Thomas and Pattison 2007); instead needs are met at a pace and in ways that are 'in tune' with the individual. It is suggested that the discovery of EHE induces *the possibility* for such ways of living peacefully. Of course, it is, as Illona was told by other home educators, not all 'a bed of roses' and can be very hard work as well.

The realisation of what EHE entails is part of the journey of discovery and seems to involve a certain level of 'clearing of the eyes' to see with new vision and the passage of time:

[About discovering the possibility of EHE when she was a teenager]

Elianne: "To me it seemed like yes, it's possible people do this out there people are free to do that, erm, but for me I didn't think it would ever happen. For me it seemed like a big dream I never thought it would be possible – I don't know if I'm answering your question – liberation, yer, it was a lovely liberating thought but I didn't think I'd be able to apply it to myself.

HL: Why do you think that? Why did you think that?

Elianne: I guess when you've been not indoctrinated but when you've been living a certain lifestyle it becomes quite embedded doesn't it that this is what we do we do our O-levels and then we do our A-Levels and then we get our job you know

and we follow the path that everybody follows because this is the done thing and um you sometimes you don't think there's a way because when you're thirteen and you're in boarding school there's no sort of way out it seems anyway..." (Elianne, February 2009)

Lynn: "I'm just not that person. It's a steep learning curve... B. [husband] and I have come on a much bigger path... journey... journey than the kids have, because we, we're indoctrinated in the other way for much longer". (Lynn, July 2009)

A key function of physically seeing or witnessing for oneself EHE and DSM ideas 'in operation' is often 'proof' needed that, despite ingrained understandings, other 'ways' are possible. Because these forms of education are so far removed from the vision of what education is and can be that most people have, actually seeing it happen with one's own eyes is very influential for mental ways of seeing. Again, the passage of time, in a sense of 'evolution' (see Toulmin 1972) is sometimes – but not always – important:

[Her lecturer had shown a video of various home education scenarios]
Joan: "I don't think I would have been so transformed if I hadn't watched the programme... it made me reassess what the point of education was... it transformed my viewpoint." (Joan, April 2009)

[Having come into contact with alternative educational modalities and ideas through discussion with the present researcher and then taken up the knowledge and applied it to her own family situation, Sara said:]
Sara: "It's a jump into something that you... it's not completely clear to most... it's one of those experiences until you go through that you don't really know what it's like" (Sara, July 2010)

HL: "I mean, but I mean, I use that word 'converted'. Is it is it an appropriate word to use?
Lynn: Yeah because my sister is now talking now about home education positively to other people now and so is my mother whereas before I don't... it was something I did; her daughter did, but I don't think they...

HL: Did you convert them to that more positive aspect, or your children, or just the way things worked out well or...?

Lynn: I think it's just the way it's the end result. We have lots of people [in the EHE community/ network] who don't have supportive families and we're saying 'really sorry you know, you can tell them all the information you have and you can put them in touch with other home educators and try to get them to see autonomous home education working if that's what we're talking about erm but it takes time that is the only thing that will show when they start seeing, trying to get them to see... look at [son] how happy he is now and try and get them to reflect back from that to this or..." (Lynn, July 2009)

See also quote below from Nina on page 171.

To see, in the context of the discovery of EHE and DSM, is to have realisations: what people are seeing in these situations seems to be shocking, amazing, astonishing and convincing to them. This sense of surprise seems to indicate that discovery has happened suddenly rather than gradually, in a way similar to Kuhnian revolution: a matter further discussed in chapter 6:

HL: "So when you found that out, how did it feel?

Tom: Well, it was revelationary! That was the beginning... It sparked something in my head... none of these... these are all sort of 'ptip' [makes sound] moments they kind of form a whole, the development of consciousness is quite a slow...

HL: you said 'ptip' moment what do you mean?

Tom: It's like a, you know, an eureka moment... it was part of a jigsaw that fell into place it was the first time that I thought...'I see, I see...'

HL: What did you see?

Tom: What do you mean what did I see?

HL: You said 'I see, I see'.

Tom: I see that it doesn't have to be like this there is an alternative way of doing this and probably a better way of doing things..." (Tom March 2009)

Pippa: "...what you're trying to do is alleviate these things [traumas felt deeply by the child in school] as quickly as possible finding that there aren't possibilities or options and then you suddenly read something and think 'there might be an option, there might be something else to do. Thank God for that I feel a lot better now, I might have found a solution!" (Pippa, March 2009)

HL: What do you think you did to them [children in the school] when you said 'I'm interested in your ideas'?

Bill: I think it shocked them because it hadn't happened before.

HL: What sort of shock is that then?

Bill: It's the shock of the unexpected, isn't it. A teacher asking us what we think! That's a pretty big shock!" (Bill, April 2009)

Following from the discovery of different ideas come different evaluations of self, society and other. In a sense, the discovery of EHE and DSM entails the discovery of another self, another side to oneself, or other possibilities of self :

Hannah: "...that success isn't everything... the normal goals... there's only what's right for you... see success in different ways".

Illona: "Yes, definitely. I think on the other planet the road to success is university and if you fall off that road then you're not successful and our road is very different to that... he'll have lots of opportunities to think about what he does and if he wants to be a park ranger or environmentalist...that would be great. I'm going to try and hold back from it being me because it's [son] and he's going to get a lot of peer pressure... a lot of people we know... schooling their children to go to university, that to me doesn't really matter it never has mattered to me." (Hannah and Illona, July 2009)

Nina: "...the problem was finding the right school so when we came over here we were looking for the right school there were two we had in mind and we choose the better one, so we thought, but it wasn't a matter of finding the right school it was a matter of finding the right way of educating and school, just any school, just couldn't be that right matter of education: couldn't provide it." (Nina, July 2009)

HL: "After someone has a religious experience or something like that they seem to change their life... etc and they don't believe in the old life they had. Is this similar?

Lynn: I don't believe in that old life. That's why I can't go back to [previous profession] or I can't go back into that old life because I'm not that person and I couldn't bite that Sure Start job that I could easily do because I don't believe in that system any more so I can't perpetuate the system erm I'm sure there must be children that school does suit but I just don't think it can be very many really." (Lynn, July 2009)

One aspect of the ways in which discovery leads to new selves and appreciations of the place of oneself in society is enhanced levels of reflection that manifest in various ways. One example of attitudes that seem to be a product of EHE, in particular, is awareness of sustainability issues:

> *[speaking about work colleagues who didn't understand EHE as another kind of lifestyle]*
> Lynn: "...They've no idea about considering the environment erm this idea of mutual respect between adults and children, the idea that I home educate erm let alone that I don't sit and teach maths and English workbooks and sit at the table... you can see it blowing their minds and making them question all sorts of things. I won't let them spray all, all the chemical sprays by me, they've never given it a thought... all sorts of things I make them stop and consider... have you considered the amount of energy that goes into a new car [manufacture]..." (Lynn, July 2009)

Such emboldened challenges to forms of thoughtlessness were reported by the research participants as part of what happens to people when they discover EHE and its communities of support:

> Nina: "...there's a certain element of anarchy involved in it [home education] which probably there is because it takes a certain frame of mind to go against the grain to not actively, to not do what everybody else does." (Nina, July 2009)

> Pippa: "I suppose like most establishments they don't have the control over it... [re failures of school provision] so you think 'ummm!' so why aren't they more encouraging of children that are learning in different ways but I think it's basically because they have very little control over it and if you have very little control over the way children are taught, and in the bigger sense allowed to grow and think, they then might have ideas that children in school don't [think] because it seems to me when you go into schools you're all taught to conform to think the same way whereas I think that one of the major things about home education is trying to allow children to follow the way they think themselves..." (Pippa, July 2009)

> Samantha: "...people's reactions are interesting... there's a little bit of a divide...
> HL: What do you mean by divide?

Samantha: I guess they think you're different, you're going to do it differently. You're not gonna be like everyone else.

HL: What makes you different?

Samantha: Not sending [daughter] to school. She's not going to go to school like all the people in her... toddler group.

HL: Is it as simple as that?

Samantha: I think so. Perhaps I dunno 'praps a part of them thinks that's a good thing to do I wish I could do that but perhaps they can't consider that concept: they're not willing to.

HL: If we imagine that this is possibly true is there anything that you could say well, perhaps it's because they're like this or like that?

Samantha: Umm, lots of people have said oh I'm surprised you want to be with her. Lots of people seem to want to get rid of their kids. They can't imagine, envisage wanting to spend 24 hours a day with them. They want to pack them off to school so they can have some time to themselves... get on and do other things... their attitude to parenting is quite different [from me]". (Samantha, September 2009)

Summary to section one

The discovery of another way of educating from a mainstream model is a significant event in the life of an individual. Most parents, having been used to a notion of education as schooling, are amazed that alternatives are viable options. The discovery of EHE, in particular, was easy to research because when it happened it had had a profound impact on all the people interviewed: they did not forget that moment or start of a journey and all of those asked had a story that they found personally significant to tell. They were also well aware of the potential lifestyle, social and political consequences or side effects of discovering this different way of educating their children or of being involved in education as a domain. Discovering EHE or DSM had opened their eyes and set them apart because it

had jolted them out of a hegemonic assumption, into a new territory of the unknown. The new possibilities now before them were seen as welcome and it is this positive embrace that signals for us the key feature of discovery that came out of the data.

THE DATA FINDINGS IN DETAIL: SECTION 2

How does discovery of EHE and DSM happen?

The discovery of EHE and DSM is obviously a product of new knowledge acquisition. What is most interesting about this type of discovery is the haphazard and serendipitous way in which it occurs (Education_Otherwise 2007). This can be explained partly by the current marginal nature of such educational modalities, far from the numbers and resources (in terms, particularly, of finances) of MAS, sanctioned through national government policy and tax-payers money. EHE and DSM are not often subjects of common conversation amongst the population of those discussing education – for whatever reason - at present. If they were, more awareness of them (and greater levels of depth to that awareness) would be prevalent in the street survey data. If an individual happens upon knowledge of these educational modalities, it is currently by chance. That aspect of discovery is one level of how it happens: the receipt of information. At this level discovery can be both sudden and gradual. There is however another aspect to discovery and that operates not on the level of the physical 'how' but more in terms of the nature of discovery as a sudden 'flash of awareness' and of a 'switch' or 'shift' of the self and consciousness. This has already been alluded to in section one but we will look at it in more detail in this section.

Physical Sources of Discovery of EHE and DSM

Various physical experiences of discovery of EHE happen: the possible scenarios are endless. Those that emerged in the research data for this study were mostly what one might expect with regards to discovering anything. Reading, the media (TV, radio and newspaper articles), word of mouth, seeing it in action, being taught about it at university, internet searches; all of these were avenues to 'come across' EHE and/or DSM. Government information and academic articles were not given as sources of discovery.

Meeting a home educator or educatee

Some of the research participants had an encounter with a person who represented to them the possibility of another way of being educated from the mainstream:

> Family Q Mother: "I met someone years ago who'd been home-educated.
> HL: How old were you?
> Family Q Mother: I was an adult I think. I was about 25 and she [home educated person] was about 20. She was at university at the time. I didn't know you could do that fully although I think I always wanted to when I was at school. Gradually through reading I sort of came to home education as a ... and got more and more interested in that..." (Family Q, September 2009)

> Elianne: "Some random article I saw that I really liked and then a few years later I met a girl who was homeschooled – an American girl – my sister's friend and she was so lovely and so was her mum and I thought 'wow!' this is a real example of someone who does it and it just, it really really appealed to me." (Elianne, February 2009)

> Hannah: "...I talked and talked and talked to these people at the home ed group..." (Hannah, July 2009)

Nina: "...then we [her and her husband] went to a parents' meeting for gifted children. We actually met a family who was doing it: as he [husband] put it "They are doing it!" [laughs], very funny and we came to talk to them and they were very nice open and friendly and I think that was the point when he was convinced that it was doable because he had to meet somebody in real life... [I ask about her story of attending the parents' evening and speaking with the home educators and ask what happened to them both as individual adults]...

HL: What happened there?

Nina: Um yer it's sort of this moment when it makes click... we had read the books together I had read the books and gave it to him saying hey here read this it's very convincing very interesting and he did but somehow it was all very theoretical it was what some people did but not what we could do or what I could do umm

HL: What did you say about click?

Nina: ... I think it made click with him mainly because he saw that it was actually something we could do it was possible. Before it was something in books.... yer, it was a moment when we met this couple because they said 'we are home educators' and it must have baffled him [husband] to meet somebody in person

HL: How did he behave? You know him very well, so...

Nina: Yer, he was quite excited. Before it was just reading the books and yer sounds interesting but then he was it became more real, more realistic.

HL: Did he look happy?

Nina: Yer I think so. Yer. It's difficult for husbands to be involved so much because most of the time he's not there but he could see that the children were not happy and that I was not happy and I think he was quite... quite satisfied that we'd finally found something we could be happy with.

HL; Do you remember anything he said to you?

Nina: No, he mainly listened. It was so interesting listening to these people telling us about home education. We asked millions of questions in one hour..." (Nina, July 2009)

Sorena: "You know my partner was a bit dubious at first and he was a bit you know it's a bit early she's only two and maybe when she gets to school age you'll think twice or we'll think twice about it but after having this epiphany it just felt as though we maybe needed to look into it more so we started looking into it, joined a home ed group locally, a very very small home ed group erm..." (Sorena, July 2009)

Being taught about EHE and DSM (either formally or informally)

Possibly because of the rise of interest in EHE, various undergraduate courses include a lecture on EHE: for instance at the University of Birmingham, UK. No doubt sessions on DSM appear more frequently in university courses because Summerhill School, for example, is a famous and established part of educational history and practice. Nevertheless, being taught about EHE and DSM is still a point of entrance into an often entirely unknown world of educational practice and in this sense a discovery. In the experience of the present writer, who has given such lectures, reactions from the majority of students present in the lecture hall are full of wonder, amazement, strange questions and also resistance on the part of some of the students, who have difficulty, at first, appreciating that education is not just or only a product of chalk and talk teaching methods in schools. Where people are actively seeking to be informed and happen upon someone who is fairly knowledgeable about the law, practice and where to get information about EHE (or DSM) – such as the present researcher - they are keen to talk with that person as an initial source of information, but there is a sense that a 'real' home educator will be eventually a better and authentic source of discovery:

> Joan: "I'd never heard about home education before and I thought 'Oh my God, that's amazing!'... [I was] quite shocked. I'd never heard of anything like that before so I was erm kind of shocked that anything like that even existed... At the beginning I was kind of sceptical about it. I was kind of hmm I don't know if that would work... so yer I went from shock to being kind of cynical and sceptical about it all and then towards the end I did start to open my eyes to different ways of educating children." [Lecturer shows a video of various home education scenarios] "I don't think I would have been so transformed if I hadn't watched the programme... it made me reassess what the point of education was... it transformed my viewpoint." (Joan, April 2009)

HL: "So when you called me, what were you hoping to get out of our meeting today?
Samantha: When K. said she'd met someone interested in home education, had lots of positive things to say about it and lots of new information about it, I was just keen to get... I think at that point I hadn't met the [local] home schooling group so I perhaps didn't know other people in the area, umm so I think I wanted to know if you knew of other people or groups in the area." (Samantha, September 2009)

Seeing it in action

In section one, seeing was discussed with reference to forms of inner realisation; both gradual and sudden, where people mentally 'see' EHE (or DSM) as a possibility in their minds and thereby discover it. Although it might seem like a repetition, what needs highlighting now is another aspect of seeing, which is a simple physical aspect: visual sight of EHE or DSM in progress, external to the self, leads to the inner sight previously discussed. Often a report of physically seeing EHE or DSM in action is enough to manifest talk of having discovered a 'new' way of education, with all the implications and effects for the discoverer that this can entail in the way of 'side effects' for life-style change and re-evaluated life priorities:

[re spending a day at Sands school- a democratic school in Devon, UK]
Fred:"...erm I just came away from it thinking this is the future really, it makes so much sense um..." (Fred, July 2009)

Tracy: "I went to visit Park School [a primary school on the Dartington Hall Estate]. We had a tour and spoke at length with the teacher-in-charge. I cried while explaining my dissatisfaction with the current primary school. I was utterly seduced by the ethos and intentions of the school. Holistic learning, focus on environment, learning through play, valuing each child as an individual that has something valuable to contribute". (Tracy, by email, November 2008)

Internet discovery

The internet seems to be playing a huge role in discovery of EHE and DSM, although there is still very little research on the role of the world-wide-web in spreading information about educational alternatives. The many references regarding support for EHE through use of the internet (Apple 2007; Atkinson et al. 2007; Gaither 2008; Hancock and French 10/10/94) and remarks made by the interviewees in this study, all back up the idea that discovery is both facilitated and grown through internet usage. The ways in which these educational communities communicate with each other and maintain their communities and share knowledge is widely apparent from the number of dedicated websites, organisations that function through internet information sharing and the many, many blogs, forums and threads all discussing EHE and DSM. Many of the participants mentioned discovery via internet searches:

> Lynn: "...I actually put the words 'Education Otherwise' into Google... but I didn't know any... I didn't know it was an option *really* I wasn't aware consciously of it being an option but somewhere subconsciously I'd heard it so I put 'Education Otherwise' into the search engine and up came that page and I knew I'd got the answer... When it said [excited] when it said 'Education Otherwise' home education, I was like 'woooooarrh I've got it got it! I've bloody found the answer!' I knew. There was never a second of doubt that they were coming out of school, you know..." (Lynn, July 2009)

> Sorena: "...and I can't quite remember how I came about the whole idea of home education but I remember just doing a search on the internet and doing home education in Google or whatever it was and I came up with various sites probably Education Otherwise and all the common ones, all the typical ones, and all it said was it's legal and that's what I needed I didn't need to be told anything more. I just wanted to know that it was possible that other people were doing it and at that stage I didn't know how they were doing it or what methods they were employing to do it, I just knew it's legal, I'm allowed to be with her at home and for her to be with us and her community, so that's it. That's it, and it was like a whole weight lifted of my shoulders and it was a just like I said almost like an

enlightenment like a realisation that this was the way ahead that this was it..."
(Sorena, July 2009)

Family H, Mother: "We joked oh we're home educating you... What happened was I was joking about it and I went to Amazon and put home education in and Alan Thomas's book came up and I just read the review, said most of it is done conversationally, and I thought to myself: 'That's what we do anyway'..."
(Family H, July 2009)

Samantha: "I suppose I became interested – I've got a computer so I read various blogs- and I become interested in Montessori, Steiner, Waldorf and then various blogs of people who were home schooling or un-schooling and it just seemed like a wonderful thing to do. That's... that would be my dream." (Samantha, September 2009)

Nina: "I asked several people on the internet and the internet is really good for that because you can go on all the yahoo groups for the different home education locations... (Nina, July 2009)

Sophia: "The ones who stay [with EHE] are the ones who don't labour to get informed as they are already committed in deeper ways... There is less reason to stay as a member of a home education support organisation if you are tapped into everything that is happening anyway, i.e. if you are on the internet all the time."
(Sophia, May 2010)

Information in books or leaflets and through charities

There is now a burgeoning global commercial market in English language books on EHE (Apple 2007, pg 115; Stevens 2003a), with many of the more mainstream presses deciding to publish in this area (e.g. Continuum, Jessica Kingsley, Teach Yourself), where previously only small independent presses saw value in the topic and were not primarily publishing for profit but more for information dissemination and sharing of ideology through print (e.g. Educational Heretics Press, Cinnamon Press). As previously mentioned on pg 148-149, the

Advisory Centre for Education publish a leaflet on EHE (ACE 2004), although in this small scale study no one reported having discovered EHE through this avenue. As an aside to this brief discussion about a proliferating market of 'positive' and largely accurate information, there was also no-one amongst the sample who talked about discovery of EHE through any government website or information point such as the information provided by local councils on EHE. In the course of research for this study some people, both within and outside the sample, pointed specifically to these sources of information as misleading, distorted and factually wrong in parts: quality of information was not judged to be high. As discussed above, discourse analysis by the present writer of the information found on Coventry City Council's website in 2009 found that the premise and default position of the information was that of school practice, which actually led to inaccuracies in law and distortions in the information provided (see pages 54-57). This is a commonly reported objection to government information on the part of those who can 'tell the difference' between educational discourse based on AEM and MAS. It was also a part of the public response in the Select Committee Enquiry to the Badman Review (Badman 2009) because supposedly 'new' information was also judged by many to be likewise conflated:

> 'I have been fortunate to meet many home educating families over the last twenty years and they have led me to look at schooling afresh. I believe the Badman review demonstrates the kind of blindness that equates all education with school education and this leads to distortions in his recommendations about home education. His recommendations will damage the home education model which could provide invaluable insight for school education reform—and this is of consequence for the whole country.'
> (Children_Schools_and_Families_Select_Committee 2009, pg 36)

All this ties to public complaints about an inadequate and inactive government information policy (see page 53 for the DCSF 'policy' on providing information about EHE), which the

street survey findings in section 4 of this chapter bear out. In light of this it is probably fair to say that discovery through such sources of information is limited and often requires levels of re-discovery once contact with 'genuine' home education information and correct legal advice (such as that offered by the Education Otherwise helpline for instance) is achieved. Books written by home educators, or researchers and writers known as experts on EHE who 'properly' understand AEM from an AEM perspective (e.g. Thomas and Pattison 2007) are discussed within a framework of trust as sources of discovery of information on EHE. As previously indicated, the nature of DSM discovery sources and the politics and otherwise of this is outside the scope of this study in its fuller details.

> Sorena: "We thought well we'll read a little bit more about it about different methods you know the books people recommend like John Holt and I sort of everything that I read of his I'm still in the process of reading well, I know this, I thought to myself: I know this! And it's just confirming what I already know. I didn't care whether it's based on evidence or not it was almost like a belief that this is the way we should do things. So I suppose my comment on err it being like a religion it's that it's that you believe in it in your heart you know and it doesn't matter what you read really. Reading, all that that did for me was confirm what I already believed. I'd be surprised if not more people think that erm I don't know my partner seems that for him it's more about evidence and reading you know reports and whatever maybe it just depends on your character and maybe I'm more gullible than others or maybe I just go with my gut feeling more..." (Sorena, July 2009)

> *[re reading Summerhill by A. S. Neill]*
> Sara: "That's also what I felt when I read the book. It really affected me a lot...powerful..." (Sara, July 2010)

Sometimes it is simply contact details for EHE charities, which are currently acting as a central point of reliable reference for discovery, that are enough for the journey to discovery to begin:

EHE Family, Mother: "...so I was going through the book and I found contact for Education Otherwise and phoned the lady. There was nothing that I said that she hadn't heard before and she told me what I could do..." (EHE Family, July 2009)

Katrina: "Yea. You just look it up on the internet and there's a wonderful organisation called Education Otherwise which is where I started off and it gives you the legal aspects as well..." (Katrina, July 2009)

HL: "How did you find out about EHE?
Illona: A few years before I had looked at it and got the Education Otherwise booklet and I think I remember looking through that and thinking it wasn't me. I think I would have struggled with the younger child and of course my train-tracks were school! I should have been more open to the idea I think." (Illona, July 2009)

In fact mention of the charity Education Otherwise was a significant feature of the data on physical sources of discovery. Not only is this charity the most prominent but it also has a helpline. As Education Otherwise is the best known EHE charity, its dual function of commonly used information and support provider means that it both receives enquiries and answers them in a supportive and accurate way, which is an important element of its difference from other sources of information, as discussed above. This combination could be seen to facilitate discovery in the deeper 'genuine' sense meant, rather than just as a superficially assimilated new piece of information, although even that seems to have its own effects. The picture for discovery through Education Otherwise is, however, complex; with the quote below showing the extent to which understanding for genuine discovery is not an immediate or simple matter in many cases:

Sophia: "We always get a lot of enquiries when it's in the news... we get all levels of questions... they are saying the same thing over and over again. People can't get over the idea that nobody is watching you and nobody is telling you what to do. People can't get their heads around it... People call thinking we're the council, think we are the inspection people or they say 'He's nine, what should he be doing?... A lot of people don't realise they have to be the people doing it and

that they can't just go to work whilst someone else does it. We get that at local groups as well. They ask 'which tutor do you use?... People sometimes join EO and stay in EO "in case they ever need support." It's seen as a kind of insurance... We have a lot of people making inquiries who don't have access to the internet... don't know how to google..." (Sophia, May 2010)

As these comments indicate, there is much about discovery of EHE which is unusual: it is complex *because* it requires another mindset, specific to educational provision that is alternative. These matters are discussed further in chapter 6. Discovery of EHE is seen here as a site of information about other issues connected to social questions such as the equity of internet usage, parental awareness of responsibility for their children's education, a sense of 'nannying' and of a 'surveillance gaze' (Foucault 1980a) that parents might have when it comes to education, and so on. More research is needed with regards to the role of such charities in the discovery and support of EHE and the extent to which they might be fulfilling a role that ought to be met by government funding as a part of taxpayer's rights to information about something as key as education.

Discovery through the media

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the media is playing a large role in discovery of EHE in particular. Curious and exploratory articles, written mostly from the point of view of intrigued journalists (see pages 37-40) are fuelling the fires of heightened awareness. Unwittingly, even negative articles that appeared during the controversial Badman Review period, caused spikes in enquiries to the EHE charity Education Otherwise helpline:

> "Ironically there was an upsurge of interest [during the Badman period] because more people became aware that home education existed". (Sophia, May 2010)

It stands to reason that media publications in widely circulated formats would attract the intrigue and attention of some. It seems this interest in and for discovery is augmented by school difficulties. Perhaps it is not surprising that discovery of EHE through the media is only one stage in a much longer journey of discovery. The fact that the media is informing parents of their parental rights with regard to education, rather than state agencies is a curious situation:

> HL: When did you first find out about home education as a sort of possibility?
> Pippa: Ummm well I knew about home education only very slightly because you don't see it in the media or you didn't! You didn't hear about it. The only time it would come up would generally be on the television when it would be a slightly obscure family that was on the television because they were slightly different and everyone would 'tut tut' and 'oh isn't that strange' so I knew it was an option I suppose or that people did it but it seemed to be odd people in inverted commas that did it and they were always portrayed as people that didn't fit normal society... We're not living in the third world with sweat shops but it was quite by chance that I saw this newspaper article.
> HL: You bought it that day?
> Pippa: Yes, that was blinking good, wasn't it! Phew! Ah dear. Relief!... and what that article did was make me think 'oh thank God for that!' There might be something else we can do. There might be an answer or just a different way of going in the short term until I find a better solution." (Pippa, March 2009)

Discovery despite no information

Parents who have discovered EHE are well aware that the information about its possibility comes to them despite a dearth of active information through official channels. Time and time again the interview research participants in this study suggested that the government

ought to provide information on EHE as an educational option. The street survey data in

section 4 of this chapter especially overwhelmingly confirms this because a pointed question

in this regard was asked to many parents, who suggested they want to know EHE (and AEM

more broadly) is a possibility and they want to be told by the same source of information

from whence information comes about school provision.

Samantha: "Everyone should have the choice to home school. Lots of people don't know about it.
HL: How does that make you feel?
Samantha: Sad for all the people who don't know. I'd quite like to go and tell everyone about it." (Samantha, September 2009)

Pippa: "When you get all your information from the LEA regarding nurseries and ages and applying for places at primary schools – there is no information readily available on alternatives... there's no information on the alternative of home education and I think primarily that's because they don't want you to home educate... they want everyone neatly together so they know what's going on!...[re inspection by LA] so they have input but there's no information prior to that... [re uneasy alliance LA's and EHE-ers] It's almost as if 'Ok we'll have to let you home educate if you want to but we'll make it as hard as possible kind of attitude and the idea that home education is the easy option really is so far from the truth... You feel impotent as well. You know, with all the resources you have, not being able to find a solution [to difficulties with a school] in this day and age, It just seems really bizarre." (Pippa, March 2009)

Katrina: "I felt empowered I suppose you know actually I can do something about it and there is an alternative and I read everything I could find... and I thought yes we have got rights as parents and I thought yer... you know... I wish I'd been aware of that right from the beginning.
HL: Why?
Katrina: Because I think because I feel my children weren't happy...
HL: As a parent, what do you do? [re EHE]
Katrina: You can't unless you know about it before hand because nobody informs you of these things. You don't go into the education system they say well actually you can teach your child at home: did you know that? So unless you hear from other parents who home educate it actually very difficult to realise you can do it, that it's an option.
HL: Do you think they should be told?
Katrina: ... perhaps they should.. I think there's some danger in parents taking their children out for other reasons..." [gives example of woman who took

children out and is doing autonomous EHE. She then goes on to express jealousy and admiration for this mother's 'bravery' to do things differently] (Katrina, March 2009)

Summary to section two

People discover EHE (and DSM) through various methods, none of which it seems are pre-planned attempts. Rather, overwhelmingly, discovery seems to happen by chance and often reactively; either to an unhappy situation with MAS or to ensure that one doesn't occur. Nevertheless, despite the nature of discovery of EHE as seeming to be an escape from something negative it is a predominantly positive event in a person's life; one they remember well. Even when entrance into discovery of EHE is forced because there is no other 'solution', gradually a journey of deeper discovery seems to take place which transforms the coerced entrance into EHE (or DSM) into something that becomes positive. This data is supported by other research (Parsons and Lewis 2010). It is possibly the point at which discovery becomes positive that a 'switch' occurs, because shifts of this kind do not seem to be products of coercion but rather internally agreed upon events, which are permitted in some sense by the individual to happen, subject to no other influence than volition.

One of the outstanding features of the data (given the current status of AEM within education as 'alternative' and marginal), is that discovery of EHE (and DSM) follows no set pathway; either at the level of information assimilation or inner 'realisation'. It can involve reflection and experimentation as well as a breaking down of resistance to disbelief or lack of imagination and knows no set timeline as a full journey, within which a shift seems, at some point, to be occurring.

Because of the strong role of the internet in discovery of EHE in particular, discovery is set to be globally applicable, especially as other languages than the dominant English market are now talking about EHE as an educational possibility: ie. Spanish.

The many paths towards discovery of EHE and DSM – media articles, internet, books, face to face encounters, seeing it in person, hearing about it, etc mean that a network of people who know about it in a deep manner is in the process of growing. As network theory tells us (Newman, Barabasi, and Watts 2006), it is only a matter of time before conscientization of EHE reaches unprecedented levels such that it quite likely will have the power to present a new epistemological and ontological challenge to the hegemony of the concept of education as conflated with schooling. Of anecdotal note: during 2010 alone, the present researcher was asked to be filmed talking about EHE four times, two of which were intended for potential television or film projects. These small beginnings are only a glimpse of a wider picture of EHE discovery possibly occurring in the future from visuals of EHE hitting the screens in a mainstream way. News in 2010 of various filmed projects about EHE proliferated. As we can understand from the above data, in one way or another, *seeing is believing* when it comes to EHE. It is, because of these signs of change in the visual profile of EHE especially, only a matter of time before large numbers of people begin to question the conflated, 'enthralled' (Robinson 2010) concept of education as MAS, through mainstream discovery of EHE and DSM.

THE DATA FINDINGS IN DETAIL: SECTION 3

Philosophical data and its questions for education

Curious features of the interview data emerged during this study, which deserve closer attention. These features point to questions about education that may have the power to take education into new directions in the future. Firstly, the data is suggesting parallels in terms of discovery of educational possibilities, with scientific discussions of how discovery happens (Bird 2000; Kuhn 1962). The seeming existence of a gestalt switch mechanism (ibid and discussed further in chapter 6) manifesting in the data is important: it shows us that education is paradigmatic and this has implications. These are with regard to how we can view education as comprised of various worlds that are all features of education as a field of study subject to crisis, change and mutation but also affect what we could do with education, were a shift in our perception to happen, and how – in what ways, according to what epistemology and ontology - we act on any such new knowledge.

Secondly, language used by the interviewees to try to describe how discovery of EHE and DSM had made them feel, suggests that education as a possibility – within a mode that is chosen and believed in as appropriate for the self – has the power to be deeply affecting for a human being in ways similar to the power and impact of religious understandings, when within or outside of a creed. It is in this sense that adherence to a particular educational

modality could be considered as a form of belief. We will now consider, one by one, each aspect of the data which emerged that together begin to point towards such questions.

Is there a 'gestalt switch' into an alternative educational modality?

The research questions that created this study looked at whether there is a shift of some kind from one educational modality into another as a part of what might happen to the self of adults upon discovery of the possibility and possibilities of AEM and in particular EHE. The philosophy and theory surrounding this is considered – from a Kuhnian perspective (Kuhn 1962; Kuhn 2000) - in chapter 6. The data presented below suggests that there is indeed such a movement, recognised and experienced by those that discover EHE and/ or DSM. This is, it seems, the same kind of 'shift'/'switch' that is being asked for in this contemporary period by educationists who believe a MAS model is broken (Miller 2008; Robinson 2010; Meighan 2005; Harber 2004). Perhaps even more interestingly the model of 'switch' that the data suggests seems to very closely follow Kuhn's framework as presented in 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' (1962).

Crisis

Crisis, in Kuhn's framework, is the precursor to discovery of a new way of doing things. It is characterised by discomfort, confusion and a search for alternatives. As we see below, crisis features in the data as a part of the whole picture:

HL: "Was looking for alternatives a way to escape?
Tom: Yes, it was partly that... I was uncomfortable. I was unhappy and I knew things weren't right and that's not caring for yourself... but I'm trying to find a way out of that... I could start to make choices". (Tom, March 2009)

Sandrine: "We've had all these problems with school and it's got to the point where I don't want her in school... As a parent you always want to do what is best for your child and you are told what is best for your child is to be like every other child and go through the system. You know, they have your details. You can't escape from them. You get letters when they're such and such an age you need to do this, you need to register for that, you need to be going to a nursery, you need to be thinking about first schools and you just think about being free from that system and having the freedom to make the right choice, because I could go away from today [a discussion with the present researcher about educational alternatives] and think actually that's not for me but at least I would know I've done everything I could for my daughter to say, right that's the right decision because of X, Y and Z whereas at the moment I'm almost manipulated..." (Sandrine, May 2009)

EHE Family, Mother: "...We didn't know anybody who was home-educating at all but I knew I had to do something. J [son] couldn't stay there because his whole personality was changing: *such* an unhappy boy in school and so I knew I had to do something to..." (EHE Family, July 2009)

Discovery as resolution to crisis

Following a period of crisis (of whatever kind), the subject – and in this case the participants in this research study – report having discovered something that resolves the issues that previously so troubled them. With this comes a sense of release and relief and a feeling that the pieces 'fit together' in ways which were elusive before but now make helpful sense and are some sort of 'information resolution':

Pippa: "Thank God for that I feel a lot better now, I might have found a solution!" (Pippa, March 2009)

Carolina: "Have you read 'Free Range Education'?
HL: By Terri Dowty?
Carolina: Yea. Well, there is a moment where it starts to make sense. That's what she says. She calls it, like lessons from the leg break fairy, because she breaks her leg and erm realises that she can't do all the things with her sons... but they're learning anyway..." (Carolina, July 2009)

[Her son was crying all the way to school]
Katrina: "I just did not know what to do because they start muttering about 'have to get social workers in if your children are below attendance' and all this rubbish and of course you start worrying about it and when we almost got to school that day it suddenly clicked and I thought this is absolute nonsense, it's complete and utter nonsense so I turned round and went home... I felt with my youngest son that in a way it was neglectful of me to try and make him go to school when he wasn't well and it was only when I suddenly thought, well, I don't care what they say or what they think, I'm going to do the right thing for my child". (Katrina, March 2009)

Gestalt Switch

A 'gestalt switch' concept is used here to identify a fundamental change of some kind: a wholesale movement of the self from one place to another; of one way of thinking and seeing to another way. The participants here all seem to recognise that a shift is possible and some even name it as such. In each instance there is movement: climbing out; opening; shifting; transforming; changing. These movements are characterised as part of decisions freely taken by individuals and as a volitional characteristic of the decision to 'move' or 'switch'. That such 'events' exist when one changes one's mind about education is an interesting phenomenon:

Samantha: "...I have to remind myself to think outside these set ways, you know, embrace other ways... I can't think of an example but I'm sure there are things I'd

do automatically without thinking about it, you know and I should be not doing it that way.

HL: When you catch yourself in one of those set way moments is there a feeling that you experience?

Samantha: I suppose there's a sort of tinge of sadness there that I've kind of been moulded into that set way of doing things.

HL: Are you able to get out of the set way or do you feel...?

Samantha: I think I am...

HL: How do you do that?

Samantha: I climb out! I don't know. I suppose it's a kind of letting go type of thing..." (Samantha, September 2009)

[We discuss empowerment and self confidence in the context of working in education]

Betty: "Yea it is about that psychological break-down of yes of breaking out of what you think is a cell you know a prison cell and in fact, the door's open. But, it's just opening it!" (Betty, September 2009)

HL: "What kind of effect do you think that shock [of another way of being taught] had on them?

Bill: Disbelief at first. That's what they said: 'Are you real?' and then when it was for real they were for it.

HL: Where does that disbelief come from?

Bill: Well, years and years of experience where the whole system had been 'you do as we tell you'.

HL: So what were you doing in changing that?

Bill: I was saying 'why don't we devise a situation where we all have a say...

HL: But that's the practical thing you did, what do you think you did to them as human beings when you suggested a difference?

Bill: Even broaching the idea was a different kind of relationship wasn't it. 'I think it's worth having your opinion' was a fundamental shift of position."

[....re students self-managing their course of study at HE level]

Bill: They create that switch. I just provide the conditions.

HL: What is it in them that creates that switch?

Bill: That they've been given the opportunity and have seen the possibilities and decide they either will or will not go with the opportunity." (Bill, April 2009)

[a home educated young person talking about meetings with people who don't understand EHE]

HL: "Say what you said – your experience when you meet them...

Cathy: Either its cool or they completely don't get the idea – think it's like school at home and think what's the point and generally over time it can take about four years for the people I've regularly met and then they suddenly start thinking 'Heh, that would be really nice!'. It takes a really long time for some people. The longest I've met was a school teacher I knew and she sort of thought 'Oh that's a

bit odd, for years and then just recently she thought 'oh that would be really nice to be at home and be with my family and go out and do things, so it takes people quite a long time to adjust to the idea and they're quite fixed in their mentality of school.

HL: When we were in there you used the word concept.

Cathy: Yer. They don't understand the concept of being at home as a family and learning things. They don't understand those can be one and the same whereas home edders know that. In school the idea is that family is one place and learning is another and the idea that those mingle doesn't cross most people's minds."

(Cathy, September 2009)

New worlds

Having moved the self through a process of crisis to new understanding that resolves the crisis, and all this involving either simultaneously or eventually a fundamental shift in positionality, the research participants speak of ways in which they find themselves in strange new worlds where different laws and meaning apply. They often also spoke, without the sharing of the vocabulary beforehand by the present researcher, clearly and often of 'worlds':

[her children were happy as home educated children]

HL: "Did you feel happy?

Lynn: Somebody's described to me since, their big thing was finding the community, err, finding there was another way. You didn't have to be school at home, that was the other thing. Somebody described to me that, quote, 'It's like Alice goes through the looking glass and finds another world' and that's exactly what this is like. Especially coming here somewhere like this [Home Education Summer Festival: HESFES] people have no idea this exists. It's like a Harry Potter world you know, going through that station 9 and ¾ and look what's here! Coz it's different... people just don't know.

HL: How is it different? Why is it so different?

Lynn: Because kids are enjoying themselves, following their own interests. I mean, my 3 [children], complete [inaudible] I've already said that [son] is here and [daughter] is not: instead of having an education that's broad and balanced and dictated by somebody else the education path they've followed is *completely*

different. They've ended up in absolutely opposite directions, you know..."
(Lynn, July 2009)

HL: "After someone has a religious experience or something like that they seem to change their life... etc and they don't believe in the old life they had. Is this similar?
Lynn: I don't believe in that old life. That's why I can't go back to [previous profession] or I can't go back into that old life because I'm not that person and I couldn't bite that Sure Start job that I could easily do, because I don't believe in that system any more so I can't perpetuate the system, erm, I'm sure there must be children that school does suit but I just don't think it can be very many really".
(Lynn, July 2009)

Tom: "...I realised that there were alternatives and I think that's the crucial thing – it doesn't matter whether I agree with that particular book, but what I realised was that there was an alternative world out there.
HL: Ah.
Tom: That nobody had particularly shown me at that time but you were starting to get inklings..." *[later in life became Tom became a strong advocate of educational alternatives and critical of mainstream schooling]* (Tom, March 2009)

Sandrine: "...with my son I'm at the very start... if I know how to put something in place so he doesn't have to enter that world, that's good as far as I'm concerned... [re failings of school system]
HL: When you say... you want to get them out of that world, what do you mean by that world?
Sandrine: Well, one where they've constant... I ... just ... always been a little bit anti-establishment I always would much rather they've not encountered homophobia, racism..." (Sandrine, May 2009)

HL: "So if that's one 'world' and you discovered another world...?
EHE Family Mother: Yes. Which doesn't have short term goals either... in fact it doesn't really have any goals..." (EHE Family, July 2009)

Wife of Bill: *[re politician]* "They can't get their heads around [that] millions of them lead totally different lives to those which they lead and I think that's true to some extent for people within education, they experience this world – the people they associate with you know, frequent that world, and it's hard for them to get outside it. I don't know why we've done it mind you.
Bill: There are several reasons. We've been involved in home based education which has given us a totally different perspective on things.
Wife: And I was early years education...

Bill: That's a different perspective too..." (Bill and Wife, April 2009)

Pippa: "It kind of – because we're slightly alternative in terms of there aren't many people in our position – it sort of allows us to live in a parallel universe to everyone else. The world goes along its own sweet way and we kind of trudge along this route which is quite bizarre for me because I am conformist and conventional...so it allows me to live as I would have done under different circumstances. I don't know." (Pippa, March 2009)

Incommensurability

One of the difficulties with such fundamental shifts is that new rules of language (of all kinds of language: linguistic, social, emotional) apply to shifts into EHE (and DSM). According to Kuhn (Kuhn 1962) this is a serious issue pertaining to 'revolutionary' changes and can cause significant problems of understanding across 'worlds'. Such problems are seen within this data and also the more general situation that EHE has found itself in with the Badman Review (Badman 2009). Some expressions of recognition of incommensurability shown below lend further credence to the idea that movements between worlds have been occurring and that following Kuhn's framework (Kuhn 2000), incommensurability strongly applies:

Pippa: "...people who are prepared to meet you half way and don't get me wrong there are a lot of home educating parents that are set in their ways shall we say as school people. I think their trouble is there's still a lot of erm wrong ideas about each other but nobody's ever brought together. You know there's... well, I think society has a particular idea about home educators but they're not going to be the ones involved in the education. Schools have attitude to home educators generally and home educators have a particular attitude towards teachers and conventional schooling and there there's this great big no-man's land and I think it would probably benefit a lots of people if there was ever a common ground where people could discuss their views and ideas and how because to my mind what you are trying to do is the best thing for the child and yet it seems to be an awful lot of adults battling over having their rights or their views recognised at the expense of the child." (Pippa, March 2009)

Leanne: "I've been on a long journey and I've done lots of stuff and seen lots of people and so on and that's how I've got where I am, I think when you meet new people like Badman and so on you have to go where they are and pull a little bit you can't say 'no, I'm over here' because if I talked to him like I'm talking to you he wouldn't understand what I'm saying: he would just think I'm just I'm mad, or wrong or not worth talking to! A fanatic, yer." (Leanne, April 2009)

Dutch Conference Speaker: "...I never planned it but they still did it [learn] and you can still use... what I say...education needs... it's like Chinese for educational talks, you don't use it in your normal day to day life and have education but afterwards you have to make like a translation into school talk. It's a bit like what L. said you have to have some... learn a new language so people can hear what you are trying to say. If you just stay with your own language it's like talking to the wall so it's (sic) no point." (Dutch conference speaker, 2008)

What is the non-creed based religious element?

'There is no reason for denying the existence of experiences that are called mystical. On the contrary, there is every reason to suppose that, in some degree of intensity, they occur so frequently that they may be regarded as normal manifestations that take place at certain rhythmic points in the movement of experience.' (Dewey 2008, pg 26)

In the USA home education is both famous and infamous for large numbers of communities who are, rather than being home educators with a mild religious adherence, fundamentally and significantly religious, with a use of home education to serve their religious needs for segregation (Kunzman 2009; Stevens 2003a).

The data for this study is not suggesting that the home educators who were consulted in England are also religious in this sense: far from it, with some of those who will now be discussed even claiming – unasked - as part of their interviewee transcripts to be atheist. Only Elianne and Edmund, amongst the sample, were openly and strongly Christian. What

emerges is however some degrees of *feeling* which have been hitherto mostly associated with religious domains. Home educators do not, on the whole, seem to be aware of a number of parallels between their own discourse and that of religious fundamentalists. Such a claim needs a careful framework and outline of explanation for it to not be misunderstood.

Evangelism

Amongst the parents interviewed who had discovered EHE and were then practicing it, there was a strong sense of community and mutual encouragement noticed in what they said about each other and the support they gave each other in practical as well as psychological and emotional ways. Not only were parent-to-parent enquiries for discovery met with enthusiasm and friendliness but there was also a sense in which anyone who seemed interested was *welcome*: in this sense there seems to be an informal 'church' of EHE, where anyone interested to join this currently marginalised group is either needed, wanted or simply liked for being of a similar mind-set to them. Some small signs of evangelism emerged in the interviews, usually as an effect of a good experience:

> HL: "And what if someone had said you could take your child out of school?"
> Illona: I think that would have made a tremendous difference actually. If I'd been able to speak to someone at an earlier point and realised how wonderful it is and every chance I get to say it now to other people who say talk to me in the street or something you know the hairdresser was talking about it the other day I say "Do it! It's so wonderful!". Yeah, so it would have been nice to have someone say that to me." (Illona, July 2009)

> EHE Family, Father: "Because where we are just appeared just outside one catchment and inside another... certain of the local people are unhappy at the choice of schools their kids are going to be getting and one of these has floated

the idea of going home ed and I really don't think it would have occurred to them before-hand so, I think we do some good.

Son: We do do a bit of home ed preaching... [laughs] not on purpose though.

HL: What do you mean [son's name here]?

Son: Spread the word a bit. Not on purpose. Half the time we don't even know we're doing it." (EHE Family, July 2009)

[Nina is German]

Nina: "Would I like it to be not so unknown in Germany? Yes, I would – In fact I've told all my friends and there's one family - there's many families that are in a similar situation in Germany and would like to do what we are doing. They're actually quite envious I think, so that's keeping me from telling them too much about it, about the good sides I also mention the bad sides.

HL: What are they?

Nina: Well, that you have to put more effort into education than when they were at school, you can't blame anybody else that's probably... or that... you can get isolated sometimes erm, you get on each other's nerves because you are closer together so you have to come to an arrangement. It's not always easy but it works quite fine. Yes, so I of course I had to tell all my friends because I was really excited and they asked many questions: 'Is it illegal?' and, 'Do you have to follow a curriculum?', all these questions. Always the same questions really! I wish that people in Germany would know more about it really. I surely would, yes. I wish they would have the option if they were as privileged as I am to have the time to do it..." (Nina, July 2009)

[the following discourse came out of the blue in the interview and was not a part of any preceding conversation]

Samantha: "I think lots of people don't know that it's actually legal to home school. They think going to school is something a child has to do.

HL: Do you think that's bad?

Samantha: *Yer!!*

HL: The local council send out leaflets – these are the schools in the area but they don't include any information about home education.

Samantha: So, I suppose most people presented with that information would say well, this is it, this is our choice.

HL: Do you think that they should? [send out information about EHE as a possibility for parents]

Samantha: Yer.

HL: Why?

Samantha: Everyone should have the choice to home school. Lots of people don't know about it.

HL: How does that make you feel?

Samantha: Sad for all the people who don't know. I'd quite like to go and tell everyone about it." (Samantha, September 2009)

There is also a sense however that home educators need to be careful to whom they 'spread the word'. Various issues occur to do with degrees of persecution or undue interference which – from anecdotal, storied, media and research evidence (Cizek 1990; Eddis 2007; Frean 20/01/09; Harrison 2010) - seem to have been and are still widely shared amongst home educators as a diverse population. As a recent case in the USA shows, the persecution that some home educators experience, in this case a family from Germany - where EHE is illegal (Francis-Pape and Hall 24/02/08; Spiegler 2003) - can even result in successful, albeit controversial, applications for political asylum (Moore 08/03/10) such is the degree of harassment involved for wanting to home educate (Frean 24/03/10). The dangers of evangelism or just simple enthusiasm about EHE are manifest:

Nina: "... so once I got into doing it and it became very normal for me via the people I got to know via the home education forums, I found it really hard that some people reacted so negatively. I just became, I was so convinced of it being really good and I really liked the idea and it was perfect for my family. I thought I sometimes felt really, really surprised about people being negative. When I went to the hairdresser in the morning and I took my son with me I didn't think for one moment that it would be unusual for children to be at the hairdresser in the morning but I very quickly realised that it is because she kept interrogating me: 'Why's he not at school? Is he ill?' She's a very well... she's a hairdresser. She's very bossy and inquisitive person very, very inquisitive person anyway and she remembers everything you tell, that's really surprising but then I thought hmmm maybe I was too naive and I have to be more careful about whom I'm going to tell about it. Before I was just oh it's all brand new and isn't it exciting and I wanted to tell everybody but then I got more cautious." (Nina, July 2009)

Illona: "My husband's parents, aunt and sister have been very anti. They got quite angry with us for some unknown reason. I felt anger coming from them... whether it's their own guilt I don't know or...
HL: *[explain to both Illona and Hannah – interviewed together – current thinking regarding possible reasons why people are negative because, perhaps, it is a 'promised land' they can't have (see Stronach 2005, pg 7)]*
Illona: Yes I think you're right. I think you're right because they've had to live their lives by saying school is the right place to be and suddenly I've whipped the carpet from under their feet and they don't like that." (Illona, July 2009)

Leanne: "Being marginal you can't tell other people or you feel reluctant to... in home ed I often don't tell people unless I'm up to it because I don't want to go through it all, you know, you know you're going to get some kind of reaction so that kind of being a marginal...

HL: The majority of the reactions are...?

Leanne: Usually positive and interested and 'why did you do that?' 'What made you think of it?' 'How did you get to know about it?' and that sort of thing. I very rarely, often they say 'oh that's illegal isn't it?' but it's still not 'Oh you're a horrible person', and then you say 'No it isn't', but you have to be, you know, it's a long spiel and people wanna stay and talk and you know then they have their own worries about it and then they tell you about their schooling and their problems and you have to go through it all and it's the same every time. Like at [home education group] we have one day a month when new people come. We can't have new people come all the time otherwise we have to sit and listen to their stuff [tone of complaint] coz new people come and they need to off-load. Either they are very frightened... you know if the kids have never gone to school they're sort of saying [mimicking tone of urgency] 'How old are your children and how are they doing and are they all right?' or, and 'Oh my God, they've been bullied at school, I've had a terrible time with teachers and I've got to get all that off my chest!' and you have to hear it sometimes endlessly, people need to speak about it before they can move on and that's fair enough, but it's a real drain on the community... we need to have time to get to know each other and move forward together and not just always be dragged down by people's stories and they do pass people round... all alternatives [educational] have it... 50% of people who come to [home education group] come out of desperation..." (Leanne, July 2009)

EHE Family, Mother: "It can make you feel separate, apart from others.

EHE Family, Father: It's not easy!

EHE Family, Mother: I think sometimes parents with children in school keep away, particularly if they feel that their children might say 'Oh I wish I was home educated as well!', and you're given a wide-birth. Generally the responses we've had have been positive... generally the response [son] gets is 'Aren't you lucky!'. You do have to develop a bit of a thick skin. A couple of people have said to me 'Oh are you a teacher?', [I] say 'I'm his mum!' 'Oh ok then but you have to be a qualified teacher to do it, don't you?'

HL: Well, there's a tremendous amount of ignorance.

EHE Family, Mother: I was *shocked* by it! Still... so there's that element of things." (EHE Family, July 2009)

Religious Language

In researching discovery of EHE (and DSM), a surprise feature of the data was the extent to which participants sometimes took recourse to language that is not out of place in a religion, in order to describe how they felt when they discovered EHE (and DSM). Key in this regard was frequent use of the word 'epiphany' and reference to belief:

> HL: "What did you say again?
> Sorena: I'm not sure but something about basically that home education and autonomous education are a little bit like religion... yer it's like a religion or it's like religion in the sense that you believe in it regardless of what people, I mean, this is from my own personal experience. I think that a lot of people must come to it because they realise all of a sudden they have some sort of realisation, whatever that may be, that this is the right thing to do it's sort of, it is a little bit like enlightenment in that sense". (Sorena, July 2009)

> Nina: "...you've got this feeling everything fits. I think that's the feeling I have about it.
> HL: What do you mean?
> Nina: The peace". (Nina, July 2009)

> Hannah: "I likened it to changing your religion. I thought it was that big a change of life, it was like becoming a Catholic... it just seemed that big a deal to me." (Hannah, July 2009)

> Sorena: "...so you have to go with your gut instinct ultimately erm and at the moment certainly my gut instinct and belief is this is the only way to do it and I would certainly consider moving and leaving the country if it meant I had to change, you know, my belief and sometimes I think to myself why don't more home educators get together and form a cult and say that it's our religion that we want to continue to educate in this form: it's part of our religion and therefore, the government or whoever, needs to accept that or acknowledge that and maybe give us a bit more freedom. I don't know, it's maybe fanciful thinking obviously, but sometimes I just think you know it's that strong, that people believe in this that, er, it is almost like a religion! In that sense yer... outside of family I don't really go round preaching about home education partly because I don't have any proper experience about it yet it's just a belief in my head erm, so, no I haven't really met anybody, certainly haven't discussed it. I know home educators who believe very strongly about what they're doing urm, but I haven't discussed it in these terms with them I just don't feel there's any need I don't have to go around preaching about it, that's what I mean.

HL: When you say it's just like a religion, what for you is a religion?
Sorena: I suppose almost like having blind faith really that you believe something to be right and true regardless of the evidence that's there and I'm not a religious person per se you know I'm atheist, but I would, I suppose, the realisation that it was something that we could do as an option and the effect that it had on me I, would equate that to finding God or something like that because it was just so erm I don't know it was just so deep that huuh [she starts to cry]...I just feel so stupid [hands me the recorder]..." (Sorena, July 2009)

[re son getting a B in English after having been predicted a D]
Lynn: "That's the moment I think my mother and sister finally *believed*... I think they thought... I don't know what they thought I was doing... home education was a step too far... and autonomous education...
HL: What kind of belief is that?
Lynn: That it worked." (Lynn, July 2009)

[I ask about effect of EHE community on life of Lynn herself]
HL: "But in a social sense I think I mean, not necessarily in a a a...
Lynn: Ahhh, there was a moment of epiphany, so it's changed completely, but I'd have lived that life and thought I'd have lived a worthwhile life before, but by God, this one's so much better!
HL: I see." (Lynn, July 2009)

HL: "Well, you're sort of painting a picture for me for how you must have felt getting this kind of [unhelpful] treatment as a parent [from the school] and I'm wondering: how did you feel when you read the article in the newspaper?
Pippa: Umm well, that there was some sort of, I guess, some sort of light at the end of the tunnel, that there was an *alternative*... It's not seeing any light at the end of the tunnel that's the worst thing and I'm sure I'm not the only person who can feel like that." (Pippa, March 2009)

Tom: "You realise everything is interconnected" (Tom, March 2009)

Bill: "On the road you look for people who've got like-minded similar ideas and I couldn't find them in person, but I could find them in literature... Russell, Boltman, Abelard... radical theologians in the past who questioned the whole system, so in a sense I could find companions, even if I couldn't find them in contemporaries. I've found them in contemporaries since, of course. That's why [an organisation for alternative] education exists; they're a group of people who tend to think along the same way." (Bill, April 2009)

Use of such language does not need to suggest that EHE and DSM practice is a religion that involves belief in God, as mentioned: at least three of the above participants are avowed

atheists. However, within a Deweyan context of the everyday, as part of 'a common faith' (Dewey 2008), wherein 'ordinary' experiences can be mystical, it is possible to frame the expressions above as part of something deeper than just educational convenience. Discovering EHE interacts with the self in ways which evoke feelings of oneness, highlights communities of like-minded others and a need (as Sorena says) for 'faith'. The repeated *strength* of the avowals in these quotes is also of interest. Indeed the idea of a need for faith – albeit non-creed based - can be seen in the various metaphorical 'leaps of faith' (Kierkegaard 1985) that participants report having made. There is also a sense that these movements of the self are for or because of spiritual, moral or well-being issues:

> Hannah: "The way my husband and I thought about was, it was like being an alien on this planet, so we had to jump planets and go on a different planet [laughs]... Sometimes it's just my husband and I and we just think we're the only people that think thoughts... you know... lots of different things and of course you do meet people who think the same and it doesn't feel such a different planet.
> HL: What kind of thoughts would you find in your planet that wouldn't be on the other planet?
> Hannah: That success isn't everything... the normal goals... there's only what's right for you... see success in different ways...
> Illona: Yes, definitely. I think on the other planet the road to success is university and if you fall off that road then you're not successful and our road is very different to that... a lot of people we know... schooling their children to go to university, that to me doesn't really matter...
> HL: So what does matter?
> Illona: It's just simply being happy. Having a life you can just enjoy and look after yourself." (Hannah and Illona, July 2009)

> *[re coming into contact with alternative educational modalities and ideas]*
> Sara:"It's a jump into something that you... it's not completely clear to most... it's one of those experiences until you go through that you don't really know what it's like" (Sara, July 2009)

Sometimes it seems, the 'leap' or 'jump' is not made; either because there is no need, no wish for it or perhaps even a fear of it. Circumstances of 'a jump' that might be made but in the end is not, are for reasons which are unclear and outside the scope of this study:

Katrina: "My husband wouldn't take that step of taking my son out of school. He just wouldn't, couldn't bring himself... because he was frightened. I think he just thought: education, you go to school. The thought of doing anything different was scary to him... It was a big step into the unknown." (Katrina, March 2009)

[S talks about women in toddler group not being in tune with their children]
HL: "Do you think those ladies will ever be interested in home education?
Samantha: I doubt it.
HL: Why?
Samantha: 'Coz they're already talking about how nice it would be when the children have gone to school and they can have more time to do what they want to do. So I can't imagine them being interested in home education because it would mean giving up a lot of themselves." (Samantha, September 2009)

Summary to section three

'Epiphanies' and 'realisations' are possible as a part of the every-day (Cohen and Phipps 1979; Laski 1980; Dewey 1960) and such 'happenings' seem to be recognised in one way or another as a key part of EHE (and DSM) discovery and practice. Epiphany or 'click', as a couple of the interviewees called it happen as a result, it seems, of what the participant Elianne described as 'wanting more'. Paula-Jane Rothermel intriguingly notes that the home educators she interviewed seemed to be 'searching for something' (Rothermel 2002, pg 358), which she claimed was 'families pursuing an ideal that was neither school nor home education' (Rothermel 2002, pg 359). Literature on religious experiences describe a period of searching that can precede an 'awakening' experience (James 1902) and so perhaps it is possible to suggest that those parents who do spend a period of time 'searching' before they discover EHE are preparing themselves for an 'awakening' in this same way, albeit wholly

without creed, related to and indeed, *of* education. These observations of 'particular' expressions on the part of home educators are perhaps part of a larger picture. Something is happening in discovery of EHE (or DSM) that is every-day, yet also not every-day at all and really quite special: both for the parents and by extension, the children with whose care the mind that experiences these phenomena, is occupied.

As we have seen in taking the journey through the stages of Kuhn's revolutionary framework of discovery, the discovery of EHE fits the pattern of the same kinds of scientific discoveries that could eventually merit Nobel Prize awards in a scientific context. Important human awareness is coming to those scientists who experience these 'shifts' and this applies also to educational shifts, albeit on a more intimate (see Merry and Howell 2009), private and personal scale. This awareness is happening for the sake of children and with the children in mind, but they are essentially adult experiences in the context of the parental responsibility in law for the education of children. Where shifts of awareness and their effects occur, for those who work vocationally with, or appreciate DSM, the affect on the self is not less profound: the meaning there might not be directly for their own children but instead for all children as people for whom those individuals have chosen to show care and consideration as a part of an educational vocation. Clearly there is something profoundly affecting for individuals happening in discovery of EHE and DSM. We will now move to consider triangulation of this unusual data with the street survey data.

TRIANGULATION OF THE INTERVIEW DATA WITH THE STREET SURVEY

'It must be announced to everyone.' (Rancière 1991, pg 106)

"I'm passionate, passionate, that people should know that home education is a legal and viable choice, equal in law to school and it really is viable and it works..." (Lynn, July 2009)

Respondent 56: "...There's a little light gone on in my head..."

Introduction

The presentation of the street survey data will be divided into four broad categories, encompassing the eight main themes of the findings of the interview data within them and other findings distinct to the street survey data. The first area of triangulation concerns discovery as a personal event, showing reactions of surprise, shock, annoyance (at not already knowing) and moments of 'epiphany'. The second area looks at a need and wish among those surveyed for the government to provide information on EHE as a viable option, as well as those respondents who suggested more information about EHE, 'out there' in society, would be a danger. This includes a consideration of the fact that many people are unaware EHE is legal or have an inaccurate and distorted picture of what EHE actually is. As a consequence, discovery of EHE – in particular – emerges from the data either as a political act or as a highlighter of a substantial lack of interest on the part of some parents to

think about educational options beyond what they are told is advised by the government. Thirdly, the hidden story of the emotional pain *of parents*, due to difficulties with schools, is highlighted by this data, just as it was in the interviews. This section also includes data regarding the views of non-home educators about people who do home educate. Fourthly, there is a discussion of the nature of discovery: how it happens, the surprising commonality of the use of religious language in the context of discovery. Within the concluding section of the triangulation data is a brief look at how the street survey might affect any understandings of education as modal.

An overview of the methodology used for the street survey data collection is to be found on pages 135-137. An overview of the question sheets used is in the appendix.

Discovery as a personal event

The street survey was a very personal and personalised method of research. Each instance was unique as, unless the respondent was not 'responsive', the interaction was a conversation. What came out of some of the conversations was the fact that discovery of EHE was a personal 'event'. Either it had happened in the past or by meeting the present researcher, armed as she was with important information that was in some cases being learnt for the first time. This emerged in various ways: signs of emotion (tears, smiles, choked throats), or verbal expressions that indicated something significant had happened to the respondent upon discovery:

Respondent 56: "It's the first time I've thought about it...There's a little light gone on in my head..." [he smiles, winks at me appreciatively, takes the information sheet]

Respondent 2: "Oh my God! I really didn't know. I really did feel it was illegal. So why are people going to prison?... I'm amazed".

Respondent 10: "I thought it was fantastic [to find out]. It gave me the opportunity to go abroad and still educate... It's not that expensive – online tutoring is £1500... It opens up the world a bit...It makes you feel better... [It's about] getting out there and seeing what else there is in the world instead of staying on the same estate [area]... Lots of people get blinkers on".

Respondent 81: "Yes, I did know. Home tutoring. I've read it in the newspaper at some point... Yes it was a surprise. I thought kids had to go to school. I have no real feelings about it [re finding out]. I think it's up to the individual. [HL explains re school as one way for education to happen and EHE as a different experience]. I was very lucky I went to a good school. Personally I needed school because I wouldn't have been disciplined at home to do it, that's why I think every case is individual. But again it's parents isn't it. They both worked. They wouldn't have had the background to tutor. But yes, I would have turned out differently. I would have had more self-discipline... [HL asks: "Did something just happen there? I noticed you had a reaction.] When you said 'Education makes us the person we are', it's so true, yes... I've never really thought about it before... [HL asks: Have I made you think about it?] Yes. I think half the problem is parents don't think about it. It's something that's so taken for granted".

Information (or lack of it) on EHE as a viable option

Many of the street survey respondents either voiced that they wanted more information for themselves or felt that others should be told it was an option. There was a thread running through the interactions that people thought the government should provide more information about EHE as an option and that that would be more fair and right.

Respondent 12: "More people should know about it because the pressure is on people all the time... It's very misleading isn't it. You do think it's law because that's the way it's put across to people... I'm quite surprised that it's not the law [that people should be told about EHE]. Everything is drummed into you that you need to send them to school by law. We even get letters that lead you to believe..."

Respondent 14: "I think there's more people out there who don't know. I think it should be more widely spread or known. I like the fact it's an option. I think the government should tell people. I've never been told [found out via Melinda Messenger – a celebrity who home educates]."

Respondent 38: "I don't think people know. They think they have to send their children to school. It's not widely discussed. There doesn't seem to be a great deal of information about it. It's not discussed due to work [that the state want people in work]."

Respondent 41: "I didn't know. I thought they had to go to school...surprised...I thought they get punished if they don't go to school...truancy... I thought they had to be taught in some way even if it's home tutoring."

Respondent 43: "I thought it was just in America. I've never heard of it in the UK."

Respondent 17: "I'm glad [to be] aware there's a choice. It solidifies that viewpoint: I'm sure this is what I want [MAS]."

Respondent 88: "Yes. They can be home-taught. It means they don't have to go to school as long as their parents can provide an adequate education for them. I don't agree with it. I think children need socialising... I think it's something people should know so they've got the choice about whether a child goes to school or they teach the child themselves... Yes, I think the government should advertise it. Maybe they should put a few posters around... have a spot on the local news. [HL: Any reason why they might not do that?] They might ... because of [Kyhra Ishaq] they're frightened because it's not secure..."

The emotional pain of parents

Just as with the interviews, a number of parents discussed with the present researcher their feelings about schools as causing them pain or difficulties. This was a surprise during the research as it was not expected that there would be so many people who would complain about schooling and often be keen on the researcher's information as a result:

> *[This respondent was having difficulties getting the school to agree that she could take her son out of school for short trips to see his father, who lived in another part of the country]*
> Respondent 33: "No National Curriculum? It's quite good [to know about it]…. Now I know I can educate him at home there's not a problem. It's a good idea. Now they can learn their way... I mean... who needs algebra!"

> *[He looks deeply thoughtful and angry]*
> Respondent 7: "The average person doesn't know. It seems there's a lot of benefits that you don't know unless you're... (looking tearful) I just wish I'd known that a while ago. It makes me feel guilty now (sister was badly bullied and the family were at a loss to know what to do)".

> *[Parents together]*
> Respondent 80: Mum: "No. I thought it was compulsory. I didn't realise that. Dad: I didn't know that. Damn, if I'd known that I wouldn't have gone to school [Dad looks at me fearfully to gauge my reaction] HL: Does it come as a surprise? Mum: Yer".

The nature of discovery

As with the interviewees, discovery happened for the street survey respondents in a number of ways. It was clear – though obviously impressionistic up to a point - over the course of 90 interactions that middle class seeming respondents had a higher level of awareness of EHE than working class seeming respondents. It was often the case that working class respondents

were discovering EHE as a legal educational option through the present researcher – but not always. It was rare that discovery for middle class respondents happened through the research interactions. If discovery did happen through the interactions, there were degrees of it. Often people who thought they knew about EHE as an option had a distorted picture: i.e. thought it was teachers coming to the house. Over the course of this research exercise it became clear that very few of the respondents really understood what EHE is in an autonomous form in terms of philosophy, practice and otherness compared to a MAS modality. It is no exaggeration to say that if this small sample is in any way representative of the general population, parents in the UK are significantly ignorant of the legal range of educational modality, practice and philosophical options open to them as parents with legal responsibility for the education of their children:

> Respondent 54: "... through ignorance. It's not a well known fact. I was in the right moment at the right time watching the TV. It's more promoted to send your child to school, isn't it."

> Respondent 73: "No. Obviously school should be compulsory for all children: need good education for career, social aspect, be in stable environment. [HL: Does education mean school?] I suppose so. Obviously there is home learning... [HL explains is a legal option for all parents] I maybe thought automatically that home education was for special circumstances to begin with. I wasn't totally aware that everyone could do that."

> Respondent 88: "[Found out about it] when I was training to be a nursery nurse in 1996. Before that I heard about it on the news."

> Respondent 69: "Vaguely. I knew there were other options but I didn't know they didn't have to... I got the impression it was something they'd have to fight for."

Summary to Section Four

What the street survey was essentially aiming to research was levels of awareness of the possibility of EHE as a legal option for parents. It aimed specifically to test *the nature* of that awareness. In other words, what were the boundary lines of people's understanding? Of course, a great deal of other interesting data came out of and subsequent to this key question but the 'trap' of the first question acted like a thermometer for levels of discovery. The following interaction aptly shows how this was highlighted by the nature of the first question: 'Did you know that children don't have to go to school?':

> Respondent 58: "No. That's the normal thing to do. I thought everyone had to go to school... I knew home education existed. The way you say the question. I said no: it's the way you say it. If you had said 'Did you know home education existed?' I would have understood where you're coming from. "

What this interaction shows us is that there is a gap between knowing home education exists and *realising* - as with the interviews - that home education is a 'normal' option because children *don't have to* go to school. It is the *realisation* of the 'normalcy' of the possibility (see Stevens 2003b, for a discussion of EHE becoming 'normal') which constitutes part of 'genuine' discovery of EHE (or DSM) and simply *knowing* is part of 'superficial' discovery. Of course, how viable an option EHE is as practice was something else that came out of the street survey: the levels of ignorance about what EHE is or actually can be were high, as were the prejudices and so, there is an argument to say that one cannot viably do something unless one understands it to an operational degree: whatever that might mean. The most repeated prejudice about EHE as educational practice in the street survey was to do with a perceived lack of socialisation opportunities. There was also a strong sense within the

population surveyed that school was not often questioned as the right place for education to happen or as the right conduit for education as a social enterprise. The interactions were all short so it was not possible to go into lots of detail about the reasons for these strongly held views but to the present researcher's mind it was clear that there is a substantial mythology about schooling in most parents' mind that is rarely, if ever, reconsidered and mostly only when problems occur. Discovery in this sense then mostly emerged out of the street survey data as superficial awareness of the existence of EHE, whether already extant or introduced by the researcher. However, just as this emergence is impressionistic in nature, so too, it is not possible to say that no-one experienced 'genuine' discovery in the sense of an 'inner' *realisation,* either prior or during interactions. The present researcher considers that in interactions where strong emotions were manifest upon discussion or sharing of information, the likelihood of 'genuine' discovery is higher (either as extant or happening within the interaction itself). This correlation of emotion with 'conversion' switch/shift is discussed as a phenomenon in religious literature (James 1902; Cohen and Phipps 1979). Emotions upon 'genuine' discovery were a noticeable feature in the fuller interview responses.

In the sense of this thesis, where discovery is a profound event of 'switch' that changes one's lifestyle towards a new world of education, this level of discovery was obviously not witnessed in the respondents. Such changes can perhaps only be properly identified retrospectively. What was witnessed by the present researcher was the possibility that a switch might have occurred in a few instances and the beginnings in some people of realisations, an interest to know more, a feeling that more should be known and that it should be more easily accessible as information. There was also a sense of confusion and annoyance amongst many respondents that as parents - and taxpayers - with legal responsibility for their child's education, it took a random encounter with a researcher on the street or in the train to

inform them more broadly and deeply of their options about an issue (education) in their lives they took very seriously and which they clearly considered was within the proper remit of the state.

CHAPTER 6: THE THEORY OF THE GATELESS GATE OF HOME EDUCATION DISCOVERY

[responding to a brief explanation of the thesis of the 'Gateless Gate' of EHE, at HESFES: EHE summer festival gathering]
Illona: "Yes, I see that and coming here, I see it even more. There is nothing to join. Yes, and that's fine, that's good in fact.' (Illona, Interview July 2009)

Cathy: "Either its cool or they completely don't get the idea..." (Cathy, September 2009)

Nina: "... so once I got into doing it and it became very normal for me... I found it really hard that some people reacted so negatively I just became I was so convinced of it being really good..." (Nina, July 2009)

Introduction

Whilst this thesis is entitled 'the gateless gate of home education discovery', various theories underpin the data of this thesis and the title: some of them have already been presented, whilst the next two chapters will concentrate on two philosophers whose work fits closely with the findings. The idea of the 'gateless gate' represents (paradoxically) *the particular nature* of discovery of EHE (and DSM) and comes from Zen philosophy koan-style thought. It is presented as an overarching 'meta-theory' to encompass the full picture of complexity of the discovery discussed in theoretical and empirical details. 'The 'gateless gate' metaphor is discussed - in terms of its 'explanatory' reference - on page 17-18. This metaphor suggests that an alternative framework of cognition applies to understanding something; in the present

case, the discovery of EHE (and DSM), where a 'particular' nature is possible but only as part of a paradox can its meaning be valid. Rather than a Cartesian, rational and binary approach of a 'mechanistic view of life' – similar to Newtonian physics in structure – (Capra 1983), discovery of EHE (and DSM) cannot be measured or assessed in a uniform or standardised manner and a replicable and generalisable structure cannot be found, re-modelled and applied elsewhere: it is a 'happening' or 'event' in the personal, unique in each case to the individual and their moment and circumstances of discovery. In Deleuzian terms, it is a case of waking from dependence on tree-like genealogies that determine set relations, to an opening and a flight into 'rhizomatic' freedoms 'enabling one to blow apart strata, cut roots and make new connections' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, pg 16).

The gateless gate theory of EHE discovery is therefore – aptly - an issue of some complexity. The kinds of theories which are being applied to education emerging now out of complexity theory itself, are much closer to a framework of understanding that fits the gateless gate of EHE (and DSM) discovery than theories utilised in education which work with analytical philosophy if an idea of a pre-determined formed self is offered as a premise of what constitutes educational appropriateness (e.g. Peters 2007). Complexity theorising includes emergent selves (Osberg, Biesta, and Cilliers 2008), alternative epistemologies (Biesta and Osberg 2007; Osberg and Biesta 2007), merging theories and simultaneities (Davis and Sumara 2006) and post-modern perspectives on the curriculum (Doll 1993). Whilst such ideas could embrace Zen philosophical ideas such as 'mu' and 'nothing' (Watts 1974) if they chose to do so and Zen 'fits' into the postmodern 'mould' (Olsen 2000), the gateless gate of the Zen koan on page 17-18 of this text avoids any traps of 'rightness' or theoretical capture whatsoever and that *is* the point. Thus, the most valid theory of the discovery of EHE (and DSM) is possibly a meta-theory of 'non-theory'. Nevertheless (and

as a part of the paradox), within the amorphous 'reality', lie ideas that have been already given epistemological form and are welcome contributors to a framework of understanding in response to this study's data: Kuhn's philosophy of the structure of scientific revolutions (1962) and Foucault's late philosophy of an ethical art of the self (1986) are the two main ones and will be discussed in turn with regard to discovery of EHE (and DSM) in this chapter and the next.

It is important for us to appreciate that the various ideas underpinning and being encompassed within the theory of the 'gateless gate' are not invisible or outside of our ability to understand within communities of knowledge and debate. Firstly, with forms of intuition and eyes of spirituality rather than materiality – in other words, through 'inner' eyes – we can see a non-sense sense in the notion that a path towards discovery of something can happen without it being determined. This can be a *community* determination of understanding, which is, in being willingly accepted, free from obligations or impositions of what ought to be or needs to be understood. It is in the open willingness to accept its non-determined nature that its meaning and nature becomes clear and its status as knowledge emerges. This is fully reflected in pedagogy of a human autonomous type: elective (autonomous) home education and alternative education practice such as democratic education (i.e. Summerhill School, Suffolk), for example. This is one paradigm of educational practice – or modality - that refutes metanarratives. In line with Lyotard's vision of knowledge as now 'postmodern', escape occurs from lines of command regarding what we understand and believe, (Lyotard 1984). The kinds of education and their discovery that this thesis has investigated are against being told how to think, what to think and what to do with the thoughts they think. They are suspicious of narratives that assume a position of authority, just as they are suspicious of those who assume to be in authority. It is with this

'incredulity towards metanarratives' that the theory of this thesis presents itself as an assemblage, collage or montage. Perhaps bricolage is the right word to describe how theory is used here as this word, from the French, signifies both a construction from whatever is 'ready to hand' in a haphazard fashion with no guiding 'meta-narrative' of design but also, has a sense, from the original French verb 'bricoler', of something repaired. Claude Levi-Strauss defined the original theory of 'bricolage' within the context of understanding the other (1966) and subsequent to this structuralist demarcation of the uses of various epistemological tools to configure ideas, education has taken up the concept, for example, with regard to understandings within history of education (Peim 2005) or the impact of technology on the concept of schools (Papert 1993). The connotation of 'bricolage' as open to reparation is particularly apt in the present context, because the theory used in this text is employed towards creation of something that is reparative: where previously there was no theory or vision of how to understand the difference and self-styled narratives of the paradigm of education that is AEM, a bricolage of theories chosen for their explanatory powers and appropriateness can fill, or repair the situation.

It is considered that it was the lack of awareness of this gap or void that created unfortunate and unnecessary miscomprehension. The inability of previous interactions to cohere meaningfully, between what will be fully described in this present chapter as 'separate worlds', involved attempts at understanding which disappeared into that 'empty' space. It is hoped that, in some measure, such a situation can be repaired by the bricolage of theory presented. These theorists appear in different places in this text, doing different jobs; fulfilling different functions. Hirschman's theory of exit, voice and loyalty comes from the discipline of economics and can be applied to explain why people leave a school system for education outside of that organisation. The later work of Michel Foucault on technologies

and care of the self can be applied to autonomous EHE and DSM to explain why the freedom to determine the pattern and pace of one's own education can lead to self-flourishing and contentedness and a hermeneutics fit for human becoming in a technological age. But, out of all the possible theories that could be laid, without friction or incongruence, gently beside the path taken by the participants of this study towards the gateless gate of discovery, it is perhaps surprisingly that of Thomas S. Kuhn, as the master explicator of scientific paradigm shifts, which proves the most useful in our present 'educational' context.

This itself speaks interestingly for and about education as it presently functions: the situation with regard to understanding educational alternatives is still so basic, primal and fundamental that we are operating in a realm of deep level structural appreciations. Rather than the data of this thesis offering a 'tweak' or refinement of existing theory, it suggests that the building blocks of theoretical understanding for alternative pedagogies is still to be done at the most fundamental theoretical levels, so that alternative education can be epistemologically and ontologically understood *within* the academic structures of epistemology and ontology presently circulating as preeminent and dominant, which of course would be changed themselves by such an entrance.

The problem is in the creation of a peacefully accepted and dynamically interrelated space for DSM and EHE to exist along with extant, more recognised and practiced, (Western) systems of thought such as have been built up through Kant (Kant 1993) and Enlightenment thought to determine our approach to much of human life and which involve schooling structures of MAS education but have difficulty understanding autonomous education. One key task to undertake, in this new 'post-Kantian' territory, is the establishment of pedagogical understanding that fits educational events and circumstances currently seen as 'unorthodox'. What theory can explain why so many people embrace alternative pedagogies

with such vigour, enthusiasm and joy (even if not at first 'touch' but eventually)? Why do people report so often affects on the self - of alternative pedagogies - which are full of human common sense and positive outcomes, in tune with how the human works as an individual becoming of the self? Why do people who are not 'into' alternative pedagogies not 'get it' and when those that are try to communicate about their discovery, they are met with incomprehension from friends, family and neighbours? All of these questions fit easily into a Kuhnian structure of 'scientific revolutions' (Kuhn 1962). It is the stories and comments of the research participants in this study who, it is posited, give us the proof we need that this fit occurs.

Instead of senseless miscomprehension mentioned earlier wandering around, waiting for and needing solutions or absolutions on and in the terms of the dominant epistemology (and its ontology), now there need be no such 'solutions' because there are 'different worlds' and also different 'language worlds' (Wittgenstein 1992) which do not admit of 'agreement' but rather require *recognition* of their difference. Thus, various theories are offered within this text to help us to understand new knowledge by virtue not of standard forms of mechanistic cognition but rather through zen-like forms of intuitive seeing and recognition. We also <u>do</u> here some philosophy. A development or '*entwickungsfähigkeit*' - as Giorgio Agamben chooses (after Feuerbach) to call the work of philosophy (Agamben 2002) - of the arena of EHE and DSM must, it is suggested, come about through a viable and appropriate plugging of the hole through which understanding currently disappears. For this, new philosophy and theory is required, if development of alternative educational modalities as a part of education as a discipline is to happen effectively and appropriately. The philosophy developed here with regard to the theoretical underpinnings of AEM affects education in ways which might possibly be able to act as a reconfiguration of education into the future. The introduction

here of education as modal, which Kuhnian application allows, is itself a shift for education as a whole, from a dominant 'sole' paradigm to a multiplicity domain wherein various paradigms can be recognised and configured: education is not schooling, it is modal and schooling is but one mode.

As was suggested at the beginning of this thesis, a small moment in the lives of ordinary people has the power to change the face of education. This is, it is suggested, a feature or characteristic of paradigms as a function of understanding: they are at the heart of the operationalisation of knowledge. Such an idea is borne out by Giorgio Agamben's recognition of the French historian of Greek philosophy Victor Goldschmidt's interest in paradigms: 'the analysis of an apparently minor problem such as the paradigm sheds a completely new light on the whole of Plato's philosophy' (Agamben 2002). Of course, Kuhn's work on paradigms has itself been far reaching in influence (Bird 2000). If the gestalt switch moment of the participants in this study can have importance for education, perhaps this is a feature of paradigm recognition as a powerful changer of perceptions. Thus, theoretical discussion of this empirical data may – as a paradigmatic function – be of great significance for the future – and history - of education *as we see it*, perhaps because – following Agamben again - 'what makes something intelligible is the paradigmatic exhibition of its own knowability' (2002).

What is a paradigm?

The term 'paradigm' is presented here as a concept roughly analogous to some of Kuhn's meanings outlined below. This word has a history of explication (Mey 1992) under different

conditions (Fleck 1935; Conant 1951) that even includes its use by Wittgenstein as a model or stereotype (Preston 2008, pg 22). However, since Kuhn published 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' in 1962 (Kuhn 1962), the term 'paradigm' has been a concept of significant contemporary mainstream consideration and importance for science and also in areas outside of natural science's defining interests. Nevertheless, an answer to the question, 'what is a paradigm?' remains still somewhere on the level of Margaret Masterman's identification of 21 separate uses of the term paradigm by Kuhn in '*Structure*' (Masterman 1970). Giorgio Agamben attempts an analysis in his lecture 'What is a Paradigm?' (2002) and, in a sense, what he does there is interestingly to open up understanding of the paradigm to koan type thought, exemplified in lines from the Wallace Stevens poem he uses '*Description Without Place'*: 'It is possible that to seem, it is to be. And the sun is something seeming, and it is. The sun is an example. What it seems, it is. And in such seeming all things are'.

We are therefore not yet able to say that the question of what a paradigm is can be fully answered as perhaps this specific task is yet to be done (Mey 1992, pg 102). Indeed, perhaps it will be done with epistemological tools that are to come or for it to be eventually agreed that paradigms are a form of knowing belonging to knowledge in a domain of non-cognition as briefly discussed above and thus even outside epistemology. The question itself is unsuited to a scientifically rationalistic answer. In an age where post-modern proliferations of paradigms of varying natures is a possibility, the very introduction of paradigms in the plural as a concept of difference, denotes that linear interpretations of truth about what something 'is' become challenged to the extent that certainty of definitions is both impossible and unwise.

Nevertheless a rough domain can be sketched, following Kuhn –whose conception of paradigms was called by Foucault as 'admirable' and 'definitive' (in Agamben 2002). Kuhn's vision suggests a paradigm is an area of enquiry with epistemological boundaries that can be breached leading to the creation of new paradigms with different areas of enquiry that take over from their predecessor claims of validity and research attention. Specifically Kuhn highlighted two types of paradigm (Kuhn 1962): 'exemplars' as units of excellence from which maxims of importance can be taught; and the more widely known and wider meaning of a paradigm as a 'disciplinary matrix':

> 'the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given [scientific] community' (ibid, pg 175).

For our purposes here, the nature of a paradigm *as existent* is of utmost importance for the location of our focus which is an enquiry concerning the found phenomenon, or otherwise, of a 'gestalt switch' or 'conversion' between a MAS mentality and a belief in AEM. Kuhn's presentation of paradigms is here largely accepted as valid and valuable as a theoretical framework for the arguments presented by this present text: a discussion of the finer points of his '*Structure'* essay, or indeed the nature of a paradigm as say, socially cohesive or developmental, is outside of the scope of this thesis (see Preston 2008, for an overview of commentators and Bird 2000, for an in-depth analysis of Kuhn's work).

The nature of a paradigm as containing crisis, conversion, competition, incommensurability and community are all presented by Kuhn in a way that very closely corresponds to what the data of this text can offer. It is therefore not necessary for our present purposes to challenge Kuhn's philosophy, which in the correlation just mentioned seems to be able to apply also to events in the social sciences and Alexander Bird discusses this at length (2000). Kuhn wrote that 'it remains an open question what parts of social science have yet acquired such

paradigms at all' (Kuhn 1962, pg 15). With regard to what a paradigm might be, a 'popular' interpretation is taken here of a paradigm as a community of investigators considering how a closed domain of inquiry can be developed; the community being a product of a revolution of ideas that emerged from a period of crisis, where a previous paradigm failed to solve anomalies and that may itself one day be overturned by subsequent 'revolutions': the flexible and transient nature of the dominance of a paradigm is key.

It is argued here that education has not yet acknowledged a paradigmatic approach to understanding itself as a domain, content as it presently seems to be to largely and hegemonically mean 'schooling'. Education is currently 'unparadigmatic', because it has so far failed to *allow* – as a community feature - anomalies to entail crisis leading to 'gestalt switch' phenomena *into another modality* or 'world' of education. This situation has prevailed despite attempts by educational researchers to instil within the domain of education an outlook that incorporates 'difference', in the form of various paradigms of attitudes to 'replace traditional positivism' at the level of methodology (Guba 1990; Schwandt 1990). The argument for 'difference' in education can, and needs to be, dramatically and revolutionarily altered to incorporate a paradigmatic identity at the level of modalities of practice and not just methodological theory. At this juncture we need to question why the identification of a 'gestalt switch' mechanism might be so important for a discipline to obtain a paradigmatic identity and why this might be of benefit to that domain.

What is a 'gestalt switch'?

'Gestalt switch', as a term used by Kuhn, is a phrase that signifies a turn or change of the 'whole' (gestalt) as a switch in allegiance between or focus on differing paradigms or 'shifts

in perception' of cognitive data (Kuhn 1962, pg 113). He also used the phrase 'world changes'. In Kuhn's taxonomy it is a form of revolution: 'scientific development also displays a noncumulative mode' (Kuhn 2000b). It is suggested that this change happens in a 'relatively sudden' (ibid, pg 122/150) way, although there may have been a long lead up to the moment where the change occurs:

> 'But after the subject has begun to learn to deal with [her/]his new world, [her/]his entire visual field flips over, usually after an intervening period in which vision is simply confused' (ibid, pg 112).

To judge whether this change has indeed occurred or not 'we must look for indirect and behavioural evidence that the scientist with a new paradigm sees differently from the way [she/]he had seen before' (ibid, pg 115) because the 'transformations of vision' (ibid, pg 118) that are involved are internal to the human as a private experience. Such 'revolutionary changes are... problematic. They involve discoveries that cannot be accommodated within the concepts in use before they were made. In order to make or to assimilate such a discovery one must alter the way one thinks about and describes some range of natural phenomenon' (Kuhn 2000b, pg 14-15).

A description by Kuhn of a gestalt switch in action, recorded as a memory of the time of its happening, is the following:

> 'Suddenly the fragments in my head sorted themselves out in a new way, and fell into place together. My jaw dropped, for all at once Aristotle seemed a very good physicist indeed, but of a sort I'd never dreamed possible' (ibid, pg 16).

Following this description, Kuhn suggests that the first characteristic of a revolution that leads to a new paradigm is a gestalt switch like this: 'the central change cannot be

experienced piecemeal, one step at a time. Instead it involves some relatively sudden and unstructured transformation in which some part of the flux of experience sorts itself out differently and displays patterns that were not visible before' (ibid, pg 17).

This has implications for the claim of this thesis that AEM – incorporating EHE and DMS - is a (newly but increasingly recognised) *paradigm* of education (see Miller 2008; Mintz and Ricci 2010). If this claim is true, there *must be* subsequent expectation of epistemological and ontological equality of treatment of AEM as one paradigm among many within education as a discipline. A shift from educational 'marginality' to 'difference' thus occurs: all paradigms of education are with *equality* on an epistemological and ontological level playing field, despite resource and population differences. For this grand claim of a shift in the layout of the territory mentioned to be valid, proof of a gestalt switch into EHE is required because such proof determines the nature of the territory as paradigmatic rather than non-paradigmatic: this 'proof' was offered in chapter 5, through presentation of the research data, which clearly shows 'shifts', 'clicks' and sudden realisations from a conception of education as MAS into an understanding of a new way for education to happen in AEM modes.

Kuhn suggests that when differing groups of scientists are located in two different 'worlds' (as in paradigms) they 'see different things when they look from the same point in the same direction' (ibid, pg 150). Furthermore, although the onlooker is 'confronting the same constellation of objects as before and knowing that [she/]he does so, [she/]he nevertheless finds them transformed through and through in many of their details' (ibid, pg 122).

Moreover Kuhn goes so far as to suggest that in fact the world that was there before the gestalt switch no longer exists:

> 'The data themselves had changed. That is the last of the senses in which we may want to say that after a revolution scientists work in a different world'. (ibid, pg 135).

We therefore have in the concept of a 'gestalt switch' a radical transformation of perception and being that is, to say the least, intriguing. 'Gestalt switches' in the Kuhnian sense are something which have received as yet little research attention - even in Bird's exhaustive study of Kuhnian thought, gestalt switches receive scant attention (2000). They are not well understood but are being presently used in the domain of cognitive science research for example as indicators of structural functioning in the various mind-worlds that make up human experience of the world in all its complexity. Such researches are being utilised for the purposes of artificial intelligence developments (Mey 1992).

'Gestalt switch' used by Kuhn in the context of scientific discoveries may be one way to say something which other domains express differently. Religious discourse speaks of 'conversion' experiences (Chester 2003). A modern version of 'gestalt switch' might be the use of the term 'Aha! (George 2008), which seems to be gaining in popular and frequent use. Awareness of the possibility of a 'gestalt switch' has, since Kuhn suggested that this was necessary for the 'conversion' from one paradigm to another, increased. Although we are still at the beginning of our understanding of the cognitive mechanism of gestalt switches or the nature and reasons for their occurrence, it is now possible to transfer Kuhn's usage to other domains in the 'hunt' not only for examples of gestalt switches in a domain such as education but also to infer from any discovery of such 'conversion experiences' the existence of a paradigm. It is suggested that where a paradigm is established as existing,

where previously there was no concept of it, perception of what it is that is identified as belonging to and being in (or outside) that paradigm changes. In essence establishment of a recognised paradigm changes the structure of a field, just as Kuhn identified a fundamental change in our understanding of how science and scientific discovery functions (Kuhn 1962).

What is Kuhnian Incommensurability?

For Kuhn a key lasting problematic for his presentation of paradigmatic revolutions was the idea of incommensurability (Kuhn 2000). This is the impossibility of communication between people located in different paradigms: although they may be referring to the same thing and seeming to use the same language, their meanings are totally different due to the nature of their differing world-views and they are thus talking at cross-purposes when they discuss what seems to be a common topic. For the present thesis it is a problem of great significance when we consider the difficulties with which EHE and DSM as a practice have grappled: for example the Badman Review and Summerhill's fight with Ofsted against closure, already mentioned on page 77. Within the data of the present research there is plenty to indicate that incommensurability is a problem for both those who have undergone a gestalt switch moment in that they find it hard to communicate in ways that are convincing to others who are not themselves 'believers' and for those outside of the 'circle of conversion'. These cannot understand why EHE or DSM practice works and how or why it ought to be believed in so vehemently because they quite literally do not – and cannot until experiencing a gestalt switch - see their point of view. Incommensurability and its concomitant problems for communication about EHE and DSM is seen as reflected in the data presented on page 191-192.

Paradigms in Education

Usually in education, 'paradigms' are discussed as being worlds within education as conflated with schooling; for example the paradigm of accountability (Stickney 2006) or of various theoretical approaches to research methodology (Guba 1990; Donmoyer 1996). As already suggested, AEM is an emergent paradigm of education in another sense and challenges this conflation to its core.   We can see it differently: education is the epistemological and ontological home of a powerful and dominant 'mega-paradigm' which is MAS, wherein 'minor' paradigms such as 'accountability' or 'post-modernism' play out their discourse. Previously the conflation of education with schooling allowed only for an epistemological structure that was top-down or enclosed: education *as* schooling at the top and beneath or within this 'mega' paradigm lay various 'inner' paradigms such as narratives, qualitative/ quantitative research methodologies, post-modernism etc. DSM and EHE were also 'within' this mega paradigm which was therefore no paradigm at all but the field itself. The emergence of EHE and DSM as within an AEM *paradigm* of education - shown as a paradigm through the 'proof' of 'gestalt switch' discovery inherent in the data of this thesis – changes the topography of education as presently conceived. Instead of the top-down model just outlined, where everything that is educational is either inside or outside – or 'alternative', as John Furlong said earlier (see page 91) - of education as a conflation with schooling, now the practice of education has at least two identifiable paradigms with the possibility for future discoveries that uncover other paradigms of education. There is now: MAS and AEM. Within AEM are various worlds, one of which is EHE and within EHE are various worlds such as conservative Christian (Kunzman 2009) and autonomous (Thomas

and Pattison 2007; Bergeron 2009). Then, of course within both paradigms of MAS and AEM are distinct paradigms of theory or practice.

When it comes to the assessment of the various paradigms of education, MAS, in this text, is considered as a failed (or failing) paradigm of education. It acts outside of its nature (which, as is shown here, is paradigmatic) by acting as if it is education itself as a field. This has significant negative consequences for the ability of MAS to do what Kuhn would call 'normal science' in creating development of the paradigm and confers upon such schooling as a *mere* paradigm of education, a role in the life of the human that deserves substantial scrutiny and challenge for being outside of its capacity and remit. It also is useful to note that in being a 'mega-paradigm' of education, MAS has a responsibility to acknowledge its responsibility (as hegemonic) to develop what Bernstein calls the requirement of "the cultivation of hermeneutical sensitivity and imagination" (Bernstein 1991, pg 92) towards a fellow, less powerful and less well-resourced paradigm of education such as AEM, in the face of its paradigmatic difference and Kuhn's concept of incommensurability which requires sensitive understandings of difference for intolerance, persecution and miscomprehension to be avoided (Kuhn 2000).

The emergence of EHE as a form of education that is gaining prominence and showing quantitative and qualitative success as education (Rothermel 2003, 2002; Thomas and Pattison 2007) begins to show us that effective alternative paradigms of educational modalities within education as a field, are not only possible, but with the 'competition' that having various forms of education creates, are real experiences of difference in terms of practice and its outcomes. Of course, paradigms in this sense do not mean different kinds of

schools: free schools, academies, etc. Importantly for this concept of education as a paradigmatic field is the idea that each paradigm must have a different theoretical base underpinning its pedagogy in practice from another: each paradigm is a different 'world' *because* of the difference of its educational theory and pedagogical practice. Thus, a free school set up along MAS lines is not outside of a MAS paradigm but within and a part of it, despite certain specific features such as being set up by parents. The nature of the 'world' of EHE and DSM, as the AEM paradigm, is such that its theoretical differences; its incommensurability with MAS education practice; its incommensurable vocabulary; its existence in large part as response to crisis in MAS; its nature as educational anomaly and also as solver of anomalies such as the cry for individual autonomy in learning; its present nature as paradigm as 'crude' (see Kuhn 1962) and undeveloped, all shows signs of paradigm emergence according to Kuhn's taxonomy of paradigm features. Further discussion of these matters is below.

Given that paradigms are changeable with time and situation, it is interesting to note the resilience of the MAS paradigm within education (once we identify it as such) as continuously underpinning the same methodology of authoritarian and hierarchical structures. This is especially surprising given that such schooling as a modality bases itself on scientific principles of assessment, verification and reliability. If Kuhn is correct and science is a domain which, due to its need for precision, must continuously admit of anomalies and therefore in time a critical mass of these demanding a new paradigm (Kuhn 1962), MAS should have changed paradigm by now. If MAS has not developed in its hundred or so years of aiming to be a major 'scientific' technology in society for learning of all kinds, such that its paradigm might be able to reach a crisis point and morph into a new

paradigm, or even be able to humbly recognise that it is in fact 'merely' a paradigm of education and not education itself, what, we might ask, is wrong with MAS that it is so stubbornly unreflective of its clear mass of anomalies such as over-testing, teaching to the test, bullying, abuses of power, repression or disagreement with individual expression? Perhaps the answer is that education is still a very immature science and awaits its first paradigm shift, or perhaps it is not a science at all but has been masquerading as one to gain status, or Kuhn is wrong?

It is suggested that education *is* a kind of science that fits Kuhn's convincing model of paradigms and revolutionary shift; however the idea of science presented by Kuhn may need to open its doors to new forms of science that are paradigmatic and which are not imbued with rationalistic scientism but operate according to principles found in human nature. In this way AEM would be easier to recognise as an 'educational' paradigm. With such an opening may arrive further and new understandings of how social 'scientific' endeavours behave in relation to the human, how they can behave and how the human could respond to them in a new way.

How is the paradigm of EHE (and DSM) different from that of MAS?

In order to suggest that EHE should be judged according to another paradigmatic set of rules, boundaries, standards and values from MAS, we need to 'prove' that the paradigm of values and standards and acceptable actions that EHE (and DSM) take to be valid have indeed validity within their own paradigm and are paradigmatically different from another vision of education such as MAS. For this we can turn to the already mentioned High Court

judgement made in favour of Summerhill School, which deserves repetition. Summerhill School was deemed by Ofsted to be a failing school (Grenyer 1999), which led to a subsequent court battle for Summerhill to be judged according to a different paradigm of educational value and attainment (Cunningham 2000). Summerhill won (Summerhill_School 2000) and secured itself the right to an alternative framework of inspection and has since been judged to be a good school according to this set of purposes and standards (McCarthy 2007).

What this judgement has achieved for EHE as well (which is yet, it is believed, to be noticed or operationalised) is the possibility for EHE as a practice of pedagogy, to be judged according to its own paradigmatic validity, rather than that of another pedagogic paradigm such as MAS. The failure to 'judge' EHE within its own paradigm is one reason why the Badman Review (Badman 2009) has received such a poor reception from so many home educators (especially those located within an autonomous paradigm of learning): the review was simply judging standards, practices and values that do not apply; that are incommensurable (Kuhn 2000a) with its object of inspection. For future attempts to make policy 'sense' of the domains of EHE and DSM, an appreciation of education as paradigmatic is a key tool for rational approaches to policy application and communication with the community of practice in question and the setting of new policy.

Thus, when we consider EHE – and especially autonomous EHE, which received particular mention in the Badman report as mysterious (Badman 2009, pg 36) - the holistic *integrity of potential* for the naturalness of the human that EHE practices amongst other forms of alternative education promote as a primary tenet of their practice (McKee 2002; Kendall and

Atkinson 2006; Dowty 2000; Smithers 19/06/08; Curtis 08/02/08) might receive the respect of acceptance that they require. They would be seen and judged according to another and particular point of view, different from the one usually used in most books and research on education.

The special similar nature of EHE and DSM discovery

As a part of one AEM paradigm (albeit a minor one compared to the mega paradigm of MAS) it is not surprising that the discovery of EHE and DSM is similar, because they share a theoretical underpinning of autonomy for the individual child in learning and an emphasis on emotional freedom and flourishing. The significance of paradigms as a conceptual and epistemological tool for understanding what happens when adults discover EHE (and DSM) is clear. The Kuhnian pattern, it seems from the data, is the same in the case of EHE and DSM discovery. Two examples will suffice to show the similarity: Tom, in the context of the discovery of DSM - as a mainstream (albeit unusually liberal) school teacher at the time - reported having a sense of searching for new answers in the face of a situation of his own life experiences which made him uncomfortable and didn't make sense to him. He talks of how he found a new way to understand both education and living and how this was an epiphany of realisation; that there was a 'new world'. At the end of the narrative he concludes by speaking of how this journey gave him a sense of rightness:

> Tom: "...I realised that there were alternatives and I think that's the crucial thing – it doesn't matter whether I agree with that particular book but what I realised was that there was an alternative world out there.
> HL: Ah...
> Tom: Certainly I was looking for an alternative script that could explain what I wanted to be and where I wanted to go and what was going on because I knew what I didn't like and I needed to find something I did: a new way forward...

HL: What is this force in you?...

Tom: I was uncomfortable. I wanted to restore the comfort. I wanted to find a way through that I could be comfortable with. I think all of us are looking for some form of balance in ourselves.

H: Did you feel alienated?

Tom: Yea yer absol... I felt alienated from school... I didn't like school... so you've got all these tensions. I wanted to be myself. I wanted to do what I wanted to do. I wanted to define my identity not have someone else do it for me...

[Tom was talking in the context of a new experience of being a member of the labour party and other ideas and activities]

That was another eye opener, onto another world so I was obviously looking for these and of course the more you do it, the more you look so it kind of feeds on itself... it was a part of all that looking for other things.

HL: It seems to me from the way you're talking about that period and your life in terms of finding out about these different worlds... it seems that it was quite exciting.

Tom: Oh it was. Absolutely! Oh there's a new world.

HL: What did it mean to you?

Tom: Just that I didn't have to follow the old paths...the feeling was increasingly that there was nothing predetermined that you could...break through this you could do it... my increasing awareness was that I didn't have to do I didn't have to lead the same lifestyles... developing 'an alternative armour' if you like part of this was assertiveness training... you could say no to these things... no! I don't have to ...more and more...but I wanted some choice about what I did. It increasingly dawned on me that you didn't have to do...

HL: What was it that this thing that you couldn't help but defend? What were you trying to save?

Tom: I think I was trying to save my self really... this is your sense of self coming out here because I'm facing all these contradictions... I'm trying to reconcile all of these things and the only way I can reconcile all of these things and the only way I can reconcile them is to come up with an alternative script [banging table] to all of this... so I have to find another script *for me* and the only way you can find that is by searching for alternatives...

HL: Was going bird-watching with these boys...?

Tom: That made a huge difference to me. That's why I brought it up because it was at *that* moment... it wasn't until I'd had this kind of concrete experience... that it really started to dawn on me that what we take for granted as 'must do' isn't 'must do' at all....

HL: So when you found that out, how did it feel?

Tom: Well, it was revelationary! That was the beginning... It sparked something in my head... none of these... these are all sort of 'ptip' [makes sound] moments they kind of form a whole, the development of consciousness is quite a slow...

HL: you said 'ptip' moment what do you mean?

Tom: It's like an, you know, an eureka moment... it was part of a jigsaw that fell into place it was the first time that I thought...'I see, I see...'

HL: What did you see?

Tom: What do you mean what did I see?

HL: You said 'I see, I see'.

Tom: I see that it doesn't have to be like this there is an alternative way of doing this and probably a better way of doing things... You realise everything is interconnected." (Tom, March 2009)

This next example is very similar but from the discovery of EHE. Although this extract has also been previously used above, in parts, it is presented here in full to show the bigger picture and line of development:

HL: "So you do think that you had smallish moments of epiphany?
Nina: Yer. I still do sometimes when I meet people and talk to them, and then or when we have really nice experiences and we have fun and we learn so many things instead of sitting at school. I still have these moments sure. Without it it would be terrible it would be prison with children at home.
HL: ...have these 'moments of epiphany' as you call them been a surprise feature of home education or is it something that's connected to you as a person but wouldn't be in the lives of other home educators?
Nina: No, I think they are connected to home education. Very much so. As I said we were basically doing home education anyway all the time and I just felt it's like a jigsaw some pieces just put together and the you've got this feeling everything fits I think that's the feeling I have about it.
HL: What do you mean?
Nina: The peace. The bit I've been doing with my children anyway since they've been born and the bit about home education can give us or be for us – they fit together like two jigsaw pieces so it gives the satisfaction satisfied feeling.
HL: What kind of satisfaction is that?
Nina: About doing my thing about having finally found something that's good that's practicable for us that we like to do that's suitable for our family, especially our family something I've probably been looking for, for all the time they've been at school basically yep. I just didn't know. I *always thought* I just had to find the right school..." (Nina, July 2009)

These narratives mirror exactly the ways in which Kuhn speaks of discovery in the natural sciences: confusion, crisis, an experience of discovery and then a new world that makes sense and feels right. These participants have also both articulated – either in interview or in person with the present researcher – experiences of profound incommensurability in

attempting to communicate their satisfying realisations, which in both cases became permanent and life-determining aspects of their existence.

How does the concept of paradigms help us to understand education?

It is suggested here that without the concept of paradigms applied to education, education becomes a trap of institutionalisation because of the key conflation of education with MAS. Paradigmatic revolution, following Kuhn, is a principle of self-healing where problems (anomalies) in a science occur. Without the continual possibility for renewal that Kuhn's framework offers through conscientization of the possibility of radical change, education as a discipline faces the danger of becoming unhealthy - some would say this has already occurred, of course (Harber 2009; Apple 1995; Hemming 1980) - stale, out-dated, incapable to meet present needs, dogmatic, threatened and therefore threatening, liable to constant attack and predisposed to attack; and worst of all, inhuman (Block 1997; Miller 2008; Foucault 1977). By becoming paradigmatic in its identity, pedagogical 'difference' in the form of alternative pedagogies such as EHE cease to cause education to 'tremble'; schooling may tremble if school exit were to become critical but the onus on change is taken away from education itself. Change is internalised through paradigmatic diversity and internalised change is made possible through the adoption by education of a paradigmatic identity.

Of course, with a paradigmatic identity in education comes a need for (and indeed a revolution of) a change in perception of how education functions. Diversity and diverse practices of education, such as EHE (and DSM), would no longer be seen as outside of education (conflated with MAS), but as a natural part of it as a 'science'. This would have

long term implications for funding, research, social outcomes and acceptance of EHE (and DSM). In terms of helping us to understand education, such equality of approach to what is considered appropriate as education might serve to create a way of understanding education as returning to its teleology for goodness and assistance in the life-world of individuals and societies and as thus having a function otherwise than as creating mere functionality (Biesta 2009).

The discovery of EHE as a paradigmatic function

Not only does the empirical data for this study show again and again how there is a manifold similarity to Kuhn's framework (Kuhn 1962) as he applied it to discoveries in the natural sciences, but it serves to tell us new things about EHE and DSM that were previously hidden: there is 'discovery' in the finding out about alternative ways of educating which is a significant life event; discovery of EHE and DSM is profoundly important for the educational experiences that follow; EHE and DSM are *literally* a world away from MAS education. Intriguingly, an article from 1994 suggested that a move towards an education of 'intersubjective' democratic difference of a kind in tune with AEM 'requires a 'gestalt switch' (Biesta 1994, pg 317). The fact that Kuhn's natural science model fits so well onto a social science issue such as discovery of different educational modalities is important in itself as it 'proves' that Kuhnian revolutions of knowledge apply in the social sciences. This was previously mentioned above (see page 219) as a point of query for Kuhn, as he was not sure when he wrote 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' that this was possible (Kuhn 1962).

Having established a line of argument for seeing education as a discipline with various paradigms of difference, we return now to a Kuhnian description of discovery in order to attempt to highlight the *nature* of the discovery of EHE with this key reference as a focus. Discovering EHE seems, from the data collected for this thesis and the analysis (both of the data and of a philosophical nature), to closely follow Kuhn's taxonomy of features of discovery leading to a new paradigm. Kuhn leads us to understand that discovery incorporates a need for new vocabulary and concepts (Kuhn 1962, pg 55). Discovery is, according to Kuhn, both gradual and instantaneous:

> 'But if both observation and conceptualisation, fact and assimilation to theory, are inseparably linked in discovery, then discovery is a process and must take time. Only when all the relevant conceptual categories are prepared in advance, in which case the phenomenon would not be of a new sort, can discovery that and discovering what occur effortlessly, together, and in an instant (ibid, pg 56).

It is vital here to note the 'instantaneous' nature of discovery at the end of the quote as this is, for Kuhn, what the slow form of preparation style 'discovery' is for: the gestalt switch. Interviewees expressed their mixed experiences of discovery of EHE. Sometimes it was as both a product of drip-drip feeding to them of information, via the media, friends or even their own researches stemming from various levels of curiosity but sometimes also in the same interview those people whose discovery happened as 'a process' (ibid) would announce that a moment of 'éclat' happened when a key piece of information helped to make EHE 'make sense' to them: leading, following this avowed change in perspective, to withdrawing their children from school or committing themselves to joining an EHE community network.

Kuhn problematises the moment of discovery and thereby the nature of discovery itself: 'At what point in Roentgen's investigation, for example, ought we say that X-rays had actually been discovered?' (ibid, pg 57). He suggests that discovery requires an active agent with a perhaps less than everyday power of observation to occur; someone who is able to see where others cannot: 'At least one other investigator had seen that glow and to his subsequent chagrin, discovered nothing at all' (ibid, pg 58). However, how and when discovery actually results in paradigm change is a question that seems nevertheless to remain unanswered: 'Unlike the discovery of oxygen that of X-rays was not, at least for a decade after the event, implicated in any obvious upheaval in scientific theory. In what sense, then, can the assimilation of that discovery be said to have necessitated paradigm change?' (ibid, pg 58).

For EHE discovery parents are invariably the active agents. Naturally not all parents who 'discover' EHE superficially opt for it as an educational path for their children, as the many street survey respondents who knew about EHE but sent their children to school testify. Discovery of EHE is a problem: not everyone I spoke to who had discovered EHE on some level felt they were capable of doing it and many who were positive about it as a possibility also stated that financially it was, for them, not an option. Apart from these basic primary issues at the starting block, other concerns manifested in the discourse of the interviewees in particular in the shape of difficulties persuading extended family members of the efficacy of EHE as an educational modality.

Of course the many people who are now discovering EHE via the media portrayals do not *enter* into the paradigm of EHE as soon as they hear about it. They may be uninterested or even against such forms of education, as the street survey respondents sometimes suggested

in their responses. It is posited here that the paradigm of EHE is only created and maintained by those who not only 'enter into it' by practising EHE as a form of education for their children, but also maintain a belief in EHE as a way of life that is educationally valid: the paradigm of EHE entails more than education, necessitating as it does a 'fundamental change in lifestyle' and changes in self-perception (Neuman and Avriam 2003; Safran 2008). In all respects the discovery of EHE closely follows Kuhn's outlined pattern applicable to science such that the change is a gestalt (whole or holistic).

Kuhn states that discovery is shown to be a product itself of community but there is also a sense in which discovery needs to be a product of the personal. To discover new information is normally to present it to others in one's community. This implicates them in trying to understand the discovery and they may not be able to do so: 'Others, though they could not doubt the evidence, were clearly staggered by it. Though X-rays were not prohibited by established theory, they violated deeply entrenched expectations' (Kuhn 1962, pg 59). We see a clear comparison between this kind of discovery and the discovery by parents of EHE: often those who 'discover' EHE as a pedagogical practice come up against serious difficulties in getting their extended family (sometimes a spouse) and even neighbours, doctors and the Local Authority to accept their discovery. There is a normative pressure upon the discovery of EHE to justify it as valid, just in the same way that x-rays were difficult to accept by those to whom they should have made perfect sense in the wider community were it not for the fact that it was a *personal* discovery. Even when something is in front of one's person, discovering it as such is often not so easy; Kuhn cites the example of Bruner and Postman's experiment with the playing cards where some of the participants refused to accept that they were being presented with an anomaly (a red spade or black heart)

(ibid, pg 63). As Kuhn states, 'In science, as in the playing card experiment, novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectations'. (ibid, pg 64). This seems to hold for expectations of EHE, by those who have not had a *personal* discovery of it in terms of a *revelation* but hear of it superficially to be another form of education assumed as part of a schooling paradigm (but home-based). Of course, with autonomous learning this is far from the case: the paradigm of learning is utterly different (Thomas and Pattison 2007) so 'expectations' are dashed and resistance can emerge, or conversely, a moment of 'eclat' occurs.

Kuhn also states that the professionalization of a domain (in his case, science, in the present one education), '...leads, on the one hand, to an immense restriction of... vision and to a considerable resistance to paradigm change' (ibid, pg 64). Discovery of what is *not* part of the institutionalisation of, say, schooling, is thus made difficult 'within' the institution. Is it any surprise then that those parents who discover EHE (and withdraw their child from a school's register) often find that schools and the Local Authorities who serve them are hostile? (see Eddis 2007; Fortune-Wood 2007)

In all of the comparisons just presented of Kuhn's description of the nature of scientific discovery and the nature of the discovery of EHE, there is a common thread that Kuhn offers in 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' (Kuhn 1962) but later sees as much more significant and tries to develop (Kuhn 2000) and that is language. Unfortunately there is not space enough or scope within the present study to investigate the fascinating arguments relating to language and paradigm creation that Kuhn pursues. What can be briefly stated however is that the discovery of EHE as a function of paradigm creation and maintenance

relates, as Kuhn explains in his references to scientific communities, to 'the shaping of cognition by language' (ibid, pg 55). Briefly stated, the discovery of EHE and the paradigm of EHE do not happen without the role of language as a community-wide 'lexicon' of referents having meaning unique to EHE as practice and lifestyle. In other words, discovering EHE is about understanding EHE, through language and in thus understanding the language used helps to create the 'alternative' nature of the new paradigm.

Is there conversion to EHE (and DSM)?

Our questions at this point are to ask whether there is something about MAS as a paradigmatic experience that serves to convert people away from MAS towards another educational paradigm. Furthermore, is there something that EHE (and DSM) as an experience can offer that can serve as a substitute and alternative world for becoming educated in the face of any 'conversion point' within and away from MAS: is there a paradigmatic conversion point into EHE (and DSM)?

Firstly we need to clarify what is meant by a 'paradigmatic conversion point'. By this we do not mean a 'gestalt switch', which describes the moment of change, but not the nature of the point at which change happens. To discuss conversion is no easy matter because conversion as a general concept is complex and includes forms of conversion that are 'divine' in nature (meaning that they are caused by ineffable elements and for reasons not open to rational explanation). These forms of religious conversions – as a part of a belief system linked to the Divine – are not included in the present thesis. It is suggested however, that a 'paradigmatic

conversion point' is similar to a tipping point of change and it is a particular place within the experience of the self and the self's experience that is connected to Kuhn's idea that 'revolutionary changes are somehow holistic' (Kuhn 2000b, pg 28). In this sense it is a *form* of spirituality: in encompassing everything it is non-material and existential. Because a conversion point depends on what has gone before and what is considered lies ahead into which one might 'tip', the acceptance of and in the individual's mind of a revolutionary change in perspective is something it is believed the mind knows it must be ready to accept, in terms of consequences and effects. This would explain why there are many people who do not experience such a conversion and even exhibit hostility towards such a change: they are holistically unable or unwilling to accept the required changes because they do not want them and/or are not ready for them. Kuhn speaks of such hostility towards a new paradigm as a feature of revolutionary changes (Kuhn 1962). Furthermore we have in the idea of the holism required in revolutionary change an explanation of features of EHE discovery: because it seems that conversion from one paradigm to another is such a profound change of outlook and even language (according to Kuhn), we have some rational explanation in this awareness of why those who enter into the paradigm of EHE experience such fundamental changes in lifestyle, such that they alter their lives holistically as already mentioned (Neuman and Avriam 2003; Rothermel 2003).

The change from one paradigm to another, by being at the conversion point and having the readiness to experience a gestalt switch that literally changes one's life, is irreversible. Kuhn speaks of this feature of revolutionary change as the 'scales falling from the eyes' (Kuhn 1962, pg 122). More than one of the research participants interviewed used the phrase 'seeing the light at the end of the tunnel' as a way to express that a journey in darkness was

over and a new life was beginning. There is no putting 'the scales' back upon the eyes and there is no voluntary returning to the darkness of the tunnel. Even if someone has entered into a paradigm of education that is not schooling and then returns to schooling, the paradigm that characterises either EHE or other forms of living at an educational stage outside of a schooling environment apparently does not leave one (Yoneyama 2000). Some suggest obtaining this paradigm of educational 'otherness' can actually be an empowering experience (Yoneyama 1999) for dealing with what some consider is the very real possibility of the brutality of schooling (Olson 2009; Harber 2009, 2008, 2004).

All of this suggests that somewhere in the life of an individual who has literally 'changed their mind' with regard to education, there exists a 'place' where this conversion happens. Naturally it is not a physical place, although as with Kuhn's experience of gestalt switch cited previously, a physical place can be strongly associated in the memory with the moment of gestalt switch at the point when a conversion occurred:

> 'I was sitting at my desk with the text of Aristotle's Physics open in front of me and with a four-coloured pencil in my hand. Looking up, I gazed abstractedly out the window of my room – the visual image is one I still retain' (Kuhn 2000b, pg 16).

But if a conversion point is not in a physical place, where is it? This conversion point is considered here to be within the self of the individual. According to the research data provided by the participants of this thesis the conversion point has a number of characteristics that fit closely with Kuhn's taxonomy. 'Anomaly of scientific problems' that will not fit the old paradigm is for these educational paradigm shifters found in a persistent inability of a schooling paradigm to provide appropriate education personalised to the unique being of their child. 'Scientific crisis' is found in a crisis of belief and confidence in state

educational provision. 'Gestalt switch' is the moment when they realise that education outside a schooling paradigm is legal and possible; this comes with some form of conscientization about the law and finding information to support their next moves: perhaps via the internet or through talking with friends who home educate and, at the conversion point all of this comes together to create the gestalt switch. The establishment of the new paradigm in which a radically different 'normal science' from the old paradigm is undertaken is for home educators carried out in practising EHE step by step at home (Thomas and Pattison 2007). Thus, the nature of the point of change for those who switch into an EHE paradigm of education, is a form of emotionally oriented rationalisation: dissatisfaction, a belief they can do better than what is on offer by the state and a curiosity to practice in a way that is described to their ears as appealing educational practice. This state of mind readies the individual for a whole-sale change in the self and consequently their lives, based on either a single piece of new knowledge or an amalgam thereof.

The World of Discovery that is EHE (and DSM)

So far we have considered the discovery of EHE (and DSM) as a part of the creation of a new educational paradigm of alternative educational modalities (AEM). Our next question might be: what does that paradigm look and feel like to those who enter into it? This gives us some understanding of the effects on the self of the discovery of EHE (and DSM).

Kuhn's main concern for the incommensurability of paradigms (and of course this applies to those identified in this text of MAS and AEM) is with language (Kuhn 2000; Kuhn 2000d). As the paradigm of AEM has, due to this incommensurability, a language world of its own,

the effects of discovering EHE (or DSM) are certain levels of incomprehension on the part of those outside of the paradigm to which these belong. Serious problems arise with this when terms such as 'educational progress' mean to someone in a MAS paradigm testable outcomes and the amassing of factual knowledge, whereas for an autonomous EHE-er such a term means such things as feeling comfortable with oneself, having a growing and facilitated curiosity about things that are of personal importance and interest to the learner, feeling happy about one's place in the world one is learning about and seeing sense in fitting into that world in their unique way, etc. Such problems of incommensurable language have, as has been already mentioned, been most recently dramatically highlighted with the Badman review (DCSF and Badman 2009; Badman 2009) where lack of comprehension on the part of both sides of the debate of the other's perspective has been a very serious difficulty for moving forward in a fruitful way and caused a number of inaccuracies (e.g. Sauer 2009).

Because of the nature of EHE (and DSM) as a pedagogy, where aspects of the self are considered important and valuable (Miller 2008; Cameron and Meyer 2006; Sheffer 1995), discovering EHE (and DSM) as pedagogy is also to discover a new world of self-formation. The framework of becoming of the self changes from an external authority of compliance to rules and regulations that may be considered harmful to the self due to their impersonal nature (Meighan et al. 2007), to a highly personalised and sensitive framework for achieving age appropriate and readiness-appropriate results of self development (Thomas and Pattison 2007). A profound sense of happiness (and relief) seems to result from this new relationship (and freedom) with the self: "'I like how I've learned, I like who I am, and I like what I know... I'm going to like to be like whoever I end up being'" (Sheffer 1995, pg 97).

Reports are also of a tremendous feeling of release from constraints and negativity that have been caused by unsuccessful ties to a schooling paradigm, as we see in the data in chapter 5. Once the freedoms that are involved in regulating one's own day and its contents for learning are established, reports from research participants are that discovering EHE (or DSM) has changed their relationship with the world around them.

A significant number of the EHE-ers encountered in this study (to the extent that it was impressive) and with whom extended conversations were had, manifested an overt interest in the health of the physical world and had engaged themselves in various ecological activities such as tending an allotment, keeping bees, eating organically, etc. Another feature of the discussions with EHE-ers was a discourse that concerned consumerism; they saw the reckless pursuit of money as something they had eschewed for a careful pursuit of money. This meant to them balancing the needs of family life and quality of family interactions (including the decision to home educate to further these needs) as something that took priority over capitalist gain. In this regard there seems to have been a paradigmatic change in their attitude to money from one that they said that parents who schooled their children took, which seemed to have emerged from their EHE practice. Spending time with their children placed earning money at a lower position of importance. This meant that their feelings about money and 'success' had changed from prior to discovery of EHE. These EHE-ers knew that EHE was having a financially detrimental effect on the extent of their income (due to not only one parent needing to be home-based but also a change in attitude towards the pursuit of money) but saw a lower income as a just price for the gains they received from EHE practice, and even questioned openly the mentality prevalent in capitalist societies that promoted money making above family cohesion or attention on family.

By discovering EHE some interviewees reported in the data a change in their attitude to learning. Many parents spoke with joy about the relationship they had with not only their own child's learning but also their own relationship with learning as an activity, which had been changed by the freedoms and curiosity inherent in self-directed knowledge acquisition. The parents interviewed were fully aware that in discovering EHE they had entered into a different social situation from schooling, which some saw as part of increasing state controls that they found offensive. They saw themselves as educators differently from the model of teacher prevalent in schools. They were facilitators, co-workers and sometimes guides. They also remarked on the relationship of their children to education and its effect, in an EHE paradigm, on the becoming of self of their children.

Some interviewees mentioned in the data a change in their ways of believing upon discovering the world of EHE. Their new belief system (as a mechanism not a dogma) was characterised by a wandering and searching without pressure to conform. They saw themselves, both prior to and after discovery of EHE as 'looking for something'. Those who voiced that they had been searching for 'something else' prior to discovery of EHE reported that when they found EHE they found something they had been looking for, and that this allowed them to feel a security to look further without fear. There is much to suggest in the data collected for this thesis that EHE as a pedagogy and life practice is considered by some EHE-ers as a form of spirituality that has no creed. Some suggested they saw it not just as a lifestyle but as a belief system on a level with religious practice (to their mind) in terms of satisfaction gained in the self. The interviewees reported that they were, once inside an EHE paradigm, more reflexive (because they had more time and were more relaxed), were more

curious and questioning (because they were living in a modality where questioning was celebrated), were open to change (whatever that meant) and welcomed challenge of their ideas as exciting rather than confrontational.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing findings of all from the data is the suggestion that discovery of the EHE paradigm instigates a new relationship for participants with time, space and perhaps also matter as all of the above indicate in various ways. The lack of a rigid school day timetable and a freedom of perception about what to do with the day ahead meant that EHE-ers reported changes in their ontology. The ways in which EHE is practiced as a (for want of better language: still to be invented?) classroom without walls where EHE children visit the local galleries, museums, sports facilities and other places of local community activity, meant that their freedom to move through the space of their locality enabled them to see space differently. These issues were only briefly touched upon in the course of data collection and would be a subject for interesting in-depth follow-up.

Conclusion

The discovery of elective home education (EHE) and a democratic schooling modality (DSM) closely follows Kuhn's framework of scientific discoveries. The extent to which this is true is surprising. Such close similarities poses questions about education as a science or field of study and also the nature of the knowledge that underpins education as conflated with mainstream authoritarian schooling (MAS). Clearly, whatever the conclusions individually drawn, the data of this thesis which suggests a conversion point lies between

belief and adherence to a MAS paradigm and modality and can provide a gestalt switch movement of a profound and holistic kind into an AEM paradigm and modality, is intriguing. It has the potential to open up new avenues of research and enquiry in education, not least of which is within philosophy and theory of education. It is at this level in particular that the empirical data that emerges as itself theoretical has perhaps its strongest bearings on our current understanding of what education is, what it is capable of doing and being and how we ought to view education as a field of study and practice if we are to truly respond to what might be rather than what we blindly and unreflexively design because we follow a 'set' programme. The discovery of EHE (and DSM) opens up education in surprising and powerful ways which require, from this initial small understanding, further and deeper pondering if we are not to miss a potentially valuable and significant 'moment' in education. This moment is supplied to us by ordinary people undergoing extraordinary moments within their private and personal selves, having thereby impacts in the social and public with which we can share if it is possible for us to listen attentively to the sounds of another world and another language.

In the next chapter we will consider in greater depth how discovery of EHE might be an entrance through 'the gateless gate' and into a world of 'care of the self' such as is described by Michel Foucault in his later work (Foucault 1986).

CHAPTER 7: THE THEORY OF THE GATELESS GATE OF HOME EDUCATION: DISCOVERY OF WHAT?

'Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains' (Rousseau 1984)

Introduction

When individuals discover EHE (and DSM) they report new effects on the self, as we see mentioned in the data, especially in section one of Chapter 5. Strikingly, these effects, their rationale for being *allowed* into the self and the philosophical framework within which they sit, all match closely the later work of Michel Foucault on technologies and care of the self. This is interesting because this work by Foucault has been widely seen as a 'turn' away from his previous concerns (Foucault 1993): a radical break with the kinds of interests he had before in aspects of power and social relationships within a constructed framework of controls, towards a deep interest in ethical agency. As we see in the data, participants report that discovery of EHE (or DSM) is also a 'turn' away from what they were involved with before at the level of MAS and social lifestyles connected to it. If then a match between the discovery of EHE (and DSM) – with its involved 'switch'- and a Foucauldian 'shift' to ethical agency (Foucault 1988b, pg 2) is established, questions are raised. What does it mean for MAS itself that 'constructed' power is a philosophical world away from concerns of ethical agency, when schooling can be seen to be located in the realm of 'constructed' power

(Foucault 1977)? Does the existence of a empirically indicated parallel 'switch/shift' between the domains of power and ethics and of MAS and AEM, mean that, theoretically, personal agency is impossible: unable to be philosophically reconciled within domains where power operates in denial of ethical agency such as authoritarian and hierarchically operated school systems?

If there is incommensurability at a philosophical level between these seemingly distinct 'paradigms' and a 'turn' away into another domain is a common feature for those individuals in search of meaning *for the self* this could indicate that discovery of EHE (and DSM) as a negation of MAS education, is a recognition of ethical agency and a denigration of other forms of being such as are offered in formal schools. It is in this sense that late Foucauldian work can offer a philosophical underpinning of what is becoming in alternative educational circles an established understanding: people 'turn' away from MAS on many levels, of which perhaps the most obvious, powerful and important is the level of ethical agency (Mintz and Ricci 2010; Sheffer 1995).

Firstly, let us look at how Foucault approached his ethical 'turn', as a newly discovered topic of 'care' and 'ethics' of the self (Foucault 1986, 1983a, 1983b, 1988a). It is interesting to note that this work possibly follows an appreciative reading of Dewey (Auxier 2002) as well as other writers such as Degérando, who featured on Foucault's radar of awareness (see Foucault 2002b, pg 72 & 261), and who spoke about 'care of the self': 'the life of man is in reality but one continued education, the end of which is to make himself perfect' (Degérando 1830, pg 24). This community of others who had written on care of the self includes Jan Patočka who wrote on Greek philosophy and published a book entitled 'care of the soul'

(Szakolczai 1994). Technologies of care for the self are not a new topic. From ancient times, caring for one's being is a topic of interest to humans. What is particular perhaps – for the present discussion - about Foucault's focus on this subject, is in its exactitude of match to the notion of the discovery of EHE (and DSM) in a particular combination of elements. Foucault's notion of 'care of the self' is spiritual without being linked to any creed (Foucault 1983a) and EHE discovery is not a belief in a religion but a belief in a self that is sacred to its own existence: see Chapter 5, section 3. The 'arts of existence' which Foucault discusses (Foucault 1986) are used as directed tools of self-formation to 'craft' the subject (Butler 2005) in the same way that a pedagogical framework involving volitional structures of autonomous education is a life exercise in forming the self to exist well, through learning (D'Marea_Bassett 2008; Neill 1968). Furthermore, Foucault's conceptualisation of the purpose of these 'arts' is not to fit in and be accepted within a given world but rather to push the limits of that world, adopting a critical stance in order to find what else can be (Foucault 1991; Healy 2001). This is similar in attitude to the atmospheres of AEM, which consider that the ways in which most children grow up according to the structures of MAS and its side-effect of alienation from what is natural, ought to be challenged by both example and education towards adopting other attitudes (Bergeron 2009; Spring 1998; Llewellyn 1993). Let us now consider how Foucault constructed his philosophy of the self and its formation.

What are technologies of the self?

Foucault understood that there are '"truth games" related to techniques that human beings use to understand themselves' (Foucault 1988a, pg 18) and he delineated such techniques as

different from other types of techniques: production, signs and power. The technologies of

the self of which he spoke were to do with humans effecting:

> 'by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on
> their own bodies and souls, thought, conduct, and way of being, so as to
> transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity,
> wisdom, perfection or immortality' (ibid).

Technologies of the self in ancient Greece – a focus of Foucault's conception of this

phrasing – were about taking care of oneself: 'rules for social and personal conduct and for

the art of life' (ibid, pg 19). This is emphasized more than the maxim 'know thyself' and is

of a different character, with 'take care of oneself' being located within a paradigm of the

emotions, whereas 'know thyself' is located in a source or target paradigm of cognition.

Foucault suggests that technologies of the self, having more to do with caring rather than

knowing, are to be privileged in an ethics that he offers as new (Foucault 1983b).

For our purposes here this has significant implications. It highlights a way of understanding

EHE as a pedagogy (Thomas and Pattison 2007) and fundamental lifestyle change (Neuman

and Avriam 2003) that considers care of the self as an instrument and teleology within

paradigms of education that act as ways to care for the self, privileging this focus over and

above learning for external ends such as test scores, top university attendance or career

'triumph'. In (MAS) education it is suggested that it is not *easy* for pedagogy to be seen as

this purified form of care of the self because of the various instrumental aspects of its

purpose and a need to present itself as aiming towards qualifications and curriculum

determined knowledge acquisition for justification of its resources and industry. It also

attempts events of the self that are closer to technologies of the self in Foucault's sense but

are more dubious in hoped-for ends such as emotional intelligence and self-understanding, but even these are determined by an instrumental mentality that could infantilise and denigrate genuine autonomous abilities of the human to manage its own emotions (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009).

In terms of the educational atmosphere that best suits 'care of the self' developments, a pedagogic paradigm that privileges freedom is required because no other atmosphere is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the unique emergence of the individual (Biesta 2006). As Foucault says: 'liberty is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the deliberate form assumed by liberty' (Bernhauer and Rasmussen 1988, pg 4), so if care of the self is an ethical project, one must be free (on many levels often not accepted in MAS) to develop and practice it. Such atmospheres are found *a priori* in EHE of the autonomous form and democratic schools such as Summerhill. 'Care of the self' technologies introduced into MAS suffer problems: they are not organised around fear-free truth telling and thus cannot accept the vicissitudes of human self-formation (Besley 2007). Nor can the power of self-formation in terms of its fearlessness of the truth be accepted in educational scenarios where compromises are required due to management of large groups. Democracy of a deliberative kind becomes inconvenient at best (Olssen 2007).

Thus, technologies of the self are *not* suited to MAS. They are in fact antithetical to such education at a deep philosophical level of aims and purposes. Where they are suited is in an open-ended space of self and time, where interactions are facilitated and promoted 'so that man (sic) can be reconciled with himself' (Foucault 1988b, pg 2). By means of a 'conversion of power' from 'abuse of power' can become a mode of being whereby self possession is the

means to control of one's environment, including interactions with others *in an ethical manner* (ibid, pgs 7-8). Technologies of the self are the art of living ethically without having recourse to being told by another what to do so that ethical acts happen.

How do technologies of the self operate in the paradigm of AEM?

The ways in which technologies of the self operate in the paradigm of AEM (including as it does both EHE and DSM) can first be addressed by making clear – in post-modern spirit (Lyotard 1984) - that it is not for anyone to stipulate how such technologies operate. However, as we can see in the Meeting of democratic schools, as an example in DSM where technologies and care of the self operate, 'patterns' of process can emerge (Fielding 2009) but these can be dismantled if thought needful by the community. These 'patterns' are habits of understanding that dialectical interactions can and do produce known results: if someone in a DSM meeting objects to some action on the part of another, they know that raising the issue in front of others will result in discussion and a group vote on what should happen in terms of appropriate justice in form of either exoneration or punishment. Key to this outcome will be the process by which a result is reached. All involved will know that a pattern of process needs to be followed for the outcome to be valid. One difference in this other law formation pattern, from a court of mainstream law for example, is that results and outcomes of discussion having resulted in rules, laws and regulations can be abolished by the group as easily and as instantaneously as they were made. This is a technology of the self in the sense that the individual self learns to think and act ethically within an agreed – and not a coercive – flexible context. The freedoms involved *inform* the collectively agreed upon ethical decisions taken and this is perhaps the key difference of such meetings from a court

of law where unbreakable laws inform – in the sense of *instruct* - the boundaries of decisions made by a judge or jury. The incredulity towards metanarratives of which Lyotard spoke (1984) operate in a context of open narratives and trust rather than meta-narratives put in place because trust is absent. These patterns of being and becoming are diametrically opposed to patterns – or as Dewey put it, 'rules of order' (Dewey 1965, pg 18) - that pertain to formal schooling where 'the world of school structure can lead us to learning patterns that are self-destructive, hurtful, paralyzing, counterproductive, divisive and even immoral...' (Swidler 2008, pg 109).

The one main characteristic that imbues all the other characteristics of the paradigm of AEM with meaning and validity is that of individual freedom. Therefore, should technologies of the self natural to AEM in any way be denied any of their necessary freedoms they will cease to work as a 'self-technology' and the free-flowing functioning of the paradigm; its coherence and internal homology of modality and mechanisms (the technologies of the self in action) will fail. It is suggested that it is this homology which renders AEM a paradigm that can and does incorporate with success, technologies of the self into its 'structures'. Furthermore, these technologies are *a necessary condition* of the paradigm. Freedoms of being, it is suggested, are celebrated in EHE and DSM as natural to the human and are seen to exist in this paradigm in the form of a democratic organisation of inter-social interaction and space for communication of 'voice' (as opinion, choice and communication) to determine the manner of regulation of the body, learning, the environment one finds oneself in, the future direction one shall take in terms of career and one's relations with the physical and social world around one.

That is not to say that such use of freedom and care of the self is selfish or anti-social. Indeed as Foucault points out it is highly social (Foucault 1996a) yet is also about priority given to care of the self so that social behaviour is made possible:

> '...care of others should not be put before care of oneself. The care of the self is ethically prior in that the relationship with oneself is ontologically prior... the risk of dominating others and exercising a tyrannical power over them arises precisely only when one has not taken care of the self and has become the slave of one's desires.' (ibid, pg 438).

What this last quotation tells us is that 'care of the self', or in similar fashion the freedoms of EHE (for they are the same in essence), is in order for the human to be the best that it can be in a social sense. The success of Foucault's conceptualisation of an ethical stance suited to relating also to the 'other', as well as the individual self, is wondered about by some commentators (e.g. Fillion 2005; O'Leary 2002). It is interesting to note – in line with other comments about instances of commensurability between Foucault's ethical turn and discovery of AEM – that where there are criticisms of Foucault's' 'ethics' on grounds of individualism, there are concomitant criticisms of EHE in particular as being anti-social. Either someone is getting both wrong or their criticisms are valid for this kind of way of living and being. It is suggested, based on the observed happiness and satisfaction and their witnessed abilities to be very sociable and friendly with the present researcher, that such criticisms are too broadly presented and are therefore invalid. Numerous studies and testimonies clarify the socially effective outcomes of the self pertinent to AEM (Leue 2005; Llewellyn 1993; Sheffer 1995). The participants who were interviewed in depth for this study show clearly that criticisms about being individualist and isolationist, laid against an 'ethics of freedom', of 'technologies of the self' and of a paradigm of education that is AEM, are premature. Such people as 'practice' these forms of being and becoming do function

effectively in the world: on many different levels. They also seem to be able to think about

and contribute to making the world a better place for all, partaking of a strong sense of social

justice common to AEM (Swidler 2008; Miller 2008; Curry 1947), as a part of its critical

pedagogy communalities (Spring 1998). The question of how technologies of the self

function as an AEM paradigmatic expression of social contribution, is a space for future

extended research.

Care of the Self and the discovery of EHE

Freedom is a key element in a Foucauldian exposition of ancient Greek practices of care of

the self (Foucault 2005), within which it can be seen also as its *necessary condition*: in being

free from needing to work in the fields, or being overly concerned with affairs of state, for

example. The effects on the self of this combination of necessary freedom and care of the

self as a practice, is discussed by Foucault as various forms of preparation of the self or soul

for living. The first is '*paraskeue*':

> 'Paraskeue is the equipping, the preparation of the subject and the soul so
> that they will be properly, necessarily, and sufficiently armed for whatever
> circumstances of life may arise' (Foucault 2005, pg 240).

This corresponds with data in Chapter 5 showing EHE can be considered as contributing to

forming 'effective' people able to deal with whatever life throws at them in terms of their

ability to first thereby resolve problems created for their child by MAS and then adapt to a

new paradigm of both education and living. Another specific effect on the self that Foucault

mentions as pertaining to care of the self practices and is also relevant to EHE outcomes is '*phusiologia*':

> "*Phusiologia* gives the individual boldness and courage, a kind of intrepidity, which enables him (sic) to stand firm not only against the many beliefs that others wish to impose on him, but also against life's dangers and the authority of those who want to lay down the law' (ibid, pg 240)

Again such effects on the self are seen in the data for this research, where discovering EHE is an entrance into a world which poses challenges and difficulties as a little understood practice and requires practioners to be bold in the face of the 'authority' of the Badman Review for example. Testimonies in EHE stories and literature of such effects on the self of 'intrepidity' as a result of EHE and DSM practice are also legion (Miller 2008; Lees 2008; Cameron and Meyer 2006; Sheffer 1995; Goodsman 1992).

Another effect on the self developed through care of the self and relating to EHE practice is 'autarkeia':

> '... the well known notion of autarkeia. That is to say, they will depend only on themselves. They will be contenti (content with themselves, satisfied with themselves). But... they will need nothing other than themselves. However, at the same time, they will find a number of resources within themselves, and the possibility in particular of experiencing pleasure and delight in the full relationship they will have with themselves' (ibid, pg 241)

Again, discourse within EHE and DSM communities of such effects on the self is common (Sheffer 1995; Dowty 2000; McKee 2002). Children in the AEM paradigm of education report having confidence and self-reliance (Llewellyn 1993) and are noticed as being self-poised (Meighan 2005, pg 27).

Juxtaposing with this some of the effects on the self that pertain to MAS, reported as negative, such as fear, submission, self harm and anger (Harber 2009, 2008, 2004; Meighan 2004; Block 1997; Staff_Writer 10/01/08; Milne 21/03/08; Walton 2005; Glover et al. 2000; Bloom 24/04/09; Maddern 20/02/09) are the possibilities of EHE to create positive effects on the self just mentioned. In some cases, if these reports of school violences are to be believed, discovering EHE and 'exiting' a MAS paradigm, might just save one's life - be it physical, mental or emotional life. Many of the research interview participants voiced this feeling: the technologies of the self evident in AEM had, to their mind, saved them. Whereas Michael Apple discusses this 'saviour' effect as ideological and a form of social divisiveness (Apple 2000b), he fails to appreciate the cycle of despair at MAS and subsequent joy on the part of those discovering EHE to be a visceral and very real personal event of great individual and family importance, as is discussed and supported by the data in Chapter 5. Discovery of EHE and DSM, in such circumstances, is not just a political, philosophical or social act but a saving act of grace and mercy for the self. In this sense discovery of EHE is similar to Foucault's joy in the idea of 'a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way' (Foucault 1988c, pg 328).

In essence what 'care of the self' represents is a break with Enlightenment thinking that circumscribes experience and demands standards towards progress: the modes of the experience of the subject that operate within the different paradigms of MAS and AEM relate to either side of Foucault's 'Cartesian moment' of division (Foucault 2005, pg 14). EHE as philosophy of the self is linked to ancient Greek practices of '*epimeleia heatou':* *care of the self* (Foucault 1986) and MAS as philosophy of the self is linked to

Enlightenment exhortations to find and assimilate exterior truth (Foucault 2001). It is suggested that Foucault's different critical philosophy where a 'new' post-humanistic philosophy was being sought for by Foucault (see Miller 1993), is found as immanent in a 'aesthetics of existence' (Foucault 1996b) of freedom that adults discover and create when they discover EHE. Subsequent to this discovery, as children in relation to those adults and as subject to the atmospheres and possibilities of self that their parents deem fit for them, young people experience the effects of that discovery as something distinct from what most other children are experiencing by attending a MAS domain. The 'otherness' of the educational modality and situation discovered in AEM instigates or causes a 'conversion *to* the self' because it is sought for in response to a need for care of the self. That need is met by and is inherent in the special nature of the discovery.

Conversion to the Self

Foucault was of the opinion that within the 'Hellenistic model' of the self's relationship to the self, there existed a need for 'conversion to the self' in order for access to the truth to occur (Foucault 2001, pg 207-212), involving: "... a real shift, a certain movement of the subject with regard to himself" (ibid, pg 248). As is discussed in chapter 6, this mirrors the present thesis that the discovery of EHE involves a necessary 'conversion' or real 'shift' from one paradigm to another. Aligned with Foucault's philosophy of care of the self, this signifies that the 'conversion' suggested as being present in an adult's appreciation of EHE modality is in fact not a fundamental conversion *of* the self but a conversion *to* the self. Such a minor change in signifiers 'of' and 'to', portrays two very different stories; one is where the self changes in discovering EHE, the other – that 'supported' by Foucault's deliberations

about a new ethics of the self – is that there is a 'return to the self' (ibid). Although both stories of 'of' and 'to' are represented in the discourse of the interview participants when they describe their experiences, where 'conversion' is spoken about in terms of a growing awareness of the self about aspects of itself and its relationship with the world (see Safran 2008, for a discussion of changing and developing identity in EHE discovery), there is also talk in the data, throughout chapter 5, of a form of conversion *to* the self, e.g.: "...so I have to find another script *for me..."* (Tom, March 2009) or "... I still had an interesting life but I wanted something more..." (Elianne, February 2009).

It is this conversion *to* the self that it is considered is of most significance. It indicates that instead of the kinds of therapeutic education advocated in MAS which aim to 'improve' emotional literacy etcetera for insufficiently specified ends (see Ecclestone and Hayes 2009), in fact, towards and in AEM, a simple non-interference event of natural return to the self of emotional literacy is taking place and there is no need for 'teaching' or 'guiding' in this domain, which at best looks like a well-meaning mistake. The possibility of a conversion to the self implicit in and because of the discovery of EHE (and DSM) implies that MAS as a paradigm of education fails to *allow* the self to be with the self and is in this regard a form of alienation: the self is not already with the self when the paradigm of EHE (and DSM) is discovered, if that self is coming from MAS. This idea of being with, to or away from the self and the fact that an educational paradigm has the power to change that status of one's experience in particular directions, speaks eloquently of the power of education in formation of our self and its relationship to its experience (embodied, social and existential). A phenomenon of 'return to the self' inherent in the discovery of EHE (and DSM) explains the impressive (in the senses of affecting and unforgettable) phenomenon noticed during the

research, of the high levels of personal satisfaction and open, ebullient expressions of joy that the research participants displayed, discussed in chapter 5. As previously mentioned this fed into the experience of the researcher, who herself became transformed in her 'self' by the experience of researching this subject: the close proximity to this joy, when witnessing these events of remembrance when recalled, seemed to occur powerfully in part afresh and touch not only the participants as they remembered but her also in a deep and intimate way.

A 'conversion to the self' is spoken of by Foucault as relating to the 'metaphor of navigation' (Foucault 2001, pg 248):

> "...in this idea of navigation, there is the theme that the port we are seeking is the homeport, the port in which we will find again our place of origin, our homeland. The path towards the self will always be something of an Odyssey."

With regard to EHE this is important because often remarks were made by participants about EHE as a journey that takes them to happiness. This happiness of EHE is, it is suggested, a form of *élan* that corresponds –according to the data presented here and relevant literature about the experience of EHE as a journey (McKee 2002; Llewellyn 1993; Hern 2008; McDowell 2000; Basham, Merrifield, and Hepburn 2007) - exactly in kind with that discussed by Foucault as mentioned often by Seneca regarding the effects of being in close contact with the self:

> "Seneca frequently tells us that by being in contact with it, close to it, in its presence, we can experience the greatest delight, the only joy, the only *gaudium* which is legitimate, without fragility, neither exposed to danger nor subject to any lapse"

A conversion to the self caused by the discovery of a way to reach the self (a Foucauldian 'shift'), that is a journey, has the potential, according to Foucault, Seneca and many others who speak of forms of conversion that relate to the self (George 2008; Marshall 2005; Laski 1980), to take the person making that conversion towards happiness in and with the self. This would be a fairy tale for EHE if it were the case that discovering EHE created a conversion *to* the self of this kind. Can it be thus? Ought we to be more sceptical and dismissive of such a possibility? Despite modern fashion and advice for a presumption of a need to falsify (Popper 2004), perhaps a more post modern (and radical) response to data that emerges would be to trust it (see chapter 4 for a discussion of trust). The 'good news' - that 'must be announced to everyone'? (Rancière 1991, pg 106) - of AEM forms of education might be that discovering it can and does (often?) lead to a 'conversion to the self' such as Foucault describes is possible when one cares for the self.

The self and autonomy

Techniques of the self are autonomous practice. Foucault was quite clear that this form of self 'stylisation' was a newly discovered way (albeit ancient) to ensure human autonomy in the face of domination. He understood also that domination was not the first nor last context for humans as they went about determining their own life: in a sense he indicated that care of the self was a secret and perhaps even surprisingly powerful way to truth about how humans develop; not in the face of domination and power but 'underground' as a vital and natural part of their interest in themselves (Foucault 2000). Of course, again, such an emphasis and vision of human emotional life would deny any need for spurious 'therapeutic interventions' in education (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009). Such descriptions of the naturalness of self-

development, bear strong resemblance to the technologies of the self of EHE and DSM. If then, these educational worlds, as autonomous practices of the self, are discovered, does that mean that matrices of power that encompass the human as per Foucault's earlier ideas (Foucault 1977) are able to be circumvented through a modality of education that has the power to change the self and the self's relationship to others?

There is a sense in which the freedom that is discovered through EHE *is* the discovery of EHE, for without the discovery of AEM as a practical lived reality there is often only MAS and the concomitant ethics of religion, law and science that serves to deny the freedom which is being spoken of above. AEM is positioned in this oppositional dynamic as utterly 'other' in comparison to the paradigm of MAS. The discovery of EHE is in this sense about freedom from many different ills identified with MAS education, all of which are variously mentioned in the data for this study as having been left behind following discovery of EHE: from the state, from controls, from direction that comes from outside the self, from social, economic and psychological conformity, from being 'hoarded like cattle', from a 'factory model', from being timed and time-tabled, from being made to bend to undemocratically imposed rules, from harm, from lack of care, from inappropriate treatment, from inadequate education, from peer pressure, from sexism, from low expectations, from biased information, and so on (Block 1997; Meighan 2004; Harber 2009, 2004; Olson 2009).

Emotional ignorance and the MAS paradigm

There is a great deal of literature that deals with the ways in which the self as a unique emotional entity of worth is harmed and sidelined by MAS as a technology. Much of the

literature connected to the democratic schools movement embodied by and in tune with A.S. Neill's Summerhill School or the work for EHE led by the writings and activism of John Holt in the USA and Roland Meighan in the UK speaks of ways in which forms of care of the self are hindered in the 'wounding culture' (Olson 2009) of MAS schools:

> 'I had taught in ordinary schools for many years. I knew the other way well. I knew it was all wrong. It was wrong because it was based on an adult conception of what a child should be and of how a child should learn.' (Neill 1968, pg 20)

> 'While children who never go to school are most deprived, economically and politically, they probably suffer the least psychological pain.' (Reimer 1971, pg 17)

Thinkers such as these suggest ways in which the alternative modalities of education utilised for emotional freedom actually work to eradicate and ensure lack of sadness:

> 'Summerhill is possibly the happiest school in the world. We have no truants and seldom a case of homesickness. We very rarely have fights... I seldom hear a child cry, because children when free have much less hate to express than children who are downtrodden.' (Neill 1968) pg 23)

> "My outlook on life has been affected in many, many ways by homeschooling... I have been living in what I would call "real life", interacting with people in many different situations and coming to a thorough understanding of myself and what I do" (Sheffer 1995, pg 181).

Foucault writes of 'care of the self' as a philosophy wherein 'the chief objective one should set for oneself is to be sought within oneself, in the relation of oneself to oneself. This conversion implies a shift of one's attention...' (Foucault 1986, pg 65). If we combine the 'shift' of Foucault's description with the idea that a shift happens in the self when we move from the 'wounding' paradigm of MAS to the emotional freedoms patterned throughout

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AEM, we can contextualise the discovery of EHE (as one such modality of emotional freedom) as a source of freedom from harm, an entrance into emotional self-examination, care and solicitude that is facilitated by the temporal, spatial, regulatory and social freedoms of an alternative educational modality, not present in its opposite educational paradigm of mainstream education. Perhaps this is a form of a 'good' education that Biesta hopes will be measured as valuable rather than any propensity towards value of measurement (Biesta 2009)?

Discovery beyond discovery

Discovery of AEM can be seen, in the light of Foucault's philosophy of an appreciation for one's existence as a work in progress, as an opening into other ways of thinking. Radically different ways to see the world are offered in many arenas. It is suggested here that one of the key 'paradigms' of thought which has something to offer us in understanding the difference of 'being', 'becoming' or 'authenticity' that seems to be part of discovery of AEM is 20th Century French thought; of which, of course Foucault is a part. It is outside of the scope of this thesis to develop such interesting 'lines of flight' with other philosophers of this era and community in any depth. What philosophers such as Deleuze, Derrida, Irigaray, Lyotard, Rancière have to offer – amongst other thinkers – is a way to conceptualise a theoretical underpinning for the kinds of pedagogy in AEM which are 'incommensurable' to those who have not experienced a full discovery 'event' in the personal. These thinkers think differently from traditions of thought which we might suggest follows a line from Plato through Kant and into the philosophy of education underpinning schooling found in the 'London School' of Hirst and Peters. When Deleuze (with Guattari) says they are 'tired of

trees...They've made us suffer too much' – meaning 'branches' and structures of organisation that are rigid (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, pg 17), we get a sense that there is much on offer in these kinds of thought that can resonate with the complexity-oriented pedagogies of AEM. There is thought that can *work* with this paradigm of pedagogy in a strong and fruitful way to *develop* the paradigm as an educational world.

This is made possible by the understanding that a way of becoming exists, and through a certain kind of education – discovered and chosen - a belief in the self as an organic, evolving whole with a need for a sensitive, flexible, active and responsive environment can flourish. Discovery of EHE (and DSM) seems to be the start of a unique work of art of the self, not possible in the factory production line or 'day factory' (Meighan 1992/2005, 2004) of MAS. Moreover, to discover EHE (or DSM) is to enable discovery of the self as a unique product of the self, cared for by reflection. This is in stark opposition to a vision of MAS where assessment and measurement are required to understand who conforms (Doll 1993). MAS, as a technology of conformism for social and political 'cohesion' cannot provide that and should it attempt to do so, the technology itself would crumble under the intense emotional pressure of the many individuals in its care needing another atmosphere for their self-expression. EHE is thus an alternative to a MAS education because MAS cannot be what EHE can be: the radical differences between these two educational worlds are set into the frameworks of their possibilities. For one to change and mutate into the other it would have to cease to be itself.

It is thus that the discovery of AEM is a radical shift in perspective; a 'gestalt switch'; a revolution of the self and the world created by one's ontology. Because there is the

alternative of EHE (or DSM) to the framework of MAS, discovery of EHE (or DSM) *as a possibility* indicates a way to survive – in the self - problems that MAS can represent when the concept of viable escape from those issues is vague in terms of practical avenues. The despair felt in countries where EHE is illegal and this 'existential escape route' is not possible, is represented by the common practice of families in such countries leaving to set up new lives in countries where EHE is possible (Francis-Pape and Hall 24/02/08; Spiegler 2003).

Care of the Self and Discovery of EHE: the common thread of 'spirituality'

Foucault seems to develop in his later work a significant interest in 'spirituality as ethics', creating a form of counter-fascist investigation (Bernauer 2004) and 'worldly mysticism' (Bernauer 1988, pg 67) to interrogate and problematise the enclosure of the self and the body within normalising webs of power, which he previously identified as 'bio politics'. The 'turn' in his thought to the agency of the self uses language that can possibly be described as surprising. In a lecture he gave in Berkeley he talked about 'Care of the Self' as turning towards the 'divinity' or turning 'your eyes towards the supra-celestial light' and leaving behind the things closest to you such as the body "so you see it is not an internal relation" (Foucault 1983a). It is possible to argue that care of the self as an ethical philosophy is a form of spiritual move towards the self and Foucault does compare the ethics of ancient Greece with the ethics of Christianity as being of a similar nature but emerging or referring to 'epistemological' attitudes to the self (Foucault 1988a) that respectively omit or include a notion of God. The discourse of Foucault's later work is spiritual in tone because it concerns

an ethics of the self and serves almost as a way to talk about quasi-spiritual matters that can avoid the use of religious ideas or dogmas.

Language that is touched by the kinds of discourse familiar to religious experience is common in the realm of EHE, as we saw in chapter 5, section 3, where the relationship that emerges with the self during the moment of discovery has overtones of a turning towards something inwardly alive and light-filled (but without a religious organization of any kind to the discourse). AEM celebrates the 'sacredness' of the self, whether in conservative Christian settings (Kunzman 2009) or within a secular framework (Curry 1947; Lane 1928; Neill 1968):

> '... [home educated] children are assumed to have precocious inner beings whose individuality must be honoured and celebrated' (Stevens 2003a, pg 185).

As the research data in Chapter 5 shows, the discovery of AEM – in the form of EHE or DSM - is seen by many of the participants as some form of *non-creed based or affiliated* spiritual event. As has already been mentioned, such types of encounters with a feeling of 'ecstasy' are not as unusual as we might imagine and can happen in everyday life with surprising regularity (Dewey 1960; Laski 1980; Cohen and Phipps 1979). That the discovery of AEM with the 'immense sense of relief' or the 'sense of rightness', that can accompany it – as reported by many research participants in this study – can be in itself a moment of quasi-spiritual enlightenment is not so strange when we consider that the test in literature of whether a true 'religious' experience has been had is the affect of that experience in changing the life of the person involved (James 1902). It is clear from the testimonies of home educators in particular that upon discovering EHE, not only their chosen mode of

education changes but, in various ways, their life bears new and pleasing 'fruit'. They are not only happy for this to happen but move into the change with a sense of awe and wonder:

> 'I hoped that telling the story of our homeschooling experience would reveal how homeschooling – initially thought of as an educational choice – often becomes a life-style choice. Families that decide to let their children learn in a home setting rather than a school setting often discover what we discovered – that children easily and naturally become integrated with their community, and that by learning together, the family benefits in extraordinary and unexpected ways.' (McKee 2002, pg vii)

What is clear here is that Foucault's investigation into ancient Greek relationships of care of the self has commonalities with the ways in which EHE (and DSM) affects those who discover it: both are technologies of the self that have an element of spirituality in that they develop the self as a sacred site of meaning.

Conclusion

> *'He is a nomad, even in his work: do you believe that he has built his house? Not at all. 'That's not it', he said to me about his last volume, 'I've been mistaken. I have to re-cast everything. Go elsewhere. Do it otherwise'. (Cixous 1986; in O'Leary 2002, talking about Michel Foucault)*

It has been suggested that the discovery of EHE is a 'gateless gate' and that stipulations or set frameworks of theory to address this 'gate' are non-sensical because of the non-sensical (in terms of rationality) nature of the philosophical domain. The 'gateless gate' is a product of complexity and intuition, individuality and personal events in the 'inner' self. Foucault's later work can contribute to this theory of the gateless gate of discovery by offering a

meaning to discovery; a way to understand why discovery of EHE (AEM) would be important and affecting to the self of the discoverer: a personal and exciting ethical world of self-discovery itself. Foucault's technologies and care of the self offers an 'ethics' of reflexivity that epistemologically and ontologically fits with the open-ended *joys* and *satisfactions* that are reported by the research participants when they remember discovery and when they reflect on what that discovery meant to them. It also suggests a new way to understand relations of the self to itself that AEM as a paradigm of education can facilitate. Whereas MAS has difficulties in being necessarily flexible in and for the self to the degree needed, which is close to absolute within a setting of community embodied by the home, local community or democratic school environment. It is in understanding that these possibilities inhere in the 'switch' or 'shift' towards a relationship with the self, that Foucault's later work fits with the research data that emerged in this study, whereby a 'switch' of the self was identified in the moment of discovery. The data suggests that this moment was towards and for the sake of the self. Tom states the situation clearly:

Tom: "I think I was trying to save my self really..." (Tom, March 2009)

As the above quote from Hélène Cixous indicates, Foucault was not one to rest upon a framework for long before seeing it as inadequate to further searching. It is this restlessness for answers that is common with AEM in terms of the curiosity within the paradigm; acting as a driving force for learning, possibly as a habit, fresh, alive and undamaged by coercions, through the life course. It is this commonality of the nature of searching in both Foucault's care of the self and what might have come subsequently and those who look for another way

to educate, that creates the discovery discussed in this thesis. It is also why this discovery is

not an arrival at a destination but a move towards and through a 'gateless gate'.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Introduction

This research thesis on personal experiences of adults upon discovery, primarily, of elective home education (EHE) but also democratic schooling modalities (DSM) - as examples of an alternative way of becoming educated from mainstream authoritarian schooling (MAS) - has required a positioning within educational literature and wider literature that might be called a 'nexus' point of many interconnected issues. Not only have these experiences of discovery shown themselves to be deeply embedded in the self of adults coming upon and realising educational differences of possibility from MAS, but they are found to be widely connected to events, politics, social mores and personal goals. They are special moments in the lives of these adults, given both the personal impact that they create in the individual self when they occur and the strong effects they have on life outside of these inner experiences. The impact of this educational discovery on most who experience it, is significant.

What is clear both from the study and its wider connections such as the Badman Review in England and whatever will eventually follow from that in terms of legislation or otherwise, the rise of numbers of home educators globally and also the experiences of the children in the educational care of the adults, is that discovery of AEM cannot be ignored. This is perhaps especially true for EHE, given its context in the home, with the implications for others that this involves in democratic societies used to 'creating' democracy and equality

through MAS (for a defence of this position, see Apple 2000b). This thesis has not commented in any depth on the whys and wherefores of regulation of EHE. To do so, it is believed by the present researcher, is not only to step outside the remit of this present study but to embark upon a complicated set of arguments that presently do not have sufficient domain-appropriate theoretical underpinning. It is hoped this thesis can contribute to some other work in progress (e.g. Conroy 2010; Merry and Howell 2009) to lessen that problem in some way.

To ignore discovery of EHE is to ignore home educators. To ignore discovery of DSM is to sideline interesting, valid educational practice. Discovery of EHE and DSM - as modalities within an educational paradigm of 'alternative educational modalities' (AEM) - lies at the heart of a new vista for education. Why? Because to appreciate that something is discoverable, has been discovered or will be discovered is to acknowledge its value. We see this all the time in natural and medical sciences research: when we discover a cure for cancer, it will be valued and it will open up a new vista for medicine; when we discover the Higgs boson particle and can understand the origins of matter, it will open up a new vista in science. The same degrees of interest do apply to education and pertain to what is its own: a new discovery in education is of importance for that domain. Not only is the value of discovery of AEM *for* AEM, but it is – as we can judge from the dissatisfactions with mainstream schooling highlighted in previous chapters – of value for MAS. Small scale in quantity, AEM discoveries can offer grand-scale qualitative material *as discovery* for a hegemonic MAS modality of education which currently fails large numbers of children, parents and adults. In this sense, the discovery of AEM, can highlight the limited scope of MAS and open its eyes to new vistas of possibility.

We will now consider in what ways and how the research questions for this thesis have been addressed through answers.

How have the research questions been answered?

This study has indicated that a number of effects occur to the self of parents and others when they discover the possibility in law of the pedagogical possibilities of AEM, but especially EHE in its autonomous style. Many are initially shocked and surprised to discover EHE – as education at home and not in a school - is possible. If serious problems have been occurring with MAS, many report a significant sense of relief and release from the suffering caused by MAS. An overwhelming feature of discovery of AEM is joy. None of the participants indicated dissatisfaction with their discovery and all voiced degrees of satisfaction – from basic to extreme and ecstatic joy.

Various kinds of sentiments and feelings of freedom – from the personal to the political – feature in the testimonies of discovery. EHE and DSM seem, upon discovery - to open vistas of both the self and the world, such that the experience of participants of their existence changes. In this sense discovery is an existential event.

It is of course, also, a political event and participants were mostly clearly aware of this with those home educators involved in EHE communities during the Badman Review period being naturally especially so. EHE discovery is a family event: it changes financial arrangements, visual quantities of seeing and of spending time with each other for both children and parents, social and neighbourly interactions, relationships to time, space, bodily

movements, information processing etcetera. All of these 'family' realities are part of the relationship to learning that can and does emerge as a result of EHE discovery, which can be seen as a *founding* event of new pedagogies of being and becoming emerging as active in a life; pedagogies which are what the discoverers judge as proper, true, authentic or healthy education, for their children and by extension themselves. As an educational event – in another sense – in the self of the interviewees in particular, discovery of AEM is *an education*: when they found out about EHE and made their own personal 'leaps of faith', they learnt something about themselves, society, education as a social and political function and about unexpected and surprising ways of learning. This education continues past the point of discovery (Safran 2008).

In answer to the first part of the second of the main research questions: 'Is there a moment/s of 'ontological conversion' in the self of an adult upon discovery of AEM (and in particular EHE)?' the conclusion can be clearly drawn that there is some form of movement, conversion, gestalt switch or profound change in the way of thinking that permeates a discoverer's self when they 'enter' through the gate of discovery of AEM, such that the sentence 'The data themselves had changed. ...after a revolution scientists work in a different world.' (Kuhn 1962, pg 135) can apply to these experiences of home educators. To say, 'in particular EHE?' in the question above, must be limited to a focus on EHE participants. There was no sense in which EHE as a modality in some sense different (i.e. home based) from DSM, was a site of *especial* ontological conversion. Reports of 'ontological' effects did not differ in kind between EHE and DSM discovery testimonies. It can therefore be concluded that an ontological conversion happens at a broader level of switch between MAS to AEM. Incidentally, there was no indication from any quarter, either during the formal research or anecdotally during the study, that conversion happens in the other direction: from

AEM to MAS. It is suggested that this direction of movement is unlikely, due to conversions as a movement of the self from the negative, searching for the positive and MAS is simply too saturated with problem areas for it to be a magnet for volitional conversion (a concept involving the idea that conversion is not against a person's will on any level).

This study has chosen to identify the conversion seen within the research as *necessarily* sudden, following Kuhn's framework (Kuhn 1962). Around this otherwise silent or hidden 'switch' (unless deliberately uncovered by questioning such as that involved in this study), lie many moments of slow, gradual discoveries. It has been concluded however, from analysis of the nature and the tremendous frequency of reports of 'switch' like moments, that this thesis can claim to have located within education as a field of study a gestalt switch that because it is sudden is significant in that it indicates the existence of paradigms, again, according to Kuhn (ibid). It is also sudden *because it is significant* and it is that deep significance for the discoverers which causes the volition for and powerful dynamism needed in movement over epistemological and ontological boundaries into another 'world', with all the wonder, yet challenges, attached to that change, involved and essentially accepted as a reward and price to pay.

That a conversion exists can change our conception of education at a philosophical level, as discussed briefly in the next section of this chapter, as a contribution to knowledge about education. Essentially, we must be careful to problematise such a conversion so that initial awareness of its existence bears further fruit for our understanding of the possibilities for new creations of new world-views developed through education. Perhaps the greatest contribution that a conversion in education can offer us is an opening into changes in what we currently

conceive as 'truth' as that 'truth' is created in and through forms of education. These would be changes that could not be designed as they are in MAS curriculum projects (i.e. Crick 1998), but would emerge (Osberg, Biesta, and Cilliers 2008) in post-modern fashion (Doll 1993).

The subsidiary research questions are answered by analysis of the data and these answers are presented in a diffuse manner throughout the text. Parents discover EHE via the media, word-of-mouth, the internet, by chance, by searching for 'something else', by wanting a better form of education and life for their children. The discovery of EHE by parents (DSM was not interrogated in any depth as a discovery by parents because parents of DSM children are very rare in the UK and so none were serendipitously recruited) is not so much a how, but a why. The how happens because – in a knowledge society – the how is out there. It is the 'why' that sometimes surprises: because parents are *themselves* suffering so much, in certain cases, from a combination of their love for their children, their acknowledged moral and legal responsibility for the education of their children and the negative effects of MAS on their lives and its failures in these cases as a 'suitable' and 'efficient' (see page 55) education. In cases of 'why is EHE discovered?', where parental suffering is not an issue, the why seems mostly to be as a prevention of suffering they have calculated will occur (in this instance the suffering under consideration is of their children in MAS settings in the future) and which they decide they refuse to allow.

This study has qualitatively identified ignorance of EHE as more prevalent in certain quarters of the population than others i.e. amongst working class (seeming) parents and highlighted poor quality information from government sources, as well as a lack of active information

about choice advice of AEM as an educational option. EHE is little known about amongst parents at the level of government information. This is likely to be a result of the fundamental dominant epistemological structures, incommensurable with AEM's own epistemology. Thus, AEM is 'discovered'; previously having been 'hidden' within what is obvious.

The why of why EHE is not actively and positively advertised by the state is perhaps, in part, answered above, throughout the thesis. However, there are many complicated historical, political issues involved in an answer to the question - as the example of Germany and its fear of EHE as a potential dissolver of skills for 'democracy' (Spiegler 2003; Francis-Pape and Hall 24/02/08) indicates - which are outside the remit of this study. The present research has not been able to answer such questions with any firm empirical answers. This is in part due to a situation where awareness of EHE at this level is in process of emergence. The answer from Ed Balls' aide to the letter sent (see page 53) is an indication of this. This research has highlighted however that currently only theoretical conjecture based in the thoughts and feelings of the research participants can answer that question. They believe that the state is afraid of the lack of conformism that AEM celebrates because it is against capitalist compliance and efficient production of economic goods. Such an answer to the research question as being subject to subjective opinions, is itself of interest, indicating as it does that EHE is not really *theoretically* (yet?) under the control of the state: it is a space of philosophical freedom with regard to education. This is refreshing, compared to the educational product that is MAS, as itself a product of a certain 'controlled advertising' of a philosophical picture of what education can and should be such that most parents have

'bought' the product as a life necessity and are not exploring their opinions fully with regard to educational options for their children and any lack of options for them.

The last two subsidiary research questions: 'Do any effects on the self reported upon discovery of EHE (and DSM) signify a split *of some kind* between those people who attend and support MAS and those who discover AEM?' and 'If there is a split, what is it and what might it mean?' concern the significance of a possible split of some kind between those people who do or can discover EHE and DSM and those who do not, do not want to and/or perhaps cannot. It is not possible to answer this question unless parity of cultural capital that can create awareness of discovery at a conceptual level is present. As the research data shows it is clearly not and is not easily verifiable even if equality of conceptual awareness were suspected. In a sense the last two research questions are about belief about the nature of the human. During the course of this study it has become clear to the present researcher that she felt happiest with people who 'believed' in AEM and felt most comfortable in their company. The sometimes strong and almost vicious rebuttals of AEM as valid, valuable and possible that she witnessed in a seeming 'type' of person split from the 'type' that would endorse AEM, were never pleasant or fruitful experiences. However, to make any statements leading towards a judgement of this situation is contrary to the spirit of this study. The bases for any division applied to the human are complex and not clear cut and remain an open question, perhaps especially when it comes to education.

Contributions

The contributions to knowledge and understanding of this thesis are wide-ranging due to the aforementioned location of the research at a nexus point of many inter-connected issues.

Contributions offered have been split into three categories which, whilst presented separately, nevertheless can be seen as a whole.

Highlighting issues

Conscientization of educationists working and studying in university education departments and possibly also policy makers was a key aim of this study; in order that indirectly changes in attitudes towards AEM might filter into education as an activity of influence at the level of the experiences of the general public. Firstly, a greater need for an understanding of the strong and deep conflation of education with MAS has been highlighted through a theoretical underpinning of the existence of various forms of education as existing alongside MAS, and not within it as forms of difference from MAS. Education is thus seen as reconfigured and a conflation of MAS with education is shown as invalid and inappropriate. The result of this is that speaking of education is necessarily modal and one should not refer any longer, by use of that word, solely to MAS. Instead, when the word education is used it refers to a modal field. This is a novel distinction to be brought to bear in education through an empirical underpinning that can support a new theoretical structure for an identification of education as paradigmatic and modal. This theoretical contribution has been achieved by highlighting an empirical event of discovery of other forms of education which have validated those forms of education *as themselves*, rather than requiring justifications as to why they are different *from MAS*.

Using a Kuhnian framework of discovery highlighted the place of crisis within the MAS to AEM picture of conversion and shows how in times of crisis discovery happens as a reactive

creation: AEM discovery has been shown as both an answer to and a proof of serious problems within MAS. Through the use of the 'gateless gate' theory of EHE (and DSM) discovery, this thesis has highlighted both the unregulated nature of entrance into EHE (and DSM) and how the nature of that entrance into another educational 'world' is necessarily 'gateless' or without discernible pattern, located as it is in individual unique volitions and circumstances. The world of 'difference' that is suggested by AEM discovery is seen as moving towards alternative ways of thinking, living, being and becoming. This is shown in the text to highlight questions of equity with regards to access (informational and conceptual) to discovery, such that a democratic state needs to carefully consider its information policy with regards to education, so that alternatives are included as a process of fairness regarding individually chosen forms of learning.

A further issue that has been highlighted is that of the existence of incommensurability, through application of Kuhn's framework of discovery to problems between MAS ways of thinking, judging and assessing that are inappropriate in an AEM setting. The research excavation of the existence of a gestalt switch between educational modalities brings to the fore questions re incommensurability in other domains such as peace studies, where sides who think differently have serious difficulties seeing each other's points of view. The example of this thesis suggests an epistemological rationale for understanding such situations without blame being apportioned. That a gestalt switch involves powerful emotions and experiences in the personal has been shown to contribute to understanding the force of adherence that 'believers' in a given (educational) world might feel, sometimes so strongly that the power of their location is close in kind to a spiritual adherence.

Making identifications

This thesis has identified that discovery of EHE comes in four socially 'possible' types and has named and categorised them as 'genuine' discovery, superficial, negative and excuse discovery. By doing this the study enables those, whose job it is to deal with EHE matters, to separate out home educators according to the status of their EHE practice by virtue of the nature of their discovery. This could help to facilitate greater levels of non-interference in the lives of genuine home educators and identify where knowledge and understanding of EHE is adversely affected by different levels of commitment and belief in connected parties such as EHE-ers and local authority inspectors. It could isolate instances of a claim of EHE practice as an 'excuse' and also help to pinpoint negative instances of abuse of children that seem to have a link to EHE on the surface, but in fact are about something 'else', where EHE is being implicated through language claims alone and not as part of what EHE is as a positive practice. This categorisation can thus help to alleviate conflation of EHE with anything that happens to call itself by the name of EHE. The media, for one, could thereby sharpen the language that it uses when reporting on isolated instances and the public can be aided in their understanding of EHE as a complex field of separated issues because the names genuine, superficial, negative and excuse EHE refer to difficult and different concepts of practice, not one form of education. Due to the high levels of parental suffering with MAS, there is also, in a substantial number of cases of discovery of EHE a fifth category, which is here identified as 'salvation' EHE discovery. In speaking of the ways in which MAS fails and disturbs parents' own equilibrium of the self, through researching EHE discovery, this thesis creates further understanding of the wide-reaching harms that can be caused by MAS inadequacies and identifies a need for schools to better understand the long

arm of the damage they can do, even into the lives of adults in the privacy of their own home.

The theoretical presentation of 'school exit' in connection to EHE discovery has identified causes of leaving MAS settings according to a convincing Hirshmanian rationale of voice, exit, loyalty (see page 79-81).

Effects of discovery on the 'inner' self of adults have been identified through presentation of the empirical data, which shows the complex, holistic nature of those effects and the presence of intuitive dynamics of understandings.

This research study has also shown that parents want to know about EHE as an option from governmental sources. Furthermore, given the need for parity in (cultural and informational) knowledge towards discovery of EHE in particular, a test of satisfaction with MAS would be created such that parents and children are aware of options and thus can act according to genuine choice, rather than through a current sense in many parents' minds that MAS is the default and only option for education, whether they like it or not. Finally, AEM discovery has been shown as overwhelmingly characterised by strong elements of joy, wonder and delight at finding out that educational alternatives to MAS are available. High levels of subsequent satisfactions with EHE and DSM have also been shown within presentation of the qualitative research data.

Philosophical contributions

The data from this study *reconfigures* and solidifies education as conceptually paradigmatic at the level of forms of theory and practice, not just research methodology and its adjunct theories. It is considered that this is an important contribution to our understanding of education as a research arena and has implications for the approach to education that educationists and parents might take through a philosophical understanding of education. As an aspect of this contribution, modalities in education have been highlighted by this work as an important key concept of our understanding of what education is. This has been achieved by presenting them as a discovery *of* education, on their own particular terms, using a Kuhnian and Foucauldian context of paradigms and care of the self respectively; thereby presenting diversity of modality as intrinsically educationally legitimate. A current dearth of academic research into AEM is perhaps explained, through this study, by location of AEM in a world away from MAS as a dominant rationale in university Education departments. This would be due to the conflation of education as MAS mentioned above and also Kuhnian deliberations that apply here to the location of ideas as separate and separated, where the dominant mode takes the conceptual attention away from alternatives. The discovery of AEM outlined by the data of this study as a positive, contributes to our understandings of what might follow a 'broken' MAS model and provides in turn a form of theoretical 'road-map' of how to get there.

Areas for future research identified by this study

The study highlights the need for national standardisation of information about EHE and *for* EHE discovery – according to a Kuhnian awareness of incommensurability as an aspect of such information. It would be a fruitful area for future research to consider how this might be achieved as a national roll-out, including the 'philosophical' priming that officials would need as a part of their training.

It is suggested that EHE *discovery* becomes a fully accessible option for all parents in England, involving appearance in educational choice literature and campaigns, on the grounds of democratic equality of access to life-options that differing forms of education can create, of varied kinds. Further research on inequality of access to education outside of a MAS paradigm is required in order to better understand issues of cultural capital (especially in terms of concepts), in foreclosing options for sectors of the population who have an equal right to such information and discovery in the 'genuine' sense, as any parent.

Questions about the role of the state in providing educational choice materials and advice re EHE are opened up if education accepts it is not, and should not, be conflated with schooling at the level of free decisions of parents for the education of their children (unhindered by 'education *as* schooling' beliefs): AEM charities have a present great burden which is growing year on year with the rise of discovery and questions ought to be raised about financial support for these charities. The possibility for the state to enter *appropriately* into the fray of advice service with regard to AEM should be an open question in a democracy and is a rich area for future research.

There also needs to be research into negative and excuse discovery of EHE that can properly inform the kinds of worries and problems which instigated the Badman Review. Research into areas where education has a strong role but where it is not the main focus of action – such as Adoption Services – is required for those services to behave professionally in response to issues raised about the education of adopted children outside of MAS.

The relationship of the media to EHE would merit a fuller study, especially given its role in promoting snowball discovery. Importantly, wider and more in-depth telling of stories of pain by parents and pupils, who are suffering themselves because of MAS failures, is an ethical imperative to be achieved through research so that MAS can better understand some of the effects its structures and practices are having with regards to parents. The issue of school choice lotteries and 'school exit' into EHE due to the dissatisfaction of the school-place allocated, is a new area of research interest for those working in this domain. 'School exit', as a phenomenon, could be researched in greater depth with regard to leaving motivations, to further elucidate rationales and reasons and destinations, where those destinations of mentality, as well as the body, are towards AEM.

The role of the internet in EHE (and DSM) discovery is also a vast territory of potential future research questions about educational choice making and the formation of educational worlds.

The effects of EHE discovery as a precursor to a 'fundamental change in lifestyle' (Neuman and Avriam 2003) have appeared often in the course of this study but never with sufficient space or time to give the issue of a connection between what happens in discovery and subsequent outcomes of change due regard. Future qualitative research on the 'follow-up' to discovery in terms of these changes, considering links especially to the quasi-mystical

aspects identified in discovery moments, would be interesting and important research for both EHE and other areas such as philosophies of change, choice and education, not to mention comparative research in the domain of religious conversion and consequent lifestyles, with regards to, for example, use of time, well-being and health.

Following Graham Badman's dismissal of much extant EHE research (Badman 2009, pg 36) there is a strong need for research *in* and of EHE, especially where paradigms of education can be acknowledged as influential factors of reception of such research. The kinds of incommensurabilities highlighted in this study can be seen as reflected in our knowledge about what constitutes domain-appropriate research. This is currently an open, problematised and challenging question which requires wider conversations and conceptualisations for it to achieve a context of its own – when it is presented within education as a field of study - instead of a quasi-borrowed epistemological context of MAS-focused educational research.

Final words

Working in this field – and especially writing about this field in what is essentially a prevalent scientific doctoral construct of writing, based on a paradigm of thought somewhat antithetical to the paradigm of thought involved in the subject of this study – has been like trying to tidy up a beaver's dam. If it is deemed to have been in any degree achieved that the study coheres, it is suggested that this indicates the possibility of an 'incommensurability bridge' between the 'worlds' of AEM and MAS, the latter referred to here as seen to include structures of thought also prevalent in higher education. To write within mainly MAS

structures about AEM, but on the terms of neither one more strongly than the other, has been chosen as a means to communicate from that bridge. This has been a delicate balancing act, necessarily involving some loose ends, which it is hoped the reader can nevertheless comfortably tolerate, given that they have been 'tidied' to that end. The writing has perhaps not been quite on the terms of either 'world' but by being from both 'worlds', it is hoped that it might be able to communicate the findings of the research to both, without incommensurability coming too strongly into play.

APPENDIX

Interview survey sample

No	Who? (pseudonym)	Background?	How recruited?	Interview date?	Where interviewed?	Nature of Interview?	Length interview?
1 & 2	Elianne and Edmund	Home educators	Recruited via mutual contact	February 2009	Their house	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery. Interviewed separately.	40.30 & 54.31
2	Tom	University academic, specialist in democratic education.	Asked face-to-face	March 2009	Tom's office	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	59.33
3	Pippa	Home educator, child with special needs	Asked face-to-face	March 2009	At her home	Semi-structured, quite a few questions.	2:17.03
4	Katrina	Mother, grown children, expressed regret not to have home educated.	Asked face-to-face	March 2009	In a cafe	Semi-structured. Narrative life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	1:20.00
5	Leanne	EHE activist. Home educator.	Recruited by email via mutual contact	April 2009	In a cafe	Semi-structured. Narrative life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	1.31.21
6	Joan	Education graduate, interested in doing a PhD on EHE.	Recruited via mutual contact	April 2009	Over the phone	Conducted over the telephone. Semi-structured, quite a few questions.	18.08
7	Bill	University academic, specialist in alternative education.	Recruited via mutual contact	April 2009	At his home	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. At the beginning Bill's wife was present and made some interesting remarks.	3:21.21

8	Fred	Teacher, interested in doing a PhD in democratic education.	Recruited via mutual contact	May 2009	In a cafe	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	44.55
9	Sandrine	Mother unhappy with school, thinking about EHE, wanted more info.	Recruited via web inquiry made to me	May 2009	In a cafe	Semi-structured. Narrative life story and emotions around subject of discovery. Also, conscientization exercise: providing literature and explaining law.	33.39
10	Lynn	Home educator and EHE activist	Asked face to face	July 2009	EHE camping festival (HESFES)	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	2:32.31
11	Anna	Home Educator	Around at end of interview with Lynn	July 2009	At HESFES	Semi-structured with few questions as Anna mostly making (very interesting) remarks in response to points raised with Lynn.	1.02
12	Carolina	Home Educator with child with special needs	Asked face to face	July 2009	At HESFES	Comments at beginning of conversation about discovery. When conversation started recorder was switched off.	0.42
13	Sorena	Home educator (to be: little girl of about 2 yrs)	Asked face to face	July 2009	At HESFES	Semi-structured, few questions. Narrative, mainly of emotions around subject of discovery.	20.17
14 & 15	Illona and Hannah	Two home educator friends	Approached me	July 2009	At HESFES	Semi-structured, few questions. Narrative, mainly of emotions around subject of discovery. Interviewed together.	43.06
16	Nina	Home educator, German	Asked face to face	July 2009	At HESFES	Semi-structured, few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	1:13.46
17 & 18	EHE family: Mother, Father (& son)	Home educators (and their son)	Approached me	July 2009	At HESFES	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	1:04.27
19	Justina	Home educator before, now sends children to a school.	Asked face to face	July 2009	At HESFES	Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Narrative, life story and emotions around subject of discovery.	56.37

20	Samantha	Home educator (to be: little girl of about 3 yrs)	Recruited via mutual contact	September 2009	Her house	Semi-structured. Narrative life story and emotions around subject of discovery. Also, conscientization exercise: providing literature and explaining law.	1:14.38
21	Cathy	Home educated young person, age 16	Asked face-to-face	September 2009	EHE fair, London	Semi-structured, quite a few questions.	11.15
22	Betty	Year 6 teacher, interested in 'another' way other than schools	Asked face-to-face	September 2009	At her home	Semi-structured, quite a few questions.	1:03.25
23	Family H (mostly mother)	Home educators, child with special needs	Asked face-to-face	September 2009	EHE fair, London	Semi-structured, but few questions.	32.06
24	Family Q	Parents (children pre-school age) opting for EHE and democratic ed	Recruited via mutual contact	September 2009	At their home	Semi-structured, quite a few questions.	1:11.52
25	Dinah	Mother thinking about educational alternatives, wanting to know more.	Recruited via mutual contact	September 2009	At her home	Semi-structured. Narrative life story and emotions around subject of discovery. Also, conscientization exercise: providing literature and explaining law.	1:44.37
26	Peter	Father who had thought about EHE as an option	Asked face-to-face	April 2010	At a conference	Comments made that he agreed I could write down as he said them.	Approx 5 mins
27	Sophia	Home educator, member of EHE charity	Asked via email	May 2010	Over the phone	Conducted over the telephone. Semi-structured, quite a few questions. Not recorded but transcript sent by email for verification.	Approx 10 mins
28 & 29	Paul and Sara	Italian parents considering EHE and democratic ed. Personal friends.	Asked face-to-face	July 2010	At my house	Not recorded but written down in situ. Interviewed together.	Approx 10 mins

Example of Street Survey sheets used

No	Who?	Where interviewed?	My Question?	Reply
6	White Mother Middle class Training as a teacher next year Early 30's	Train THL to BHM 04/03/09	Did you know children don't have to go to school?	"yes"
			How do you feel about that?	"I like the good..." "I don..." "Nice to know the choice is there"
			What do you think of home educators?	"I think you have to be dedicated to do it... last resort for me"
			Are you glad that you know now about the law re this?	"You should have options" "Not many people know about it" "You should be told" EHE more common. It was a certain type of family that considered it before. What kind I don't really know. More typical now.

No	Who?	Where interviewed?	My Question?	Reply
7	White Mother and father and 10 month old baby Late teens/early 20's	On train THL to BHM 04/03/09	Did you know children don't have to go to school?	"No" (her and him) HER: "That's the first time I've ever heard of that. It's not a bad option
			How do you feel about that?	
			What do you think of home educators?	
			Are you glad that you know now about the law re this?	(He looks deeply thoughtful and angry) "The average person doesn't know. It seems there's a lot of benefits that you don't know unless you're..." HER: "It takes a weight off your shoulders" HIM (looking tearful): "I just wish I'd known that a while ago. It makes me feel guilty now (sister was bullied)"
			FIELD NOTES	His response (and seeing his emotions) profoundly affected me. I felt a release in him that touched on joy. It made me feel overwhelmed and touched by joy myself. I had to recover from that encounter a little bit. As we parted he said thank you with deep feeling and put his hand out to shake mine.

Other sources of data

- Podcast from Dutch EHE conference, 2008. Henk Blok session: http://home-education.podomatic.com Accessed 29th August, 2010

- Written account of discovering an alternative school: Account by Tracy, emailed 14th November 2008.

Sample of Questions asked during interviews

The following questions were asked spontaneously in response to things said by the interview participants. As the research study progressed, the style of interviewing became less based on questions and more on listening. The questions presented below are not in any chronological order, except were it might be inferred that they belong to one event of questioning.

HL: Well, you're sort of painting a picture for me for how you must have felt getting this kind of treatment as a parent [from the school] and I'm wondering: how did you feel when you read the article in the newspaper?

HL: Can I take you back to that newspaper article? Did something happen to you when you read that newspaper article?

HL: When did you find it was possible to do that [EHE]?

HL: When you had that conversation with her how did it make you feel?

HL: What frame of mind is that what does it look like or feel like?

HL: When you say you want to get them out of that world, what do you mean by 'that world'?

HL: So why do you think that government don't suggest home education if parents are doing the job that schools are funded to do and they are doing it for free, which is the reality isn't it?

HL: Why don't you think the government think 'oh this is good!'?

HL: Could I just ask a question because it's not going to appear on this sound recorder: did you just get emotional?

HL: You've just got emotional again didn't you?... I mean, it's a happiness isn't it?

HL: ...I'm just really curious to know if it did something to you and if so what that might have been?

HL: You're someone who [was aware] of EHE but didn't act?

HL: The majority of the reactions are...?

HL: I mean but I mean I use that word converted is it is it an appropriate word to use?

HL: Did you 'convert' them to that more positive aspect or your children or just the way things worked out well or...?

HL: Are you ever mystified when you see this incomprehension or do you understand it completely?

HL: In your observations of this sort of thing do you think it should be a slow process or do you think a 5/6 hour intensive course would do the trick and there's nothing wrong with that?

HL: Why do you think there's such ignorance?

HL: Is that because they went to school?

HL: So what does matter?

HL: Did finding out about EHE change you in any way?

HL: Has it transformed your Self?

HL: Have these 'moments of epiphany' as you call them been a surprise feature of home education or is it something that's connected to you as a person but wouldn't be in the lives of other home educators?

HL: What do you mean?

HL: What kind of satisfaction is that?

HL: What did you say again?

HL: Are there other members of your 'religion'?

HL: No when I say that it's in inverted commas. I actually don't mean it as a joke to be honest with you er I take what you say very seriously have you met other women or parents who feel the way you feel?

HL: When you say it's just like a religion, what for you is a religion?

HL: What kind of belief is that?

HL: What do you mean believe? Is that like a belief in Jesus Christ? I mean, what do you mean?

HL: So do you mean a belief where someone changes their mind?

HL: What was it that appealed?

HL: Because you're jumping through hoops?

HL: What do you mean by divide?

HL: What makes you different?

HL: Is it as simple as that?

HL: If we imagine that this is possibly true is there anything that you could say well, perhaps it's because they're like this or like that?

HL: Was going bird-watching with these boys...?

HL: So when you found that out, how did it feel?

HL: You said 'ptip' moment what do you mean?

HL: What did you see?

HL: What happened there?

HL: What did you say about click?

HL: How did he behave? You know him very well, so...

HL: Did he look happy?

HL: Do you remember anything he said to you?

HL: Do you have an experience... of 'click'?

HL: So you do think that you had smallish moments of 'epiphany'?

HL: ...have these 'moments of epiphany' as you call them been a surprise feature of home education or is it something that's connected to you as a person but wouldn't be in the lives of other home educators?

HL: What do you think you did to them [children in the school] when you said 'I'm interested in your ideas'?

HL: What sort of shock is that then?

HL: What kind of effect do you think that shock had on them?

HL: Where does that disbelief come from?

HL: So what were you doing in changing that?

HL: But that's the practical thing you did, what do you think you did to them as human beings when you suggested a difference?

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