**Abstract**

The concept of possible selves (PSs) has been used to facilitate imagined possibilities and future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The voice of children and young people (CYP) who have experienced school exclusion is underrepresented in research. This study aimed to address that gap in knowledge for three young people, utilising PSs. The future hopes and aspirations of each young person were also considered. The young people attended an alternative education provision, following an exclusion from a mainstream school.

A social constructionist position was taken and a narrative inquiry approach was adopted. Narrative interviews facilitated co-constructed narratives, from which themes and PSs were interpreted. A multi-layered approach to analysis aimed to enhance knowledge and privilege the young people’s meanings. Social, cultural and power influences were explored within and across the young peoples’ narratives of agency and resistance.

Whilst taking a critically reflexive and transparent approach, I acknowledge my own power and influence within the research process. This research raises awareness to the potential challenge encountered from narratives which marginalise and close down possibility for CYP who experience school exclusion. It prompts us to consider how we may generate conditions to facilitate the construction of new PSs to open up new possibilities for young people, enabling them to achieve their hopes and future aspirations. The implications of this study, for my own practice as well as the educational psychology profession, are presented. The value of a narrative approach for research and practice is highlighted.

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**Introduction**

Training as a Child and Educational Psychologist (CEP) has encouraged me to continually aspire towards an ethical and moral practice when working with CYP. I hoped to extend this to my research, taking inspiration from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle posits eudaimonia as the best, most complete form of human life, and that to live well, is to perform the function of being human well. He proposes the good life is not an end state that we achieve, but rather a way of life that we live:

the good for man is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, in accordance with the best and most perfect kind (2004, p.16).

Not to acknowledge that I arrive at this research with my own personal histories, knowledge constructions, intrinsic motivations and hopes is to deny my influence and the credibility of the young people’s stories, which I present herein this thesis. In my previous role as a primary school teacher, and throughout my training as a CEP, I have been met with numerous stories of and about children who challenge, children who achieve and children who lack belief in themselves. These stories have often been influenced in the ways that others, professionals included, talk about them. In my work with CYP, I have been witness to the many limiting and restrictive views of ‘self’. Such views may be considered to originate from one particular theoretical understanding of ‘self’ over another. I have also observed the corrosive nature of exclusion for CYP within my practice, for whom stories about their ‘selves’ are too often deprived of opportunity and new possibility. Stories of strengths, skills and unique gifts are often not listened to and are neglected to be heard. A report from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons recently outlined that nine out of ten children and young people (CYP) who have offended have also been excluded from school before the age of 14 and never re-engaged with education (HMIP cited in Atkinson, 2011). This is a worrying illustration of a group failed and marginalised in society.

During the summer of 2011, when I began thinking about a question for my research, riots had started to break out across many cities within the UK. The actions of young people, who were at the very heart of the riots, became dominant stories, broadcast nationally and influenced further by the power of social media. Narratives of violence, destruction and anger were constructed, alongside stories of fear, despair and hopelessness. It made me reflect upon what we might need to do better, as key people who work with CYP who have experienced school exclusion, to help them to construct and reconnect with hope, aspiration and potential.

A fundamental component of Educational Psychology practice involves working with different narratives, and in particular narratives which separate, lose and exclude CYP (Billington, 2000). The importance of narrative approaches in research and professional practice within Educational Psychology has recently been given further attention by Billington and Todd (DECP, 2012). Foucault (1979) proposed that change is possible through ‘opening up’ marginalised and repressed discourses, making them available as alternatives from which we may fashion alternative selves. A narrative approach was therefore adopted in this research to enable me to listen closely to what young people had to say. I, with Charlie, Sonnie and Jackson, hoped to co-construct knowledge about their potential PSs in the pursuit of opening up new possibilities. This thesis endeavours to provide a space for three young people to share their stories.

**Chapter 1: Literature review**

A man is always a teller of tales;

He lives surrounded by his stories and

The stories of others;

He sees everything that happens to him

Through them,

And he tries to live his life as

If he were recounting it.

*Jean- Paul Sartre, 1969.*

**Introduction**

This literature review is divided into two parts. Within the first part, I will examine the theoretical underpinnings and different narratives of ‘self’, including self as: singular and multiple, a moral agent, a narrative construction, as socially and culturally constructed, before presenting the concept of possible selves. The second part of this literature review will then explore the dominant narratives of CYP and exclusion, as arising within the published literature. This will include: from exclusion and beyond, resilience and protective factors, what children and young people say, towards potential possible selves, engaging potential as well as hopes and future aspirations. Finally, I will discuss the contribution that I hope to make to this area of study and present my questions for research.

***Part one***

**A theoretical basis of 'self'**

Theories about the self and selves have long been an important area of study across multiple disciplines (Hanna, 2012).The concept of ‘self’ is complex, having been described as problematic and ambiguous within the literature (Smith & Sparkes, 2008; Harré, 1998). James (1890) described the concept of ‘self’ as ‘the most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal’ (p.298). Early realist theories have been criticised for being too essentialist (biological) in their view of the ‘self’ as residing within the individual (Baumeister, 1987). Relativist thinking conceptualises that there is not ‘one’ self waiting to be discovered but instead there exist multiple selves located within different linguistic practices, articulated across both time and culture (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Post-modern relativist theory, with the rise of social constructionism (Gergen, 1985), has also been challenged for denying the power of human subjectivity (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). Although such polarised debate is on-going within the research literature, Cromby (2004) argues that is unhelpful and unproductive in the construction of new knowledge.

Whilst recent approaches commonly share a view of self as embedded within sociocultural contexts, specific notions of the self in context still vary greatly. Stetsenko and Arievitch (2004) state that

the goal of rendering an account of the self as a profoundly

social phenomenon, yet at the same time as real, agentive

and unique, remains to be achieved (p.476).

This view is further shared by Martin and Sugarman (2000). Stetsenko and Arievitch reason that for different approaches to find a common ground to conceptualise a coherent view of the self is difficult. Recent attempts to integrate multi-faceted views of the self have fallen short in trying to forge links between conflicting epistemologies and ontologies (Hallam, 2009; Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004).

***A singular self towards multiplicity***

In his book,The Singular Self, Harré (1998) attempts to solve the ontological problem of the self. Harré argues that although a useful fiction, a view of the self as a distinct entity is seriously misleading since there is no objectified, single self, but merely a person:

the self, as the singularity we each feel ourselves to be, is not an entity. Rather it is a site…from which a person perceives the world and a place from which to act. There are only persons. Selves are grammatical fictions, necessary characteristics of person-oriented discourses (1998, p.3).

Whilst Harré regards that each person is a unique embodied being with power, personal attributes and a distinct history, he also conceptualises selves as discursively produced through both public and private action. He proposes three aspects of selves which each manifest from the perspective of the person, in the stories one tells and in the conversations one engages in. Harré highlights evidence towards the multiplicity of our selves, concluding that the self cannot be stable, nor singular, within the constraints of all cultures that we know. Furthermore, since selves are manifested within conversations and the stories one tells, Harré posits that ‘within a person there are selves hidden away to be brought out’ (p.175). Such thinking has important implications for the possibility of change.

***A self with moral agency***

Martin, Sugarman and Hickinbottom (2009) reject a purely essentialist and constructionist view of self, theorising that ‘persons…arise from, but are not irreducible to their biological and sociocultural constituents’ (pV). They claim that as persons, we are capable of making choices, of reason and reflection, and that we may act upon such choices to impact our own lives. In addition, Martin, Sugarman and Thompson (2003) view the ‘self’ as a kind of understanding that discloses and extends a particular way of being. The self is influenced by the physical, biological and sociocultural world we live in, which ‘simultaneously constrains and enables the emergence and interpretation of human psychological kinds’ (Martin et al., 2003, p.128). Thus, humans, or psychological persons, have moral agency of their own lives, enabling people to develop and learn. This, it is argued allows for the possibilities of change (Martin & Sugarman, 2000).

**A narrative construction of self**

Narrative thinking views self as ‘storied’ (Sarbin, 1986), assuming a continually developing narrative which can be re-constructed. Whilst a narrative view of self is frequently cited, wide variation in theoretical understanding and conceptualisation of narrative selves exists. Smith and Sparkes (2008) propose a continuum with varied emphasis placed upon the individual and socially relational view of the self.

Freeman (2001) argues that there exist untold potentials of meaning through the narrative construction of selves, however cautions against privileging the social over the individual in the construction of self-narratives, which he argues as dismissive of the individual person. Freeman views the construction of selfhood as imaginative labour seeking to give form and meaning to experience. However, Smith and Sparkes (2008) criticise Freeman for having too heavy a focus upon the individual self, at the expense of cultural influence.

Smith and Sparkes (2008) support a storied resource perspective, conceptualizing selves as ‘shaped by the socio-cultural matrix of our being-in the world’ (p6). Whilst a largely socio-cultural influence in the construction of personal selves is acknowledged, individual influence is also recognised. Smith and Sparkes acknowledge that stories are a site for self-construction in which individuals draw from a cultural repertoire of larger, available stories and assemble them into personal stories:

Identities and selves are both social and individual: a person employs established and intelligible narrative resources available to them within a culture to construct an identity and sense of self, which then becomes personalised, and refers over time to the unique circumstances of a particular life (2008, p.19).

They add that ‘a person is assumed to be both positioned by others as having a certain sense of self, *and* actively position her or himself’ (2008, p.16). According to Cortazzi (2001), individuals make sense of themselves through the stories they tell; ‘what they are or what they wish to be, as they tell so they come, they *are* their stories’ (p.388).

**A socially and culturally constructed self**

The influence of discourse, culture and power upon narratives of self is widely acknowledged. The way that we speak of others constructs representations of self and possible ways of being. Particular narratives of young people may serve to further increase the vulnerability of those considered to be at risk of exclusion. Equally, narratives may increase possible opportunities for imagining alternative selves:

Methods of conceptualizing the self involved in different linguistic practices have vital consequences for the positioning of people in society; they are not neutral or without impact, they produce senses of the self which may be negative, destructive, oppressive, as well as senses which might change and liberate.

Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.104.

Pomerantz (2007b) posits that through ‘expectations exisiting in the social system in which we live (that) we become who we are’ (Pomerantz, 2007b, p.16). While social constructionism enables attention to multiplicity, presenting each story as viable and each position as unconstrained, Burman (1996) argues that it denies or underestimates how power relations inform and produce the stories on offer.

Bruner (1990) proposes a cultural psychology for examining the self. He posits that selves are rooted within historical culture and are a product of meaning construction. Bruner states that ‘cultural psychology is not to deny biology or economics but to show how human minds are reflections of culture and history, as well as biological and physical resources’ (1990, p.138). Riessman (1993) views people as culturally immersed, with culture ‘speaking itself’ through a person’s story or body.

Somers (1994) suggests that we construct our own sense of selves through different narratives. Through this, ‘all of us come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives rarely of our own making’ (p.606). She adds that people are guided to act in certain ways according to expectations, projections and memories derived from a repertoire of social and cultural selves. Kearney (2003) also acknowledges how predomiant narratives may gain a purchase on the individual’s sense of self (he highlights the power of the media as a socioal-cultural influence), whilst Gergen (1986) also examines how certain discourses become privileged and how this affects our sense of self. He argues that whose voice prevails in a sea of alternatives may be critical to the fate of the person. Head (1997) also posits how our view of self is influenced by what we believe others to perceive about us. This principle has huge implications for pupils who have been excluded from school.

Elliot (2005) has also argued that narratives should not be understood as ‘free fictions’ but as the product of an interaction between cultural discourses and the material circumstances and individual experiences of the individual. Phoenix and Sparkes (2009) regard these broader cultural discourses to function as discursive resources which influence and frame an individual’s personal story. They note that the ways in which a narrative is told will depend strongly on the cultural discourses that are available.

Phoenix and Sparkes (2009) draw attention to the co-existence of big and small stories which are told within narrative. They refer to the big stories as the narrative content of a story (the ‘whats’) whilst the small stories (the ‘hows’) refer to those told during interactions. Bamberg (2004) notes small stories may run the risk of being overlooked, however they are crucial to the construction of a person’s selves (Phoenix & Sparkes, 2009).

**Possible selves (PSs): *possibilities for change***

There were three men went down the road

As down the road went he

The man he was

The man folk saw

The man he wished to be.

Source unknown, as cited in Kearney, 2003, p.113.

Randall (1995) posits that ‘our awareness of ourselves is at best problematic. In fact, it is a thoroughly complicated affair: many levelled, multi-faceted, and ever changing’ (p.345). I look upon this view as positive, beholding implications for the power of change through new self constructions.

The psychological construct of PSs has been used to explore how individuals think about themselves, their potential and their future. PSs represent individuals ideas of ‘what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p.954). PSs are said to provide a conceptual link between self-concept and motivation, and thus function as incentives for future behaviour (Markus & Nurius, 1986). As PSs consist of stories we tell about ourselves in hypothetical future situations, they are said to have a narrative nature (Whitty, 2002; Erikson, 2007).

Whilst Erikson (2007) highlights the strength of the PSs model, bringing together issues of the concept of self, motivation and the social and cultural-based meaning we use to interpret the world; he argues for a more specific definition of PS. Erikson warns of the methodological and conceptual problems which may result from too broad or narrow interpretations. He argues that Markus and Nurius (1986) omit two important features of PSs: their nature as experienced meaning within the social and cultural context, and their relation to the self-concept. Erikson provides a more elaborate definition facilitating the potential of the concept of PSs:

Possible selves are conceptions of ourselves in the future, including, at least to some degree, an experience of being an agent in a future situation. Possible selves get vital parts of their meaning in interplay with the self-concept, which they in turn moderate, as well as from their social and cultural context (2007, p.356).

Alternative theoretical models of a future self also exist, such as the ideal self (Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1987), which is a sense of a future self one wishes to become in comparison with what one is today. Erikson critiques the model of ideal selves as having limited scope for emotional value. He fails to elaborate his point further however, which leaves me in need of more information about the point he is making.

***Part one summary***

Different theoretical underpinnings of ‘self’, prominent within the literature, each have the power to construct different ‘self’ narratives. Whilst realist theories of a singular self may be criticised as deterministic and limiting, relativist theories of multiple selves have the potential to open up new possibilities and opportunities for CYP. The influence of social discourse, culture and power relations upon narrative self constructions should be widely recognised. In addition, the construct of PSs may be utilised to facilitate alternative narrative self constructions and the power for change.

***Part two***

**Narratives of children and young people excluded from school**

Published research literature, Government agendas and media headlines dominate as big, often problem-saturated stories about CYP who have been excluded from school. Yet these big stories include ‘thin descriptions’ (White & Epston, 1990) about narratives of underachievement, reduced employment opportunities, social exclusion and disadvantage and engagement in criminal activity (McCrystal, Higgins, & Percy, 2007; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Ball, Maguire & Macrae, 2000). With pupil attainment, behaviour and exclusion a topic high on the agenda of Government debate, CYP who have been permanently excluded from school consequently remain one of the greatest concerns in promoting social equality (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2011b; Special Children, 2011; Atkinson, 2011). Recent Government proposals outline extra power and autonomy for schools to improve behaviour and tackle exclusion, in an aim to get tough on discipline (Schools White Paper: *The Importance of Teaching:*  *equalities impact assessment*; DfE, 2011a). Yet despite schools’ increased level of accountability for all pupils they exclude, I argue there may become too much free licence to exclude. The outcomes of such policies must await trial however before an honest evaluation can be made.

Recent statistics highlight a small year-on-year reduction in the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions given (Atkinson, 2011), however schools report that ‘persistent disruption and violent or abusive behaviour (of pupils) remain a serious problem in English schools’ (Special Children, 2011, p10). The reduction in numbers of exclusions may be attributed to an increase in alternative ‘back door’ systems which schools now utilise. Thus pupils, who may have previously faced the consequence of permanent exclusion, are transferred to another school on an agreed contract and are no longer documented as having been permanently excluded. Incredibly, Parker (2012) found that CYP may experience up to six managed transfers. Such cycles of disruption to a child’s education, in addition to forming and sustaining peer relationships, I would argue are detrimental to their perceived school sense of belonging. Such actions merely communicate narratives of rejection, poor self-worth and mistrust for those CYP.

**From exclusion and beyond**

Whilst Billington and Pomerantz (2004) remind us that ‘there is something deeply offensive to social justice in witnessing fellow human beings pushed out through overt or covert marginalization’ (p.6), Lown (2007) talks of the psychological damage young people may experience as a consequence of exclusion.

The need for a protective and nurturing environment, as well as positive relationships within school, have repeatedly been evidenced as enabling factors, crucial for inclusion and successful reintegration (Parker, 2012; Wood, 2011; Lown, 2005). Pomerantz (2007a) further argues for the need to contain the emotional needs of adolescent boys at risk of exclusion as a basic requirement from schools. How this may be achieved when CYP experience multiple moves throughout their formative years remains a question unanswerable. Whilst I recognise the benefits towards learning, my reflections about pupils I have seen attending multiple short-term placements, across different school settings, makes me fear about the possible harm we may be influencing for those CYP who already experience school relationships and engagement with difficulty.

Narratives of community and school belonging are dominant within the research literature about the needs of CYP, especially those who have experienced exclusion. Belonging has been described as a basic psychological need (Maslow, 1954) which has ‘far reaching impact on human motivation and behaviour’ (Osterman, 2000, p.359). Maslow included belonging within his hierarchy of human needs, which he viewed as essential to growth and development. Maslow suggested that a person’s basic psychological needs (physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem) must be met in order for them to achieve their potential and self-fulfilment (self-actualisation). Relatedness, autonomy and competence have also been described as psychological and motivational needs which are essential to human growth and development (Ryan, 1995).

A broad range of educational and affective outcomes have been related to school belonging (Biggart, O’Harre & Connelley, 2013; Anderman, 2002; Osterman, 2000) with narratives of acceptance, valued involvement, engagement, relatedness, identification and ‘fit’, as well as narratives of rejection and alienation having also been constructed (Sancho & Cline, 2012; Hamm & Faircloth, 2005; Anderman, 2002; Osterman, 2000). Hamm and Faircloth (2005) assert that a ‘sense of school belonging is critical to adolescents’ adjustment because it meets their developmental need for relatedness’ (p.61). Osterman (2000) further posit that ‘students who experience acceptance are more highly motivated and engaged in learning and more commited to school’ (p.359). Whilst positive emotions may occur from feelings of acceptance and inclusion, Osterman (2000) states that feelings of exclusion often lead to intense negative feelings such depression, grief, loneliness and jealousy.

Powerful media and political discourses have been suggested to perpetuate a narrative of rising indiscipline in schools (Pomerantz, 2007a), with organisational practices and policies also considered to prevent community and contribute to isolation and polarisation experiences for students (Osterman, 2000). Osterman (2000) argues that pupils with the greatest needs may be least likely to experience belongingness or autonomy. With a focus ever on raising attainment, Osterman suggests that pupils’ needs for relatedness and autonomy are generally overlooked in schools. Furthemore, Pomerantz (2007a) cautions of the failure ‘to recognise or address the *emotional* needs that have led to the behavioural difficulties in the first place’ (p.75). This raises questions about how we as practictioners may best raise the potential of young people within our schools.

**Resilience and protective factors**

Resilience is viewed to be a dynamic process which can change over time and in accordance with different situations. Within the research literature, narratives of resilience may be considered to mediate the experiences of CYP, including those who have been excluded from school. Although definitions within the literature vary, one description is the ‘capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation, despite challenging or threatening circumstances’ (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). Protective factors seek to provide an explanation of why some children cope better than others when faced with threatening or adverse circumstances. Protective factors may operate at multiple levels (individual, school, family and community) to moderate individual vulnerability or environmental hazard. Thus, protective factors may be considered crucial for a person to positively cope with and adapt to change.

Research illustrates that school transitions may facilitate change within a young person’s sense of PS identity. With a change of school, a young person seeks to reconstruct their sense of who they are within the new social and cultural world they find themselves. Zittoun (2006) implicates a person’s social and cognitive resources as fundamental to supporting this process. Zittoun refers to the possible uncertainty that arises from change as rupture, of which there are three types: change in cultural context; change to a person’s sphere of experience and change in relationships or interactions. Thus, socio-cultural and historical resources, influenced through narrative telling, are influential to the PS constructions of young people.

**What do children and young people say?**

To encourage young people as active participants is ethical practice, however, there is current concern as to whether children's rights and participation with decision making (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) are being exercised consistently within the process of school exclusion. This has become a priority area for investigation following the launch of The School Exclusions Inquiry (Atkinson, 2011). Despite research demonstrating the powerful insight that listening to pupils’ views can bring (Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Knipe, Reynolds & Milner, 2007; Wood, 2011), the voices of CYP are infrequently listened to regarding the issue of exclusion. Knipe et al., (2007) demonstrate the legitimate value of pupil voice in understanding the effects of the school system, including their adept ability to argue social justice and equal opportunity principles. They argue that involving pupils in such decision-making processes may not only positively influence the creation of school policy but how it is adhered to by pupils. Despite such outcomes, I argue that the validity of Knipe et al.’s findings may be questioned when CYP interviewed have not experienced exclusion themselves. The CYP who participated in their study were not representative of children excluded or of the school population as a whole. Thus, their research may offer a biased and limited view of the exclusion process, with opinion likely resting on participants’ ability to empathise with excluded others.

Billington and Pomerantz (2004) emphasise that listening to the voice of pupils who are marginalised in society ‘can be gifts to us’ (p.5) whilst noting that adults’ views are all too often overrepresented. Gersch and Nolan (1994) outline the moral and legal rationale for active pupil involvement in the development of educational processes such as exclusion. Involving pupils concerned helps to generate ‘realistic and meaningful information’ (p.37) towards valid solutions which Gersch and Nolan argue is of ‘critical importance’ (p.44) if plans created for children are to work. They purport that concern should focus upon the extent that pupils are actively involved in the decision making processes, not whether they are involved or not.

Munn and Lloyd (2005) advocate the importance of ‘listening to the most troubled and troublesome pupils’ in order to develop better practices to sustain their future in mainstream education. They note that the perceptions of excluded pupils can ‘illuminate the taken-for-granted about the way the school system operates’ (p.205). De Pear and Garner (1996) further argue that listening to the voice of pupils who have been excluded can reveal the critical shortfalls of schools and society as a whole.

**Towards a potential possible self (PS)**

***Motivation***

‘Understanding achievement motivation is critical for reforming schools, increasing achievement and improving the lives of children and adolescents’ (Conley, 2011, p.1).

Extensive research and theory highlights the complex and multi-facted nature of motivation (through goals, values and competence beliefs) which may influence pupil engagement, achievement and ability to become a self-regulated learner. In particular, goal-setting (including the specificity of sub-goals) has been demonstrated to enhance motivation and direct action towards self-improvement (Conley, 2011). Szente (2007) describes the power of goal-setting as essential for children’s success in school and later on in life. She states:

The earlier children master the goal-setting procedure and learn to manage the quality of their thoughts about themselves, the better prepared they are for the more academically oriented school climate and later life experiences.

Szente, 2007, p.453.

Whilst future goals may be self-determined in nature, Miller and Brickman (2004) illuminate an individual’s sociocultural context as influential to motivation. This may include a person’s relationship with family, peers, school, as well as media influence. They refer to goals, such as completing school or getting a job, as ‘culturally determined developmental tasks’ (p.14).

Dunkel and Kerpelman (2006) assert that the concept of PSs provides a unique and viable approach to helping adolescents learn ways to identify and work toward future self-goals. Furthermore, when positive PSs (eg. goals) are balanced within the same domain by negative PSs (eg. fear/avoidance), self-regulatory effort improves, thus people may be more motivated to select appropriate strategies to achieve their PSs (Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

***The power of possible selves (PSs)***

Research has demonstrated the power of PSs in helping young people to create a wider number of specific, positive PSs, enabling them to embrace further positive possibilities, such as improved school involvement (Mainwaring & Hallam, 2010; Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002; Cross & Markus, 1994). Following an intervention to improve academic outcomes, based upon helping young people to construct positive PSs, Oyserman et al. (2006) illustrated sustained effects of improved outcomes two years later.

Although positive PSs can encourage positive future outcomes, research shows that people may still fail to create and sustain school-focused PSs (Oyserman et al., 2006). Oyserman et al. (2006) suggest that achievement of PSs may be reduced when young people do not realise that certain actions may be antithetical to goal achivement (or lack ‘feared PSs’). I argue that a further reason may have been linked to the use of an oversimplistic theoretical model on which they based their intervention. Whilst they drew upon a person’s meta-cognitive experience and social identity, they failed to account for further cultural and social influences, known to mediate thought and action (Mainwaring & Hallam, 2010; Erikson, 2007).

Further evidence indicates that motivation to achieve goals is affected if young people are unable to make meaningful connections to their future selves (Mainwaring & Hallam, 2010). This may have implications for an explicit focus on strategies and skills, built into the curriculum, which allow pupils to make real connections between their current behaviours and future positive or negative selves.

Mainwaring and Hallam (2010) utilised the construct of PSs to investigate the aspirations of young people in their final year of schooling (Year 11). Through the use of semi-structured interviews, they analysed student responses and compared the positive, negative and impossible selves of students attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) compared with those attending a mainstream secondary school. Findings showed that 100% of the students attending the mainstream school were able to generate positive PSs, compared with only 69% of the students attending the PRU. Students attending the mainstream school were also able to provide sub-goals and alternative action plans to enable them to achieve their positive PSs. In contrast, students attending the PRU tended to generate a wider range of negative and divergent impossible selves, and were less likely to recognise solutions of possibility. Students attending the PRU were also most vivid in communicating what they would not like to happen in their futures, exhibiting a higher degree of feared negative selves. Students who have been excluded from school are considered to have fragile PSs and more negative perceptions of their prospects, which Mainwaring and Hallam suggest may indicate a ‘lack of internalisation of positive future options’ (p.153).

In spite of the positive findings of the PSs research, most has focused upon large scale, randomized-control investigations of a predominantly quantitative nature. Thus, there remains a significant gap of research potential where the qualitative aspect of PSs remains unexplored.

**Engaging potential**

Children’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.

United Nations, 1989, Article 29.

In 1989, the United Nations highlighted the need for greater action to support CYP in achieving their fullest potential in school and beyond. Despite this, a lack of motivation and success within the curriculum has increasingly been blamed for pupil exclusions and its part in pupils’ unsuccessful re-integration to mainstream education (Morris, 1996). Previous research has warned of the rising numbers of pupils ‘opting out’ of mainstream secondary school in Year 11, asserting the curriculum offered is often incongruent with the aspirations of many pupils (Morris, 1996).

Whilst the relevance of curriculum in failing to inspire pupils has been criticised (Morris, 1996), current research reports that there are too many low quality vocational courses which do not lead to jobs (Riots, Communities & Victims Panel, 2012). Further exploration of the validity of these claims in today’s schools, and specifically the perceived relevance and outcomes of current curriculum and vocational courses is warranted.

Research suggests that few pupils from residential or secure units will realise their potential and employment ambitions (Riddell & Tett, 2001). Furthermore, the lack of perceived PSs, with accompanying resources to attain them, has been shown to have a limiting effect upon CYP’s future aspirational goals (Mainwaring & Hallam, 2010; Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002).

**Hopes and future aspirations**

*‘Young people are rioting as they see no future’ (Oyedele, 2011).*

*‘The riots show why we need to listen to young people’ (Ryall, 2011).*

The Guardian newspaper, August, 2011.

Stories about young people’s ‘lack of hopes and dreams for the future’ (Riots, Communities & Victims Panel, 2012, p.3) have been well publicised following recent summer riots, which erupted across many major UK cities. Widespread narratives of young people having ‘no future’ and not being listened to are ever present, amidst educational struggles, disaffection with the education system and a perceived lack of future opportunities; this also against the backdrop of the Government’s financial cuts. Such a well fuelled response from YP vehemently calls for their views to be actively and sincerely listened to. Despite proposed reforms, hoping to respond to the frustrations of CYP (DfE, 2010), it seems that still not enough is being done to support CYP, yet alone for each child and young person to fulfil their potential (DfES, 2004) and achieve their future aspirations (DfE, 2010).

Working together to provide better support, to CYP and families who may be described as most in need, through earlier identification and intervention across multi-agency services is no new concept. Yet with further emphasis in new Government publications (Riots, Communities & Victims Panel, 2012; Duncan Smith, 2012), it leaves me questioning what is still not being done?

With the aim of tackling youth unemployment, a series of recommendations have been published by the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel (2012) to ensure that young people receive the right support to ‘give them the best possible chance of making the most of their lives’ (p.1). Six key areas are outlined, including building personal resilience and promoting the future hopes and dreams of young people. A tighter and more focused education is suggested, which addresses the skills and values of each young person to better prepare them for future training and work. The responsibility of schools and other services to facilitate such support are also implicated. With further suggestions about developing positive thinking, determination and fortitude within today’s generation of CYP, I wonder about the specificity of such support for CYP who have received school exclusions.

In outlining their vision for achieving social justice, the Government assert the need to ‘ensure we are making the most of the potential that exists within our communities’ (p.61) and emphasise the importance of ‘fostering aspiration in young people’ (p.37) to improve long term life outcomes (*Social Justice: transforming lives;* Duncan Smith, 2012) . Cultural significance in relation to educational aspirations has been demonstrated by Strand and Winston (2008). Whilst Duncan Smith acknowledge that CYP who have experienced disadvantage are at the greatest risk of long-term disengagement, it leads me to question the possible outcomes of policy and reforms (DfE, 2011) which are essentially focused upon tackling ‘bad behaviour’ through order and discipline. With schools granted the power to deliver a tougher, hard-lined approach, I wonder about outcomes that may be achieved through an approach which fosters an ethos of exclusion and school rejection for this group of CYP. I reflect upon Biggart, O’Hare and Connolly (2013) who suggest that school outcomes, including a sense of belonging, are likely to contribute to wider, complex patterns of social cohesion and inequality. They argue that without a strong sense of connectedness, CYP may fail to exploit their full potential.

The Oxford Dictionary (2013) defines aspiration as ‘a hope or ambition of achieving something’. In highlighting the psychological and physical benefits of ‘hope’, Miceli and Castelfranchi (2010) emphasise the motivational power of ‘active hope’ as a crucial resource for attaining desired outcomes and fostering an individual’s well-being. They refer to a person’s hope as determined by their connection with possibility and wish:

As soon as some wishes arise in our mind, the sea of possibilities comes to the forefront, together with a sea of consequent hopes.

Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010, p.259.

***Summary***

After an exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of ‘self’, the second part of this literature review aimed to highlight dominant narratives of CYP who experience school exclusion as published within the literature. Whilst new Government policy aims to improve behaviour and challenge school exclusion, the harmful effects of exclusion and the lack of cohesive community within schools are ever demonstrated. This presents a disconcerting picture for CYP who experience exclusion and yet present with the greatest needs to belong within a school community. Questions about how we may raise the potential of young people who experience exclusion, how we may actively listen to their views and engage their potential remains. The powerful potential of PSs to construct alternative PSs and new possibilities is highlighted as one way of beginning to address this need. This study aims to explore the PSs that young people who have experienced exclusion from school may construct, and their potential future aspiration. The study seeks to contribute to knowledge about the process of constructing PSs as much as it does about the content of PSs.

The following research questions have been constructed to explore this:

* What possible selves are co-constructed through the narratives of young people who have been excluded from school?
* What social and cultural resources may these young people draw upon to facilitate their possible self constructions?
* How do the narratives of these young people construct agency and resistance, and what possibilities are created as a result?

Within this study, the term ‘social and cultural resources[[1]](#footnote-1)’ refers to the immediate social and cultural context which may influence a young person’s narrative construction. In doing so, it recognises community contexts, which each young person may be apart, and community experiences as a key source of influence in the construction of personal narratives.

**Chapter 2: Methodology**

**Orientation to the chapter**

In this chapter, I discuss my epistemological position within this research. I present an overview of the ethical considerations negotiated throughout my research, review narrative principles as a theoretical basis from which I approached my study and justify my methodological choices for adopting a narrative research approach to analysis. Details of my pilot study are also briefly outlined.

**Positionality**

A social constructionist position has influenced and guided the choices I have made throughout this research. Whilst I view this theoretical perspective as most closely aligning itself with the overall aims of my research, I also recognise its limitations for making sense of the theoretical basis from which I am drawn to support this research.

Social constructionism posits that reality and knowledge are socially constructed, mediated by the social-historical context of culture and language (Burr, 1995). It rejects the deterministic view of a person, with a fixed, essential self, in favour of an interpretative self that derives meaning from the socio-cultural and historical milieus in which it is embedded. Thus, how people make sense of themselves, and also of others, is infused with historically and culturally specific narratives. However, this alternative view may be no less problematic. Nightingale and Cromby (1999) criticise social constructionism for denying the existance of embodiment, materiality and power. They add further criticism towards its failure to account for how subjectivity is constitued through contextual interactions with unqiue personal-social histories. Despite such challenge, Gergen’s (1989) notion of person as ‘discourse-user’ proposes a view of agency, with people using discourse for their own purposes (p.90). He argues that we are all motivated by the desire to have our own versions of events prevail against competing notions, and thus present constructions of selves most likely to warrant voice.

Martin and Sugarman (2000) criticise a truly social constructionist psychology as ‘self-less’ (p.397). They argue that it takes

a too-static view of the human condition, one that is unduly silent with respect to possibilities for human

change, innovation and creativity (2000, p.405).

They posit that ontologically, personhood (incorporating interrelated aspects of the person, self and agency) is distinctive to human psychology; it is what enables individuals to make certain choices and to act upon them to impact their own life and the lives of others. Nevertheless, Hepburn (2003) argues that to engage with relativism is not to reject common sense reality. She emphasises the need to open up one’s ideas to enquiry (to ‘reality’) and suggests that in doing so may allow for greater optimism and opportunity.

In subscribing to a critical social constructionist view, I draw upon the work of Martin and Sugarman (1999; 2000) to conceptualise my theoretical basis of self and the PSs of young people. I argue for psychological phenomena that are not reducible to socio-cultural means, with psychological persons as having moral agency of their own lives, allowing for the possibilities of learning and change. Held (2007) however is critical of such ‘middle-ground theorising’. She maintains that a real social and psychological world can be known ‘in itself’ in a way that is pure and ‘true’ across time and space, and independent of culture and discourse. Held posits that such entities are readily available to those who have not been seduced by such deception.

In my research, I acknowledge the social aspect of the construction of knowledge, meaning and power (Emerson & Frosh, 2009), and thus, acknowledge my part in the joint-construction of the narratives created between myself and the young person. For this very reason, I cannot make claims about the discovery of ‘objective truths’.

**What is meant by 'narrative' in this study?**

For the purpose of this research, I have defined ‘narrative’ as:

Discourse with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offers insights about the world and, or, people’s experiences of it (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997, p.xvi).

Narrative may be considered to incorporate three central facets: they are temporal (representations of sequences of events), meaningful, and social in nature. The narratives focused upon within this research will be the discourse communicated by the young people co-constructed through the research interview, as well as the written narrative I present within this thesis. The young people telling their stories are also referred to as narrators[[2]](#footnote-2).

**The power of narrative**

Stories are the womb of personhood. Stories make and break us. Stories sustain us in times of trouble and encourage us towards ends we would not otherwise envision. The more we shrink and harden our ways of telling, the more starved and constipated we become (Mair, 1989, p.2).

Sarbin (1986) proposed that narrative may be considered a root metaphor for all of psychology. Stories are an inherent way in which we report experience. They are a way of organising episodes and action, as human beings seek to impose structure on their experiences (Sarbin, 1986). Narratives are ‘the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful’ (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.1). Bruner (1987) argues that life is inherently storied and that an individual may be understood as the culmination of the story so far. As natural story-tellers (Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1986), human beings may be viewed as constructive agents, remembering particular events in our past in a certain way, and actively choosing how stories about themselves and their world may be shared, according to purpose or audience. The stories people construct about their lives are influenced by how they see themselves at a particular point in time; narratives are not fixed, but may change with every re-telling. Although narrative structure is viewed as basic to human life, Burr (1995) argues that it is not clear whether it is an essential aspect of human nature or acquired through language processes.

It is important to note that narratives do not represent a ‘truth’ but the ‘truth of experience’. On the concept of truth, Schafer (1992) writes:

It is especially important to emphasise that narrative is not an alternative to truth or reality, rather, it is the mode in which, inevitably, truth and reality are presented. We have only versions of the true and the real. Narratively unmediated, definitive access to truth and reality cannot be demonstrated. In this respect, therefore, there can be no absolute foundation on which observer or thinker stands; each must choose his or her own narrative (p.xiv-xv).

Narratives have powerful properties (Polkinghorne, 1988) since several narratives can organise the same facts into different stories, with different significance and meaning. It is this unique and powerful quality which suggests our perceptions of who we are, or our PSs, are amenable to change and creative interpretation. Narratives ‘promote human empowerment…challenge oppression, unnecessary suffering and discrimination’ (Hiles & Cermak, 2008, p.149). Freire (1972) also wrote about the importance of ‘critical and liberating dialogue’ (p.41) to empower people to rediscover a new future.

Brockmeier (2009) suggests ‘narrative imagination’ (p.227) is definitive of human agency; it opens up new possibilities for action and allows a person to reach beyond one’s limits. Bradbury and Miller (2010) are critical however, of a view that an author has ultimate and all-encompassing control over their narrative and its meaning. They argue that such a view is problematic, since we cannot all choose to ‘die good’. Furthermore, the potential for generating new storied versions of our lives is always constrained, since narratives are a product of our context. The problem of how human agency and change are possible in a world that is socially, historically and culturally constructed was also raised by Martin and Sugarman (1999). Nevertheless, it may be argued that although highly constrained, agency is still necessary for any thinking about change (Bradbury & Miller, 2010).

In viewing self as made up of multiple stories, created through language and joining up of events over time, White and Epston (1990) note that those stories attended to most by the individual, and others around them, may become dominant, whilst other stories are ignored. Within my research, I have attempted to create a space to enable alternative, smaller stories to be heard, facilitating ‘thicker descriptions’ (White & Epston, 1990) and thus widening the scope for imaginative possibility.

**Why a narrative methodology?**

Wai-Ling Packard and Conway (2006) argue that:

for PS research to prosper conceptually, it is vital that researchers attend carefully to their methodological choices and the implications of those choices for what can be learned (p.251).

Within this research I endeavoured to demonstrate a coherent interrelationship between my theoretical understandings of self and research methods used to explore PSs. I chose narrative as the most appropriate method by which to achieve this. Whilst quantitative methods continue to dominate in research of PSs, I argue that this approach conflicts with my theoretical understanding of self and limits possibilities for change. I concur with Wai-Ling Packard and Conway (2006) that it places limits upon participant input and constrains learning about PSs to those that are only conceived by the researcher.

Narrative research respects each individual story (Parker, 2005). It explores how individual selves are performed and enables us to view ways out of what Parker (2005) describes as the ‘prison of identity’ (p.71), how a sense of self emerges from culturally given resources. Parker writes:

when someone grasps that everyday performance of self as an opportunity to reflect on the limits of narrative, they open the path to carry out some radical action research upon their own lives (Parker, 2005, p.72).

Furthermore, a narrative approach appreciates the linguistic and discursive structuring of ‘self’ and ‘experience’ while maintaining a sense of the essentially personal, coherent and ‘real’ nature of individual subjectivity (Crossley, 2000, p.530). Parker (2005) also argues that given space, imaginative possibilities can be opened up through narrative.

Despite the powerful potential of narrative, criticism about its theory has also been raised. Critics have cautioned narrative psychology’s attempt to reduce human life to stories. Vice (2003) questions the authenticity of narrative, concluding that to view life as storied is delusional because it imposes order that is not there. He argues that life is ‘messier, more cracked, porous, open-ended and random’ (p.106). Arguments have also stated that the realm of language and culture within stories cannot cure the painful realities of life’s events (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998). Bradbury and Miller (2009) also question ‘whether we can compose imaginative stories of a future that can alter the quality of that future for individuals’ (p699). They further caution that stories can be silenced and even when articulated, transformation either psychologically or socially is neither certain.

In spite of such criticism, Bradbury and Miller (2009) highlight the importance of working with narratives in a critical way, illustrating Freeman’s (1993) assertion that we must

become more attuned to the social construction of narrative; …see how certain stories become sanctioned and others disallowed, how the very world in which one lives becomes crossed with boundaries which all but dictate what can be said or done…these same boundaries can be exploded and how, more generally the self may be transformed from an object, prey to the potentially constrictive power of culture, to a wilful agent: a creator, able to cast into question those stories thought to be ‘given’ and write new ones, thereby transforming in turn precisely that social landscape which is often deemed responsible for who we become (p.185-186).

Narrative approaches allow space for children and young people to find ways of thinking and feeling about their experiences (Billington, 2006). I wanted to be able to give meaning and hope to the young people participating in this study privileging their perspectives and listening to their stories. I felt that narrative offered me an approach to facilitate this reverently.

**What is meant by ‘quality’ in this study?**

Throughout the planning and process of my research, I have been guided by Tracy’s (2010) eight key markers for achieving quality in qualitative research: (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigour, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. Whilst Tracy (2010) posits the importance of criteria to support quality research, she also cautions against treating them as ‘commandments’ (p849). Similarly, Parker (2005) warns of the dangers of fixed criteria which may limit the potential for innovative inquiry and new methodological developments. I propose to view Tracy’s markers as a standard towards quality of practice against which my own research may be judged, whilst acknowleding that some flexibility and negotiation of the methods I have used is needed (Parker, 2005). My methodological decisions in developing my research design were negotiated and developed with my research community (young people, Head Teacher) throughout the research process. Parker (2005) writes of the best research going beyond the criteria to open up something new, in respect of research content and form.

I endeavour to be self-reflexive and critical, whilst welcoming of challenge, reflected in the co-constructed narrative of this thesis, as I aim for quality within my qualitative research.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical guidelines were consulted in advance of and throughout the research process to act in accordance with best ethical research practice (BERA, 2012; The University of Sheffield Code of Practice, 2012). I aimed to adhere to ethics as a universal end goal, and not just a means (Tracy, 2010).

I concur with Miles and Huberman’s (1994) assertion that:

We must consider the rightness and wrongness of our actions as qualitative researchers in relation to the people whose lives we are studying, to our colleagues, and those who sponsor our work…Naiveté (about ethics) itself is unethical (p.288).

I endeavoured to critically reflect upon and question my decision-making throughout the research process to uphold my practice. Discussion with key adults in the school, who I viewed as knowing the young people best, facilitated careful consideration and negotiation of key decisions about the most appropriate design methods. For example, how best to approach and build rapport with each young person from the outset.

In respect of the personal lives and experiences of each young person, questions which focused solely upon their educational experiences were considered for the interview conversations about their PSs. On reflecting upon my research questions, this then presented me with a dilemma, since I wished to view the construct of PSs as encapsulating a holistic view of the person, and not reduce it to an educational PS, for which many of the boys had experienced so negatively. I did not want to impose limits upon what the boys may imagine was possible for their future selves to become, in a holistic sense of the word.

Informed consent was conceptualised as an on-going ‘process subject for renegotiation over time’ (British Sociological Association, 1996, p.2), rather than a single event which takes place prior to the research process (Parker, 2008). I aimed to create clear and readable information documents (with guidance from The Text Checker, 2004) for the young people whilst also meeting ethical approval requirements (see Appendix I). All documents were read through with each young person to ensure understanding in advance of the interview process. In each meeting, I reminded them of their right to withdraw from the research at any time during the course of the research and thereafter, and to answer only questions they wished.

Informed consent was further negotiated by taking the transcripts and my final interpretations back to the young people, enabling them to edit or interrogate the narratives. I reminded the young people that my interpretations of the narratives were only one of many possible interpretations and it was important for them to be happy with them. I was aware of the potential anxieties or distress which, on hearing back their words and my interpretations, may have elicited both during or following the interview; the possibility of this was planned for.

*I questioned the perceived value of this research for each young person throughout the research process. On two occasions, the young people left their participant information and consent forms. I wondered what this might mean, and considered their perceptions of and connection with the research study.*

In addition, it was important that I too engaged with this process over my writings and to anticipate how the reader may receive and interpret my written narrative in this thesis. Discussion by Fine et al. (2000) about how best to represent stories about people who are marginalised has resonated with me. I do not want my research to ‘do harm’ through a negative portrayal of the young people who are a part of my research. I acknowledge this as a sensitive and ethical dilemma for me; I neither wish to bias nor positively inflate my interpretations. I must however endeavour to keep as close to the words and phrasing of the young people as I can (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

I aimed to develop a research relationship with each young person as one built on unconditional positive regard, congruency and empathetic understanding (Rogers, 1980). I explained the boundaries of confidentiality and endeavoured to create an open, yet safe space (Winnicott, 2002) in a physical as well as a metaphorical sense, in which the young people had control of the stories they told.

When confronted with difficult ethical issues, I consulted my own research community at University, accessed reflective supervision, and frequented engagement with my reflective diary. In response to an ethical issue raised by The University of Sheffield’s ethics panel, I was mindful of potential feelings of hopelessness or indeed other sensitive issues which may have emerged from the interview conversation. Actions were implemented to support these issues. Through participation in my research, I reminded the young people that I was not providing them with future goals or promising them change in speaking to me; instead, I wanted to listen to their views about now and the future.

Throughout the interview I monitored how the young people may be feeling, and explicitly checked this before and after each interview. Exiting ethics (Tracy, 2010) were also taken into consideration. In providing an aftercare message to the young people, following the interview conversations, I reminded them that they were free to discuss any anxieties or concerns they may have (of their present self now, or in their future) with a designated member of staff, or other who they felt most comfortable with, including myself, should they need to. The school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policies were also adhered to.

My selection of narrators further presented an ethical dilemma. I had originally planned not to include young people identified as having speech and language or communication difficulties, due to perceiving potential difficulties with my chosen methodology and research area (‘imagining possible selves’). However, in getting to know one boy (who it seemed had already gotten to know me), he appeared to take a curious and genuine interest about my being and purpose within the school; thus I considered it more unethical not to include him on these grounds. Following a discussion with the Head Teacher, I decided to select narrators according to school attendance (this was reported to be an issue for the pupil cohort) and consideration over their history of past behaviours (the least history of violent behaviour). Although this felt an appropriate decision at the time, on reflection I cannot help but wonder what may have happened if I had decided to negate this decision? The more I have reflected upon this, the more I question whether I have potentially prevented something new and enlightening for those young people, who I ‘excluded’ based upon a prejudgement of historical behaviours. Was this yet another example of power marginalising the weak? (Foucault, 1979).

As it was not possible to analyse every narrator’s accounts, a decision about which narratives would be analysed also presented an ethical challenge. Much time and consideration was required to enable me to arrive at a decision I felt comfortable with. After repeated reading and listening to the co-constructed transcripts, I decided not to include one young person’s account, for whom, on listening back to the interview conversations, I felt I had too much influence over the co-construction of the narrative. On reflection why this was, I felt a sense of me trying too hard to facilitate talk from the young person, who presented as quieter in comparison to the other boys. Despite not engaging in a full narrative analysis with the young person’s account, I valued and wished to honour his participation within my research, thus decided to draw upon his narrative account in my final interpretations and reflections.

**Confidentiality and anonymity**

Parker (2008) writes that research can never be confidential because the intention of research is to make discoveries which are then presented to others; this has implications for achieving informed consent. Anonymity was explained to the young people prior to their consent to participate. Parker (2008) claims that it is best to treat anonymity as an ethical question to enable interrogation of our very own ethical assumptions. Upon asking the young people interviewed about the decision to use a pseudo-name within the research however, they remained indifferent, and informed me that they did not mind how they were referred to within the research. In this instance, I took the decision to anonymise all names and places in the research.

*I wondered about a sense of the young person not caring, or whether it was just a difference held in our values towards the research study. I felt that for the young people, their participation within my research study was potentially a very minor event in their lives, and I compared this with my own huge feelings that the research brought for me.*

**Power**

It is argued that power is inherent within all social relationships (Hollway & Jefferson, 2002). When working with sensitive issues, such as school exclusion, Hayden (2009) claims there is always a danger of interviewees positioning the researcher as superior to them. Hayden suggests this may be due to participants talking of issues they are ashamed of, issues that may be rated as culturally low or events which have left them vulnerable. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) also argue that participants may be reluctant to challenge interpretations if they position the researcher as more knowledgeable than themselves. Aware of my position as a researcher, I worked to address the potentially asymmetrical power relation between myself and the young person in a number of ways.

I endeavoured to create an open and honest relationship with the young people, and place power with them to make decisions throughout the research process (including interview location, narrative recording methods and co-constructions of the narratives). Through a narrative interview approach, I hoped to empower the young people to select what they perceived to be the most important stories about their selves and experiences (Elliot, 2005). Nevertheless, despite actions to reduce the power differential, in editing the final published narrative of this thesis, I recognise that the definitive power lies with the researcher. Within my thesis I make no denial of my intrinsic hope to construct narratives of potential ‘positive’ PSs, stepping out of potentially dominant narratives, to find smaller stories for ‘transformational possibility’ (Crossley, 2000, p.21), which are all too often unheard.

*Aware of many differences between us, I felt a sense of being ‘outsider’ –of being positioned as far removed from where the young people were in their current lives: I was female, a University student, was not from their region let alone their community, and did not share their ‘speak’. In being ‘outsider’, I wondered how I was perceived and to what effect this might constrain the narratives constructed.*

**Authenticity, trustworthiness, sincerity and critical reflexivity**

The application of traditional criteria, such as validity, reliability and generalizability, frequently used in quantitative research is illegitimate for use within qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Within my research, I chose to focus upon authenticity, trustworthiness, sincerity and critical reflexivity, as qualities to improve its credibility.

***Authenticity***

Riessman (2008) claims two levels of validity must be attended to in narrative research ‘the story told by a participant and…the story told by the researcher’ (p.184). Through my ethical position as a researcher, I have a responsibility to make clear my part in the construction of my narratives. I must demonstrate its plausibility so the reader is in a better position to critically examine my co-constructions and interpretations (Emerson & Frosh, 2009). Through a social constructionist paradigm, I recognise that the narratives generated were situated within a specific context and composed for a specific audience (Riessman, 2008). I acknowledge that narrative research remains open to alternative and multiple interpretations (Polkinghorne, 1988; Emerson & Frosh, 2009) and that my interpretations should be viewed as tentative (Clandinin & Connelley, 2000).

Although discourse from the narrative interview may have face validity, a critical issue for this research was to establish authenticity of the co-constructed narratives (Hiles & Čermák, 2008). I aimed to address this through building rapport and developing a sincere relationship with the young person. The process of taking back the transcriptions, or ‘member reflections’ was also carried out, which has been argued to enhance the credibility of qualitative research in multiple ways (Tracy, 2010, p.844). Tracy (2010) highlights the opportunities for additional data and elaboration, adding to a richer and deeper analysis, from engaging in member reflections.

*Whilst I too was able to seek further clarification and elaboration from taking back my transcriptions and interpretations to the young people, I felt the message of privileging the young persons’ views through this process was potentially to them of greater value.*

***From Transparency to Trustworthiness***

A critical issue for my research was the level of transparency achieved. Hiles and Čermák (2008) argue that this is the basic requirement of all qualitative research and is needed for critical evaluation. Throughout my thesis, I have endeavoured to provide a clear account of my methodological decisions and assumptions, including how I arrived at my narrative interpretations (Greenhalgh et al., 2005). I hope that in doing so, it allows the procedures to be replicated, should the reader wish. The need to critically consider my role and subjectivity in the research process was also fundamental to research transparency (Frost, 2009).

The necessity of thick description in the form of in-depth detail and culturally situated meanings for achieving credibility in qualitative research has also been argued (Tracy, 2010). Meanwhile, Greenhalgh et al. (2005) caution the trustworthiness of qualitative research that relies ‘heavily on evidence of the researcher’s reflexive awareness’ (p445). My endeavour to engage in critical reflexivity is shared later in this chapter.

***Sincerity***

Tracy (2010) argues that sincerity (related to notions of authenticity and genuineness) is fundamental for excellent qualitative research, and is achieved through self-reflexivity and transparency. This is not to suggest a single authentic ‘truth’ or reality, but instead that the research is:

honest and transparent about the researcher’s goals, biases and foibles and how these play a role in the methods, joys and mistakes of the research (Tracy, 2010, p.841).

Within the research relationship and interview itself, I aimed for a genuine approach, ensuring an awareness of myself within the process (Rogers, 1980).

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) raise questions about the reliability and validity of eliciting narratives as a research method. They question how narratives may be compromised by the narrator’s own motivations and memory within the interview process, and in turn how this might affect our knowledge of the potential coherence.Like Hollway and Jefferson, I wished to focus my research on the young people themselves, who tell us stories about their lives, since ‘the stories themselves are a means to understand our (young people) better’ (2000, p.32).

***Critical reflexivity***

Reflexivity demands transparency; it highlights the participatory role of the researcher, and provides a means for critically inspecting the entire research process (Hiles & Čermák, 2008). Self-reflexivity may also be considered an engagement with honesty in that one may show vulnerability and authenticity with one’s self, their research and audience (Tracy, 2010). Despite this, Squire (2008) cautions that we cannot fully attain complete reflexivity, no matter how much we strive for it, as there always exists material beyond the depth of our reflections and interpretations.

I aimed to engage in an open, critical and systematic method of reflexivity throughout my research (Hiles & Čermák, 2008). Parker (2005) argues that distance away from the immediate context of the research is fundamental to facilitating critical reflexivity. Whilst I wrote my reflections immediately after each interview conversation, I protected space away from the research context to engage extensively with my research diary, in addition to more formal research supervision. I share my reflections throughout the prose of this thesis, including my additional curious thoughts and wonders. Through critical reflexivity, I hoped to share with sincerity my own personal narrative in this thesis, and enhance the legitimacy of the narratives presented and the research process as a whole.

**The pilot and reflections**

Two individual, pilot interviews proved invaluable to my final research design. Each interview enabled me to reflect personally upon my interview approach, design and technique. Reflective evaluations of the interview process with each young person was also essential to gain their views and was used as a reality check (Krueger & Casey, 2009) to select the most appropriate methods and questions for the research process. The boys’ interview responses were limited and narrow, and their evaluations prompted further reconsideration of my questions. One boy commented that the questions focused ‘*too much about school’* and suggested that I ask questions like ‘*what are your hobbies’*. Thus, I decided to focus my questions to explore areas of the young person’s self now, past school self and future PSs.

Despite utilising a loose interview structure, the duration of each interview conversation was also very short. This made me particularly anxious since the boys’ stories were essential for the narrative research methods I wished to use. Reflection about my own interviewing technique was a major learning point and I realised crucial to the outcomes and success of the interviews. Having been anxious *not* to influence the young people’s shared stories, my potentially ‘cold’ approach appeared to have closed up, as opposed to opening up, the boys’ stories. Further research enabled me to improve my verbal ‘active listening’ responses in order to encourage story-telling whilst not impose my influence upon the direction of these.

Further changes were made to the interview guide as well as the participant information documents to reduce ambiguity and improve clarity.

**Narrative interviews**

A narrative style of interviewing, designed to empower the narrator to talk freely and have the greatest control over the stories they wish to share, is recommended for narrative research (Emerson & Frosh, 2009; Hiles & Čermák, 2008). Thus, a loose interview guide was created with a number of key open-ended, topic-oriented (Hiles & Čermák, 2008) interview questions (see Appendix II). The guide was used to support the conversation and prompt narrative accounts about the young person’s past, present and future selves, connected to specific times and situations. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue this to be the most effective form of questioning within a narrative interview, as opposed to asking about a narrator’s life over a long period of time. Bagnoli (2009) further note that ‘not everyone may be comfortable with such openness’ (p.566) and that using a structured framework may be more appropriate. The importance of question structure for the young people had also been suggested by the Head Teacher of the school.

Visual methods were included in the final interview. The first, a self-portrait activity, was presented as an option for the narrators to use to support the narration of their perceived PSs through illustration should they wish. Bangoli (2009) argues that visual methods may enhance interview participation, reflexivity and encourage a more holistic narration of the self, particularly when working with young people. Through increased participation, they may also be considered to alter the power dynamic in favour of the narrator. Bagnoli (2009) argues that the addition of a visual element ‘allows people to go beyond a verbal mode of thinking…(which) may include wider dimensions of experience’ (p.565).

Furthermore, use of a time-line (see Appendix III) aimed to support the construction of a rich, temporal narrative, as the narrators considered their past school and future PSs (Sheridan, Chamberlain & Durpis, 2011).

Aware of my influence upon the construction of the narrative, I endeavoured to follow the lead of the narrator whilst creating a relaxed, interview conversational style with an active listening approach (Kvale, 2007). I drew upon previous researcher responses within narrative interviews to guide my active listening responses (Emerson & Frosh, 2009; Riessman, 2008), using the narrator’s own words and phrasing. My biggest anxiety during the research had been whether the young people would engage with me through the interview process. A consequence of this was that I demonstrated too much influence during the co-construction of one young person’s narrative, which I considered inappropriate to include in my final analysis. Aware that I bring my own anxieties, assumptions and histories with me in all social interactions, I was equally aware of those brought to the interview context by the narrator, thus influencing the verbal and non-verbal discourse generated (Phoenix, 2009) and the narratives constructed.

After each initial interview conversation, two further meetings were undertaken. The first was to provide an opportunity for reflection, to check transcripts back, as well as enable clarification and possible elaboration. After my analysis of the transcriptions, a final meeting was offered to provide the narrators with an opportunity for feedback and interrogation of my analysis, and to qualify interpretations the narrator was happy with.

**Why narrative analysis?**

Narrative analysis[[3]](#footnote-3) (NA)allows for the

systematic study of personal experience and meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects (Riessman, 1993, p.70).

Although Discourse Analysis (DA) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) may incorporate narrative interviews within their approach, as methods they do not align themselves with the theoretical basis of my research.

DA, although well placed to study social identity and the way people negotiate meaning through talk, primarily centres its analysis upon the construction and function of language. Potter and Wetherell (1987) note that the relationship between language and mental states is a non-issue, reducing mental processes to mere discursive practices and negating a person’s ability to reflect and consider meaning to their experience. For example, DA assumes that all conversation is driven by stake, yet it does not fully acknowledge motivation as a particular mental process and is unable to account for why individuals might engage in discursive practices (Willig, 2008). Although DA may analyse language in context through also exploring the researcher’s discourse, for me DA does not fully capture the whole essence of the psychological person, or clearly account for a person’s subjectivity, which Martin and Sugarman (2000) argue is fundamental in the construction of PSs.

A phenomenological approach, such as IPA, was not an appropriate methodology for my research. Although IPA is often used to explore a person’s lived experience, it relies upon an inadequate conceptualisation of language, which does not fully capture the unique essence of experience (Willig, 2008), or explain its meaning. It neither fully acknowledges the socially constructed nature of interactions which take place within the research. Through my study of PSs, I am aware that our co-constructed narratives will be the product of a joint social interaction, embedded within a particular context. I wish to explore how each young person themselves may view and make sense of their experiences through our joint interaction.

As a method, most IPA studies aim to explore the experiences from a homogenous group of participants in order to identify and progressively integrate common themes from the transcripts. In doing so, the potential for rich descriptions of personal narratives and possibilities of agency, which privilege individual participants, are lost (Parker, 2008). Furthermore, without context, the very essence of what that narrative means is also lost.

NA supports the concept of ‘self’ as multi-dimensional, connected to the social, historical, political and cultural contexts, and constituted via narratives through time and space. It acknowledges that an individual’s thinking can develop and change over time (Smith & Sparkes, 2008), and I argue is complementary to this research study. Emerson and Frosh (2009) further suggest that NA is well suited to study PSs because it is:

particularly sensitive to subjective meaning-making, social processes and the interpretation of these in the construction of personal narratives around breaches between individuals and their social contexts (p.9).

NA gives ‘prominence to human agency and imagination’ (Emerson & Frosh, 2004, p.9), enables exploration of how people ‘perform’ their agency (Butler, 1993 in Parker, 2005, p.71) and is therefore argued to be respectful of persons negotiating possible lives. Furthermore, NA is useful when interested in exploring the meaning and purpose of a story, and how the audience affects what may be told (Riessman, 2008).

Despite the value of narrative methods, some theorists question its validity as an analytic approach since there is ‘no singular or best way to define and study narrative’ (Mishler, 1995, p.117) and therefore lacks empirical support. However, Wai-Ling Packard and Conway (2006) acknowledge the complexity of the narrative analysis process, in comparison to other methods. It is suggested that such methodological complexity, including time taken, may be the reason why clear accounts of how to analyse narratives using a NA approach are still rare (Squire, 2008) and why a lack of one specific or recommended methodology remains (Howitt, 2010).

Nevertheless, narrative theorists may argue against the constraints of standardisation for developing innovative methods of analysis and possibilities for new knowledge. Although some may argue this is a caveat of NA, I argue that it is an opportunity for selecting the most appropriate method so that an idiosyncratic and personally valid framework may be created to fulfil the aims of the research. Frost et al. (2010; 2009) demonstrate that a pluralistic or multi-method approach within NA enhances the applicability and transparency of the research. The complementary nature of this has also been highlighted within PSs research (Frost, 2009; Wai-Ling Packard & Conway, 2006; Whitty, 2002). Frost (2009) demonstrates the advantages of a tailored, multi-dimensional approach to NA, which she argues provides a deeper insight through textualised ‘layers of understanding’ (p.9).

Although empirical evidence to support narrative techniques may be limited, support is growing. I argue that narrative approaches are able to provide greater insights for new knowledge, including about a person’s perceptions and meaning constructions.

**A narrative analysis for this study**

A number of interpretive perspectives have informed my analysis, chosen to capture and complement the quality of co-constructed narratives during the interview conversations. My analysis comprised of a multi-layered approach, drawing from the analytical frameworks of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998), Gee (1991) and a critical narrative analysis (CNA) approach by Emerson and Frosh (2009). In utilising each analytic framework, I was able to examine the content, structure, performance and context of the co-constructed narratives, all of which were central to understanding its meaning (Wells, 2011).

I did not wish to place limits upon my approach to analysis and so was open to forms of narrative that break from a story format with an assumed beginning, middle and end (Parker, 2008). The narratives were therefore kept as a whole, rather than as segments of text.

An explanation of the methodological choices and procedures followed at each stage of analysis is outlined in the next chapter (Chapter 3: Specific Procedures).

**Chapter 3: Specific Procedures**

This chapter outlines the specific procedures followed within my research, detailing the dilemmas encountered and methodological choices made at each stage of analysis. It includes: research planning and negotiating; time spent with young people in context; selecting the narrators; the narrative interview; transcription and taking back interpretations, and narrative analysis.

***Research planning and negotiating***

Once the research topic was negotiated with my local authority, I reviewed the literature to help me construct a research question which I felt strongly about. Although I had intended to carry out my research within a Pupil Referral Unit, this was not feasible at the current time due to a planned relocation of its provision. Instead, I carried out my research within a special high school provision for pupils who had experienced permanent exclusion from their mainstream settings. The pupils who attended were boys, aged 13 to 16. The pupils were described as presenting with additional behavioural, emotional and social needs and all pupils had a Statement of Special Educational Need to attend the school. The school also had a residential quarter which pupils could access if they wished. At first, I was somewhat anxious about my intrusion in their school, however I was warmly welcomed by the school Head Teacher and the staff who worked there. After a number of visits, I felt that this extended to the young people too.

Discussion with the Head Teacher and Form Tutor about my research aims enabled key methodological decisions and actions to be negotiated. Pilot activities were also fundamental to the authenticity of the final research design.

***Time spent with young people in context***

Time spent with the young people in context was essential to the success of my research. In advance of the interview conversations, I spent four school visits familiarising myself within the school context and getting to know all of the young people within the Year 10 cohort (my identified research community). As well as this, I visited the residential quarters, attended by two Year 10 boys during my visit. The non-school setting provided a relaxed atmosphere which I felt was valuable in further getting to know the boys, and them me. We engaged in a number of shared activities, including many competitive games of Connect 4.

***Selecting the narrators***

In school, Year 10 and 11 may be constructed as a time of change, whereby significant choices and decisions are made which may be influential to their future. I reflect upon this time personally as a significant time of decision making about my own future. As the Year 11 pupils were nearing their final months of examination within school, I selected Year 10 as an appropriate age for my research community. Although I recognise that research with girls may be overlooked within the area of school exclusion, I wished to work with boys since from my own experience males seem to permeate exclusion figures, and thus is an area I feel worthy of continued exploration.

Five Year 10 boys were initially purposively selected to participate within my research, chosen in respect of their attendance and history of prior behaviour (considered by the Head Teacher). Consideration was not given to the number of permanent or fixed term exclusions received by the young people. The number was selected in view of potential difficulties with narrator accounts, withdrawal or absence. Three of the five boys attended on the interview days planned enabling narrative accounts of three young people to be co-constructed. Narrative research studies value the rich depth of accounts gained from interviewing few narrators. Thus, two narrative accounts were chosen for analysis which felt manageable under the remit of this thesis. I included the third narrator’s narrative within my further discussion and reflections so that I could honour his participation within my research (see Appendix IV for a pen portrait of the narrators).

***The narrative interview***

The narrative interview conversations took place in a small meeting room situated within the school. The room was quiet and with comfy chairs upon which to sit. The participant information and consent forms were read through with each young person at the start of the interview conversation to ensure their informed consent was received and to remind them of what the interview process would entail. I offered each narrator a drink of water and checked how they were feeling at the start and end of each conversation. I felt that questions such as these were important to support their comfort, ascertain their mood and aim to provide them with the power to be in control of some decision-making.

An interview guide (see Appendix II) was loosely drawn upon to ensure that three key areas were explored: present possible selves, past school selves and possible selves imagined for the future (hoped and feared). Aware of not wanting to impose my own story on those of the narrators, my questions were used as a prompt to explore each area, allowing the boys to share only what they wished and felt important. I sought some elaboration and clarification in places, often using the phrase, ‘*Tell me a bit about that*…’. The option of a self-portrait activity (showing their ‘self’ on paper with words, symbols or pictures) was given to the young people as a method of answering PS questions. I considered this to be an indirect and non-threatening way to begin and to facilitate the following conversation. A second portrait activity and a visual school time line (see Appendix III) were also used to facilitate further questions within the interview conversation. At the end of each interview conversation, I checked again how the narrators were feeling to ensure that no anxieties or frustrations had arisen and also whether they would be willing to meet again for a second, follow up meeting to take back the interview transcripts. Each conversation was recorded using an audio-recorder and my emerging thoughts, feelings and reflections about the interview experience were written immediately after the conversations. This enabled me to distinguish material that belonged to me (Frost, 2009).

Listening back to the recording and reading the transcripts from each initial interview enabled me to devise questions for our follow up conversation. These chiefly related to points of clarification and elaboration.

***Transcription and taking back interpretations***

The act of transcription is also viewed as interpretive (Riessman, 2008). Verbatim transcription of the joint dialogue and interactions (between myself and the narrator) enabled the co-construction of the narrative; this was considered crucial for authentic analysis. In addition, it enabled power relations to be explored and the co-construction of meaning to be examined within the research interactions, allowing greater transparency of the interview and analysis process.

Transcriptions of the initial interview conversation were taken back to the narrators for a number of important reasons. Firstly, I wanted to check the narrators were happy with the written narrative that had been constructed and provide them with the opportunity to change, add or take anything away. Secondly, I needed to seek clarification of certain words which I was unable to transcribe, as well as word meanings. After initial interpretive reflection, I also wanted to seek further elaboration of some of the narrator’s responses to better establish its meaning and enable detailed descriptions of the event.

A final meeting was asked of the narrators to share my final interpretations and check they were happy with them. Although I understood that this process could have potentially changed my constructions and interpretations, I felt this was an important ethical decision to take to improve the narrative’s authenticity.

***Narrative analysis***

A multi-layered level of analysis was performed upon the transcripts, through a process of repeated and generous listening, reading and reflection (Lieblich et al., 1998). In my analysis of the narrative content, I was guided by Lieblich et al. (1998), whilst I adapted Gee’s (1991) linguistic framework to examine the narrative structure. Emerson and Frosh’s (2009) Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA) was drawn upon to explore researcher and social interactions within the analysis. The influence of power and context were also explored.

*Narrative content (holistic)*

A holistic analysis of the narrative content (Lieblich et al., 1998) allowed me to examine the constructed narrative as a whole.This helped me to gain an understanding of the narrator’s ‘inner world’ (Lieblich et al., 1998, p.7) through examining what the pattern of the narrative looked like. Despite not exploring entire life story narratives within this research, as Lieblich and her colleagues had done, I adapted their approach to explore how the narrator’s story had evolved from past to now, and with a view to the future. In doing so, I attempted to be the naïve listener and not impose my own theoretical constructs on the text. My reflective journal supported me in this process. Through repeated reading of the transcripts, I was able to conceptualise a global impression, of the narrative as a whole. I noted my impressions, including contradictions and disturbances I became aware of, which informed specific themes. I also gave attention to the opposites of such themes, which Lieblich et al. (1998) argue may be of critical importance to the interpretation of a person’s story through the omissions of the narrator. Rogers et al. (1999) further draw attention to the language of the ‘unsayable’.

*Narrative structure*

A micro-analysis and macro-analysis, adapted from Emerson and Frosh’s (2009) version of Gee’s (1991) linguistic framework, was also performed on the narrative transcripts through repeated listening and reading. Gee (1991) argues that much can be learned from the way narratives are structured and that understanding how a narrative is spoken is central to understanding its meaning. Riessman (1993) argues that such a bottom up approach, from the core of their own language use, helps to privilege the teller’s meaning-making (experience and assumptions), resisting ascriptivism.

The following notations were used during the re-transcription process (adapted from Emerson & Frosh, 2009; Gee, 1991; Riessman, 2008).

***Micro-analysis***

, Slight pause, less than 1 second

(2) Number in ( ) indicates approximate length of pause in seconds

*Italics* Word emphasised by the speaker

/ Indicates pitch glide (change of tone) and signifies new idea unit

[ Speakers overlap

[writes] Word in [ ] indicates a non-verbal action or event

??? Words could not be deciphered

No.d lines Contain one central idea (often comprised of one or two idea units)

***Macro-analysis***

1. Listen repeatedly and read verbatim transcription
2. Identify text that is focused with a pitch glide (voice rises/falls in relation to normal pitch of the sentence) which signals information the narrator wants to emphasise *(a sentence with one pitch glide is called an idea unit)*
3. Mark text into numbered lines comprised of one or two idea units, that contain one central idea
4. Mark lines into stanzas. Stanzas focus on a single topic, pertaining to one scene and constitute a change from preceding stanza
5. Identify stanzas that are strophes (related), or stanzas that are in related pairs
6. Identify the larger parts of the story into which the strophes fall.

Stanzas, strophes and parts were labelled to reflect the content of the story, staying close to the narrator’s own words.

*Narrative in context*

Emerson and Frosh’s (2009) CNA was utilised to focus upon the interpersonal context of the narration, examining the influence of power, as well as social and cultural aspects, including in relation to myself as researcher. Emerson and Frosh describe CNA as:

an approach respectful of the agency of persons negotiating ‘possible lives’ particularly in the context of breaches of dominant discourses or canonical narratives where possibilities for alternative or replacement personal narratives may serve or warrant new meaning making and different social practices (2009, p.10).

Frost asserts that a ‘critical approach counteracts the tendency for the researcher to draw on personal and professional discourses to impose pre-given meaning on texts’ (2009, p.12). In selecting this critical narrative approach, I endeavoured to explore how each young person negotiated and positioned their selves in context, taking into consideration notions of power and agency.

To demonstrate clarity of my analysis process, see Figure 1.1 for an overview of the stages taken, adapted from Hiles and Čermák (2008).

**Figure 1.1: an overview of the analysis process taken, adapted from Hiles and Čermák (2008).**

1. Construct research question/s

2. Time spent with young people in context

3. Narrative interview I / Narrative interview II:

*Researcher reflexivity influencing questions asked*

4. Transcription of audio text:

*initial reflections noted*

6 & 8. Transcriptions / analysis taken back to narrators

5. Re-read / re-listen:

*further reflections noted*

(I)

(II)

(i) Content

(iI) Structure

(iii) Context

6

1. Content: Holistic Content Analysis (Lieblich et al, 1998)
2. Structure: micro and macro analysis (Gee, 1991)
3. Context: Critical Narrative Analysis (Emerson & Frosh, 2009)

**Chapter 4: Interpretation and discussion**

Within this chapter, I share my interpretations and impressions of themes that I identified within the co-constructed narratives of Charlie and Sonnie’s stories. Whilst the themes are separated for the purpose of this discussion, I consider each theme to overlap and interact throughout Charlie’s and Sonnie’s stories. Readers may wish to refer to the co-constructed, verbatim and analysed transcripts, located within Appendix V, so that they may begin to situate the themes and quotes within their fuller context.

**Charlie’s Story**

***Belonging: being separate***

**‘Some people think I’m weird like but / I reckon I’m normal because, I don’t really *do* what most a the kids in ere do…’**

(transcript 2: line 150)

Charlie frequently narrated stories which positioned him as being separate from family members and peers at school. This for me constructs a counter-narrative towards belonging, which seems to pervade both school and home life. In response to my question about how Charlie might describe his PS, he uses the word ‘normal’ and sets this in contrast with his peers:

Emma I just want to ask, / what *words* would you

*use* to describe *yourself*?

Charlie normal

Emma mmhm (1)

can you tell me a bit more about that

Charlie [laughs] *err* (1) / well some people think I’m *weird* like but

/ I reckon I’m normal because, I don’t really *do* what most a the kids in ere do / *mess* around an all that so

Emma mm

Charlie *normaler* than them, *and* (2) / that’s it really

(transcript 2: stanza 30, lines 146-151)

Charlie constructs an understanding of ‘normal’ as somebody who does not mess around in school (which he describes other kids as doing) and who is not seen as ‘weird’ (which he reports that other pupils think he is). In doing so, he makes an implication that the other pupils are not normal. If he constructs being ‘normal’ as following the rules of the school and behaving, it makes me wonder about how he perceives his past behaviour / events prior to receiving his education at High school and how his PS as a young person may have changed. To me, this creates a strong and powerful narrative of himself as a lone voice. Through our interview conversation, I sense Charlie’s construction of self as the normal anomaly. His laugh prior to informing me of other peoples’ perceptions of him makes me wonder about how he feels about this view? *As I reflect upon this now, I recall a sense of unease and sadness which it made me feel.* Charlie reaffirms his meaning-making, stating that he is at least more normal than the other pupils in the school. His use of ‘them’ as the psychological subject positions himself as separate from the other pupils. This makes me question his PS and place within the school.

Through his use of discourse, Charlie constructs a PS as having personal agency, resisting a position alongside the other pupils who he constructs as ‘wrong kids’. A further example of Charlie positioning himself apart from other pupils in school is heard below. This episode of talk leaves me feeling a sense of loneliness for Charlie. His choice of words and his emphasis upon being the only *‘quiet’* one further highlights his perceived difference from his peers:

Charlie I’m like the only *quiet* one in here, really

Emma mm

Charlie half of them are quiet for the first week or two

and then (1) they get in with the wrong kids and start messin around

Emma mm, ok

(transcript 2: stanza 19, lines 93-95)

In response to my question about what he hopes *not* to be like in the future, he constructs a powerful statement in declaring ‘like half of the kids in ere.’ Charlie constructs himself as different from his peers and openly justifies his reasons for not wanting to be like the others. The strength of his feelings towards this PS are demonstrated through his emphases on ‘*any* a *that*’ and ‘*thief*’ and gives me an impression of his sense of right and wrong morals. Charlie appears to have a clear and strong understanding of a PS which he does not wish to be like:

Emma You’ve told me a bit *about* what you *hope* to be like in the *future* (1) now can you describe what you really hope *not* to be like in the near future?

Charlie Like half of the kids in ere

Emma mm, hmhm

Charlie smokin weed n all that / like I don’t wana do *any* a

*that* (1)

/don’t wana be a *thief* like half of the kids / and, that’s round about it really

Emma Ok (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 57, lines 178-181)

Charlie’s firm ‘no’ in response to my question about whether there are any pupils he would hang around with in school further leaves me sensing his PS as being alone:

Charlie / and I wouldn’t wana hang around with the

wrong crowd / an all that in me spare time (1) so

that’s everything really

Emma yeah

/ are there many, you mentioned about wrong

crowds in *here*

Charlie *yeah*

Emma about *half* of them?

Charlie Yeah /that’s half the year 10, year 9 and year 11s

Emma *right* (1)

are there any *who* / *you would* hang around

with?

Charlie mm no

(transcript 1: stanza 60, lines 188-192)

The next episode gives me an impression of Charlie’s lack of connection with his previous schools. Not remembering his schools’ names makes me question Charlie’s experience of belonging in school. Despite a construction of him as different, Charlie positions himself alongside the other pupils (‘we’ as the psychological subject) when expressing uncertainty about the number of schools he has attended. Charlie’s short stays in his previous schools were perhaps not enough time to settle and develop a sense of real belonging. I feel that this even surprises Charlie as he appeals to me (‘you know’) in narrating his story:

Emma What school was it before X?

Charlie I don’t know the names of them you know

Emma right

Charlie but there’s one in, / yeah like there’s *one* by me

auntie

that I used to go to by L1, / but I don’t know the

name of that

Emma yeah (1) ok (1)

so how many *schools* / were you did you go to

in primary school?

Charlie I duno / about *four*

but / we weren’t really in them for that long

Emma yeah (1) ok

(transcript 1: stanzas 67- 68, lines 212-218)

***Relationships: getting along***

**‘because like I can get on with them, but I wouldn’t call none a them a mate’**

(transcript 2: line 162)

The narrative of belonging and being separate is further co-constructed through Charlie’s relationships with others in school and at home. In response to my question about what Charlie considers important to him, he openly explains his preference for his younger brother, Harry, and his nan. He emphasises this preference by contrasting them to members of his family, who he does not like (other brothers) or likes less (mum); thus Charlie positions his self as not getting along with or liking the rest of his family. *I wonder whether Harry has been too young, or not yet had the opportunity, to not get on with Charlie, considering that Harry is just two years old and that Charlie spends most of his time as a school resident. Charlie’s talk of Harry further makes me curious about an alternative PS which may be constructed for him through Harry; a PS which may construct a sense of something pure or unhurtful.* Charlie’s responses imply that he does not get along well with his mum. This is emphasised in how he constructs his relationship with his nan:

Charlie / *Harry*, because he’s the only one I like out of all me brothers

Emma *aah*

Charlie and me *Nan*,/ ‘cos I like me nan more than me mum

Emma *aah*,

(transcript 1: stanza 6, lines 21-22)

Emma An ya nan,/ tell me abit about your nan and why/ your *nan’s* important to you

Charlie m’what,/ because I get on with me nan,

(transcript 1: stanza 11, lines 33-34)

Charlie qualifies school’s importance through his relationships with others. To me, this highlights the meaning he places on relationships and getting along with others. It leaves me wondering how Charlie’s social relationships have been for him in the past and whether he has experienced many negative relationships, meaning that he places high value on relationships with those who he does get along with. Charlie’s response that school is important because he gets on ‘with everyone’ may sit in contrast to him not getting on with everyone at home. Although Charlie talks of getting on with everyone, he emphasises through his use of discourse that he would not call people in his school a mate (Charlie places emphasis upon the word ‘mate’, ‘grass on ya’ and ‘one thing’). Charlie’s use of all or nothing speech repertoires position him in opposition to ‘all’ of the others in his school. However, Charlie then reverts to what may be constructed as a more acceptable social narrative, in saying that he does get on with everyone really:

Emma Err / and tell me a bit about school as well / why that’s important t’ya

Charlie Because I get on with everyone (1)

/wouldn’t call them *a mate /* or anything like that, because they all *grass* *on ya*,/ as soon as you do *one* *thing*

Emma right (1) yeah

Charlie *But* (1)/ I get on with everyone really / so,

(transcript 1: stanzas 14-15, lines 43-46)

The importance of Charlie getting along with his teachers in school is constructed in our conversation together, with positive relationships seeming to influence his future self-choices. Charlie also seems to value having fun in his relationships with others:

Emma / has anybody inspired you –*made* you want to be

a TA?

Charlie Yeah all dem in ere, /all the teachers n all that,/ [ge

Emma [Which

Charlie get on with them

Emma is there (1) / one in particular?

Charlie Yeah *Teacher*

Emma *Right* (1)/ and what do you *like* about / Te-Mr Teacher?

Charlie *He’s funny*,

he knows *every* trick what I got / to get out of detention

Emma [laughs]

Charlie so / I can’t use them

Emma [laughs] right

Charlie and, I get on with him / more than all the other members of staff / so

Emma Yeah (1)

(transcript 1: stanzas 18-19, lines 54-63)

As Charlie expands upon his relationships with other pupils, a narrative of mistrust and a possible lack of loyalty is co-constructed. He concludes one speech episode by stating ‘you can’t really call anyone in ere a mate’ (transcript 2: stanza 33). This leaves part of me feeling some sadness that Charlie is alone and without friends in school. *I wonder about Charlie’s need to share this with me and how he feels about being in school?*

***Helping: a lack of help***

**‘I just like to *help* people’**

(transcript 1: line 50)

A narrative of helping pervades Charlie’s stories which include his offering of help as well as his receiving of it. Charlie talks of his desire to be a teaching assistant (TA) when he is older and of how he can help kids in getting an education. He is unsure about what qualities may enable him to perform this role, but simply says that he likes to help people. Through my questioning and responses, a narrative of Charlie as helper is co-constructed:

Emma *what* /about being a *TA* will *help you* to do well, do you think?

Charlie because I’m *hel-* because I’m *helping* the kids get a education

Emma yeah (2) /

what about *you* as *C* (1) in *you* (1) might help them?

Charlie I *don’t really know* but like I just like to *help* people, so

Emma yeah (1) yeah I can see that (1)

(transcript 2: stanza 10, lines 47-51)

Charlie constructs a deserved position of becoming a TA through his ability to empathise and relate to others, knowing what the pupils have been through, as he has been through similar experiences in his education. He qualifies his position of becoming a TA over other TAs. For me, Charlie constructs a PS of him as a TA with much power and agency (he shows determination). He talks of wanting to be a TA in a school similar to that which he attends now.

In response to my question about what Charlie might find a challenge in his role as a TA, I sense that he is drawing upon his own experiential narratives. His repetition and emphasis of ‘you *can’t*’, with ‘you’ as the psychological subject, draws in the listener to recognise the point he is making. Charlie appears to have a clear idea of needing to ‘reason’ with pupils first. It leaves me wondering whether Charlie is expressing views about his own needs for help, past or present. Charlie’s emphasis upon ‘any other’ and ‘been’ seems to construct strong feelings about the value of his own prior experiences in supporting him in his role. His use of the psychological subject and repeated reference to ‘I’ further emphasises his power and agency in this personal narrative. Charlie draws upon his cultural and experiential knowledge to inform his own narratives about what he may be able to do in the future:

Emma / and what might you find a *challenge?*

Charlie *err* (2) tryin to (2) *help them* when / they’re in the wrong moo-mood

Emma mm (1) yeah / can you tell me abit *more* about that

Charlie like if *they’re flippin out* then, you can’t jus go over and say an jus say / ‘well you got a detention for doin this that and the other’

Emma mm

Charlie like you *can’t* say that to the kid, you’ve gota

*reason* with them first

Emma mm (4) yeah

(transcript 2: stanza 12, lines 56-60)

Emma and what is it about those schools that you’d *like* / to teach in

Charlie Cus *I know* what the kids have *been* through an all that / and like what they’re goin through so / it’ll be more easier

Emma *mm*, [yeah

(transcript 1: stanza 34, lines 112-113)

Emma *So, erm* (1) tell me a bit *more* about it

Charlie What?

/ Oh how can I help the kids out more than *any* *other* TA because I already *been* here or whatever, / so, I know what it’s like an all that, an like I know the way / how not to get time,/ so

(transcript 1: stanza 36, lines 116-118)

The narrative of an alternative (‘changed’) PS was brought into the next story through my questioning. Charlie’s emphasis upon his assertion about not helping anybody in his old school leaves me wondering whether he felt a lack of control in his past schools and how this may be different now? Charlie constructs himself as the responsible agent in helping the pupil to return to school following his runner (‘I got him back in’), illustrating the power in his actions to help the boy. This is further emphasised through Charlie’s constructions of his own actions despite obstacles of resistance present in his discourse (‘even though it was raining and I was meant to be in lesson’):

Emma Do you think you’ve *changed* in any way / for example from being in your past school / *to*, *now*

Charlie Yeah

Emma and if so can you describe, / *how*?

Charlie Because / in me old school / yeah like I wouldn’t help *no one,*

/ but what like one of the kids tried to run off, / like there was a kid who ran off, L /*yeah* / so I ran after him to get him back,

/even though it was rainin and I was meant to be in the lesson,

/ so we walked through the park at the bottom there, walked all the way around *and* / I got him back in, and all that

Emma *Gosh* that’s really, *yeah kind of you* / that’s really

helpful / in the rain as well (2)

(transcript 1: stanza 81, lines 254-260)

In taking the first transcript back to Charlie during our second interview conversation, he narrates a more detailed account of the above helping episode. This for me seems to be a core narrative which Charlie seeks to strengthen, through his chosen language and appeal to the listener (‘yeah’). His use of ‘I’ reflects the agency and power (taking responsibility) in his actions for helping the other boy. Through his account, I feel that Charlie seems to enjoy the sense of personal mastery and agency which he experiences through helping? *It makes me wonder how much of this he has experienced or feels he has over other aspects of his life?* I sense Charlie as feeling quite proud of his actions in this narrative. He concludes the story of his experience as helper positively, noting the head teacher’s given thanks (transcript 2: stanzas 25-26).

Through my questions, a narrative of Charlie as receiving help to achieve his PS as TA is co-constructed. Charlie’s initial dubious response gives a feeling of him being alone once more. It leaves me wondering whether he has even considered the possibility of others helping him with his future goals. I further influence the narrative of Charlie receiving help by reframing the question directly, asking what person might help. Charlie responds that his teachers might help him *‘most’*. His explanation about their belief in him leaves me wondering about his past or current experiences, as well as an implied opposite of people not having believed in him. *I wonder about the importance of others’ beliefs and support in Charlie for the achievement of his PS, especially from school.* Charlie’s choice of modal verb (‘might’) further highlights for me a lack of certainty and a feeling of not having been helped very much (in school?). Although not a directive resistance, Charlie’s lack of known ‘help resources’ for his own possible self may serve as a counter-narrative to him achieving his future PS:

Emma *Erm* (1) / so might anything (1) / might a person help you in achieving these things?

Charlie Duno (1) probably

Emma yeah

Charlie hmm

Emma What type of person / might help?

Charlie hm

Emma help you?

Charlie Well the teachers would help me the *most* / because they believin’ in me an all that, / *and* whoever doin the course

Emma Yeah

Charlie so they might help me

(transcript 1: stanzas 52- 53, lines 161-164)

In our second interview conversation, I asked Charlie whether he had any memories of teachers having believed in him. Charlie’s uncertainty in who might help him to achieve his educational goals (or possible self) provides me with a sense of Charlie receiving help as a minor narrative in his life. He expresses that he only really has memories of teachers believing in him at his school now. His repeated use of ‘me’ as the psychological subject in the episode of teachers helping him, highlights the personal meaning of this to him. Charlie’s concluding line creates a powerful image of his past teachers perhaps having given up on him:

Emma erm and whoever doin the *course* (1) d’you have any *memories* of that with *teachers*?

Charlie only in ere really (2)

because if I *can’t* *do* something the teacher will *come over* and like help me, yeah an show me how to do it and then want me to do it afterwards an all that,

and like they don’t really give up on ya, so

Emma mm (2)

(transcript 2: stanza 16 lines 81-85)

***Achieving: not giving up***

Emma: what d’you, like about it?

**‘…the fact he doesn’t give up on it’**

(transcript 1: line 138)

Charlie’s inclusion of what Mr Y says creates an impression of him as needing to prove his skill and achievement as a learner. His reference to Mr Y’s support and encouragement also makes me sense its considerable value to Charlie’s self-efficacy. Charlie shares a narrative of himself as trying, illustrated through his earnest and emphasised actions:

Emma yeah (1) *an* (1) remind me again sorry / what is *something* that you’re most proud of

Charlie English and me runnin

Emma [yeah

Charlie [*mainly* / cus English, I’m not that good at it,

*but* / when it comes to science yeah like I’m not that

good at reading all the big words,

*but* / even Mr Y says that *I do* take time and I *do* *manage* / to read some of it,

like I always get me answers right, / well most of the time anyway

Emma Yeah (2) that’s super

(transcript 1: stanza 94, lines 303-305)

In further conversation, Charlie constructs his peers as influencing his motivation to become quicker at running. It creates an image of Charlie as competitor against his peers, a narrative which is also constructed through stories with his older brother. A strong sense of agency and responsibility is shown through Charlie’s use of ‘I’ as the psychological subject which may illustrate just what he is capable of through his own self-determination:

Emma Right, and is there anythin’ *else* that you had to do to help you, / to be proud of,/ of runnin *or* of your English?

Charlie Hmm, no not really

me *runnin* was more the fact that *everyone* could beat me, /in a race,

/*and* I found that annoying / so, I wanted to become quicker

Emma mm (1) and you did

Charlie yeah

(transcript 1, lines 312-314)

I asked Charlie about possible future hobbies and interests to which he responded ‘doing weights’ (interview 1, line 125). A PS is constructed which draws upon the influence of his brother who he appears to admire yet also positions himself in competition with. Charlie constructs a narrative of not giving up, identified in relation to his brother. His choice of words ‘I, *I would’* provide a sense of definite defeat (through repetition, emphasis and verb) and a narrative of Charlie as a young person who perhaps does give up on things is co-constructed. Despite the construction of this PS, Charlie states that he wants to be better than his brother. Charlie’s conflicting sentiments make me question the certainty of this possibility:

Charlie Yeah well like my brother got like one kilo with them

Emma *Right*

Charlie so like / b-but where we dud it yer like you go like that and punch it with them

Emma *I* / [see

Charlie [to make his hands more quick (1) / so you do that with *them* / and then put them down, yeah / an get your hands more quick

Emma *right*

Charlie so / I wana do that

Emma So / does your older brother do that

Charlie yeah

Emma *now* / *yeah* (1)

an, what d’you, like about it?

Charlie The fact he doesn’t give up on it

Emma *Right*

Charlie I, *I would* / but, he but he won’t / so

Emma ok, / so in the future, / you want *to*

Charlie be more like him

/ but, better

(transcript 1: stanzas 42-44, lines 132-142)

Charlie constructs a story about a PS he hopes to be. When asked about what he might need to achieve this, Charlie provides an understanding of needing good marks to go on a course. His answer to get good marks in his art work makes me question his understanding of becoming a TA and the value he places upon art to do this. *Within a later story, Charlie talks about being proud of his art. It struck me whether he finds this subject difficult, whilst also having a view of needing to be good at all of his subjects to be a TA*. Whilst Charlie’s understanding about what he must do appears ‘thin’, he draws upon school influence and notes that careers in school will help him to figure out his future goals:

Charlie *and* I wana education in it/ so

Emma yeah (1) so you want an education?

Charlie Yep

Emma Hmhm, ok,

/ why’s that important to you?

Charlie Because I wana be a TA when I’m older.

(transcript 1: stanzas 16-17, lines 47-49)

Emma Can you tell me / how you hope to (2) *do* these things / what do you *need* to be able to *be* a teaching assistant?

Charlie I need a education (1) I *need* to get good marks an all that (1) like in me art work an like what other an like whatever other work we have to do,

/ *and* I need to go on a course for it / and all that so

Emma D’you know, about / what type of course you might need to go on?

Charlie No gona figure that out in / Careers

Emma *right*

(transcript 1: stanza 47, lines 145-149)

Charlie constructs a narrative of aspiring to a PS like his TAs in school (being good at all subjects):

Charlie / because like that what all the TA do in here

Emma *right*

Charlie they do near enough *every* lesson / so

Emma yeah

Charlie but ??? they stay in one lesson what they’re good at the most (1) / so like we got like a TA who’s good at art and ICT

Emma *aah*

Charlie so she’s in two places (1)

then you got / RE and BTEC PE and PE,/ so you got a TA who does the PE work and RE with ya

Emma *I* see

Charlie so they’re all good at their own / lessons and all that

Emma yeah

Charlie so (1) / I wana be good at all of them / like

(transcript 1: stanza 51, lines 158-159)

An alternative PS of Charlie as a marine is co-constructed, although he emphasises this is only if he does not achieve his role as a TA. His responses highlight his intent about his choice to become a TA, further illustrating a sense of agency over his own future goals and PS:

Emma / *and* do you have any *other* life goals or ambitions?

Charlie mmm

Emma that you’d like to do in the future

Charlie mm no not really (2)

/ well I’d like to become a marine but other than that nothin else

Emma mm (2)

would that be *after* being a TA or

Charlie no *that’s if* I couldn’t get the TA thing

Emma yeah

Charlie I’d be a marine instead

Emma *aah*, like a plan b

Charlie yeah

(transcript 2: stanzas 35-36, lines 172-179)

Charlie constructs a PS as having agency in his decision making through his repeated use of ‘I’ as the psychological subject. He constructs a narrative of the sought after consequences of his own actions (eg for being chosen for the footie team or to go on trips). Despite this, Charlie says he never wants to play football. His justification for not playing football may serve to ‘thicken’ a narrative of Charlie as lazy. *It leaves me curious about whether the narrative of ‘lazy’ is chosen over an excuse for fear?*

Emma *So* / it’s going much *better*

Charlie Yeah

Emma and can you tell me about what it *is* / that’s good

Charlie Well I’m good *every day* so I go on / whatever trips *or* I’m picked for the footie team

*but* I *never wana* *play* / because I can’t be

bothered running around on the pitch, after the

ball,

*and* (1) / that’s round about it really

Emma mm (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 76-77, lines 239-243)

Charlie’s stories about how his family perceive him conflict with the narrative of Charlie as a helper, constructed from his experiences in school. Charlie’s counter narrative at home leaves me questioning alternative stories for a different PS of which he speaks. It makes me wonder about Charlie’s understanding of these stories and how they might influence his desire about helping. Potential narratives of resistance appear to be co-constructed through Charlie’s stories:

Emma (2) what *about* your family, what would they describe you as being like?

Charlie lazy

Emma mm (4) tell me a bit more about that

Charlie well I’m always in bed *all day* then I’m up all night

so I don’t really help me mum do anything

Emma ah

Charlie well *I do sometimes* but, / other times I don’t

Emma mm,

(transcript 2, lines 154-159)

Whilst Charlie’s long delay in responding with a feared possible self may be interpreted as meaning he may be less motivated to avoid this PS, upon listening back to this episode, I feel that my question was quite complex. His personal pronoun use of ‘anyone’ like a drug dealer provides me with a sense of the familiar in this is a PS that may be around him. Despite this, Charlie clearly states two PSs that he would not want to be like in the future:

Emma *And* can you tell me about *any* *thing* or anything anybody has *done* to make you think about what you *might* or *might* *not like* to *do* when you’re older

Charlie m, / *no* not really (7)

yeah beside, yeah like / I wouldn’t wana be a drug dealer or anyone like that

Emma mm

Charlie but that’s it really

and I wouldn’t wana become a police officer neither

Emma mm

Charlie so that’s *everything* really

Emma mm (1) ok (4)

(transcript 2: stanza 34, lines 166-171)

*Charlie’s addition that he would neither want to be a police officer, boldly stated alongside not wanting to be a drug dealer, makes me curious about his views of the police and possible experiences with them which may have influenced his thinking.*

**Sonnie’s Story**

***Thrill-seeking: chilled, safe and mature***

**‘..like *thrill stuff* cus I like all stuff like that’**

**‘...I used to be a, terrible firebomb when I was little’**

(transcript 2: lines 225 and 188)

A narrative of Sonnie as a young person who likes and seeks thrills and adventure is constructed through a PS who likes motorbikes, chases, weed and quads. Motorbikes and quads seem to have been a significant influence upon Sonnie growing up. He explains he has been around them nearly all of his life:

Emma *so* can you talk me through them, / tell me about what you’ve put

Sonnie Just motorbikes, chases, weed, quads, chill and money

Emma mmhm, ok (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 3, lines 15-16)

Sonnie Like, I like motorbikes and going on them and that,

because been round motorbikes like nearly all me life, / so I always go on them

Emma Ok

(transcript 1: stanza 4, lines 18-19)

Sonnie and then *erm* / just *quads*, always been around *quads*

(transcript 1: stanza 9, line 39)

Sonnie talks of deliberately getting chased by the police. His description of this happening ‘*loadsa* times’, with and without his peers (and of telling in a matter of fact tone) seems to emphasise its occurrence. Sonnie’s inclusion about getting chases on his own makes me wonder about his intrinsic motivation and what need may be met through his actions? *I wonder whether Sonnie’s views and meaning about his actions have become desensitised:*

Emma /*and* chases, what are chases?

Sonnie m getting chased by plod

Emma mmhm / tell me abit more about that

Sonnie ??? *loadsa* times / me n me mates just get chased and that

Emma yeah

Sonnie just on the bikes, / or like just get chased on foot

Emma and chased *with* people that you *know*?

Sonnie yeah

Emma *or* your friends?

Sonnie like me mates

Emma yeah

Sonnie or sometimes just on me ones

Emma ok (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 7, lines 26-33)

A PS of Sonnie seeking further thrill and adventure in the future is also constructed. He corrects his response of liking ‘daft’ things to provide an example of something which may be viewed as more sensible to the listener. I wonder if this perhaps illustrates a resistance to doing sensible things? *I wonder too whether Sonnie feels a need to ‘act’ a certain way with me? Sonnie’s response here reminds me of the power and influence I bring in shaping what is said and the co-construction of the ensuing narratives:*

Emma and *then* (2) / I asked you about *any other* life goals or ambitions, / and you said about the *massive* motorbike track (1) that *happens* in Columbia, / and it’s on a sandy desert, and you’d like t’ / do that

Sonnie yeah

Emma mhm, is there anything *else*

Sonnie just like

Emma you can tell me

Sonnie *do loadsa* things lik-ss-like-daf / like *sky diving* an that

Emma *I want* *to do a sky dive*

Sonnie just loadsa *loadsa* other things like / like *thrill stuff* cus I like all stuff like that

(transcript 2, lines 221-228)

Sonnie chooses ‘sick S’ to describe how his friends may perceive him. He qualifies it with his personal view, and changes the psychological subject of the sentence to ‘I’, bringing a view that Sonnie doing mad stuff may originate from his own thoughts about himself; he narrates ‘they don’t *call me*…they *just think’*. The false start and repairs within Sonnie’s discourse seem to emphasise this as a present PS view:

Emma *and* how *about* / your *mates* (1) /all of the students here, how might they describe you?

Sonnie well my mates, they’d just describe me as, / *just S* just sick S, cos like

Emma why sick S?

Sonnie not / they *don’t call me* sick S they’d *just think*

/ cos like the stuff I’ve done an that / just do mad stu- just do mad stuff

Emma mm’k (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 89, lines 397-401)

I invite Sonnie to consider a narrative about change, from being in his past schools to school now. A narrative of Sonnie as calmer and as having changed is constructed through reflections upon what he used to be like when he was younger (see also transcript 1, strophe 32). Sonnie constructs an image of a past PS as having been a ‘proper bad fireball’ when he was younger. His choice of metaphor constructs a powerful image of this PS, which I feel is a vivid memory in Sonnie’s life. He refers to a past PS as though a destructive and ‘mad’ self, as if he was not thinking properly. Sonnie’s construction of having been ‘mad’, (as opposed to the possibility of ‘bad’ how I or others may perceive it as being like), makes me curious about how he perceives his own behaviour / actions within the social-cultural context. He takes personal responsibility for this change, resisting any influence from school:

Emma *And* do you think you’ve *changed* in any way, for example from being in your *past schools* up to being in this school now

Sonnie yeah like / I don’t think this school’s changed me but like I’ve *calmed* down

Emma mm

Sonnie cos like when I was just / when I was like younger I just used to be mad

Emma mm

Sonnie er ju-we jus- like I just used to be a proper fireball,

(transcript 1: stanza 77, lines 344-347)

Through Sonnie’s narration, a chink of vulnerability is shared (‘cos I was scared’), before he diverts the narration to his mother and reaffirms his *proper bad* fireball self. *This makes me curious about Sonnie’s vulnerable PS, which it seems he hides from me, and I wonder about other scared or painful feelings which Sonnie may have:*

Sonnie like an erm when I was like three, I set the *erm*, bin on fire at me house [but I

Emma [when you were three?

Sonnie yeah, but I didn’t mean but I didn’t mean to / cos I was scared it ???

and mum comes by and she goes ‘*no*’, and then she smelt fire and ran down and put it out

Emma *right*

Sonnie but like, / I used to be a *proper bad* fireball but I’ve stopped now

Emma [laughs] ok (1) mm

(transcript 1, lines 356-360)

Sonnie’s past PS is constructed as a powerful and dominant narrative, which he regularly reflects upon. By comparison, Sonnie describes his PS now as mature and as someone who now thinks about his actions. He narrates with a tone which it seems he is proud of, as he draws upon his past PS:

Emma So how would *you* describe yourself *now* as S, what *words* would you use to describe yourself?

Sonnie just like *chilled* / and mature

cus like I used to be like proper silly an that and just do bad stuff and like (2) erm (1)

/ and just like *safe* because like I just used to do like mad stuff like didn’t think about it like

/ I’d light like fires and then go in the building and mess round

Emma mm

Sonnie and then like like police would get us an say that’s dangerous you could die in there

Emma mm

Sonnie so like *I’ve matured* and just like *think* before I act

cos I used to just like *do things* and then *regret it* / like do stuff without thinking

Emma mm,

(transcript 1: stanza 86, lines 381-388)

Sonnie constructs a story of his past actions occurring because of his ADHD and he further positions himself as having changed from his previous ‘mad’ self. His emphasis and use of words expressing that ‘*I I I* ‘*ad* trouble’ constructs trouble as if it were a disease which he could not avoid. In doing so, Sonnie constructs his relationship with ADHD as though ADHD has control, which constructs a narrative of himself as powerless, or without responsibility. *This makes me curious about Sonnie’s sense-making and his views about what may have changed:*

Sonnie and like, *I I I ‘ad* trouble through there cos I got li- ADHD and that

Emma mm

Sonnie and just like used to always be *naughty* and that

(transcript 1: stanza 50, lines 211-212)

Sonnie like, / everything was goin *well* like

but like cos-I cos I’ve got ADHD / and like I used to be dead hypo and that and just do like stupid stuff like

Emma mm

Sonnie I’d just *do* mad stuff / just like kick doors you know just start fights,

(transcript 1: stanza 66, lines 291-293)

***Rich: on the dole***

**‘I just wana be wealthy / but like with a clean record…’**

(transcript 1: line 188-189)

A dominant narrative throughout the interview conversations is Sonnie’s wish for a rich future PS and his motivation for money:

Emma  *Can you now* show me on paper / with words, symbols or pictures, / like you’ve done here, / however which way you want, who *you* as S *hope* to be *like* in the near future

Sonnie I don’t *get* what you mean

Emma So for example (1) in 2 years time, when you’ve finished High School, / *here*, maybe (2) show me on *there* what you *hope* to be like

Sonnie rich

Emma ok (2) yeah,

(transcript 1: stanza 17, lines 78-81)

Sonnie includes money within his current perceived PS and emphasises being able to ‘*get*’ money with ease. His tone seems confident. Although Sonnie refers to his future self as ‘gratfin’, I cannot help but feel a sense of Sonnie constructing a narrative of earning money without having to work too hard for it. His preceding comment and chuckle that he cannot say how he does this gives me the impression that he is acquiring money by means he knows he should perhaps not:

Sonnie and then *money* / I just love money

Emma mmhm (2)

/ do you like to spend money or d’you like to *have* money, *or*?

Sonnie *both* like,

/ I can *get* money easy

Emma [can *ya*

Sonnie [that’s why

Emma How d’ya *get* money?

Sonnie Just by loadsa things

Emma mmhm tell about

Sonnie *mm* I *can’t* say [grin/chuckles]

Emma hhhm (2) ok

/ but you *like* to have money

Sonnie [nods]

Emma mhm

(transcript 1: stanzas 12-13, lines 57-66)

Multiple stories are constructed about Sonnie’s future plans (including a PS as a landlord, a fireman and studying mechanics at college) and how he hopes to get rich. However, his plans appear somewhat vague and lack a clear or definitive plan. Sonnie’s reference to having multiple jobs and doing other things on the side further demonstrates his desire to be rich. Although I sense Sonnie doing things which he should not be doing in doing this. Whilst Sonnie constructs an understanding of a future PS, his business plans may be considered as lacking strength in his talk of having any type of business. Sonnie’s motivation is money and a dominant narrative of a rich PS is constructed over the process of how to become rich, which in turn is thinly constructed, if constructed at all? His response to ‘jus try an get a decent job and that’, ‘just get rich’ and ‘erm, start a business’, further create an impression of immature idealism with no specific idea about what Sonnie might wish to do for a living:

Emma tell me about that, *why* / you hope to be

Sonnie cos, jus try an get a decent job and that,

and then, err’m / just get rich n yeah

Emma mmhm

Sonnie just doin other things on the side as well

Emma mmhm (1) can you tell me about that?

Sonnie Like just doin loadsa graftin n jobs an that

Emma mmhm

Sonnie and then erm, / start a business

Emma yeah (2)

what type of business would you like to start?

Sonnie anythin *really*, / cos I wouldn’t be in it me self

Emma mm

Sonnie I’d just be like / rentin it out

Emma *aah* (2) good plans

*so* (1) have you got any idea about *how* you hope’t, / *do* that?

Sonnie like getting a job an that / [like I

Emma [what you need to do

Sonnie when I, / when I leave *school*, I wana be like a *fireman*

Emma mmhm

Sonnie an then like eh / you can pick some money up,

or get like a mortgage off the bank or somethin and pay it off,

but then like go into real estate building, like, build like, build like a house

and then rent that out until you make *more* money

Emma right

Sonnie to make *another one,* an or buy bloc’ straight of flats

Emma *aah*

Sonnie and rent them all out

Emma has *anybody*, helped you think about that *idea* / or [is anythin

Sonnie [like me uncle does all real estate build

Emma *right*, ok

Sonnie an that (1) said that it’s a good business but to go in but, / you’ve gota have the money

Emma *right* (1) ok

(transcript 1: stanzas 18-21, lines 82-104)

I asked Sonnie about what he might have to do now in order to achieve his goals. Although a narrative of having to study hard is co-constructed, a tone of ease in how to go about it and a lack of conviction in his discourse is narrated (‘just like, study, try hard’). His multiple reference to ‘try’ and also to ‘get through it’ constructs a sense of having to battle getting through school and his exams. An interruption of ‘erm’, in Sonnie’s response about trying his best in his exams, gives a sense of hesitation and uncertainty in what he is saying:

Emma Ok /*so* what might you do at college?

Sonnie Er just do mechanics

Emma mmhm (1) yeah

Sonnie an then, I could get a degree for that

so I’ve got more of me job

Emma Yeah (1) ok, *erm* (1)

*and* can you tell me about, what you might have to do *now* / to help you get there

Sonnie just like, study, try hard,

just put me head down an jus try an, / get through it

Emma mm

Sonnie jus try me best in all the *erm* exams

Emma yeah (1) ok

(transcript 1: stanzas -2625, lines 119-126)

Sonnie’s talk of a future hobby which may also earn him money strengthens a narrative of his desire to be rich. An image of Sonnie as a young person who is business minded and able to transfer skills he has learned to support his future PS goals is constructed. Despite this, his choice of modal verb (‘could’) gives the impression that this might be something which Sonnie has only just thought about in response to my question:

Emma so what would ya be doi’ would you have / any hobbies or interests?

Sonnie Yeah, I’dst *or* I’d go, / cos I done loadsa garage stuff, / an on bikes an that, I could just do that

a’n on the side as well

Emma mm

Sonnie cos that way, it’d *be* like a hobby but then I’m still getting paid for it / cos [I like it ???

Emma [*aaah*

(transcript 1: stanza 24, lines 115-118)

Sonnie’s wish not to be ‘like a tramp on the dole’ may be seen as further strengthening his desire to be rich. An active sense of Sonnie’s PS is constructed through his desire not to just be sitting, doing nothing. A powerful narrative of resistance to Sonnie being poor, like a tramp on the dole, is constructed and Sonnie concludes that he does not want to be that type of person:

Emma / *and,* what do you hope *not* to be doing in your spare time?

Sonnie jus like, *sittin* there like, / like a tramp on the dole just, not doin nothin

Emma mm (3) ok

(transcript 1: stanza 36, lines 158-159)

Emma *so* (4) is there anything else that you want to *add* about / the person that you don’t wana be like?

Sonnie Like, I *don’t* wana like cus, I *don’t* wa / I wouldn’t just be like stuck on the dole an that

because, e-I don’t wana be like that type of person

(transcript 1: stanza 42, lines 180-182)

Sonnie concludes his talk by stating the person he does not want to be like. He refers to being wealthy albeit also with a clean record. His further reference of a clean record leaves me wondering what actions Sonnie may choose and decisions he may prioritise. *My critical self wonders about Sonnie’s act of mentioning it in making it a possibility for happening?*

Sonnie /I just wana be like wealthy

but like / with a clean record and that like

Emma mm (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 44, lines 188-189)

Sonnie constructs a PS as having agency over his own actions within the episode below. In only stating himself, I wonder if Sonnie may actually be creating a narrative of resistance against others helping him?

Emma ok (1) *and* so you said about you know what you need to do

Sonnie yeah

Emma to help you (2) ok (1)

/ is there anyone *else* that might help you?

Sonnie not really / just me’self

Emma mm yeah

(transcript 1: stanza 76, lines 340-343)

***A learner: having knowledge***

**‘..so I know a lot about that’**

(transcript 1: line 109)

A further narrative co-constructed throughout the interview conversations is of Sonnie as having knowledge, a lot of which he draws from family influences. He delivers his stories with a confident tone as he repeats and concludes his speech episodes with the fact that he knows lots of information about what he might do when he is older. For me, I sense Sonnie resisting a narrative of not knowing which may construct him as ‘knowing-less’, or somewhat less powerful. Sonnie’s uncle seems to be a core figure of influence for him as he imagines his future PS:

Emma *yeah* ok (1) and who- / *how* did you get *the idea* for that?

Sonnie jus *erm* / *me uncle* used to do it / but then he dropped out of it,

but like I know loadsa information about it

Emma yeah

Sonnie and me mum ad her own shop, and me uncle’s got shops and barbers shops and that

Emma yeah

Sonnie *so* I just know a bit about that

Emma yeah, that’s good that you know that, ok

(transcript 2; stanza 16, lines 54-68)

Sonnie constructs his self as knowledgeable about what is needed to be a landlord and justifies the need for spare money. *Whilst his repetition and conclusion appear to further construct a confident PS narrative, equally it makes me wonder about a PS of not knowing. Thus, I wonder if in ‘not knowing’, Sonnie feels compelled to hide this through strongly narrating a knowledgable self?* Again, Sonnie resists a narrative of himself as not knowing or as a person who is without agency:

Sonnie cos I know loads about it like,

ye an then you after have like grands on the side in

case anything *breaks* cos then *you’ve* gota, / repair it

Emma right

Sonnie because you’re the counsellor f’ landlord

Emma mmm

Sonnie so I know a lot about that

Emma *mm*, / sounds like it, / k

(transcript 1: stanza 22, lines 106-109)

I introduce a narrative of achievement through asking Sonnie about a time he achieved something that was hard to do. Sonnie chooses to tell a story about learning to build bikes. As he openly shares all that he achieved on the course, I sense him as proud. His comment and emphasis upon ‘an then we get to make *our own’* highlights a sense of shared enjoyment he felt from it. Sonnie’s reflection upon it being a free course, and also in getting a six hundred pound bike from it, further gives me a sense of the value he has for money:

Emma *erm,* ok so *think back* tell me about a time when you achieved something that was hard to do

Sonnie er

Emma and that you’re proud of

Sonnie like when I went to YOT, I went on this *course* like cos I was doin community service

/ I went on this free course where if build you build bikes for eight weeks but like you fit like / take all the old bikes and put it to the workshop, like put all new stuff on it so it looks good to sell it for like people who can’t afford you know like stuff

Emma *right*

Sonnie and like we fixed loads a sick bikes up

an then we get to make *our own*, like but like like a *specialised* or a *maron* / and I had like a six hundred pound bike out of it

Emma wow

Sonnie but like it took *eight weeks*

and we fixed like, fifty bikes each

Emma wow

Sonnie ??? an it learnt me how to erm fix all the brakes, / fix everything on the bike

Emma yeah

Sonnie the chains,

like / I already knew a few stuff but it ta- it taught me like more

Emma mm (2) it’s good (1)

(transcript 1: stanzas 83-85, lines 369-379)

***Fighting: in conflict***

**‘..so you just have to fight’**

(transcript 1:line 279)

Sonnie constructs a powerful narrative of having to fight in his past schools. To me it creates an image of him fighting for his respect and for survival. Sonnie quotes what the other kids said to him, which seems to emphasise the impact it had upon him. Sonnie’s conflict (power struggle) continues into the next school year. Sonnie’s discourse is disrupted with false starts as he repeats *‘they’* as the psychological subject with emphasis which seems to create a sense of ongoing conflict. He continues a narrative of ‘I’ against ‘*them*’ and of not having any choice but to fight with the boys. A narrative which resists any blame is constructed through his actions for having ‘battered’ the three boys in three fights. I wonder whether Sonnie feels a sense of injustice (‘but they were saying stuff to me’) as he constructs his actions as legitimate. Sonnie presents a story which is full of power through his choice of personal verbs (‘battered, trashed’). *In listening back to his spoken words, it makes me sense a paralleled strength in his emotions, thoughts and feelings about the situation:*

Sonnie and *then* C was *good* / loadsa times

but like / kids started like stuff like saying it was-ss- / ‘ah thingy said this about your mum’ / an that, and then

Emma was that in year 6

Sonnie no [year 7

Emma [or year 7

Sonnie and then when I went into year 7 like, / cos like *they* wanted *they*-they were just startin on me for nothing

but *then* / I’d have a fight with *them*

and then cos I battered like thre-three lads in the three fights, like / they thought I was bullying

but they were sayin stuff to me

Emma mm

Sonnie and like windin me up and that so and like s-so I ‘*it*

and like trashed the theatre and then sprayed some kids with a erm fire extinguisher cos he threw a erm / plate at me ‘ead,

(transcript 1: stanza 59, lines 261-271)

Sonnie presents a narrative of having no other option available but to fight and an image of fighting to withhold your honour within the social and cultural context in which he belongs. Sonnie draws attention to the narrative of difference between different types of school through his story. Our conversation constructs a specific cultural narrative about unspoken social rules which one must follow and actions which have to be taken in ‘*them places’* to survive. Sonnie’s psychological subject of ‘you’ appears to emphasise the norm of such actions. He concludes the story simply noting of there being no other choice:

Emma [did you have a group of friends there?

Sonnie yeah I ‘ad *loads*,

like in *them* places like / if there’s a fight n- like you’re on your last chance like *there* / it’s like well th-everyone from the area so they’ll just be be like ‘ah he’s a faggot *him* he said nah to the fight’

Emma *right*

Sonnie so you just have to fight

Emma *right*, ok

(transcript 1, lines 276-279)

During our second interview, Sonnie elaborates upon the potential backlash to be faced if you do not fight and the damage it may mean to your street credibility, appealing to my understanding (‘you know’). *It strikes me that words, such as ‘he’s a faggot’, may be taken so personally and I wonder about the strength of such an insult within Sonnie’s culture.* He concludes his story once more in stating there is no other choice. His use of discourse is limiting as he seems to determine his own outcomes. *It creates a sense of hopelessness for me personally. For is this all we are, if there is no other choice?* Sonnie’s narratives construct resistance against the possibility of alternative actions and PSs. *I wonder about what PSs in particular he is avoiding? Furthermore, Sonnie’s story makes me feel ignorant of his experience and leaves me feeling a sense of greater distance than I first thought in trying to imagine his social-cultural and personal world through his stories, and the meanings he ascribes:*

Sonnie yeah like (1) / like in *schools* like when other kids

are like

*there* and then like if you back down then they’ll

say ‘aah

he’s a faggot aah he’s a faggot’

Emma yeah

Sonnie like and like he *flapped* it n that

but like (1) / [cos it affects your *street* cred

Emma [*he flapped it*

Sonnie flapped it means like (1) like *scared* but ???

Emma right

Sonnie cos *erm* it’ll *just* affect your street credibility you know

Emma yeah

Sonnie so then, you *just* have to fight an’tha

(transcript 2: stanza 37-39, lines 133-139)

Sonnie’s fighting narratives give me a sense of emotions on a short fuse and I wonder whether Sonnie is not alone in getting ‘wound’ up. Sonnie continues to defend his actions and justifies having ‘trashed’ the theatre as somebody was winding him up. Sonnie’s speech correction in his story from ‘they’ to ‘somebody’ gives me a feeling that although one person was winding Sonnie up, perhaps it felt like they were all doing so, albeit an audience perhaps. Sonnie adds also that he did not start the fighting, which constructs an image of his PS as the victim:

Sonnie yeah n that / like I *trashed* the theatre cos they were like / *someone* was windin me up

and then I got *shouted at* and she put a big stack a erm red paper and said just write loadsa lines over again

and I didn’t do nothing, / so I just started trashin it

but then like loadsa people *wound* me up by saying things,

and then *I’d* have a fight with them

and then, cos *I’d batter them or win*, then, / they kept *sayin* that I was bullying but, I didn’t start it

Emma yeah ok

(transcript 2, lines 124-129)

***A dissatisfaction with school***

**‘..you don’t really learn nothin in there’**

(transcript 1: line 236)

A narrative of Sonnie’s dissatisfaction with school is co-constructed through our conversation. This is illustrated in regard of his previous school’s physical appearance in the story below. Sonnie adds to the reasons about what was wrong with the school. He draws upon canonical narratives of health and safety in emphasising that the school was so bad it could be unlawful. I sense Sonnie’s feeling of disgust through his choice and emphasis upon words (*‘horrible’, ‘weird’, ‘dirty’*). He sums the school up as simply being ‘just *dirty*’. *I wonder if Sonnie’s views would have been different if he had attended when in the school’s new building?*

Sonnie just like, it was *alright* but like it-w c-

/ they’ve got a new buildin now but the old building was like *horrible* like,

it was like not even health and safety like all [the

Emma [*really*

Sonnie tiles had ripped out

and erm like ma-*weird* kids like / got sent to there who would just piss in the corner and that

and you would get locked in this room,

and like, the dinners were *horrible*

and it was just like / the school was just *dirty*

Emma yeah, ok,

(transcript 1: stanza 69, lines 302-309)

Sonnie expresses further dissatisfaction of his educational provisions. He constructs a negative image of his past school, a place in which you don’t learn anything and one which he does not value or respect. Interestingly, his use of ‘you’ as the psychological subject emphasises this point and constructs his story as one not personal to him but as a collective story for everyone. Sonnie speaks of him, amongst others, smoking weed and cigarettes, which he narrates with a tone of disrespect, through his use of emphasis (‘they just *let* you do it’). Sonnie’s narration gives me an impression that even he perhaps disbelieves what he was allowed to do in school. *It makes me wonder how he now feels about this, and whether he feels let down?*

Sonnie n- / I went to the Key Stage 3 centre *first*

Emma mm

Sonnie like a unit,

but like it’s not like a real school *like* / they’ll let you do whatever you want

Emma right

Sonnie like you could just smoke weed

and they just *let* you do it

Emma really

Sonnie or like have a ciggie or anything, or-jus

/ you don’t really learn nothin in there

(transcript 1: stanza 54, lines 230-236)

Sonnie narrates a dislike of change which happened in his previous school, preceding his exclusion. His statement that the new head teacher had affected the ‘whole school’ and his use of all or nothings in his choice of speech repertoires (‘changed *all the rules’*) emphasises his thoughts and feelings towards her. I sense Sonnie as having felt threatened by these changes and potentially feeling powerless against them, which may have caused feelings of uncertainty for Sonnie. He draws upon his relationship with his previous head teacher, and by way of contrast, narrates what he has lost:

Sonnie / but it was a *new* head teacher,

cus there was a other head teacher there that I was sound with, called Miss C,

but then this other one came just, made the whole school *dull*

Emma mm

Sonnie like changed *all the rules* and that an / *all* black trainees an everythin just changed loadsa rules

Emma right

Sonnie just made it worse

Emma ok yeah

(transcript 2: stanza 33, lines 113-117)

Although Sonnie responds that school is all right now, he then opposes it, expressing more dissatisfaction. Sonnie’s negative constructions about school make me wonder whether anything would be good enough. It leaves me wondering about possible alternative narratives he might be suppressing through his dissatisfied meaning making of school?

Emma *erm* (1) / and tell me about school life now, how do you feel about it?

Sonnie it’s alright like

Emma mmhm

Sonnie but like, in this school

/ like in other schools you’re allowed your phone and that

they try and take your coats and jackets off you here (1) jus- ???

an-an you only get like fifteen or ten minute break

Emma right

Sonnie cos like th- people like / you’ve gota be quiet and have a meeting before it / and normally everyone’s talkin

Emma right (2) before break?

(transcript 1: stanza 70, lines 310-317)

Sonnie’s narrative constructs an image of him being prisoner within his school and as powerless against the rules and restraints. A story of injustice is constructed as Sonnie narrates being wound up by his teachers, as if it may be intentional, and also of getting arrested if the teachers are hurt in a restraint, when the same does not happen to the teachers if they hurt the pupils. I feel some confusion from Sonnie’s responses. On the one hand, he complains of there being too few rules, whilst on the other he seems to dislike the rules. A PS of Sonnie in resistance to school is co-constructed:

Sonnie yeah you have meetings every time before *erm* you go to *erm* break

Emma yeah

Sonnie then you have a *short* break cus people will mess,

and then like they can restrain ya, throw you to the floor and then

/ it’s just like a *prison*

Emma *right* (1) ok (1)

and so what are your thoughts about it?

Sonnie *just horrible* like

/ an like some of the teachers *wind yor’up* and then / an give you time

and then like say if you get *restrained* and if they get *hurt*, / if they get hurt in the restraint, then you’ll get *knicked* and everything

Emma mm

Sonnie but, if erm we get hurt in the restraint nothing happens

Emma mm

Sonnie so s’horrible

(transcript 2: stanzas 45-46, lines 154-163)

Despite Sonnie’s negative views of school, he provides an insightful response when I challenge what could happen if teachers did not use restraint. Sonnie constructs a narrative of working together, noting the onus on the school to do this. *Whilst I wonder about opportunities for Sonnie’s views being listened to, I also wonder how he may perceive his part, or responsibility, and actions in working together:*

Emma what d’you think might happen if *erm,* *they* *weren’t* like that

Sonnie school ‘ud be *better* like, if they *worked* with us

Emma mm

Sonnie like it w-we’wouldn’t just take the piss like, *I mean rules*

but like / in *here* you can get over two hour detentions and that

Emma mm

Sonnie and they can keep you til ages

Emma (1) mhm m’k

(transcript 2: stanza 47, lines 164-168)

***Staying good: having trouble***

**‘well / it’s important that I have to *erm* stay good an that’**

(transcript 1: line 330)

Sonnie talks about having to ‘be good now’, and in the episode below, relates this to his PS outside of school. Sonnie’s assertion leaves me feeling some uncertainty about this through his use of repetition, as if just starting to be this PS now. It leaves me sensing that he is possibly trying to convince himself as well as convince the listener. Sonnie narrates the external pressures of having to change his actions, as opposed to drawing upon what changing his actions might mean for his own PS. Nevertheless, he demonstrates a good understanding of what actions are required of him to do this:

Sonnie yeah, but I’ve gota be good now

Emma yeah

Sonnie he said cus it’s like me last time so,

/ I’m gona just start bein good now

Emma right (1) yeah and d’you know *how* you’re gona, / do that?

Sonnie just like, stay out of trouble

and don’t listen to peer pressure, or like if me mates are doin somethin just walk away

Emma right (2)

(transcript 1: stanza 38, lines 161-166)

Sonnie narrates a story of robbing which through his use of ‘you’re’ as the psychological subject, I sense him relating it to me. He draws upon this story in his example about peer pressure, which it seems is a likely PS of his:

Emma can you tell me a bit about peer pressure?

Sonnie like, / I *can’t* explain it like when everyone’s like just like, like ‘oh *go on* do it lad just *do* it*’* like, if you know what I mean

Emma and what might that be about?

Sonnie like if there’s something there like a r-/ like if you’re doin / robbin something *or* say if like a lappie’s in a car or som’in, people are like ‘*get it lad get it lad,* / ya faggot’ (1)

(transcript 1: stanza 39, lines 167-169)

Sonnie talks of having very recently escaped court, a narrative which he then strengthens through expressing that he has been to court lots of times:

Sonnie cos I only got away with court yesterday

Emma [*right*

Sonnie [but I’ve been to court loadsa times so

(transcript 1: stanza 33, lines 150-151)

Sonnie’s story of having to stay good continues and he constructs a story which gives a sense of him still living in the trouble. He constructs a narrative which appears knowledgeable about the position he is in. However, his repetition and tone, with which he declares having to stay good, makes me question the strength of his conviction. *As he repeated the sentiment, I remember wondering if it was the listener or himself he was trying to convince?* A PS of Sonnie as someone who has committed multiple offences is co-constructed. He draws upon external pressures of having to stay good, which appears to suppress possible narratives of internal motivations for his behaviour /actions:

Sonnie well / it’s important that I have to *erm* stay good

an that

cos like I got *knicked* for weed

but then I got like *five offences* and I’m on

eighteen month suspended sentence which is f-

two other offences so,

/ I got *NFA’d* they said ‘no further action’ but, if

next time I do something it’ll be *serious*

Emma right

Sonnie an now I gota go to YOT cos o this *weed* thing cos we got caught with weed /

and if I *breech that* then I get knicked for erm, breech of ??? a probation officer and then like three other things

Emma right

Sonnie and he said it’ll just be serious

Emma ok

Sonnie *so* that’s important so I’ve gota stay good

/ and for me mum, cos every time she goes to court she’s gota get fined

Emma mm

Sonnie and *fined* for the stuff I’ve done

Emma mm right (1)

(transcript 1: stanzas 73-75, lines 331-339)

I ask Sonnie about actions he might need to stay out of trouble. His response is to ‘just walk away in it’ said as though this is done with ease. His discourse is broken by pauses, false starts and pitch glides which for me create a sense of uncertainty in what he says. A larger cultural narrative of Sonnie being surrounded by trouble is co-constructed, creating a strong narrative of resistance? His moral sense-making appears externally influenced as he draws upon the deterrence of it looking bad if he goes to prison when he is older:

Emma right (1) *so* can you tell me a bit *about* (2) / *what* (2) *might* you have to *do* so you *don’t do that*

Sonnie just like stay out of trouble and like (1) just (1) / if there’s something like bad goes on / just walk away in it

Emma mm

Sonnie cos like, by ours it’s like *dead* *bad* like there’s trouble everywhere

Emma right

Sonnie like people getting *shot* everywhere an that

Emma yeah

Sonnie and cars getting robbed so (1)

cos it’ll look bad on / if if I’m older they’ll just say ‘he’s been to prison an that’ so

Emma yeah (2) ok (1)

(transcript 1: stanzas 34-35, lines 152-157)

A dominant socio-cultural narrative of all people doing it is constructed by Sonnie which further demonstrates such influence around him:

Sonnie like where they’re *all* people are *doin it* and they’re like ‘*come come’* and like then I’ve got like arrested and knicked and then,

I’m on my final chance now

Emma mm

Sonnie otherwise I’ll go on a tag *or,* get put away or something

Emma yeah

Sonnie so

(transcript 2, lines 91-93)

Sonnie constructs a future PS as selling weed which he justifies in comparison to selling coke, according to his own social, cultural and moral understanding. However, for me this contradicts (possible hopes for) what he has just said about staying out of trouble. Furthermore, Sonnie’s assertion against doing as his cousin did is influenced by my leading, negating line and therefore reducing the trustworthiness as a PS which may otherwise have been constructed for Sonnie:

Sonnie erm (1) like just not like like *maybe* / like it’s alright if you sold like a tiny bit of weed but *don’t* *do* coke / like sold coke an that,

because my cousin got erm, my cousin was sellin it and erm got like *four* years

Emma mm (1) / m’k,

so that’s made *you* think I don’t want to

Sonnie yeah / I don’t wana go down that path

Emma yeah (1) ok

(transcript 1: stanza 90, lines 403-406)

**Chapter 5: Further discussion and reflections**

I return to the beginning of this bigger, written story to review my research aims. Having shared my interpretation of key themes within the previous chapter, I now explore in more depth my interpretations of PSs co-constructed from Charlie’s and Sonnie’s narratives. In view of my research questions, I explore the PSs which I interpret as dominant within the co-constructed narratives, as well as those which might construct agency and resistance. Further examination of some key themes takes place as PSs are constructed through and across them. I present the distinct PSs constructed for each young person (YP) whilst also drawing upon similarities where themes and PSs converge. My impressions and interpretations of the narratives and PSs that I identified in Jackson’s stories are also presented before I share my personal researcher reflections. Cautions of the research are considered, alongside future possibilities and implications for practice.

**Back to the beginning**

Through examination of the narratives co-constructed between Charlie, Sonnie and myself, I wished to explore their present as well as future PSs. The boys attended an alternative school provision following permanent exclusion from a mainstream setting. I was particularly interested in how socio-cultural resources were drawn upon, how positions of power were constructed through narratives of agency and resistance, and what influence they might have in opening up possibilities for each YP. Although I was not able to fully include Jackson’s stories within the scope of this study, I reflect upon my overall impressions of the narratives co-constructed in our conversations.

Prior to writing this chapter, I learned that Sonnie had left school permanently. Whilst I have tried to not let this taint my thinking and overall impressions, I cannot deny the influence which this new knowledge may have had on my final interpretations.

**The possible selves of Charlie**

***A possible self as separate from belonging***

A sense of irony from a PS that does not belong within Charlie’s narrative resonates within me, bringing to mind a quote by Billington and Pomerantz (2004), who argue that:

there is something deeply offensive to social justice in witnessing fellow human beings pushed out through overt or covert marginalisation (p.6).

Billington and Pomerantz warn of the wasteful nature of not investing appropriately in CYP we marginalise from our schools. In view of their previous exclusions, feelings of rejection and not belonging may have been a past PS for each YP within this study. Osterman (2000) reminds us that ‘students who experience acceptance are more highly motivated and engaged in learning and more committed to school’ (p359). This raises questions for how we as practitioners may honestly raise the potential of young people if we make decisions to educationally and socially exclude CYP.

As I present this PS of Charlie’s, I do so not implying that he actively wishes or declines to belong, but merely to represent the PS that has been co-constructed. Charlie’s narratives were rich in discourse which distanced himself from other pupils in school, as he constructed a PS which strongly wished not to be like them. Charlie frequently referrred to ‘getting along’, or be it not getting along, with others. The theme of belonging, or a lack of it, seems to further resonate within Charlie’s home life, and a PS as being separate is constructed through his relationships with family. Although Charlie narrates acceptance and value he receives in school (elements considered fundamental to belonging), Hegarty et al. (1992) also implicate a person’s perception to fit in with their environment as determining the extent to which a person feels a sense of belonging. I sensed a lack of personal attachment between Charlie and his previous schools. In considering the number of school moves Charlie has experienced, this may not be surprising. Similarly, it may be argued that this theme is reflective of Sonnie’s relationship with the school system as a whole. Sonnie’s narratives present a dissatisfaction and lack of connectedness with school and he draws heavily upon socio-cultural resources outside of school when imagining his PSs.

In view of Sonnie’s dissatisfaction with school, it may be argued that Sonnie neither feels a sense of belonging within the school system (Hegarty et al., 1992) and I wonder about Sonnie’s needs being met elsewhere, outside of school (Osterman, 2000). Voelkl (1996) reminds us that feelings of not belonging in school or valuing school are often associated with emotional and physical withdrawal from school. Thus, some may argue that Sonnie’s ultimate withdrawal from school is not surprising. Further to this, Sonnie expressed a dislike of a new head teacher who changed all the rules in a past school. He compared her with the old head teacher who he viewed as ‘sound’. It makes me wonder how such changes may have impacted upon Sonnie and his sense of relatedness with school and his teachers, disrupting a personal sense of belonging for him.

Munn and Lloyd (2005) implicate the important role of schools in helping to combat exclusion through ‘developing pupils’…sense of belonging’ (p.219). Yet, I wonder about the possible achievement of this when powerful system decisions to ‘move’ CYP are made. Movement between multiple schools may create multiple feelings of school and social rejection (Anderman, 2002). I argue that a sense of belonging within school, and within wider social society, cannot be achieved without first experiencing inclusion.

***A possible self as helper***

A PS of Charlie as ‘helper’ was powerfully constructed across multiple themes, and as a PS both past and present. Personal agency towards this PS was constructed through Charlie’s discourse and sense making, and how this positioned him in relation to his future hopes and current actions (for example in helping his peers not to do a runner). Charlie actively legitimises his future hope of becoming a TA in drawing upon his own personal experiences. He draws upon his own experiential narrative of being in school and the socio-cultural resources within it, which appear to strengthen a narrative of personal agency to achieve this goal. In particular, Charlie draws upon his relationship with Mr Teacher, who he wants to be like, as well as the TAs in school. School influences feature heavily in relation his future PS constructions. *It makes me wonder about Charlie’s PS as ‘helper’ in his previous schools, as well as the sense of agency and power experienced over other aspects of his life.*

Despite Charlie’s desire to become a TA, constructed through powerful narratives of agency, narratives of resistance are also implicit. When questioned what might help him to achieve his PS goals, Charlie lacked known help resources, and was uncertain about possible others who might help him. His knowledge about the steps needed to achieve this bigger goal may be viewed as vague (a course). By comparison, Mainwaring and Hallam (2010) found that pupils who attended a PRU had fewer strategic plans for attaining their positive PS and seemed unaware of the possible difficulties that they might experience. Whilst Mainwaring and Hallam further purport upon pupils having no alternative options, Charlie spoke of an alternative PS as a marine if becoming a TA did not work out. Charlie also refers to Careers within school which may support him. In view of Charlie’s PS goals, there is an implication for us as practitioners to recognise how best to respond to his PS needs and provide a greater sense of investment. In Charlie’s words, such adults ‘don’t really give up on ya’ (transcript 2: line 84). Although an alternative PS of Charlie as a marine is constructed, he asserts that this PS would only be chosen if he could not become a TA, thus potentially strengthening his agency towards his hoped for PS.

***A possible self as achieving, not giving up***

Charlie shares multiple narratives which construct a PS as being determined and as not giving up. This is shown through his stories about wanting to become faster at running, better at weights, and improve his skills in reading. Despite this, counter-narratives are also constructed of a PS as lazy and as giving up. The construction of this PS seems to be drawn from socio-cultural and familial resources. It could be argued that through repeated reference and attention, to such narratives, there is a danger of a PS as lazy becoming a dominant story for Charlie, and one which he may begin to internalise (Mead, 1934). Charlie positions himself within his family’s narrative of him, using it to describe his own PS. For example, Charlie draws upon a PS who is lazy as being the reason why he no longer does a runner in school. I would argue that a dominant story of a PS such as this may create resistance to and may inhibit Charlie’s sense of power and agency, and ultimately limit the realm of potential new possibilities and other PSs.

Charlie’s stories of determination seem to be influenced by externally motivating factors. For example, a PS of Charlie as competitor is constructed through his wish to beat his peers at running and his brother at weights. Charlie also draws upon the support and encouragement received from his teacher, Mr Y, as a source of influence about what he can achieve. *I wonder whether Mr Y has been an important outsider witness for Charlie in acknowledging what he can do.* Walther and Fox (2012) report that:

it is difficult for a person to step into these alternatives unless they are noticed and honoured by others. It is likely that more people will be able to sustain and develop their preferred living practices if their efforts to live these preferences are recognised and told by audiences; if they are put into circulation and acknowledged (p.11).

I asked Charlie about a feared for PS (a self he does not wish to be like). A long delay is given before he responds that he would not want to be a drug dealer or a police officer. Whilst my question may have taken some time for Charlie to think about, according to Oyserman and Markus (1990), a less developed feared for PS may mean that Charlie is less motivated to avoid this. Subsequently, he may be less motivated to achieve his hoped for PS.

**The possible selves of Sonnie**

***From ‘thrill seeker’ to ‘chilled, safe and mature’***

Both present and future PSs of Sonnie as a YP who seeks thrill experiences and takes risks are constructed. Sonnie draws upon early experiential narratives, for example in having grown up with motorbikes and quads, as a key influence. His ‘mad…fireball’ days when younger powerfully add to a PS as engaging in thrill experiences, albeit Sonnie narrates a PS who has now matured. Despite this, Sonnie’s speech correction of liking to do ‘daf’ things, and his chosen discourse to describe his peers’ view of his PS as ‘sick S’, may suggest otherwise. Whilst a PS who engages in thrill experiences may be open to new possibilities, or risk taking, it may equally translate to a counter-narrative of resistance. For example, in respect of Sonnie’s actions to entice chases from the police.

Before completing this thesis, I was informed by the Head Teacher that Sonnie had left school. In view of this knowledge, Sonnie’s socio-cultural experiences outside of school may be considered even more influential in constructing his present and future PS. I feel an overwhelming sense of concern about Sonnie, possibly constructed from my engagement with the published research literature, as another YP who we have failed within today’s so called modern age education system. I wonder about a PS for Sonnie who may oppose the narratives dominant within the literature, indicating that pupils who have been permanently excluded underachieve academically, suffer reduced employment opportunities and may engage in subsequent criminal activity (Ball, Maguire & Macrae, 2000) or drug use (McCrystal, Higgins, & Percy, 2007).

In contrast to Sonnie’s thrill seeking PS, a present PS is constructed who he describes as chilled, safe and mature. Sonnie constructs his PS as calmer, having grown from his younger, mad PS, and reflects on how he used to just do things which he would then regret. This makes me curious about his level of moral sense making now, especially in view of his justification that it is still all right to just sell a bit of weed but not coke. Interestingly, Sonnie takes personal responsibility for the construction of this new PS and denies any influence by school. This further highlights Sonnie’s lack of relatedness to school and suggests that school may not be a significant aspect for him in view of his personal experiences (Finn, 1989).

***A rich possible self***

Narratives of a PS who has money dominate Sonnie’s stories. Sonnie’s chosen discourse and reference towards this hoped for PS is powerfully constructed, permeating multiple narratives as he positions himself with much agency to achieve this future PS. His reference to multiple jobs, choice of hobby and doing other things on the side, which includes selling weed, further serve to strengthen this PS narrative. Despite multiple plans, Sonnie seems to lack a specific plan in how this may exactly be achieved. Reference to simply ‘getting rich’ causes me to feel some concern in respect of the context of Sonnie’s narratives. Furthermore, Sonnie constructs a powerful narrative of resistance against a feared for PS as ‘a tramp on the dole’, boldly stating that he does not want to be that type of person. This may strongly motivate Sonnie’s desire to achieve a PS that is rich (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). By contrast, Sonnie’s narratives of agency are met with implicit narratives of resistance, through smaller stories of robbing, using drugs, prison, a clean record and offending. Such resistance may act against the number of imaginative possibilities and PSs hoped for (Freire, 1972).

***Possible self as a learner***

Narratives of a PS as having knowledge are frequently constructed as Sonnie talks about multiple PS occupations (landlord, fireman, mechanic). For me, Sonnie constructs a PS who likes to have knowledge, illustrated through his proud storytelling about having learned to build bikes. Ironically, the PS of Sonnie as learner is predominantly constructed from socio-cultural resources outside of school’s influence. Sonnie’s narrative for me constructs an image of a PS who is business minded and able to utilise skills and knowledge learned to achieve his future goals. Sonnie’s use of discourse within his narratives positions his PS as having power, self-efficacy and agency in his ability to achieve what he wants. Despite Sonnie’s PS constructions, my critical PS also sensed the need to err caution over the trustworthiness of Sonnie’s stories as I wondered about an impression Sonnie wished to create.

Sonnie constructs multiple PS plans. Although it could be argued that having multiple plans may serve to open up imaginative possibilities for Sonnie, I felt some confusion and uncertainty about the PS he hopes for. Mainwaring and Hallam (2011) emphasise the need for an explicit focus on the specific skills and strategies that are needed for the realisation of positive PS. Sonnie’s knowledge about his future PSs and how he may achieve them is predominantly drawn from his uncle, highlighting his possible sense of relatedness towards him. When asked about how he may achieve his future goals, Sonnie talks of having to ‘try hard’ to get through school and ‘try (his) best in all the *erm* exams’. Although following our conversations I felt that Sonnie was knowledgeable about what he must do, as I engaged with the narratives further and having the knowledge that Sonnie had left school, I found myself examining Sonnie’s narratives through a more critical lens. For example, in exploring Sonnie’s discourse, I felt it could be argued that he showed an uncertainty and a lack of conviction about achieving his intended goals. Whilst Sonnie may construct a PS with limited assertion towards his school achievements, he constructs with fortitude a PS as rich and as wanting to have knowledge. Narratives of agency and responsibility are constructed as Sonnie expresses that it is only he who can achieve his future self goals.

***A possible self who is fighting***

Narratives of conflict and fighting are constructed across Sonnie’s stories. They create an image of him as fighting for his respect when confronted by peer pressure (‘it affects your street cred?’) and as having to fight for survival. Sonnie draws upon specific cultural resources, including unspoken socio-cultural rules, to construct this PS narrative. His use of language and situational meaning limit Sonnie as having no other choice, leaving him powerless to construct an alternative possibility or other PS in such a situation. Sonnie seems to determine his own outcomes, as he positions himself within a narrative of resistance against the possibility of alternative actions or other selves.

Sonnie’s narratives make me question the quality of peer relationships experienced throughout school. Hamm and Faircloth (2005) argue that a lack of peer group acceptance can lead to feelings of exclusion and alienation. They implicate friendships as a key factor in developing a sense of belonging within school:

Friendships serve as a secure base and buffer that help adolescents to cope with the psychological challenges of the social ecology of high school. Through these relationships, adolescents develop a stronger sense of belonging to their schools.

Hamm and Faircloth, 2005, p.61.

Multiple power struggles are present in Sonnie’s narratives. His PS as fighter may be interpreted as a counter-narrative constructed to protect him against getting ‘kicked out’.

Sonnie’s narratives construct an image of him as prisoner in school, as though he is powerless against rules and restraints. His suggestion about working together with school makes me wonder about the potential for new possibilities through increasing Sonnie’s connection to the education system and participation within it. Sonnie’s experience of multiple exclusions may have lead him to question his acceptance within the school community. Anderman (2002) cautions about the effects of policy reform within schools which may increase a sense of school belonging and achievement of some young people, at the exclusion of others, who may experience greater school problems.

***Possible selves in conflict: ‘having to stay good’ against ‘having trouble’***

Two PSs, which I perceive as in conflict, are co-constructed (‘staying good’ against ‘having trouble’),embedded within narratives of agency and resistance. Sonnie's use of discourse, stating that he ‘has’ trouble, implies trouble as having power and influence over him. Sonnie also constructs an earlier PS as having trouble because of ADHD. A narrative of Sonnie as powerless in the face of trouble is co-constructed, creating resistance against possible alternative PS constructions.

In contrast, Sonnie draws upon external pressures of having to stay good which makes me wonder about the power and strength of a PS motivated to achieve this. Whilst Sonnie responds that he needs to ‘just walk away’ from trouble, I wonder about the ease in which this may be achieved when a PS as surrounded by trouble is constructed. For example, smaller stories about Sonnie getting away with court and legitimising the sale of weed are also narrated. Sonnie narrates a dominant socio-cultural narrative of all people doing it. Thus, a ‘thick’ resistance is constructed against what may be perceived as a ‘thin’ sense of personal agency (White & Epston, 1990).

**Jackson’s Story**

In reflecting upon my interview conversations with Jackson, I interpreted our co-constructed narratives as having themes which converged as well as diverged with Charlie and Sonnie’s themes. Overall, I gained an impression of multiple narratives which constructed PSs as having agency for Jackson. These included narratives of: positive and valued school experiences; positive change; an empathetic understanding of school. Narratives which constructed possible barriers (which may act against his hoped for PS) were few. Jackson valued and drew upon the positive experiences of his work experience as a mechanic, in constructing ideas about a future PS. He further reflected upon all the skills he had subsequently learned. Whilst Jackson expressed some uncertainty in how to specifically achieve his PS, he narrated different paths he could take (go to college; go straight into it, depending if he had the options to leave school) and named key figures as possible sources of support (his dad, uncle and a mechanic he knew).

The importance of relationships was constructed throughout Jackson’s narratives. I perceived this to also converge with Charlie’s and Sonnie’s stories. Whilst narratives of fighting and skitting were constructed in his past schools, and indeed his present school, narratives about the importance of feeling valued within school were also constructed (Osterman, 2000). Jackson constructs a present PS who is valued and accepted in his current school and he contrasts this with his previous school experiences.

When asked if there might be anything stopping him from achieving his future PS (as a mechanic) Jackson’s response ‘unless a car falls on top of me or something’ (transcript 1, line 254) constructs a powerful statement which to me promotes a sense of personal agency. In acknowledging ‘I don’t wana go there like’ (transcript 1, line 261), Jackson elaborates upon a feared for PS on the dole (‘people think it’s free money but it’s not’; transcript 1, line 276) which may strengthen his motivation to achieve his hoped for PS (Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Jackson constructs narratives of positive as well as negative change experiences. Similar to Sonnie, he constructs a PS who is now calmer. He talks of his preference in attending a smaller school, as he does currently, compared to larger schools he previously attended. Jackson may feel greater acceptance and belonging within a smaller community better able to attend his needs. This may relate to Simmons and Blyth’s (1987) notion of impersonality as a difficulty experienced by pupils in schools. A further similarity is drawn with Sonnie’s narrative as Jackson too shares a negative change episode about a new head teacher in his past school, who he narrates ‘just hated *me*’ (transcript 1, line 285), and ‘kicked me out straight away’. He contrasts this with his past head teacher as knowing him. A change in a person’s relationships can often lead to feelings of uncertainty which Zittoun (2006) describes as rupture. In reference to Zittoun, it may be that Charlie, Sonnie and Jackson have potentially experienced multiple ruptures, from multiple changes to their sphere of experience (moving schools) and social relationships (different teachers and peer groups). In response to change, a person’s social and cognitive resources are drawn upon in order to reinterpret a sense of self. Zittoun asserts that a reconstruction of self is reflected through interactions with others. Thus, Sonnie’s, Jackson’s, and not excluding Charlie’s, interactions with their new teachers and peers are likely to have been significant in their potential PS constructions. This has important implications for what we as professionals in schools may be doing to better support young people, to overcome, prepare for, and at best prevent, the possible effects of rupture.

**Reflections of the researcher**

In reflecting upon our conversations, I felt that Charlie and Sonnie each engaged with the concept of PSs differently and to qualitatively different depths.

Whilst I felt that Charlie was very much open to imagining and co-constructing his hoped for and feared for PSs, I sensed that Sonnie remained somewhat guarded towards this process. Despite multiple plans, Sonnie never quite seemed to open himself fully to the possibility of constructing other PSs with me. In constructing his imagined PSs, Charlie demonstrated his vulnerable self and shared his emotions and ‘scared’ feelings (transcript 1, stanza 78-79) through his narratives. With the exception of a fleeting admission of his younger PS feeling ‘scared’ (transcript 1, stanza 79), Sonnie remained closed to constructing a vulnerable PS. It made me wonder whether it was perhaps all too dangerous for Sonnie to share this with me, as he frequently constructed a fighting, strong and all-knowing PS. Although I wonder if doing my research differently, I might have engaged Sonnie better, if there was at all possibility, greater time and attention than I had available was needed.

In listening to Charlie’s and Sonnie’s stories, I was witness to their unique gifts. Only Charlie was willing to share these gifts with school however. As I got to know Charlie, it made me question his place within the school. I strongly felt he was a young person who has in his past been misunderstood, especially in respect of his social communication needs. In listening to Charlie’s own words, he views himself as being amongst wrong crowds, who he does not wish to be like. In rejecting his peers, I wonder how much his judgements have been influenced by possible wider socio-political, canonical narratives. Whilst Charlie does not identify with his peers in school, he actively seeks containment from his school environment and in doing so, is able to relate to his teachers and TAs.

I greatly admired Charlie. Whilst I felt positive and excited by his engagement and openness with his hoped for PS, I also felt sympathetic about the support he might need to enable him to achieve this. Furthermore, I now feel apprehension about *who* might invest in Charlie and Sonnie’s future hoped for PSs. Whilst Charlie invests much in school, from which he gains support and containment, I wonder with some concern where these needs might be met once he finishes school.

Despite feeling some criticality towards the PSs Sonnie narrated, I felt drawn towards his PS potential. I felt I had much time for Sonnie. As I reflect upon this now, I wonder whether this was partly my inner PS wanting to keep hearing and constructing more from his PSs? Sonnie engaged with, and seemed to construct with certainty, his feared for PS of being ‘on the dole’ or without money. I wonder whether this is a PS Sonnie is most comfortable with, and whether a feared for PS may be easier for him to engage with than a hoped for PS, which he may perceive as too difficult or too threatening to imagine. Sonnie’s hoped for PS seemed fragile, in the sense that Sonnie lacked security in his ideas and never really knew how to construct his imagined future self with me. White and Epston (1990) suggest that it is difficult for people to believe their own stories when others around them have alternative, authoritative knowledge. As the adults who work with CYP who experience exclusion, we need to work with them to construct ‘thick’ narratives (White & Epston, 1990) and open up their potential for imagining their best possible and future aspirational selves.

Throughout Sonnie’s narratives, he draws upon outside, socio-cultural resources. Sonnie’s needs of belonging and acceptance are also met from resources outside of school. He identifies his PS with his uncle, or other young people who take risks outside of school, yet seem to survive and make money. I imagine they have provided a greater acceptance, loyalty and positive regard for Sonnie than he has previously experienced through school. Sonnie resists, or be it fights against, education and authority systems with rules. In doing so, it appears that Sonnie rejects school and its potential institutionalised containment. To some extent, I sensed that Sonnie also resisted me. As Sonnie reflects upon past conflict (with school and outside of school authority), he constructs a PS as fighting for survival. This leads me to think about the PS armour that Sonnie is likely to have developed to protect his vulnerable self. It also makes me wonder about our own PSs which may have added to the co-construction of potentially painful PS narratives for Sonnie. In doing so, I feel some sadness and guilt. Sonnie’s sense of injustice about what happened to him in his past schools may only serve to add to his negative feelings towards school, or indeed other systems of authority.

Within his narratives, Sonnie’s thinking is somewhat deterministic. In being this way, he is avoidant of certain PSs, which makes me wonder whether imagining alternative PSs is too difficult for Sonnie. To illustrate this further, ahead of our second interview conversation, Sonnie commented that he did not see the point in revising for his exam (on Friday) as he was going to fail anyway. Such comments would suggest that Sonnie has already failed himself of school. Perhaps he does this out of further protection for his vulnerable self? At this point, it would seem that it is too painful for Sonnie to even contemplate trying his best; maybe this PS was too far beyond his imagined reach.

Sonnie’s story in particular makes me fearful of the negative effect of rejection, psychological loss and trauma which exclusion can bring about for some CYP. Whilst I do not excuse the potential unacceptability of Sonnie’s past behaviours, his experiences of school exclusion have undoubtedly negatively influenced his personal narratives and placed limits upon his PS constructions and the future aspirations he might imagine. *I wonder about how I might construct my own PS, if I did not feel supported, accepted or thought of in positive regard within my own profession? I wonder further how I might construct this within the power hierarchies of school as a 14 year old PS?*

Listening to Charlie’s and Sonnie’s stories has highlighted for me the importance of ‘helpful storytelling’. That is, ‘thickening narratives’ through narrating positive and successful stories for young people who are all too often surrounded by ‘thin’, problematic narratives which merely constrict and limit imagined and hoped for PSs. Such narration, I believe, is crucial for opening up the PS potential of young people, especially for those who experience, or are at risk of, exclusion from school.

**Cautions of the research**

Whilst I have endeavoured to be critically reflexive and transparent throughout the methodological process and analysis of this research, I draw the reader’s attention to cautions of this research. Firstly, through my engagement with qualitative research, I acknowledge my socio-cultural and historical influences as a research-practitioner (university, professional and personal) and my unique subjectivity in determining the narratives and PSs that I have attended to and shared. I also acknowledge my PS perceived by the YP which was partner to their storytelling.

Through the context-specific nature of narrative, I make no attempt to deny that the co-constructed PSs are exclusive to this research. Had a different researcher facilitated the interview conversations, or alternative days been chosen, then different PSs may have been constructed. Indeed, the reader may wish to construct alternative interpretations to those I have presented. Nevertheless, through CNA (Emerson & Frosh, 2009), I have endeavoured to ground my interpretations within our spoken discourse to increase the authenticity of this research (Tracy, 2010). As humans are continually sense-making beings, I acknowledge the dynamic power of narratives and the inevitability of change in the ‘meanings of experiences… as time passes’ (Riessman, 2008, p.198). Andrews (2009) argues that as narrators of our own lives and the lives of others, we continuously re-script the past to make sense of our present. Thus, over time, more layers of meaning are able to emerge through further reflection and reading. Although a caution of this research, I would argue that beyond the scope of this thesis, this is also an advantage, having the power to inspire a realm of possibilities for each YP in envisioning their future PSs. In recognising the dynamic and changing nature of PSs, there is an implication on ourselves as practitioners to also support and nurture YP in constructing and reaching their hoped for PSs and future potential.

Whilst I acknowledge that NA is always partial and incomplete (Riessman, 2008), I argue that this brings with it further advantage. Narrative research has the potential to open up imaginative possibilities for alternative PSs through its attention to the smaller stories which are too often silenced by dominant narratives. Despite this, Elliot (2005) communicates caution in the construction of stories through narrative research, which he states can oppress and further marginalise, opposing the very aims it may intend to overcome:

We are as likely to be shackled by the stories we tell (or that are culturally available for telling) as we are by the form of oppression they might seek to reveal. In short, structure, content, and the performance of stories as they are defined and regulated within social settings often articulate and reproduce existing ideologies and hegemonic relations of power and inequality (p.146).

Although the small scale nature of this research may be viewed as a limitation of this study, it has allowed me to respectfully engage with a narrative methodology and the complexities of each YP’s stories. Had I tried to summarise the stories, or remove myself from the data, I argue that counter-narratives may have been lost. Emerson and Frosh (2009) caution us about the danger of reducing narratives to a coherent summary which can remove the complexities of details. Instead, a multi-layered analysis allowed me to ‘access spoken and unspoken sense-making’ that each YP brought to their experience (Frost, 2009, p.23).

In writing this thesis, I acknowledge the relations of power which this research has been governed by (Foucault, 1979). I recognise the interacting layers of constraint and boundary placed upon its process and completion, from participant selection and chosen design methods, to my engagement with university timescales. A further constraint was my difficulty in reducing the stories to interpretations, which I recognise can never fully reflect the complexity of the context in which they were narrated. My breadth of reflection has also been bound to the limits of this research. In recognising that new layers of meaning may emerge through different readings (Andrews, 2009), it made me question at what point it would be ‘ok’ to create ending to my analysis. In addition to my own timescales, I was guided by the point at which I was no longer able to construct new interpretations.

I return to Tracy (2010), as outlined earlier, to reflect upon and evaluate the quality of this research. I have endeavoured to engage in honest critical self-reflexivity and to present my narratives genuinely with analytic interpretations that are plausible (Riessman, 2008). Equally, I have endeavoured to remain transparent throughout the research process. I hope my approach has creditably reflected the social, cultural and historical forces that have shaped my constructions and understanding, and enabled the sincerity of which this research is worthy. I invite the reader to also reflect upon each measure with criticality, such that a space is created for growth and further improvement.

Within my research, I aimed to embody an ethical research relationship with each YP. This included member checks (Riessman, 2008; Tracy, 2010), enabling each YP to have control over the images constructed. Whilst I had planned to provide each YP with an opportunity to interrogate my final interpretations, only Charlie engaged in this process. From an ethical and authentic stance, I would argue that this is a limitation to my research. Although Sonnie had left school, in the given context it would not have been appropriate for me to visit him at home. Jackson was also absent on the date planned and I was informed by the school that his attendance had declined since starting the new school year. Within the constraints of my local authority work, I felt unable to visit Jackson again within a suitable timescale. On reflecting upon this now however, I feel that I should have tried harder and rearranged other commitments.

**Future possibilities**

The narrative interview conversations I had with Charlie, Sonnie and Jackson may be considered as the first steps of intervention. With further opportunity, I would wish to facilitate further construction of their future PSs and plan specific support to enable each YP to develop the strategies and skills needed to achieve them. Collaboration with the significant adults in each YP’s lives would be fundamental to keep alive their PS stories, whilst challenging and reconstructing alternative and unhelpful narratives.

We live in a dynamic system of socio-cultural narratives which interact and influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, an important extension of this research would be to explore the narratives of significant others (family, friends, teaching staff or other adults) within each YP’s circle of socio-cultural influence. It would be interesting to explore, through a YP centred analysis, where stories of influence, agency and resistance may reside for each YP. With an understanding of new knowledges, multiple possibilities may be constructed, enabling a greater wealth of PSs to be imagined. Furthermore, facilitating a multi-level approach of support may help to strengthen the co-construction of hoped for PSs and enable potential PS achievement.

**Implications for my practice**

My present PS, as critical research practitioner, is different from that which I constructed 18 months ago when I first began planning this research. My choice of methodology has enabled me to reflect upon the power of narrative within working towards social justice, including its potential to oppress as well as to challenge, liberate and transform (Foucault, 1979). A narrative approach has further developed my skills for practice and taught me the importance of listening generously (Lieblich et al., 1998), to what is *not* said as much to what is said. It has strengthened my commitment to generate opportunities for CYP at the margins (Billington & Pomerantz, 2004), foster their potential and support the construction of new possibilities for their future PSs. I am aware that my expectations and thinking are likely to have a significant part in the co-construction of the realities of the lives of each YP I work with. I am equally aware of the power of my own position to challenge and reconstruct alternative narratives. Through this research, I am more mindful of the narratives I co-construct through the ways that I listen to and speak with CYP, and how I represent them through my own stories, spoken and written (Billington, 2006). Similarly, I listen to discussions and read reports about CYP as just one possible story.

Adhering to a narrative methodology has strengthened my desire to practice as an ethical partner with CYP. It has highlighted the importance of listening to and acknowledging the preferred stories and PSs of CYP, and the future hopes and aspirations they value (UN, 1986; Walther & Fox, 2012). The importance of seeking bespoke ways to promote their participation and potential has also been reinforced.

I feel that the skills I have developed from working with complexity in narratives, dilemmas and uncertainty within this research has been reflective of practice as an EP. As I battled with uncertainty and dilemma, I reflected upon Mercieca (2011), who emphasises the importance of feeling suspended in uncertainty during research. Mercieca regards it as a ‘necessary and important state of being’ when working with children in EP practice (p.6). In hoping to co-construct new possibilities for CYP, I have embraced a process of becoming, according to Mercieca, as I too strive for good practice and the fulfilment of my potential.

***Implications for Educational Psychology***

Through my research, I hope to have added to the development of knowledge through the rigorous analysis of context-specific cases (Flyvberg, 2004). Narrative research enables important insights to be gained from ‘the many-sided, complex, and sometimes conflicting stories’ (Flyvberg, 2004, p.430) of the narrator, and enables attention to new knowledges which may be constructed through privileging space for its performance (Foucault, 1980). Furthermore, the versatility of a narrative approach serves to enhance its power and possibility across assessment and intervention, as well as research. Utilising a critically reflexive approach to research, which is akin to EP practice, may enable more generous listening to potential challenges and possibilities for CYP. Furthermore, narrative interviewing facilitates listening to what matters to CYP through the stories they view as most significant, rather than constraining their stories according to the matters we think most worthy (UN, 1989).

In EP practice, we work with stories which are multiple and complex. Thus, it seems only right that we endorse research and practice in a way which best reflects this. Within our practice, we continually seek to facilitate new possibilities for CYP, as well as for the significant adults around them. A challenge for our profession is to remain open to hearing alternative stories, contradictions, exceptions and narratives which are silenced. White and Epston (1990) recognise the difficulty of acknowledging different stories when others narrate with perceived authoritative knowledge. As a profession, we therefore have a ‘position of authority’ (Mercieca, 2011, p.125) to listen to, develop and construct alternative stories which generate new PSs about CYP and share these with significant others who may influence and support them.

Holton and Mellberg (2011) highlight our role in working with CYP to enable them to realise and reach their potential, affirming that ‘children rely on us for their own strength development’ (p.6). They remind us of the harmful nature that oppressive stories can bring:

When deficits rule our lives, fatalism inevitably reigns and hope is lost, we become blinded to our strengths and the possibilities they can lead us into.

Holton and Mellberg, 2011, p.6.

Educational Psychologists are well placed therefore to create a space in which to elicit new knowledges which both challenge and construct new possibilities for change for CYP. We need to promote a strong sense of community for our CYP, through positive relatedness and inclusive participation, so that they are embraced within a community in which they feel they belong. In doing this, we may better work with CYP to inspire their PS potential and prepare them with the skills, strategies (personal and social competence) and helpful self-goals they need. Nevertheless, I am aware of the limits within our work and the wider social community of each YP of which we may or may not be apart. As adults around our CYP, we have a significant role in respect of the narratives we pay close attention to and share, and the PSs we may thus help to co-construct. We need to reach out to and work closely with the multiple stories within this wider social context and to unsilence those stories which may empower potential and possibility.

**Closing thoughts**

This research aimed to provide a space in which to explore the PSs of young people who have also experienced exclusion from mainstream education. Through listening closely to their stories, this research has illustrated the PSs of Charlie and Sonnie, whilst also beginning to consider those of Jackson, co-constructed with the researcher. Through a narrative approach, I have been privilege to the wider socio-cultural narratives that each YP draws influence from. It has brought into awareness the potential for opening up new possibilities, and the PSs that each YP may aspire to reach. Equally, it raises awareness to the potential challenge encountered from narratives which marginalise and close down possibility, strengthened through hegemonic relations of power and inequality.

Bruner (1986) suggests we become the stories that people tell about us. This research prompts us to consider how we may generate conditions to facilitate the construction of new PSs so we may open up wider reaching opportunities to enable CYP to flourish (Macintyre, 1984).

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**Appendices**

Appendix I: Information letters and consent forms

Appendix II: Interview guide for first interview

Appendix III: School timeline

Appendix IV: Pen portrait of narrators

Appendix V: Transcripts and analysis

Transcript 1: First interview conversation with Charlie

*Overview of macro-analysis: the first conversation*

Transcript 2: Second interview conversation with Charlie

*Overview of macro-analysis: the follow up conversation*

Transcript 3: First interview conversation with Sonnie

*Overview of macro-analysis: the first conversation*

Transcript 4: Second interview conversation with Sonnie

*Overview of macro-analysis: the follow up conversation*

Appendix VI: Examples of self-portrait responses

Appendix VII: Overview of my impressions: Jackson’s narratives

Appendix VIII: Examples of my ‘raw’ analytic workings to trace themes

through the narratives

**Appendix I:**  **Information letters and consent forms**

**Information Letter: Young Person** 

Date: 14.05.12

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Research project: An invitation to take part!

*What do Young People who have been excluded from School*

*hope for the future?*

I am writing to ask if you would like to take part in a research project to find out about what young people might want to do in the future.

**Who is the researcher?**

My name is Emma Callwood and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at XXXX City Council. I am also a student at The University of Sheffield (Year 2). I work with children and young people, teachers and parents/ carers and use psychology to help people with their learning, behaviour, friendships or feelings.

**Why am I doing this?**

Your views are not heard much in research. I want to listen to your views about what is important to you now and in your future. I also want to find out about what people can do better to help young people.

**What will happen if I say ‘yes’?**

I will meet with you for an individual chat and ask you to tell me about your views and experiences of school. I will ask questions like:

* Can you tell me about school last year? …now?
* What would you like to do when you finish school?

After our chat, I may ask if you want to take part in a second chat with me on a different day. This will be so I can listen to *more thoughts* *you may have* about school life, what you like and what you don’t like, what you want to do and what you don’t want to do.

Each chat should last no longer than 45 minutes. It will be helpful if I can tape record what you say so I can write it up afterwards and not forget anything important. I will then delete the tape.

**Do I have to take part? Can I quit after saying ‘yes’?**

It is up to you if you want to take part or not. I will ask your parent/ carer if it is OK for you to take part too. You can choose to stop taking part at any time, I won’t mind, nor will your teachers, and it will be OK.

**Will people know who I am?**

No. Your name will be changed when I write about what you say –this means you will be ‘*anonymous*’. When I have finished my research, all your information will be deleted. The results of this research will be used for my report (a thesis), my presentations, and maybe for a journal article.

**What do I get for taking part?**

You do not get anything for taking part. I will not be giving you any future goals but I do hope to help you to think about your self now and in the possible future. I hope that you can help me to help other young people in the future too.

1. **Please read and sign** the ‘**Young Person Consent Form’** if you agree to take part.
2. Please return it to me, or your teacher, **as soon as you can**.
3. **Before you sign the form, please talk to your parent/ carer about it.**

Thank you so much for your help. If you have any questions, you, your parent/ carer or teacher can phone me about it, or ask me next time I am in school.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Callwood

**Trainee Educational Psychologist, University of Sheffield**

**Should you wish to make a complaint:** please contact me, or my Research Supervisor:

**Supervisor:** Professor Tom Billington

Email: [t.billington@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:t.billington@sheffield.ac.uk)

Telephone:

**Researcher:** Emma Callwood

Email: [edp10ec@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:edp10ec@sheffield.ac.uk)

Mobile:

**Information Letter: Parents/Carers**  

Date: 2.03.12

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parents/Carers of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Research project: An invitation to take part!

*What do Young People who have been excluded from School*

*hope for the future?*

I am writing to ask for your consent for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to take part in a research project to find out about young people’s views and what they might want to do in the future.

**Who is the researcher?**

My name is Emma Callwood and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at Liverpool City Council. I am also a student on the doctorate of Educational Psychology programme at The University of Sheffield (Year 2). I work with children and young people, teachers and parents/carers and use psychology to help people with their learning, behaviour, friendships or feelings.

**Why am I doing this?**

The direct views of young people are not heard much in research. I want to listen to their views about school and the future. I want to find out about their hopes and what people could do better to help make them come true.

**What will happen if I say ‘yes’?**

I will meet with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for an individual chat in school and ask him/her to tell me about their views and experiences of school, and future hopes, *eg. Can you tell me about school last year? …now? What would you like to do when you finish school?*

I may ask if your child would like to chat again with me on a different day, so I can listen to *more of their thoughts*. Each chat should last no longer than 45 minutes. It is hoped that responses will first be recorded and then deleted after having been written up.

**Does my child have to take part? Can I quit after saying ‘yes’?**

It is your choice if you wish your child to take part or not. Your child may also choose to stop taking part at any time.

**Will people know who my child is?**

No. All names will be changed and your child will remain *anonymous*. When I have finished my research, all information will be destroyed. The results of this research will be used for my report (a thesis), my presentations, and maybe for a journal article.

**What does my child get for taking part?**

Your child does not receive anything for taking part but I hope that I can help them to think about their future goals. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please talk to your child about taking part in this research.** If you have any further questions, please contact me (see below) or your child’s teacher.

If you give consent for your child to take part, **please sign the slip below and return it to school as soon as possible** [ask your child to return your consent slip to their teacher with their Young Person Consent Form] **or send by post in the pre-paid, stamped-address envelope provided.**

Yours sincerely,

Emma Callwood

Trainee Educational Psychologist, University of Sheffield

**Should you wish to make a complaint:** please contact me, or my Research Supervisor:

**Supervisor:** Professor Tom Billington

Email: [t.billington@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:t.billington@sheffield.ac.uk)

Telephone:

**Researcher:** Emma Callwood

Email: [edp10ec@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:edp10ec@sheffield.ac.uk)

Mobile:

**Parent/Carer consent slip:**

I give consent for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to take part in the above research project, to find out about Young People’s views now and for the future.

I (wish / do not wish) to receive information about the findings of the research project once it is completed.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Carer) Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### Young Person Consent Form

|  |
| --- |
| **Research:** What doYoung People who have been excluded from  School hope for the future?  **Name of Researcher:** Emma Callwood  Participant Number for this project: \_\_\_\_  **Please initial box**   1. I have read and understand the **Information Letter** explaining the   above research project. I have been able to ask any questions I have about the project.   1. I know that I can stop taking part in the research at any time.   If I do not want to answer a question in the research, I can ‘pass’.   1. I understand that my real name will not be used next to what I say   (it will be anonymised). I know that when the research is over, my information and recordings will be destroyed.  I give permission for Emma Callwood to use my anonymised responses in her written report (thesis), or presentation.   1. I agree to take part in the above research project.   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Name of Participant Date Signature  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Emma Callwood  Researcher Date Signature  *To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*  *Please read, sign and return to Emma Callwood, or your teacher.*  Copies:  *Participants should keep the Information Letter and also a copy of this consent form.*  *A copy of this form should be placed in the project’s main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.* |

**Appendix II: Interview guide for first narrative interview**

**Introduction**

**Read through / review Information Letter**

**Read through / check receipt of Informed Consent**

* **Self –portrait exercise:**

**NOW:** Show me on the paper –with words, symbols or pictures –however which way you want, who you, as a YP, (NAME), are (at this moment in your life). Can you add all the people and things that you consider important to you now (inside or outside of school).

1. Tell me about what you have shown about yourself as a YP
2. Tell me about the people and things that you consider important to you

**FUTURE:** Can you show on paper -with words, symbols or pictures –however which way you want, who you, as (NAME), hope to be like in the near future, for example in 2 years time, when you’ve finished X High School?

1. Describe what you might be doing with your time
2. Tell me how you hope to achieve this
3. Who or what might help you? Might anything stop you?

**FUTURE NOT WANTED**: You’ve told me abit about what you hope to be like in the future. Now, can you describe what you really *hope not to be like* in the near future?

1. Tell me how you hope not to achieve this
2. Might anything cause you to be like this? Might anything stop you?

* **Visual school timeline:** *-explain timeline*

**SCHOOL PAST:**

1. Tell me what school has been like for you in the past. A biggest memory or event that happened?
2. What you liked / was going well? What you disliked / was difficult?

**SCHOOL NOW:**

1. Tell me about how school life is for you now. How do you feel about it? Is there anything that is important for you now?

**SCHOOL REFLECTIONS**:

1. Do you think you’ve changed in any way, for example from being in your past school/s up to being in this school, now? Can you describe how?
2. Tell me about a time when you achieved something that was hard to do.

Have we missed anything to talk about?

Is there anything that I’ve not asked that you would like to add?

**Appendix III: School timeline**

My Story so far…

Born

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| School | Year / Age |
| Secondary |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| School | Year / Age |
|  |  |
|  |  |

?

**Appendix IV: Pen portrait of narrators**

**Charlie**

*Gender:* male

*Age:* 15

*Ethnicity*: White British

*Eligibility for free school meals:*  Yes

*Looked After Child:*  No

**Sonnie**

*Gender:* male

*Age:* 14

*Ethnicity*: Dual Black British

*Eligibility for free school meals*: Yes

*Looked After Child:*  No

**Jackson**

*Gender:* male

*Age:* 15

*Ethnicity:* White British

*Eligibility for free school meals:* Yes

*Looked After Child:*  No

*School do not have record of each pupil’s previous educational history.*

**Appendix V: Transcripts and analysis**

**Transcript 1: Analysis of first interview conversation with Charlie**

**Part 1: Getting to know about C**

**Strophe 1: Beginning the conversation**

Stanza 1: Thank you for your participation

1. E Ok, first of all thank you very much for agreeing to take part in my *research*,/ very helpful.

Stanza 2: Who ‘*you’* as a young person are?

2. E *Errm*, I *wondered* whether you could show me,/ on paper, with words, symbols, pictures, however which way you want, erm, who *you*, as C are.

3. C Lazy

E hm hm

4. C [writes: ‘like to sleep and play games’]

**Strophe 2: Summing up C**

Stanza 3: So,that’s me really

5. E Ok is there anything else that you want to add to that?/ Just to sum up *C*, as as a young person

6. C I don’t really go out/ *so*, that’s me really

E *Yeah*,

Stanza 4: I like to sleep and play games

7. E ok d’you want to talk me *through*/ what you’ve put there

C Yeah (1)

8. C I like to play *games* ‘cus/ I can’t be bothered goin *out*

9. E What games d’you like to play?

C *Any* (1)

10. C / then I play an I go, an I go to sleep as well

11. C / ‘cus I like to sleep

E *yeah*

12. C I don’t like to be awake in the morning

13. E Ok, it’s hard going (1)

**Strophe 3: What’s important?**

Stanza 5: What else is important?

14. E / *can you erm* (2)/ *add* all the people/ and *things* that you consider important to you, either inside /or outside of school

15. C s’ anything what’s important?

E Yeah

16. E so *people* /and *things*

17. C [writes: ‘school harry and nan’]

18. C *There*, done

E Ok (1)

Stanza 6: School, Harry and Nan

19. E Can you talk me *through*/ what you’ve, you’ve put down

20. C *School*, for education an all that

21. C / *Harry*, because he’s the only one I like out of all me brothers

E *aah*

22.C and me *Nan*,/ ‘cos I like me Nan more than me Mum

E *aah*,

**Strophe 4: Harry**

Stanza 7: A bit about Harry –he loves the word ‘*no’*

23. E can you tell me abit about *Harry*,/ what’s he like? How old is he?

24. C two

E yeah

25. C an he loves the word *no*

E does he [laughs]

C yeah

26. C pick up the phone an says ‘*no’*/

‘i’ya Mum there?’/

‘*no’*/

‘Nanny there?’/

‘*no’*/

‘who’s this?’/

*‘no’*

Stanza 8: Not learnt from me

27. E [laughs] Who’s he learnt that from/ I wonder? [laughs]

28. C [laughs] not me

**Strophe 5: Brothers and sisters**

Stanza 9: There’s seven of us altogether

29. E How many brothers/ *do you have*,/ brothers and sisters d’you have C?

30. C I have, *Harry/* and then I got/ Eusain, Ali, Daniel and Thomas,/ five brothers and one sister, there’s seven of us altogether.

31. E Yeah/ oh gosh *lots*/ then,

Stanza 10: E clarifies Harry’s age

32. E *ah* so Harry’s two/ you said?

C Yeah

**Strophe 6: Me nan**

Stanza 11: I get on with me nan

33. E An ya nan,/ tell me abit about your nan and why/ your *nan’s* important to you

34. C m’what,/ because I get on with me nan,

35. C and / what d’you call it, like me nan’s funny an all that / so

E yeah (1)

Stanza 12: How is she funny?

36. E how is she funny?

37. C What?

38. E How is she funny?

39. C Because like she comes out with some *mad* rubbish,

40. C / an like she finds some songs on You Tube/ what *are*,/ woulda, like yo’would jus’ laugh at them

E [Really?

C [yo’would jus’ laugh at them/ yeah

E Yeah (1)

Stanza 13: Good on the computer then? *(E frames assumption as a question)*

41. E Is she good on the computer/ *then*?

C Yeah

E *yeah* (1)

42. E / that’s good having a nan / on the computer / on You Tube [laughs]

**Strophe 7: School: Peer relationships**

Stanza 14: School - important because I get on with everyone

43. E Err / and tell me a bit about school as well / why that’s important t’ya

44. C Because I get on with everyone (1)

Stanza 15: I wouldn’t call them a mate…they all grass on you

45. C /wouldn’t call them *a mate /* or anything like that, because they all *grass* *on ya*,/ as soon as you do *one* *thing*

E right (1) yeah

46. C *But* (1)/ I get on with everyone really / so,

**Strophe 8: School: Future plans?**

Stanza 16: I want an education

47. C *and* I wana education in it/ so

E yeah (1) so you want an education?

C Yep

E Hmhm, ok,

Stanza 17: I want to be a TA

48. E / why’s that important to you?

49. C Because I wana be a TA when I’m older.

50. E What d’you want to be?

51. C What?

52. C / A *TA*

53. E *Aah,* brilliant,

**Strophe 9: Teacher inspiration**

Stanza 18: Has anybody inspired you?

54. E / has anybody inspired you –*made* you want to be a TA?

55. C Yeah all dem in ere, /all the teachers n all that,/ [ge

56. E [Which

57. C get on with them

58. E is there (1) / one in particular?

59. C Yeah *Teaching*

Stanza 19: He’s funny, I get on with him

60. E *Right* (1)/ and what do you *like* about / Te-Mr Teaching?

61. C *He’s funny*,

62. C he knows *every* trick what I got / to get out of detention

E [laughs]

C so / I can’t use them

E [laughs] right

63. C and, I get on with him / more than all the other members of staff / so

E Yeah (1)

**Strophe 10: What’s important in a teacher?**

Stanza 20: E clarifies important qualities for a teacher/TA

64. E /what do you think’s important, *in*, a teacher/ or a teaching assistant

65. C What?

66. E What’s important in one?

Stanza 21: Making sure they always help

67. C Makin sure they alway go an help the kid / even though the, even though like they might not *ask* for *the help*,/ but, go over and help make sure they’re doin alright [an that

E [*Yeah*,

68. E /ah brilliant, y’got some good answers there, good thoughts

**Strophe 11: C and his dog**

Stanza 22: Anything else outside of school?

69. E Ok (2) What I’d like you to do *now*, *is,*/ oh is there anything else / that *you*, you do outside of school?

C mm no

70. E that sums up *C* / as a person

Stanza 23: I take me dog for a walk

71. C I take me dog for a walk

E *Oh / right*

72. C That’s it

73. E Yeah (1) tell me a bit about that

74. C Well, / she kinda goes on walks wit me but me brother takes her on a walk as well / like when I’m ere all week

E *Right*

C and I take her out on the weekend

Stanza 24: What dog is she?

75. E What dog is she?

76. C What? / Don’t know,

**Strophe 12: My dog and me brother’s**

Stanza 25: Everyone loves my dog but they all hate me brother’s

77. C / but *e’ryone* loves *my* dog

78. C but they all hate me brother’s

E *Do they*?

79. C Yeah because like, it’s a Rott, a,/ what do you call it,/ a Rottweiler.

E [*Oh*

80. C [so they all hate it

E *Right,*

81. E/this is your dog?

82. C No like that me brother’s

83. E [Their dog?

Stanza 26:I got a little one, …it ain’t the same breed

84. C but I got what’s you call it, *I* got / a *little* one,/ yeah but like it ain’t like the same breed / as that,/ but like like half the size of that,

Stanza 27: A walk in the field

85. C more that like it doesn’t need a lead,/ so he comes a walk with me ???

86. E *Ah*, where d’you take it for a walk?

87. C What, / well I go into the field at the bottom of our road

E Yeah (1)

**Strophe 13: E’s dog, Holly (E influences / imposes narrative construction)**

Stanza 28: E asks a leading question

88. E / *ah* is she goo- is she lovely?

C Yeah

Stanza 29: E imposes own information exchange

89. E I’ve got a dog as well

90. E / I *love* dogs,

91. E / mine’s mine’s called Holly/ what’s your dog called?

92. C Havanah

E Havanah?

C Yeah

93. E *Ah* / what a lovely name

**Part 2: A future possible self**

**Strophe 14: Moving the conversation on to the future**

Stanza 30: An invitation to add information

94. E Ok, *erm*, is there anything else that you want to *add*,/ about you?

95. C *mmm* / no

E no (1)

Stanza 31: *‘Me self’*

96. E / great now I’d like you,/ erm I wonder whether you can you show me on *paper* / *with words*, symbols or pictures/ again, however which way you want/ who *you* as C / hope to be like in the *future* (1) For example *in* two years’ time, when you’ve finished X High School *or*, further beyond that

97. C Well I wouldn’t wana *be* anyone else / but me self

Stanza 32: Working *(E explores future self further)*

98. E mm,/ so what would you like to be

C hm

E be *like*/ what would you want to be doing? (1)

99. E So you’re not at high school any *more*

C yeah

E but in the *future*,/ what are you doin?

100. C [workin

101. E [what do you *want* to do?

102. C workin n all that

103. E *So* can you picture yourself,/ describe it to me

**Strophe 15: Working as a TA**

Stanza 33: Working as a TA, here or in X

104. C [writes: ‘TA’]

105. E If you’d prefer to talk to me about it / that’s fine too

106. C *Ah* you tell me after I’m writin it

107. E *No* no

108. C Working as a TA

E m’hm (1)

109. E anywhere in particular? / Any type of school in particular?

110. C *Here* / *or* *in* X / me other one / what I used to go to

E *right*

111.C before I came ere

E Ok,

Stanza 34: I know what the kids have been through…

112. E and what is it about those schools that you’d *like* / to teach in

113. C Cus *I know* what the kids have *been* through an all that / and like what they’re goin through so / it’ll be more easier

E *mm*, [yeah

**Strophe 16: More about it (a TA)**

Stanza 35: E acknowledges C’s ‘thoughtful answer’

114. C [laughs] your face look weird when ya do that you know

E [laughs]

115. E *no* that’s a really *yeah* / thoughtful answer

Stanza 36: I can help …because I already been here

116. E *So, erm* (1) tell me a bit *more* about it

117. C What?

118. C / Oh how can I help the kids out more than *any* *other* TA because I already *been* here or whatever, / so, I know what it’s like an all that, an like I know the way / how not to get time,/ so

**Strophe 17: Reminder of response**

Stanza 37: Interruption: change of location

**[Interruption: change of location]**

Stanza 38: Sorry for the interruption

119. E Ok, / *so* thank you and sorry for that interruption

C [laughs]

120. E *erm*, so can you remind me about what you just said about erm *why* it would be important to you working in, / your old schools?

Stanza 39: I know what the kids are like

121. C Because I *know* what the kids are like *and* / I can help the kids more than all the other TAs

E mm

C or teachers / so

E *Yeah*,

122. E /ok, that’s super

**Strophe 18: Future hobbies and interests**

Stanza 40: Walking me dog and doing weights

123. E *Erm*, would you have *any* hobbies, *or,* *interests* that you would do, want to do in your spare time / in the future? Thinking about C as a young person in the future

124. C Still walking me *dog* (1)

125. C doing weights an all that / that’s round about it

E Yeah (1) so *doin*

126. C the weightch

Stanza 41: E clarifies and C demonstrates (doing ‘weights’)

127. E the weightch / what’s that?

128. C Well (1) / what hang on, yeah like / me and me brother call it *dat*,

129. C / ‘cos like you know like them little weight things that like what you get / and that you go like that with [acts out lifting weights]

130. E *Ah*, dum-bells?

131. C What? / Dum-bell things?

E Yeah

Stanza 42: Weights: you do that with them and your hands get more quick

132. C Yeah well like my brother got like one kilo with them

E *Right*

133. C so like / b-but where we dud it yer like you go like that and punch it with them

E *I* / [see

134. C [to make his hands more quick (1) / so you do that with *them* / and then put them down, yeah / an get your hands more quick

E *right*

135. C so / I wana do that

**Strophe 19: Admiration for…yet competition against?**

Stanza 43: My brother …he doesn’t give up

136. E So / does your older brother do that

C yeah

E *now* / *yeah* (1)

137. E an, what d’you, like about it?

138. C The fact he doesn’t give up on it

E *Right*

139. C I, *I would* / but, he but he won’t / so

Stanza 44: To be like him but better

140. E ok, / so in the future, / you want *to*

141. C be more like him

142. C / but, better

**Strophe 20: Further hobbies and interests**

Stanza 45: I wana be a boxer

143. C / and, I wana be a boxer so

E *right* / so be be a boxer in your spare time as well

C mm

E mm (1)

Stanza 46: E posits opinion

144. E / *certainly* that will be keep you up with your *fitness* / won’t it

C yeah

E ok (2)

**Strophe 21: What is needed?**

Stanza 47: What is needed to be a TA?

145. E Can you tell me / how you hope to (2) *do* these things / what do you *need* to be able to *be* a teaching assistant?

146. C I need a education (1) I *need* to get good marks an all that (1) like in me art work an like what other an like whatever other work we have to do,

147. C / *and* I need to go on a course for it / and all that so

148. E D’you know, about / what type of course you might need to go on?

149. C No gona figure that out in / Careers

E *right*

Stanza 48: C provides a literal response

150. E / so when will you look into that / do you know?

151. C On Friday

E *Right*, ok, super,

Stanza 49: Subjects you might need?

152. E *erm* / du know what / *subjects* you might need? / You mentioned art

153. C Yeah, you’re gona need English, maths, science, ICT

E mm

C near enough all of them *like*

**Strophe 22: Like the TAs do here**

Stanza 50: What the TAs do here

154. C / because like that what all the TA do in here

E *right*

C they do near enough *every* lesson / so

E yeah

155. C but ??? they stay in one lesson what they’re good at the most (1) / so like we got like a TA who’s good at art and ICT

E *aah*

156. C so she’s in two places (1)

157. C then you got / RE and BTEC PE and PE,/ so you got a TA who does the PE work and RE with ya

E *I* see

Stanza 51: I want to be good at all of them

158. C so they’re all good at their own / lessons and all that

E yeah

159. C so (1) / I wana be good at all of them / like

160. E yeah [laughs] I’m sure you *will* / like / absolutely

**Strophe 23: What / who might help?**

Stanza 52: Might a person help you?

161. E *Erm* (1) / so might anything (1) / might a person help you in achieving these things?

162. C Duno (1) probably

E yeah

C hmm

163. E What type of person / might help?

C hm

E help you?

Stanza 53: Teachers believin’ in me

164. C Well the teachers would help me the *most* / because they believin’ in me an all that, / *and* whoever doin the course

E Yeah

C so they might help me

Stanza 54: Might anything stop you?

165. E Erm might *anything* / *stop you* / from achieving this goal?

166. C Mmmm, duno (1) maybe / I’m not sure

Stanza 55: Me uncle (might help)

167. E Can you tell me anything else about / *how* you *might* (1) /what might help you / to *be* a boxer / you said about?

168. C Me uncle, because like he’s the one who like wanted to get me into boxing

E *Right,* ok

169. E / so tell me a bit more about that

170. C Well he likes to paint, but he comes with me mum sometimes / to see me mum,

171. C /yeah like he always says to me that I should be a boxer

E *Right*

172. C so he tryin to get me into a boxing club

E Yeah, well that would be good

173. E / so it’d help you there wouldn’t it

C Yeah

E Ok (5)

**Strophe 24: To be good**

Stanza 56: A reference –‘oh good what he did’

174. E Might you need anything *else* to help you be (1) *erm* / a teaching assistant / in the future?

175. C Yeah like I need a what do you call it from / whoever I’ve been working for / an all that like I need like / a good *thing* n all that like if I come here, like I tell them I worked here then they need to phone up the people and say / ‘oh good what he did’ / and all that

176. E *like* a *reference*

C yeah

177. E *like* a report

C yeah

E yeah, yeah (1) ok / thank you

Stanza 57: I don’t wana be…like half the kids in here

178. E You’ve told me a bit *about* what you *hope* to be like in the *future* (1) now can you describe what you really hope *not* to be like in the near future?

179. C Like half of the kids in ere

E mm, hmhm

180. C smokin weed n all that / like I don’t wana do *any* a *that* (1)

181. C /don’t wana be a *thief* like half of the kids / and, that’s round about it really

E Ok (1)

**Strophe 25: Not doing homework**

Stanza 58: Not working…I don’t like doing homework

182. E What do you hope / *not* to be doing, in your spare time?

183. C Not to be doin?

E mm

184. C Workin [laughs] because like we get homework, *but* I don’t really like doin the homework so (1)

185. C / *and* what’s i’ call it / we get (2) no / that’s it really

Stanza 59: I don’t do (homework) anymore

186. C / we used to get homework but they don’t give it out unless *you* want it

E mm, *o*-k

187. C so I don’t *do that* anymore (1)

**Strophe 26: The wrong crowd**

Stanza 60: I wouldn’t wana hang with the wrong crowd

188. C / and I wouldn’t wana hang around with the wrong crowd / an all that in me spare time (1) so that’s everything really

E yeah

189. E / are there many, you mentioned about wrong crowds in *here*

C *yeah*

190. E about *half* of them?

191. C Yeah /that’s half the year 10, year 9 and year 11s

E *right* (1)

192. E are there any *who* / *you would* hang around with?

C mm no

Stanza 61:The wrong crowd as causal to a person C does not want to be?

193. E Erm / *might anything* cause you to be / like that person you don’t want to be *like*, / in the future? So you mentioned about stealin, thievin

194. C Yeah like if I get into the wrong crowd and all that / so, that’s the main one really

E mm, ok, yeah (2)

**Part 3: School in the past**

**Strophe 27: What’s school been like for you?**

Stanza 62: I didn’t really like school

195. E Can you tell me [clears throat] i’ve got a bit of a timeline here, like *your* story so far, *and* it says about being born and then your school, so maybe first nursery, then primary, secondary, school now, and then / going into the future (1)

196. E / can you tell me what school’s been like for you *in the* *past*?

197. C *Borin* (2)/ in ere it’s *borin*

198. C but/ in like, before I went to X / and all that yeah like / I used to go through school, and I didn’t like it, cus the teachers would *moan* at you for nothing an all that so, / I didn’t really like school

E mm (2)

Stanza 63: I had fun in one school but they moved me

199. E Can you tell me about one of your *biggest memories* / or an *event* that had happened in your *past* school?

200. C Well I had *fun* in *one* school,

201. C but / they *moved* me, / saying it would be better if I went to ere, could’ve ??? what do you call it,

202. C because like they didn’t want me there but they didn’t say that they just said it would be better if you went here,

203. C /*so* they ju’ *moved me* from that school really

E right,

Stanza 64: Fun as messin around

204. E and what type of fun did you have in that school?

205. C messin around really, at break time and at lunch

**Strophe 28: Shouting**

Stanza 65: I shouted back

206. E D’you think, / so have you got any *thought* about why they, wanted you to go, / why they thought you might be better in another school?

207. C Yeah because *some teacher* shouted at me,/ for no reason, / so I shouted back at her, and I had to go to the head teacher’s office for it

208. E *right*, so that’s one of your *biggest* memories

209. C yeah like that’s the only reason / I got *moved* out of that school, / because I shouted back at the teacher

E *right* (1)

Stanza 66: I don’t like people shoutin’

210. E and how did that make you feel?

211. C Well I don’t like people shoutin *so*, / it didn’t really make me feel that happy really

E No (2)

**Strophe 29: Past primary schools**

Stanza 67: I don’t know the (schools’) names

212. E /What school was that C?

C what?

E What school was it before X?

213. C I don’t know the names of them you know

214. E right

215. C but there’s one in,/ yeah like there’s *one* by me auntie that I used to go to by L1, / but I don’t know the name of that

E yeah (1) ok (1)

Stanza 68: About four, but we weren’t in them for long

216. E so how many *schools* / were you did you go to in primary school?

217. C I duno / about *four*

218. C but / we weren’t really in them for that long

E yeah (1) ok

**Strophe 30: Fun in one school**

Stanza 69: I had fun…then they moved me

219. E / and is it *one school* of those that you remember in particular that you had fun in?

C yeah

220. E How old were you *then* / roughly?

221. C I was in / I think I was in year 5

E yeah

222. C like I had *fun* / at the beginning of year 5, and then they *moved* *me* to another school

E yeah,

Stanza 70: Windin’ up the girls…

223. E / can you give me an example / of something that was fun?

224. C Windin up *all* *the girls* in year 6 / and sayin ‘*aah,* you love my brother’ an all that,

225. C / and they would always run after me

E *right* [laughs]

226. C that’s the *one* thing / I *loved* to do

E Did [you?

227. C [wind them up, yeah

**Strophe 31: Seeking clarification and elaboration**

Stanza 71: E clarifies brother’s year group

228. E Is your brother / was your brother in year 6?

C Yeah

E [laughs] (3)

Stanza 72: Nothing else important

229. E Was anything *important /* for you then?

C mno not really

230. E Was anything going *well for you* / then? You mentioned about you / *you liked* havin fun, chasing the year 6 girls and was there anything else that *you* *liked* doing / that went well?

C mm no

**Part 4: School life now**

**Strophe 32: School now: better…but**

Stanza 73: Better than it used to be

231. E Can you tell me, about how school life is for you *now*

232. C Better than what it used to be

E mm

233. C But what I don’t like detention

E [laughs]

Stanza 74:I hate detention

234. C you can ask *any* member of staff / if I get *five minutes* I will have / I will have the *worst* cob on *ever*

E Oh really

235. C I’ll walk out the gates and all that / all for five minutes

E oh really

236. C [or get in a bad mood / yeah

E Ohh

237. C [??? I *hate* detention

E [laughs]

Stanza 75: C unable to provide a reason (for detentions)

238. E why’ve they gi-given you detention sometimes?

C Duno

**Strophe 33: C as master of his own experiences**

Stanza 76: I’m good every day

239. E *So* / it’s going much *better*

C Yeah

240. E and can you tell me about what it *is* / that’s good

241. C Well I’m good *every day* so I go on / whatever trips *or* I’m picked for the footie team

Stanza 77: C opposes his positive statement

242. C *but* I *never wana* *play* / because I can’t be bothered running around on the pitch, after the ball,

243. C *and* (1) / that’s round about it really

E mm (1)

**Strophe 34: Scared feelings**

Stanza 78: First time at X High

244. E *An,* how du *feel* / about comin to X High / in school *now*?

245. C The first time I came to X High (1) I didn’t know *what* to do / I was *scared* and *everything* about it / and like, even on residents

246. C / yeah like the first time I went on there I was sit, yeah like du know like where the games thing is

E mm

C yeah well I just *sit there* on me own

247. C / wouldn’t talk to *none* o *them*, / cos I was *too scared* to do anything

E [yeah (1)

Stanza 79: Feeling less scared?

248. E How long did it take you to feel, *less* scared?

249. C Well like *only* a couple a weeks

E Yeah

250. C so it was alright (2)

251. C /‘cos I do that in *everything* / so like *I’m scared* for like the first couple of weeks, and then I’m alright after that

E [Yeah (2)

**Strophe 35: A narrative of C as ‘helpful’**

Stanza 80: Getting an education

252. C and is there anything that’s *important* for *you /* *now*, about [school

253. C [getting a education mainly /that’s round about it

E mm

Stanza 81: E describes C as being ‘helpful’

254. E Do you think you’ve *changed* in any way / for example from being in your past school / *to*, *now*

C Yeah

255. E and if so can you describe, / *how*?

256. C Because / in me old school / yeah like I wouldn’t help *no one*,

257. C / but what like one of the kids tried to run off, / like there was a kid who ran off, L /*yeah* / so I ran after him to get him back,

258. C / even though it was rainin and I was meant to be in the lesson,

259. C / so we walked through the park at the bottom there, walked all the way around *and* / I got him back in, and all that

260. E *Gosh* that’s really, *yeah kind of you* / that’s really helpful / in the rain as well (2)

Stanza 82: C reflects on always doing a runner (unable to respond appropriately to E’s question?)

261. E *so* (1) /has anything *helped* you to become more helpful then?

C What?

262. C No because, what dya call it yeah like / in *year 9* I would always do a *runner* / all because I got a detention,

263. C / so I would do a runner every day get put into the detention room and would *run away / every* day / from that room

264. C and then,/ *one day*, I actually did the detention in the room (2)

265. C oo / oh no *I didn’t*,

266. C because like they allowed me to go to class one day, then I ran outside with the kidge,

267. C / only like over there on the field by the big building,

268. C and then what du call it (1) / they took us in, took the shoes off us, and then said / ‘your attending here for a day now’

269. C / an then after they done that I ran off / in the rain

270. C / and it was *freezing cold*

E uuhh

271. C hur-hurt me feet like but, / it was alright

Stanza 83: Never did a runner since

272. E and then, after then

273. C *Never* did a runner since (1)

274. C / but what I always help the people who / wana do a runner,/ *by* making sure they don’t

**Strophe 36: Doing a runner**

Stanza 84: I got more lazy

275. E Why what made ya / *not* do one again?

C what (1)

276. C / because I got more lazy

E hha

Stanza 85: A contradiction by C?

277. C Because I tried doin a runner the other month but,

278. C / I got to like the bus stop at the bottom, and then *aah* it was too long for me so I walked back

Stanza 86: What makes you do a runner?

279. E What makes you do a runner?

280. C When I’m in a *bad* mood or, /if I’ve got *more* than an hour detention

E Yeah, ok

**Part 5: Something to be proud of**

**Strophe 37: Proud achievements?**

Stanza 87: C flaws his achievement

281. E *Erm* (2) / think back (1) tell me *about* a time when you *achieved* something that was *hard* to do, / somethin that you’re proud of now

282. C (5) *errr* (3) runnin

E mm hm

283. C Because / everyone thinks I’m quick,

284. C but / anyone of these can beat me if they put *more effort* into their runnin(1)

285. C / I don’t really put that much effort into runnin, / so (1)

Stanza 88: I got a gold and a silver

286. C and in year 8 I got a gold and a silver, for doing the 60 metres, the 100 metres and the 150

287. E *Gosh* (1) / you’re strong

C [yeah and I

E [strong at running

Stanza 89: ..and I can beat any of these

288. C and I can beat any of *these* at / arm wrestle, so

E Hmm (1)

**Strophe 38: Achievements that have been hard to do**

Stanza 90: What has been *hard to do?*

289. E has there been anything else that’s been *hard to do* / but you’ve tried *really hard* at doing, / and you’ve achieved it

290. C Yeah me art work, science, English and, / that’s it really

E mm

291. C cus I’m already good at maths so / it’s only them ones

E yeah (2)

Stanza 91: An ambiguous question from E? - C’s outlines his abilities

292. E what have you / *achieved* now (2) from, /having found those hard?

293. C Well, I’m better than most of the kids at science in our class (1)

294. C I’m the only one in our class who does like *drawing*, / yeah without like tracing it/ *and*, what else ??? do,

295. C Eng*-yeah* English (1) like / I can write a story about something

Stanza 92: But I can’t do…

296. C / but I can’t do the ending

E mm

297. C but everyone *loves it* but like / they always wana know the ending

E mm

298. C but I can’t do a ending for it

E mm (1)

**Strophe 39: E clarifies, C illustrates response**

Stanza 93: E reframes to clarify understanding

299. E / so have *you* / you said you’ve tried *hard* at these subjects now, and you’ve / do you feel that you’ve *improved*

C yeah

300. E yeah (1) *an* (1) remind me again sorry / what is *something* that you’re most proud of

301. C English and me runnin

E [yeah

302. C [*mainly* / cus English, I’m not that good at it,

Stanza 94: C provides an example –in response to something he is most proud

303. C *but* / when it comes to science yeah like I’m not that good at reading all the big words,

304. C *but* / even Mr Y says that *I do* take time and I *do* *manage* / to read some of it,

305. C like I always get me answers right, / well most of the time anyway

E Yeah (2) that’s super

**Strophe 40: Is there anything that you had to do?**

Stanza 95: They do a reading thing with all the kids

306. E *Errm* (1) and what did you / what did you have to *do*?

C What?

307. E to help you

308. C well they do a reading thing with all the kids (1) / you know that like they got two reading things like,

309. C one after lunch where kids come and *read /* and you get like, / well I don’t know what they get but,

310. C / they do another one where they take you out of lesson for like half an hour, and you read with this woman, / like the TA woman, / for half an hour (1)

311. C and then, she marks the book and like she does a *dot* if it *wrong* and like *a line* if it’s *right*, and then you don’t move on

Stanza 96: I wanted to become quicker

312. E Right, and is there anythin’ *else* that you had to do to help you, / to be proud of,/ of runnin *or* of your English?

C Hmm, no not really

313. C me *runnin* was more the fact that *everyone* could beat me, /in a race,

314. C /*and* I found that annoying / so, I wanted to become quicker

E mm (1) and you did

C yeah

**Part 6: Closing the conversation**

**Strophe 41: Questions to check?**

Stanza 97: Is there anything to add –have we missed anything?

315. E Is there *anything* / that I’ve not asked you, that you want to add?

C Hmm, no not really

316. E Have we missed anything *out* to talk about?

C [laughs] no

E *Ok*,

317. E thank you very much, we’ll stop that there (1)

Stanza 98: Still tired

318. E how are you feeling?

319. C Still tired.

***Overview of macro-analysis: the first interview conversation with Charlie***

**Part 1: Getting to know about C**

**Strophe 1: Beginning the conversation**

Stanza 1: Thank you for your participation

Stanza 2: Who ‘you’ as a young person are?

**Strophe 2: Summing up C**

Stanza 3: So, that’s me really

Stanza 4: I like to sleep and play games

**Strophe 3: What’s important?**

Stanza 5: What else is important?

Stanza 6: School, Harry and Nan

**Strophe 4: Harry**

Stanza 7: A bit about Harry –he loves the word ‘no’

Stanza 8: Not learnt from me

**Strophe 5: Brothers and sisters**

Stanza 9: There’s seven of us altogether

Stanza 10: E clarifies Harry’s age

**Strophe 6: Me nan**

Stanza 11: I get on with me nan

Stanza 12: How is she funny?

Stanza 13: Good on the computer then? *(E frames assumption as a question)*

**Strophe 7: School: Peer relationships**

Stanza 14: School –important because I get on with everyone

Stanza 15: I wouldn’t call them a mate…they all grass on you

**Strophe 8: School: Future plans?**

Stanza 16: I want an eduaction

Stanza 17: I want to be a TA

**Strophe 9: Teacher inspiration**

Stanza 18: Has anybody inspired you?

Stanza 19: He’s funny, I get on with him

**Strophe 10: What’s important in a teacher?**

Stanza 20: E clarifies important qualities for a teacher/TA

Stanza 21: Making sure they always help

**Strophe 11: C and his dog**

Stanza 22: Anything else outside of school?

Stanza 23: I take me dog for a walk

Stanza 24: What dog is she?

**Strophe 12: My dog and me brother’s**

Stanza 25: Everyone loves my dog but they all hate me brother’s

Stanza 26: I got a little one, …it ain’t the same breed

Stanza 27: A walk in the field

**Strophe 13: E’s dog, Holly (E influences / imposes narrative construction?)**

Stanza 28: E asks a leading question

Stanza 29: E imposes own information exchange

**Part 2: A future possible self**

**Strophe 14: Moving the conversation on to the future**

Stanza 30: An invitation to add information

Stanza 31: ‘Me self’

Stanza 32: Working *(E explores future self further)*

**Strophe 15: Working as a TA**

Stanza 33: Working as a TA, here or in X

Stanza 34: I know what the kids have been through…

**Strophe 16: More about it (a TA)**

Stanza 35: E acknowledges C’s ‘thoughtful answer’

Stanza 36: I can help …because I already been here

**Strophe 17: Reminder of response**

Stanza 37: Interruption: change of location

Stanza 38: Sorry for the interruption

Stanza 39: I know what the kids are like

**Strophe 18: Future hobbies and interests**

Stanza 40: Walking me dog and doing weights

Stanza 41: E clarifies and C demonstrates (doing ‘weights’)

Stanza 42: Weights: you do that with them and your hands get more quick

**Strophe 19: Admiration for…yet competition against?**

Stanza 43: My brother …he doesn’t give up

Stanza 44: To be like him but better

**Strophe 20: Further hobbies and interests**

Stanza 45: I wana be a boxer

Stanza 46: E posits opinion

**Strophe 21: What is needed?**

Stanza 47: What is needed to be a TA?

Stanza 48: C provides a literal response

Stanza 49: Subjects you might need?

**Strophe 22: Like the TAs do here**

Stanza 50: What the Tas do here

Stanza 51: I want to be good at all of them

**Strophe 23: What / who might help?**

Stanza 52: Might a person help you?

Stanza 53: Teachers believin’ in me

Stanza 54: Might anything stop you?

Stanza 55: Me uncle (might help)

**Strophe 24: To be good**

Stanza 56: A reference *–‘oh good what he did’*

Stanza 57: I don’t wana be…like half the kids in here

**Strophe 25: Not doing homework**

Stanza 58: Not working…I don’t like doing homework

Stanza 59: I don’t do (homework) anymore

**Strophe 26: The wrong crowd**

Stanza 60: I wouldn’t wana hang with the wrong crowd

Stanza 61: The wrong crowd as causal to a person C does not want to be?

**Part 3: School in the past**

**Strophe 27: What’s school been like for you?**

Stanza 62: I didn’t really like school

Stanza 63: I had fun in one school but they moved me out

Stanza 64: Fun as messin’ around

**Strophe 28: Shouting**

Stanza 65: I shouted back

Stanza 66: I don’t like people shoutin’

**Strophe 29: Past primary schools**

Stanza 67: I don’t know the (schools’) names

Stanza 68: About four, but we weren’t in them for long

**Strophe 30: Fun in one school**

Stanza 69: I had fun…then they moved me

Stanza 70: Windin’ up the girls…

**Strophe 31: Seeking clarification and elaboration**

Stanza 71: E clarifies brother’s year group

Stanza 72: Nothing else important

**Part 4: School life now**

**Strophe 32: School now: better…but**

Stanza 73: Better than it used to be

Stanza 74: I hate detention

Stanza 75: C unable to provide a reason (for detentions)

**Strophe 33: C as master of his own experiences/actions???**

Stanza 76: I’m good every day

Stanza 77: C opposes his positive statement

**Strophe 34: Scared feelings**

Stanza 78: First time at X High

Stanza 79: Feeling less scared?

**Strophe 35: A narrative of C as ‘helpful’**

Stanza 80: Getting an education

Stanza 81: E describes C as being helpful

Stanza 82: C reflects on always doing a runner (unable to respond appropriately to E’s question?)

Stanza 83: Never did a runner since

**Strophe 36: Doing a runner**

Stanza 84: I got more lazy

Stanza 85: A contradiction by C?

Stanza 86: What makes you do a runner?

**Part 5: Something to be proud of**

**Strophe 37: Proud achievements?**

Stanza 87: C flaws his achievement

Stanza 88: I got a gold and a silver

Stanza 89: ..and I can beat any of these

**Strophe 38: Achievements that have been hard to do**

Stanza 90: What has been hard to do?

Stanza 91: An ambiguous question from E? - C’s outlines his abilities

Stanza 92: But I can’t do..

**Strophe 39: E clarifies, C illustrates response**

Stanza 93: E reframes to clarify understanding

Stanza 94: C provides an example –in response to something he is most proud

**Strophe 40: Is there anything that you had to do?**

Stanza 95: They do a reading thing with all the kids

Stanza 96: I wanted to become quicker

**Part 6: Closing the conversation**

**Strophe 34: Questions to check?**

Stanza 97: Is there anything to add –have we missed anything?

Stanza 98: Still tired

**Transcript 2: Analysis of second interview conversation with Charlie**

**Part 1: Returning to our first conversation**

**Strophe 1: Returning to our conversation to check…**

Stanza 1: The purpose of our second conversation

1. E First of all thank you very much again for coming today this morning

2. E *erm* first of all as I said I just want to check with what you’ve said and that you’re *happy* with it and that you want to add anything or change anything

Stanza 2: Sleep, games, Harry and Nan

3. E So one of the key questions initially was I asked you to *show* who you are as a person on paper (1) ok and what was important to you and *what* people might be important to you as well *and* you *said* you like to sleep and play games *and* *school,* your younger brother Harry and your Nan were all important to you, yeah are you happy with that?

4. C mmm

5. E is there anything else that you want to add to that (1) or tell me about

6. C [shakes head]

7. E no (4)

**Strophe 2: E reads transcript (I asked you…)**

Stanza 3: Why education was important

8. E ok (6) and I asked you why education was important and you said because you wanted to be a TA when you’re *older*

9. C yeah

10. E yeah

11. E and Mr Teaching and you liked him cus he was funny and he knows every trick that you get out of in detention

Stanza 4: E’s typo

12. E ok (3) that’s my typo there

Stanza 5: Taking Havanah for a walk

13. E (2) *erm* and I asked you anything else that you’d like to do outside of school and you said about taking your dog Havanah for a walk

14. C yeah

15. E yeah, ok (3)

**Strophe 3: E checks *(’you said…’)***

Stanza 6: Future hopes

16. E and I asked you as well *about* (3) who you *hope* to be like in the future what you hope to be like

17. C mm

18. E and you said *yourself* (1)

19. E *and* you also said *about* erm working as a TA within that,

20. E *and about* not wanting to be like *half* the people in here

21. C [laughs]

22. E [laughs]

23. C yeah

24. E and, are you still *happy* with *that*?

25. C yeah

26. E yeah

Stanza 7: Unclear questioning by E

27. E Can you tell me abit more about what you *see* erm as the other *kids* of having *been through* and what they’ve, going through you, mentioned about *that* as a quality of a TA, that you want to do when you’re older (5)

Stanza 8: X to keep it anonymous

28. E *erm* so when I said any particular type of school you said *here* or *in* X I’ve called it but I know you said ???

29. C hm

30. E erm, just to keep it anonymous

31. C yeah

**Part 2: C elaborates further**

**Strophe 4: C constructs a helping narrative**

Stanza 9: E invites C to elaborate

32. E *Erm*, and I said what’s it about *these schools* that you’d like to teach in / ‘cus *I know* that the kids have been through, what the kids have *been* through an that and what they’re goin through so it’ll be more easier’

33. E / is there anything else that you can *tell* me about that (1) and what you mean by that?

34. C Yeah some of them *don’t* really like *detention,* but they manage to get themselves on detention,

35. C but they *know* they’re doin something wrong

E *right*

36. C like they already know they’re doin something *wrong*

37. C but *every* time they *do* it they think they can get away with it

E yeah

38. C or somethin different would happen but it won’t

E ok

39. C or *even* like when they try an like (1) *bully* someone they get a detention for that

E mm

40. C or jus *messin around* so (2)

41. C / *I know* what its like because *I’m* the one who, well *I’m* the one who *was* messin around in year 9

E mm

42. C *and* I never used to like detention so I’d do a runner

E mm

43. C so I know half of them would do a runner, if they had a long detention

E *right* (1) yeah ok (1)

Stanza 10: I just like to help people (E seeks further elaboration/clarification)

44. E / how do you think you might *help* them?

45. C makin sure they won’t get detention like makin sure they don’t do the *wrong* thing,

46. C *and* if they try an do a runner take their shoes off them and put them in inclusion for the day

E mm, yeah ok

47. E *what* /about being a *TA* will *help you* to do well, do you think?

48. C because I’m *hel-* because I’m *helping* the kids get a education

E yeah (2) /

49. E what about *you* as *C* (1) in *you* (1) might help them?

50. C I *don’t really know* but like I just like to *help* people, so

51. E yeah (1) yeah I can see that (1)

**Strophe 5: The other kids**

Stanza 11: They’re all the same really

52. E / what might you find *easy* about it?

53. C cus half of the kids are what d’you call it they’re all like *everyone* in ere now / so when they’re *new* kids, they’re all gona be like everyone in ere

E mm

54. C cos like they’re all the *same* really

E mm

55. C so I know what they’re gona be like an all that

E yeah (1)

Stanza 12: You’ve got to reason with them first

56. E / and what might you find a *challenge?*

57. C *err* (2) tryin to (2) *help them* when / they’re in the wrong moo-mood

58. E mm (1) yeah / can you tell me abit *more* about that

59. C like if *they’re flippin out* then, you can’t jus go over and say an jus say / ‘well you got a detention for doin this that and the other’

E mm

60. C like you *can’t* say that to the kid, you’ve gota *reason* with them first

E mm (4) yeah

**Strophe 6: Checking out hobbies and interests**

Stanza 13: Hobbies and interests

61. E and then you said about your *hobbies* and interests

62. C yeah

63. E as well as your dog

64. E *and* (6) bear with me

65. E and you mentioned about erm w-doing *weights* when you’re older

66. C yeah

67. E and your brother and about he doesn’t like to give up

68. C yeah

69. E *and* you said about wanting to be a *boxer*

Stanza 14: Me uncle wants me to become one

70. C mm (1) but *that’s only* because o me uncle wants me, to become one

E mm, *oh* right

71. C so that’s the only reason I wana become one (2)

72. C / but he said I’d be *good* at it (1) because I got good balance and I’m a bit quick with me hands

73. C but me *brother’s* *better* than me at like (1) *everything* but runnin

74. E *right* (1) ok (2) some good qualities there (2)

**Strophe 7: Not giving up**

Stanza 15: I woulda gave up - he won’t give up

75. E /can you tell me a bit more about the fact that you *like* *the fact* that your brother doesn’t give up

76. C yeah because if it was *me* I woulda da *gave up* after me arms were hurting

E mm

77. C but he won’t give up

E mm

78. C he carries on

E mmhm

Stanza 16: Teachers helping? *..only in here really*

79. E erm you mentioned about needing an education as well

80. E and you mentioned also about erm (1) / when I asked what might *help you* erm with your education in the future you said well the *teachers* would *help* *me* / the most because *they* believe in you

C. mm

81. E erm and whoever doin the *course* (1) d’you have any *memories* of that with *teachers*?

82. C only in ere really (2)

83. C because if I *can’t* *do* something the teacher will *come over* and like help me, yeah an show me how to do it and then want me to do it afterwards an all that,

84. C and like they don’t really give up on ya, so

85. E mm (2)

Stanza 17: A contrast to previous schools

86. E / and how was that, how is this now compared to your last schools?

87. C cus the ones what I went to before *ere* weren’t really like this one

E mm

88. C like teachers would *give up on ya* if you were *that* naughty / but like in here they don’t

E mm (1) ‘k (3)

**Strophe 8: Not doing…for a future self**

Stanza 18: Checking out about ‘not working’ (future spare time)

89. E and I asked you again about what you’d do in your spare *time* in your *future* and [laughs] you said not working (3)

Stanza 19: I’m the only quiet one in here

90. E *erm* (5) and again here you mentioned about *not* being like half the kids in *here*

91. E /are there any that you *would* be like?

92. C what (2) m n’not really because most a them are annoying

E mmhm

93. C I’m like the only *quiet* one in here, really

E mm

94. C half of them are quiet for the first week or two

95. C and then (1) they get in with the wrong kids and start messin around

E mm, ok

**Part 3: A reflection of school**

**Strophe 9: Memories of fun in school**

Stanza 20: Fun in school now?

96. E and you mentioned about having *fun* in *school* as being a memory from your past schools (1)

97. E / d’you have fun in school *now*?

98. C *sometimes* / but not all the time

99. E can you tell me a bit more about that

100.C well I have *fun* when we do something that *I* wana do / not like what *they* wana do

101.E and what might that be

102.C what like (2) [coughs] / I like to do rugby, *yeah*, but all them want to do footie

E mm

103.C so the teachers would only let the footie go out not the rugby

E mm, mm’k

104.C that’s the only thing really

E mm, mm’k

Stanza 21:Checking out…’being fun and messin around’

105.E *erm* (1) and you told me about a big event from your *last school* (7) and that’s about being fun and messin *around* and about your *teachers*

106. C mm

107. E and about yo-your *brother,* saying that the year 6 liked your brother (3)

108. E and you all liked *windin* the girls up

109. C hm

**Strophe 10: E checking out transcriptions**

Stanza 22: Checking out school life now –as better, having changed

110. E / and how school life is for you *now* (1) and you said its *better* (4) / and you get to go on your *trips* and you got picked for the footie team (4)

111. E and you said you think you’ve / *changed* now

112. E and about no one would *help* *you* really much in your old school but they /do *now*

Stanza 23: Checking word - ‘kids’?

113. E oh I just wanted to check on this *word* (1) I wasn’t quite *sure* (1) you told me about when somebody had done a runner and you *helped* them

114. C yeah

115. E *and* they ran outside with *the* (2) maybe that’s ‘kids’ (2)

116. C well right they ran *outside*, the gate

E yeah (4)

Stanza 24: Unclear and self-corrected questioning by E

117. E did they *ran* with anything?

C mwhat?

118. E did they *run* with anything?

119. C no like they decided to climb over the gate

120. E mm

121. C duno *why* like

E yeah ok

**Strophe 11: C recounts about a runner**

Stanza 25: A bad mood…*I don’t really know when it happens*

122.E And you mentioned sometimes a bad *mood* might make you do a *runner* (1) can you tell me a bit more about when this happens

123.C well I don’t *really* know when it happens like / it just *depends* really

E yeah

Stanza 26: C tangentially recounts helping one kid who did a runner

124. C bu-but th-there dis *one* kid who did a *runner* /in the rain*, yeah*,

125. C so *I* climbed over the fence to go after him,

126. C / yeah n like n he was gona walk home, yeah and I made him walk through the park round there

E mm

127. C yeah talkin to him and then we walked all the way back

E right

128. C *so* (1) / I told him yeah that ??? know that I’m cold an all that

E mm

129. C an like he started laughin his head off

130. E [laughs] and then what happened

131. C what no th- / we *came* *in*, and then

132. C / they thought *I’d* tried to do a runner as well but I came back,

133. C and *then,* the headteacher said well done and all that to me so,

134. C / then I went back to class

E mm

Stanza 27: I didn’t get a detention for walking out

135. C and like I didn’t get detention for it

E *aah*

136. E / and how did that make you feel

137. C what alright

E mhm

138. C cus I didn’t get detention for walkin out

E [laughs]

**Part 4: More about C**

**Strophe 12: Checking out -what’s important?**

Stanza 28: You’re most proud of your English and your running?

139. E *and* (3) and then you said something that you’re most proud of your English and your running

C yeah

E yeah, ok

140. E is that all ok for

141. C yeah

142. E what’s there (3) *super* (3)

Stanza 29: An invitation to add to what has been said?

43. E and there’s nothing else that you want to add to *now* and, / your *future* *C* that’s important

144. C err no not really [yawns]

145. E to you? *Ok*

**Strophe 13: Words to describe C**

Stanza 30: C as ‘normal’

146. E I just want to ask, / what *words* would you *use* to describe *yourself*?

147.C normal

E mmhm (1)

148. E can you tell me a bit more about that

149. C [laughs] *err* (1) / well some people think I’m *weird* like but

150. C / I reckon I’m normal because, I don’t really *do* what most a the kids in ere do / *mess* around an all that so

E mm

151. C *normaler* than them, *and* (2) / that’s it really

E mm (1)

Stanza 31: How would teachers describe you?

152. E / what would the *teachers* describe *you*, as being like

153.C don’t know

Stanza 32: C as lazy

154. E (2) what *about* your family, what would they describe you as being like?

155. C lazy

156. E mm (4) tell me a bit more about that

157. C well I’m always in bed *all day* then I’m up all night

158. C so I don’t really help me mum do anything

E ah

159. C well *I do sometimes* but, / other times I don’t

E mm,

Stanza 33: You can’t really call anyone a mate in here

160. E *and* what *might* *other* students in here describe you as being like?

161. C I don’t know really,

162. C because like I can get on with them, but I wouldn’t call none a them a mate

E mm

163. C cus *all* a them would grass on one another

E mm

164. C about *anything*

E mm

165. C so you can’t really call anyone in ere a mate

E mm

C [laughs]

**Strophe 14: Future selves**

Stanza 34: I wouldn’t wana be…

166.E *And* can you tell me about *any* *thing* or anything anybody has *done* to make you think about what you *might* or *might* *not like* to *do* when you’re older

167. C m, / *no* not really (7)

168. C yeah beside, yeah like / I wouldn’t wana be a drug dealer or anyone like that

E mm

169. C but that’s it really

170. C and I wouldn’t wana become a police officer neither

E mm

171. C so that’s *everything* really

E mm (1) ok (4)

Stanza 35: I’d like to become a marine…nothing else

172. E / *and* do you have any *other* life goals or ambitions?

C mmm

173. E that you’d like to do in the future

174. C mm no not really (2)

175. C / well I’d like to become a marine but other than that nothin else

E mm (2)

**Strophe 15: A plan B**

Stanza 36: If I couldn’t get the TA thing

176. E would that be *after* being a TA or

177. C no *that’s if* I couldn’t get the TA thing

E yeah

178. C I’d be a marine instead

179. E *aah*, like a plan b

C yeah

180. E good *thinkin* (1)

Stanza 37: Do you know what you might have to do?

181. E / mm, d’you know what you might have to do to do that?

C mm m’no

182. E I’m not sure either

C [laughs]

E [laughs]

**Part 5: Closing questions**

**Strophe 16: Closing the conversation**

Stanza 38: Is there anything else to add?

183. E *ok* brilliant is there anything else that you’d like to *add*?

C *mm* no not really

184. E no,

185. E well thank you *ever* so much, for coming back to me again

Stanza 39: Bored

186. E *erm* how are you feeling?

187. C bored

***Overview of macro-analysis: the follow-up interview conversation with Charlie***

**Part 1: Returning to our first conversation**

**Strophe 1: Returning to our conversation to check…**

Stanza 1: The purpose of our second conversation

Stanza 2: Sleep, games, Harry and Nan

**Strophe 2: E reads transcript (I asked you…)**

Stanza 3: Why education was important

Stanza 4: E’s typo

Stanza 5: Taking Havanah for a walk

**Strophe 3: E checks *(‘you said…’)***

Stanza 6: Future hopes

Stanza 7: Unclear questioning by E

Stanza 8: X to keep it anonymous

**Part 2: C elaborates further**

**Strophe 4: C constructs a helping narrative**

Stanza 9: E invites C to elaborate

Stanza 10: I just like to help people (E seeks further elaboration/clarification)

**Strophe 5: The other kids**

Stanza 11: They’re all the same really

Stanza 12: You’ve got to reason with them first

**Strophe 6: Checking out hobbies and interests**

Stanza 13: Hobbies and interests

Stanza 14: Me uncle wants me to become one

**Strophe 7: Not giving up**

Stanza 15: I woulda gave up – he won’tgive up

Stanza 16: Teachers helping? ..*only in here really*

Stanza 17: A contrast to previous schools

**Strophe 8: Not doing…for a future self**

Stanza 18: Checking out about ‘not working’ (future spare time)

Stanza 19: I’m the only quiet one in here

**Part 3: A reflection of school**

**Strophe 9: Memories of fun in school**

Stanza 20: Fun in school now?

Stanza 21: Checking out…’being fun and messin around’

**Strophe 10: E checking out transcriptions**

Stanza 22: Checking out school life now –as better, having changed

Stanza 23: Checking word - ‘kids’?

Stanza 24: Unclear and self-corrected questioning by E

**Strophe 11: C recounts about a runner**

Stanza 25: A bad mood …*I don’t really know when it happens*

Stanza 26: C tangentially recounts helping one kid who did a runner

Stanza 27: I didn’t get a detention for walking out

**Part 4: More about C**

**Strophe 12: Checking out –what’s important?**

Stanza 28: You’re most proud of your English and your running?

Stanza 29: An invitation to add to what has been said?

**Strophe 13: Words to describe C**

Stanza 30: C as ‘normal’

Stanza 31: How would teachers describe you?

Stanza 32: C as lazy

Stanza 33: You can’t really call anyone a mate in here

**Strophe 14: Future selves**

Stanza 34: I wouldn’t want to be…

Stanza 35: I’d like to become a marine…nothing else

**Strophe 15: A plan B**

Stanza 36: If I couldn’t get the TA thing

Stanza 37: Do you know what you might have to do?

**Strophe 16: Closing the conversation**

Stanza 38: Is there anything else to add?

Stanza 39: Bored

**Transcript 3: Analysis of first interview conversation with Sonnie**

**Part 1: Getting to know about S**

**Strophe 1: Settling into and beginning the conversation**

Stanza 1: Thank you for your participation

1. E Ok first of all thank you *very* much for agreeing to take part in my *research*,

Stanza 2: Checking out well-being and conditions

2. E / erm how are you feeling, today?

3. S alright

E you ok / *yeah*

4. E and is this room alright with you?

S [nods]

E yep, ok

Stanza 3: Who ‘*you’* as a young person are?

5. E Erm first of all I *wondered whether* you can show me on the paper, with words, symbols or pictures, / whichever way you want, who you as S *are /* as a person

6. S What dya mean?

7. E *So* you could *write* / or draw *symbols* (1) things to show *you* as a person,

8. E [they might be things that you *like*

9. S [like what me personality

10. S mm,/ like a motorbike and that

11. E mmhm (1) things that you *like* things that are about *you*

12. S Shall I just write it?

13. E *Any way* you want it’s up to you

14. S [writes: ‘motorBikes chases weed quads chill money’] that’s it

E Ok (2)

15. E *so* can you talk me through them, / tell me about what you’ve put

16. S Just motorbikes, chases, weed, quads, chill and money

E mmhm, ok (1)

**Strophe 2: About motorbikes**

Stanza 4: Motorbikes – I always go on them

17. E *so* tell me a bit about motorbikes

18. S Like, I like motorbikes and going on them and that,

19. S because been round motorbikes like nearly all me life, / so I always go on them

E Ok

Stanza 5: Little KTMs or RM T50

20. E [What type?

21. S [an then, just *like* only a little KTMs or

E yeah

S or like a *er’m* RM T50

Stanza 6: There’s a big motorbike place

22. E right, so you’ve mentioned that *you’ve* / *always* gone on them since you were little

S yeah

23. E s’anybody (1) / *shown* you them

24. S *yeah* like all me family and that,

25. S and then like there’s places where you go up to like W, / the tip / where there’s a big motorbike place just go round there

E ok (2)

**Strophe 3: Just…chases and weed**

Stanza 7: Just get chased and that

26. S /*and* chases, what are chases?

27. S m getting chased by plod

28. E mmhm / tell me abit more about that

29. S ??? *loadsa* times / me n me mates just get chased and that

E yeah

30. S just on the bikes, / or like just get chased on foot

31. E and chased *with* people that you *know*?

S yeah

32. E *or* your friends?

S like me mates

E yeah

33. S or sometimes just on me ones

E ok (1)

Stanza 8: Just smoke weed n blaze a lot

34. E *and /* weed / tell me about that

35. S just always smoke weed n that

E mmhm

36. S with me mates n blaze a lot so, / just put *weed*

E yeah

37. S [n then

38. E [when you say *blaze* is that, is that smoke

S yeah

E ok

**Strophe 4: Quads**

Stanza 9: Always been around quads

39. S and then *erm* / just *quads*, always been around *quads*

40. E is that quad bikes?

S yeah,

41. S / was on the quads *yesterday*

E yeah

42. S riding around

43. E ok / in the fields?

S yeah,

Stanza 10: Blasted 200 -*a fast quad*?

44. S *Blasted* 200

45. E *what?*

46. S *a Blasted 200*

47. E What does that mean?

48. S Like, like a *fast* quad

E *right*

49. E / oh that’s the *make* is it?

S yeah

50. E or is that not / [not the speed

51. S [no that’s the cc /that’s the speed

52. E *right* / engine

53. S 200

E ok (2)

**Strophe 5: Just chill …and money**

Stanza 11: Just always chill with me mates

54. E *and* chill?

55. S Just / always justchill with me mates and that so, I’m always chilled out

E mm

56. S so I just put chill,

Stanza 12: I just love money

57. S and then *money* / I just love money

E mmhm (2)

58. E / do you like to spend money or d’you like to *have* money, *or*?

59. S *both* like,

Stanza 13: I can get money easy

60. S / I can *get* money easy

E [can *ya*

61. S [that’s why

62. E How d’ya *get* money?

63. S Just by loadsa things

64. E mmhm tell about

65. S *mm* I *can’t* say [grin/chuckles]

E hhhm (2) ok

66. E / but you *like* to have money

S [nods]

E mhm

Stanza 14: What do you do when you chill?

67. E *Erm* what d’you do when you chill?

68. S Just chill smoke weed like, / play tunes or we’ll just go like, go the park or somewhere / or

E mm

69. S just go *town*

E m’ok yeah (1)

**Strophe 6: Important people**

Stanza 15: The closest people to me

70. E *So,* / can you tell me about *any / people* that you consider important to you?

71. S like me family

72. E mmhm (2) *So /* say a bit about that

73. S *like* the closest people to me is like / me mum an me nan

E yeah

74. S ‘cos they like, / they’re the ones that give me everythin n all that

E mmhm

Stanza 16: They give me the most

75. S like everybody else gives me stuff but they give me the *most* an that

E yeah

76. S and like they’re the closest I’ve been around

E yeah ok,

77. E *erm* / brilliant you’ve given lots there

**Part 2: Future hopes?**

**Strophe 7: A rich future self**

Stanza 17: What you as S hope to be like?

78. E  *Can you now* show me on paper / with words, symbols or pictures, / like you’ve done here, / however which way you want, who *you* as S *hope* to be *like* in the near future

79. S I don’t *get* what you mean

80. E So for example (1) in 2 years time, when you’ve finished High School, / *here*, maybe (2) show me on *there* what you *hope* to be like

81. S rich

E ok (2) yeah,

Stanza 18: Get a decent job and get rich

82. E tell me about that, *why* / you hope to be

83. S cos, jus try an get a decent job and that,

84. S and then, err’m / just get rich n yeah

E mmhm

85. S just doin other things on the side as well

86. E mmhm (1) can you tell me about that?

87. S Like just doin loadsa graftin n jobs an that

E mmhm

Stanza 19: Start a business…anything really

88. S and then erm, / start a business

E yeah (2)

89. E what type of business would you like to start?

90. S anythin *really*, / cos I wouldn’t be in it me self

E mm

91. S I’d just be like / rentin it out

92. E *aah* (2) good plans

**Strophe 8: How do you hope to do that?**

Stanza 20: A fireman, a mortgage and real estate

93. E *so* (1) have you got any idea about *how* you hope’t, / *do* that?

94. S like getting a job an that / [like I

95. E [what you need to do

96. S when I, / when I leave *school*, I wana be like a *fireman*

E mmhm

97. S an then like eh / you can pick some money up,

98. S or get like a mortgage off the bank or somethin and pay it off,

99. S but then like go into real estate building, like, build like, build like a house

100. S and then rent that out until you make *more* money

E right

101. S to make *another one,* an or buy bloc’ straight of flats

E *aah*

102. S and rent them all out

Stanza 21: Me uncle said it’s a good business to go in

103. E has *anybody*, helped you think about that *idea* / or [is anythin

104. S [like me uncle does all real estate build

E *right*, ok

105. S an that (1) said that it’s a good business but to go in but, / you’ve gota have the money

E *right* (1) ok

Stanza 22: I know loads about it

106. S cos I know loads about it like,

107. S ye an then you after have like grands on the side in case anything *breaks* cos then *you’ve* gota, / repair it

E right

108. S because you’re the counsellor f’ landlord

E mmm

109. S so I know a lot about that

E *mm*, / sounds like it, / k

**Strophe 9: In your spare time?**

Stanza 23: Go to college and get a job

110. E *So*, what might you be *doin* as well in your spare time / when you’re older, in the near future?

111. S Like *how* old though?

E Erm

112. S Just before I like/ leave school?

113. E Say when you leave school, eighteen

114. S I’ go to college and get a job

E mmhm (2)

Stanza 24: E reframes question as hobbies and interests

115. E so what would ya be doi’ would you have / any hobbies or spare interests?

116. S Yeah, I’dst *or* I’d go, / cos I done loadsa garage stuff, / an on bikes an that, I could just do that

117. S a’n on the side as well

E mm

118. S cos that way, it’d *be* like a hobby but then I’m still getting paid for it / cos [I like it ???

E [*aaah*

**Strophe 10: What might you do?**

Stanza 25: Mechanics at college; I could get a degree

119. E Ok /*so* what might you do at college?

120. S Er just do mechanics

E mmhm (1) yeah

121. S an then, I could get a degree for that

122. S so I’ve got more of me job

E Yeah (1) ok, *erm* (1)

Stanza 26: Study, try hard

123. E *and* can you tell me about, what you might have to do *now* / to help you get there

124. S just like, study, try hard,

125. S just put me head down an jus try an, / get through it

E mm

126. S jus try me best in all the *erm* exams

E yeah (1) ok

**Strophe 11: I know a lot about it**

Stanza 27: *An alternative response gained from an ambiguous question*

127. E *Erm* (3) and so you mentioned about being a *fireman* d’you know what you might have to *do*, to be a fireman?

128. S Yeah (1) I know a lot about like, I know a bit about it like,

129. S like it’s four hours on and four hours off you get your own place an that, and like, you get to sleep an then, like you can do day and night shifts and then you getbonus’, for like, *the risk* of *erm*, what buildin you’re going into (1)

130. S cos me uncle he used to be in the fire fire service but he’s retired

131. S and he said erm, it’s not it’s mostly not fires it’s like floods an like when you’re cutting people out of cars

E right

132. S he said it’s *not really* that much about fires

E mm (1)

Stanza 28: Information from different uncles

133. E *so*, / is this the same uncle that does real estate?

S No

134. E No are they different uncles

S [nods]

E ok (2)

Stanza 29: E frames assumptions as questions

135. E so are they quite, / important to you

136. S yeah they’re just like me uncle in it

137. E mm (2) so they’ve inspired you a little bit?

S Yeah (1)

**Strophe 12: An account of S’s mum’s business**

Stanza 30: Mum had a business too

138. S and plus me Mum had a business too,

139. S but like the place it *was* it weren’t makin enough business (2) so

140. S sh-sh-she ad it for like two years but it weren’t making that much money / so

E mm

141. S just closed it down

Stanza 31: A big massive beauty salon

142. S / she had like a hair salon and but it was like massive and it had tanning booths in it as well

143. S and then if you go further back, an it had like she like, em like she was payin these people, but she’d get half what they’d get off the you know like

E mm

144. S beauticians

E mm

145. S who do the nails an that,

146. S it was like a big massive beauty salon,

147. S / it was alright but, it weren’t makin that much money

E mm (2) ok,

**Part 3: Thoughts about …a future self not hoped for**

**Strophe 13: A juxtaposition by S (not to go into prison…but I’ve been in court loadsa times) ?**

Stanza 32: On the dole, or go into prison

148. E *and* (3) *can /* you’ve told me abit about what you *hope* to be like in the future, can you *describe* what you really hope *not* to be like in the near future?

149. S Like on the *dole* or like, / or go into prison

E mm

Stanza 33: I only got away with court yesterday

150. S cos I only got away with court yesterday

E [*right*

151. S [but I’ve been to court loadsa times so

**Strophe 14: To stay out of trouble**

Stanza 34: Just walk away…

152. E right (1) *so* can you tell me a bit *about* (2) / *what* (2) *might* you have to *do* so you *don’t do that*

153. S just like stay out of trouble and like (1) just (1) / if there’s somethin like bad goes on / just walk away in it

E mm

154. S cos like, by ours it’s like *dead* *bad* like there’s trouble everywhere

E right

155. S like people getting *shot* everywhere an that

E yeah

156. S and cars getting robbed so (1)

Stanza 35: It’ll look bad if I’m older

157. S cos it’ll look bad on / if if I’m older they’ll just say ‘he’s been to prison an that’ so

E yeah (2) ok (1)

**Strophe 15: Review of a future self *not* hoped for**

Stanza 36: Not like a tramp on the dole

158. E / *and,* what do you hope *not* to be doing in your spare time?

159. S jus like, *sittin* there like, / like a tramp on the dole just, not doin nothin

E mm (3) ok

Stanza 37: A recap of S’s responses

160. E so (2) / you mentioned *about* you don’t want to be on the dole and you don’t want to be in prison, and you said that you were in *court*, that you’d been in court / lots of times

**Strophe 16: Don’t listen to peer pressure**

Stanza 38: I’m gona just start being good now

161. S yeah, but I’ve gota be good now

E yeah

162. S he said cus it’s like me last time so,

163. S / I’m gona just start bein good now

164. E right (1) yeah and d’you know *how* you’re gona, / do that?

165. S just like, stay out of trouble

166. S and don’t listen to peer pressure, or like if me mates are doin somethin just walk away

E right (2)

Stanza 39: Peer pressure

167. E can you tell me a bit about peer pressure?

168. S like, / I *can’t* explain it like when everyone’s like just like, like ‘oh *go on* do it lad just *do* it*’* like, if you know what I mean

169. E and what might that be about?

170. S like if there’s somethin there like a r-/ like if you’re doin / robbin somethin *or* say if like a lappie’s in a car or som’in, people are like ‘*get it lad get it lad,* / ya faggot’ (1)

**Strophe 17: Mates**

Stanza 40: I don’t chill with them mates anymore

171. S but like, I don’t chill with them mates anymore (1)

172. S /*i’ve still*, / I’ve *still* got mates who do that

173. S but like, / I just don’t chill with them

174. E yeah (1) / and do they live by you or

S yeah

175. E are they near here or

176. S they *live*, by me

Stanza 41: Mates in loadsa places

177. S / I’ve got mates in loadsa places

178. E mm (1) / do they go to school?

179. S erm some of them (2) some of them are in college

E yeah, ok (1) /

**Strophe 18: That type of person**

Stanza 42: I don’t wana…be stuck on the dole

180. E *so* (4) is there anything else that you want to *add* about / the person that you don’t wana be like?

181. S Like, I *don’t* wana like cus, I *don’t* wa / I wouldn’t just be like stuck on the dole an that

182. S because, e-I don’t wana be like that type of person

Stanza 43: Brother and sister good through school -good for me mum

183. S because me / I’ve got a older brother and a sister, and both of them have moved out and erm, and got like their own house an that / but they were all good through school and that,

184. S *an* / I’ve gota be good for me mum an that so she doesn’t see me like *that*

185. S because, / all a them were good through school an that

186. S and then I’ve had trouble, getting kicked out school goin all the police stations and that so

E mm

187. S just be goo / like,

Stanza 44: Wealthy with a clean record

188. S /I just wana be like wealthy

189. S but like / with a clean record and that like

E mm (1)

**Part 4: Review of family**

**Strophe 19: A bit about family**

Stanza 45: They both just spoil me

190. E and you mentioned before about your mum an your nan and they’re important to ya can you tell me a bit about, about that

191. S like they’re the closest *I’ve* (1) *been to* like,

192. S cos like I don’t really see me dad cos I don’t like him (1)

193. S an erm, / me mum’s al-/always done everything for me and that,

194. S and *me nan* ??? always used to stay at me nan’s all the time when I was little, so (1)

195. S sh-she just she just / they both just spoil me

E yeah (1)

Stanza 46: Older brother and sister plus a little sister

196. E and is there are you the youngest an you got your two older, brother [and sister

197. S [no an I / I’ve got a little sister who’s twelve

198. E ah ‘k (1) d’you look after *her*?

S yeah

E ok

**Part 5: School life: in the past and now**

**Strophe 20: School in the past**

Stanza 47: What’s school been like for you?

199. E *So* huc hm (4) what I’ve got here is kind of got a bit of a it’s like an overview a timeline so to speak it says my story so far, *so* you look here yo’ if think about you being born and you’ve got your school and your year age and nursery if you went to a nursery primary school, secondary school, school *now* -X High and then there’s like a question mark / for the future (1)

200. E *erm* (1) can you tell me *about* what school’s been like for you in the *past*

Stanza 48: I can’t remember what age I was in nursery

201. S it’s been like, li-/ I *can’t* really remember erm when nursery was

E mhm

202. S how old I was in nursery,

203. S but I went to you know / do you know W, town?

E No

Stanza 49: A little school up there

204. S mm, / do know where the erm cathedral is not the white one

E *yes*

205. S the black one

206. E yes / [Anglican

207. S by there [there’s a, yeah by *there*, / you know where the library is

E *yes*

208. S there’s only like a little school up there

E ok

209. S that school

E yeah

210. S but I can’t really remember what age I was in nursery

E *right* s’alright

**Strophe 21: S recounts getting kicked out**

Stanza 50: I ‘ad trouble through there cos I got ADHD and that

211. S and like, *I I I ‘ad* trouble through there cos I got li- ADHD and that

E mm

212. S and just like used to always be *naughty* and that

213. S / but on /we had a different erm prim- like head teacher li-like a girl tea- head teacher

214. S and then on the second to last day in W she kicked me out

215. E *right*, in year 6?

S yeah

Stanza 51: Contradictory statement: I was naughty - we were only messin

216. E Can you tell me a bit about that?

217. S cus like I was *naughty*

218. S and like, erm me mates were *messin* *yeah* like

219. S and like sent a little rumour round sayin he jus-like I-sh- I pulled me pants down to the girls

220. S but I *never* messin / they were *all* *messin* laughin

221. S and then she goes that’s it / you-you’re getting kicked out

E right

Stanza 52: Everybody even said it was only a joke

222. S but we were only messin / and everybody *even* said it was only a joke

223. S / but she said no still / so

224. E and that was your teacher was it?

225. S yeah no the head teacher

E *right* ok

226. S and then a-a and then after that but like I was finished the second to last day anyway

**Strophe 22: C, Key Stage 3 Centre and H**

Stanza 53: Three months at C, then got kicked out

227. S and then I- I went to C

228. S / but then I was only in there for like three months

E mm

229. S and then got kicked out o *there* and then I went to like this place called H / it’s like a

Stanza 54: Not like a real school…you do whatever you want

230. S n- / I went to the Key Stage 3 centre *first*

E mm

231. S like a unit,

232. S but like it’s not like a real school *like* / they’ll let you do whatever you want

E right

233. S like you could just smoke weed

234. S and they just *let* you do it

E really

235. S or like have a ciggie or anything, or-jus

236. S / you don’t really learn nothin in there

Stanza 55: You only had to be a little bit good

237. E *right* and what did you think of that?

238. S it was alright like, /

239. S you only had to be a little bit good and every single week you go erm Awesome Walls or *erm*, trampolining

240. E oh right you’d go where?

241. S Awesome Walls

242. E what’s that?

243. S like a climbing, [place

244. E [*o-*k, yeah Awesome Walls, ‘k

Stanza 56: H and then here

245. S and then after that I went to H, and then, / from H I went to here

E mmhm (1)

**Strophe 23: A ‘best experience’ of school…?**

Stanza 57: W was boss, everybody from the area was there

246. S *ok* and so, thinking about all tho- the-di- your different *experiences* (1) how would you describe one of you-bi- your biggest experiences maybe / of school in the past

247. S d’you mean what do you mean like / *the best* / or

248. E it could be the *best,* / yeah the best *and* / the not so good

249. S erm / *W* was boss when I was a little kid

E mm

250. S in primary school, and [C-

251. E [what was good about it?

252. S I-dunno it was just good

253. S /everybody from the area was there,

254. S / it was just boss round school

255. E and was that where you lived [as well

Stanza 58: Kids Club

256. S [yeah, an then you used to go, for your breakfast in this place / they had like a big cafeteria called Kids Club

E mm

257. S and like, you only gave them like 20p / back then and then like, / you get like all your cereal an everything

E mm

258. S and then you get to play on all like,

259. S they had like these big things what open up in the *hall* an then i-it’s all / like it clicks all in and then it’s a big climb-wooden [climbing frame

E [mm (1) k

260. S and you just play on that (1)

**Strophe 24: C …kicked me out**

Stanza 59: C was good but kids started sayin stuff

261. S and *then* C was *good* / loadsa times

262. S but like / kids started like stuff like saying it was-ss- / ‘ah thingy said this about your mum’ / an that, and then

263. E was that in year 6

264. S no [year 7

265. E [or year 7

266. S and then when I went into year 7 like, / cos like *they* wanted *they*-they were just startin on me for nothing

Stanza 60: I’d have a fight with them

267. S but *then* / I’d have a fight with *them*

268. S and then cos I battered like thre-three lads in the three fights, like / they thought I was bullying

269. S but they were sayin stuff to me

E mm

270. S and like windin me up and that so and like s-so I ‘*it them*

271. S and like trashed the theatre and then sprayed some kids with a erm fire extinguisher cos he threw a erm / plate at me ‘ead,

Stanza 61: Thought I was just bullying

272. S / and then d’ all a them thought I was just bullyin

273. S but like they didn’t even n-notice / the other people were saying n doin it all to me

E mm

274. S so then the just *kicked* me out

275. S [said they’d had enough

**Strophe 25: You just have to fight**

Stanza 62: So you just have to fight

276. E [did you have a group of friends there?

277. S yeah I ‘ad *loads*,

278. S like in *them* places like / if there’s a fight n- like you’re on your last chance like *there* / it’s like well th-everyone from the area so they’ll just be be like ‘ah he’s a faggot *him* he said nah to the fight’

E *right*

279. S so you just have to fight

E *right*, ok

Stanza 63: Scared about getting kicked out

280. S I’m not *scared* about fightin it’s just / getting scared about getting kicked out / but

E mm (1) yeah ok,

**Strophe 26: C was a good school**

Stanza 64: E checks out/revisits question

281. E *so /* was anythin important to you, *then*, in the past

282. S in C?

283. E *yeah* then or W

S yeah

284. E [or H

Stanza 65: C was a good school

285. S [yeah, yeah it was *good* like like / C was a *good school* like

286. S / it was massive and it had its own gym

287. S / it had its own gym like but

E right

288. S you could go in there on the erm / at like break an that

E mm

289. S it had a big basketball court, that erm it had all mechanic stuff it was boss

E mm (1) ok (2)

**Strophe 27: I’ve got ADHD**

Stanza 66: I’d just do mad stuff

290. E *erm* and what was going *well* for you, / maybe at that time?

291. S like, / everything was goin *well* like

292. S but like cos-I cos I’ve got ADHD / and like I used to be dead hypo and that and just do like stupid stuff like

E mm

293. S I’d just *do* mad stuff / just like kick doors you know just start fights,

Stanza 67: Two weeks before I got excluded

294. S and erm / cos I didn’t have like me medication cos I’ve got-a /I had to wait for a bit, / they put a prescription,

295. S and I got like me medication like *two* weeks before I got, / excluded

296. E two weeks before

297. S err, two weeks / just before I got excluded

E mm, hm‘k,

Stanza 68: E’s opinion verging on diagnosis

298. E / it can take a bit t- for your body to get used to it

S yeah

299. E can’t it / it can just be a bit (1) ok

**Strophe 28: S’s dislike of school**

Stanza 69: H: horrible and dirty

300. E Can you tell me anything that, / was *difficult* for you, in the past or that you didn’t like

301. S erm H

E mm

302. S just like, it was *alright* but like it-w c-

303. S / they’ve got a new buildin now but the old building was like *horrible* like,

304. S it was like not even health and safety like all [the

E [*really*

305. S tiles had ripped out

306. S and erm like ma-*weird* kids like / got sent to there who would just piss in the corner and that

307. S and you would get locked in this room,

308. S and like, the dinners were *horrible*

309. S and it was just like / the school was just *dirty*

E yeah, ok,

Stanza 70: School life now

310. E *erm* (1) / and tell me about school life now, how do you feel about it?

311. S it’s alright like

E mmhm

312. S but like, in this school

313. S / like in other schools you’re allowed your phone and that

314. S they try and take your coats and jackets off you here (1) jus- ???

315. S an-an you only get like fifteen or ten minute break

E right

316. S cos like th- people like / you’ve gota be quiet and have a meeting before it / and normally everyone’s talkin

317. E right (2) before break?

Stanza 71: S explains purpose of the meeting

318. S yeah before break yeah have a meeting like

319. S say what-like, / the teachers just say / how the lessons went

320. E *I* see, so is that going on now?

321. S no, at break

322. E right at break time, ok, / and are you in that?

323. S yeah *everyone* goes [there

324. E [as well, yeah ok

**Part 6: Contrasting reflections… (of) a possible self that may be changed**

**Strophe 29: What’s important now?**

Stanza 72: Important that I stay good

325. E And is there anything that’s important for you *now*?

326. S er (1) like, in school or

327. E *in school* or *out of* school

328. S important like *what*, like a person or [s’

329. E anything

330. S well / it’s important that I have to *erm* stay good an that

Stanza 73: S recounts his penalties -next time it’ll be serious

331. S cos like I got *knicked* for weed

332. S but then I got like *five offences* and I’m on a eighteen month suspended sentence which is f- two other offences so,

333. S / I got *NFA’d* they said ‘no further action’ but, if next time I do something it’ll be *serious*

E right

**Strophe 30: A motivation to stay good?**

Stanza 74: Gota stay good -if I breech YOT, he said it’ll be serious

334. S an now I gota go to YOT cos o this *weed* thing cos we got caught with weed /

335. S and if I *breech that* then I get knicked for erm, breech of ??? a probation officer and then like three other things

E right

336. S and he said it’ll just be serious

E ok

337. S *so* that’s important so I’ve gota stay good

Stanza 75: Fined for the stuff I’ve done

338. S / and for me mum, cos every time she goes to court she’s gota get fined

E mm

339. S and *fined* for the stuff I’ve done

E mm right (1)

**Strophe 31: Myself…I’ve calmed down**

Stanza 76: Just me’self

340. S ok (1) *and* so you said about you know what you need to do

S yeah

341. E to help you (2) ok (1)

342. E / is there anyone *else* that might help you?

343. S not really / just me’self

E mm yeah

Stanza 77: I’ve calmed down, I used to be a fireball

344. E *And* do you think you’ve *changed* in any way, for example from being in your *past schools* up to being in this school now

345. S yeah like / I don’t think this school’s changed me but like I’ve *calmed* down

E mm

346. S cos like when I was just / when I was like younger I just used to be mad

E mm

347. S er ju-we jus- like I just used to be a proper fireball,

**Strophe 32: A proper bad fireball**

Stanza 78: The nursery, a warehouse and a few abandoned houses

348. S like I set the nursery a nursery on fire

349. S / but there was *no* *kids* in there it was like abandoned one

350. S and then there was a brand new one getting built next to it

E right

351. S and a warehouse and like like few abandoned houses

352. S / I just like used to be mad

353. E how old were you then?

354. S like twelve (2)

355. S I just used to be a proper bad fireball / just light everythin

E mm

Stanza 79: When I was like three, I set the bin on fire

356. S like an erm when I was like three, I set the *erm*, bin on fire at me house [but I

357. E [when you were three?

358. S yeah, but I didn’t mean but I didn’t mean to / cos I was scared it ???

359. S and mum comes by and she goes ‘*no*’, and then she smelt fire and ran down and put it out

E *right*

Stanza 80: A proper bad fireball…but I’ve stopped now

360. S but like, / I used to be a *proper bad* fireball but I’ve stopped now

E [laughs] ok (1) mm

**Strophe 33: S recounts the last time**

Stanza 81: We coulda gota three grand fine each

361. E / *what* d’you think’s made you stop so much?

362. S cos erm the *last time* like a big abandoned warehouse but it was like damaged property and cos we were just *thirteen* / we just missed it they said like erm we coulda gota three grand fine *each*

E mm

363. S for all the damage an that,

364. S / and then the- said ‘you’ll have to stop have to lighting fires, / otherwise you’re just gona go and ???’

E mm

Stanza 82: We didn’t mean to set the whole thing on fire

365. S and like it it’s like a / like warehouse bigger than this school

E mm

366. S and we-di / *we didn’t mean* to set the whole thing on fire

367. S there was just wood an loadsa petrol tanks / and we poured all the petrol tanks over

E mm

368. S and got out the building and lit it

E mm m’k (1)

**Strophe 34: Building bikes**

Stanza 83: Building bikes for people who can’t afford them

369. E  *erm,* ok so *think back* tell me about a time when you achieved something that was hard to do

S er

370. E and that you’re proud of

371. S like when I went to YOT, I went on this *course* like cos I was doin community service

372. S / I went on this free course where if build you build bikes for eight weeks but like you fit like / take all the old bikes and put it to the workshop, like put all new stuff on it so it looks good to sell it for like people who can’t afford you know like stuff

E *right*

373. S and like we fixed loads a sick bikes up

Stanza 84: I had a six hundred pound bike out of it

374. S an then we get to make *our own*, like but like like a *specialised* or a *maron* / and I had like a six hundred pound bike out of it

E wow

Stanza 85: Learnt how to fix everything on the bike

375. S but like it took *eight weeks*

376. S and we fixed like, fifty bikes each

E wow

377. S ??? an it learnt me how to erm fix all the brakes, / fix everything on the bike

E yeah

378. S the chains,

379. S like / I already knew a few stuff but it ta- it taught me like more

E mm (2) it’s good (1)

380. E *so* yeah you’re most proud of that, an done that, / ok

**Part 7: Self reflections**

**Strophe 35: Words to describe S**

Stanza 86: S as chilled, mature and safe

381. E So how would *you* describe yourself *now* as S, what *words* would you use to describe yourself?

382. S just like *chilled* / and mature

383. S cus like I used to be like proper silly an that and just do bad stuff and like (2) erm (1)

384. S / and just like *safe* because like I just used to do like mad stuff like didn’t think about it like

385. S / I’d light like fires and then go in the building and mess round

E mm

386. S and then like like police would get us an say that’s dangerous you could die in there

E mm

387. S so like *I’ve matured* and just like *think* before I act

388. S cos I used to just like *do things* and then *regret it* / like do stuff without thinking

E mm,

Stanza 87: How teachers may describe S *–‘don’t know’*

389. E / and how would *your* teachers describe you (1) as being like?

390. S don’t know

E (1) ‘k

Stanza 88: How family may describe S *–‘I don’t know’*

391. E / *erm* how would *your family,* describe you as being like

392. S (7) bein like what?

393. E as a person

394. S just like

395. E how would they describe S?

396. S I don’t know

Stanza 89: S as ‘sick S’

397. E *and* how *about* / your *mates* (1) /all of the students here, how might they describe you?

398. S well my mates, they’d just describe me as, / *just S* just sick S, cos like

399. E why sick S?

400. S not / they *don’t call me* sick S they’d *just think*

401. S / cos like the stuff I’ve done an that / just do mad stu- just do mad stuff

E mm’k (1)

**Strophe 36: Decisions and ambitions**

Stanza 90: Don’t do coke –my cousin got like four years

402. E *erm and* (2) has anything (1) / *happened* or has anybody *done* anything to make *you* *want* to or *not want* to / *do* something when you’re older, *so* can you tell me about anything that somebody’s done or that’s happened / which makes you want to do something or which makes you *not* want to do something, when you’re older

403. S erm (1) like just not like like *maybe* / like it’s alright if you sold like a tiny bit of weed but *don’t* *do* coke / like sold coke an that,

404. S because my cousin got erm, my cousin was sellin it and erm got like *four* years

E mm (1) / m’k,

405. E so that’s made *you* think I don’t want to

406. S yeah / I don’t wana go down that path

E yeah (1) ok

Stanza 91: Big, massive motorbike tournament in Columbia

407. E *and* do you have any *other* life goals or ambitions, that you would like to do in the future?

408. S erm, what like like go to the track er

409. S / there’s like this *weird* this track what happens all the time in like Columbia like you know just like that sandy desert hard

E mm

410. S gravel / an like it’s a big massive motorbike track

E *right*

411. S go there

412. E *in* Columbia

S. [nods]

E. *right wow*

413. S it only happens once a year like this big massive motorbike *erm* tournament

414. E *right*, so you’d love to do that

S [nods] ye

415. E that sounds good (2) adrenaline (1) yeah ok,

**Part 8: Closing the conversation**

**Strophe 37: Questions to check?**

Stanza 92: Thank you, E invites S to add anything not asked

416. E great, thank you

417. E *Erm*, is there anything that *I’ve* not asked that you *that* you would like to add about anything I’ve asked you?

S no

418. E no, or have we missed anything ou- *out* to talk about?

419. S like what?

420. E mm, anything (2) mm no?

S [shakes head]

Stanza 93: How are you feeling?

421. E and how are you feeling now?

422. S alright

Stanza 94: Really informative –thank you

423. E ok, well thank you S, you’ve been really *really* informative with your answers so thank you

***Overview of macro-analysis: the first interview conversation with Sonnie***

**Part 1: Getting to know about S**

**Strophe 1: Settling into and beginning the conversation**

Stanza 1: Thank you for your participation

Stanza 2: Checking out well-being and conditions

Stanza 3: Who *‘you’* as a young person are?

**Strophe 2: About motorbikes**

Stanza 4: Motorbikes – I always go on them

Stanza 5: Little KTMs or RM T50

Stanza 6: There’s a big motorbike place

**Strophe 3: Just…chases and weed**

Stanza 7: Just get chased and that

Stanza 8: Just smoke weed and blaze a lot

**Strophe 4: Quads**

Stanza 9: Always been around quads

Stanza 10: Blasted 200 – a fast quad?

**Strophe 5: Just chill…and money**

Stanza 11: Just always chill with me mates

Stanza 12: I just love money

Stanza 13: I can get money easily

Stanza 14: What do you do when you chill?

**Strophe 6: Important people**

Stanza 15: The closest people to me

Stanza 16: They give me the most

**Part 2: Future hopes?**

**Strophe 7: A rich future self**

Stanza 17: What you as S hope to be like?

Stanza 18: Get a decent job and get rich

Stanza 19: Start a business…anything really

**Strophe 8: How do you hope to do that?**

Stanza 20: A fireman, a mortgage and real estate

Stanza 21: Me uncle said it’s a good business to go in

Stanza 22: I know loads about it

**Strophe 9: In your spare time?**

Stanza 23: Go to college and get a job

Stanza 24: E reframes question as hobbies and interests

**Strophe 10: What might you do?**

Stanza 25: Mechanics at college; I could get a degree

Stanza 26: Study, try hard

**Strophe 11: I know a lot about it**

Stanza 27: *An alternative response gained from an ambiguous question*

Stanza 28: Information from different uncles

Stanza 29: E frames assumptions as questions

**Strophe 12: An account of S’s mum’s business**

Stanza 30: Mum had a business too

Stanza 31: A big massive beauty salon

**Part 3: Thoughts about…a future self not hoped for**

**Strophe 13: A juxtaposition by S (not to go into prison…but I’ve been in court loadsa times) ?**

Stanza 32: On the dole, or go into prison

Stanza 33: I only got away with court yesterday

**Strophe 14: To stay out of trouble**

Stanza 34: Just walk away…

Stanza 35: It’ll look bad if I’m older

**Strophe 15: Review of a future self *not* hoped for**

Stanza 36: Not like a tramp on the dole

Stanza 37: A recap of S’s responses

**Strophe 16: Don’t listen to peer pressure**

Stanza 38: I’m just gona start being good now

Stanza 39: Peer pressure

**Strophe 17: Mates**

Stanza 40: I don’t chill with them mates anymore

Stanza 41: Mates in loadsa places

**Strophe 18: That type of person**

Stanza 42: I don’t wana…be stuck on the dole

Stanza 43: Brother and sister good through school -good for me mum

Stanza 44: Wealthy with a clean record

**Part 4: Review of family**

**Strophe 19: A bit about family**

Stanza 45: They both just spoil me

Stanza 46: Older brother and sister plus a little sister

**Part 5: School life: in the past and now**

**Strophe 20: School in the past**

Stanza 47: What’s school been like for you?

Stanza 48: I can’t remember what age I was in nursery

Stanza 49: A little school up there

**Strophe 21: S recounts getting kicked out**

Stanza 50: I ‘ad trouble through there cos I got ADHD and that

Stanza 51: Contradictory statement: I was naughty - we were only messin

Stanza 52: Everybody even said it was only a joke

**Strophe 22: C, Key Stage 3 Centre and H**

Stanza 53: Three months at C, then got kicked out

Stanza 54: Not like a real school…you do whatever you want

Stanza 5: You onlyhad to be a little bit good

Stanza 56: H and then here

**Strophe 23: A ‘best experience’ of school…?**

Stanza 57: W was boss, everybody from the area was there

Stanza 58: Kids Club

**Strophe 24: C…kicked me out**

Stanza 59: C was good but kids started sayin stuff

Stanza 60: I’d have a fight with them

Stanza 61: Thought I was just bullying

**Strophe 25: You just have to fight**

Stanza62: So you just have to fight

Stanza 63: Scared about getting kicked out

**Strophe 26: C was a good school**

Stanza 64: E checks out/revisits question

Stanza 65: C was a good school

**Strophe 27: I’ve got ADHD**

Stanza 66: I’d just do mad stuff

Stanza 67: Two weeks before I got excluded

Stanza 68: E’s opinion verging on diagnosis

**Strophe 28: S’s dislike of school**

Stanza 69: H: horrible and dirty

Stanza 70: School life now

Stanza 71: S explains purpose of meeting

**Part 6: Contrasting reflections…(of) a possible self that may be changed???**

**Strophe 29: What’s important now?**

Stanza 72: Important that I stay good

Stanza 73: S recounts his penalties –next time it’ll be serious

**Strophe 30: A motivation to stay good?**

Stanza 74: Gota stay good -if I breech YOT, he said it’ll be serious

Stanza 75: Fined for the stuff I’ve done

**Strophe 31: Myself…I’ve calmed down**

Stanza 76: Just me’self

Stanza 77: I’ve calmed down, I used to be a fireball

**Strophe 32: A proper bad fireball**

Stanza 78: The nursery, a warehouse and a few abandoned houses

Stanza 79: When I was like three, I set the bin on fire

Stanza 80: A proper bad fireball…but I’ve stopped now

**Strophe 33: S recounts the last time**

Stanza 81: We coulda gota three grand fine each

Stanza 82: We didn’t mean to set the whole thing on fire

**Strophe 34: Building bikes**

Stanza 83: Building bikes for people who can’t afford them

Stanza 84: I had a six hundred pound bike out of it

Stanza 85: Learnt how to fix everything on the bike

**Part 7: Self reflections**

**Strophe 35: Words to describe S**

Stanza 86: S as chilled, mature and safe

Stanza 87: How teachers may describe S *–‘don’t know’*

Stanza 88: How family may describe S –‘*I don’t know’*

Stanza 89: S as ‘sick S’

**Strophe 36: Decisions and ambitions**

Stanza 90: Don’t do coke –my cousin got like four years

Stanza 91: Big, massive motorbike tournament in Columbia

**Part 8: Closing the conversation**

**Strophe 37: Questions to check?**

Stanza 92: Thank you, E invites S to add anything not asked

Stanza 93: How are you feeling?

Stanza 94: Really informative -thank you

**Transcript 4: Analysis of second interview conversation with Sonnie**

**Part 1: Returning to our first conversation**

**Strophe 1: Returning to our conversation to check…**

Stanza 1: Thank you again –your views are important

1. E Ok (1) *so* thank you *again* for meeting with me *erm* to erm help me with my research (1) your views are really really important to me so thank you

Stanza 2: The purpose of our second conversation

2. E *Today* / as I’ve said before I want *to* go over the conversation that we *had* the week before last / *and* to check that your happy with it and if you want to add anything or take anything away

3. E so I’ve underlined a couple of things, / key things (1) that I just wanted to, / review and check

**Strophe 2: About S as a young person**

Stanza 3: Motorbikes, chases, weed, quads, chill, money –*happy with that?*

4. E so first of all I asked you *about,* erm showing on paper the things of you as a *person* , and what you were *like* and you *said* about *motorbikes* (1)

5. E you’ve mentioned that again haven’t you over the *half term*

6. E and you said chases, weed, quads, chill, / and money, that were *things* that like represented S, *you* / yeah [laughs]

7. S [nods]

8. E happy with *that*?

9. S yeah

Stanza 4: You explained a little bit about…

10. E *erm* and then you explained a little bit about the *motorbikes* (1) and with your brother (2)

11. E that you went on

12.E *errm* you said about chases,

**Part 2: Checking out and clarifying the transcript**

**Strophe 3: Checking the words**

Stanza 5: Checking out the word *‘plod’*

13. E / I *couldn’t decipher* what this *word* was / I didn’t know whether you meant *police* or whether you actually said plod /as in police / or people

14. S no plod

15. E so you [said plod yea

16. S [police

17. E that’s *right*, / that’s ok

18. E I didn’t (1) no/ when I’m, rewinding *this* it’s really hard to think / what was that again what was that again

19. E /so *yeah* you did say plod as in police

Stanza 6: Unsure of a word?

20. E *erm* and *then* / there was a word there that I wasn’t sure what it *was* but it doesn’t matter

**Strophe 4: S likes …to chill**

Stanza 7: E, reading back the transcript

21. E [reading interview 1 transcript] ‘tell me a bit more about that’ / and you said loadsa times *me,* and me mates get chased, and that (1) ok

22. E *erm* (1) and you said *about* (2) / weed blaze (1)

23. E / and you like to just *chill* with your mates (1)

24. E and so you’re always chilled out *and* (1) ???

Stanza 8: Where do you chill?

25. E where d’you *chill*?

26. S *just* (1) T and that like round the area

27. E mhm, so is that like, on a *street* *or* in a *square* *or*

28. S depends cos loadsa times we jus chill *loadsa* places like

29. S / like on the streets though

E mm yeah, ok (2)

30. E / d’you go on your *bikes* or d’you walk around

31. S a bit a both sometimes

E yeah (1) ok

**Strophe 5: Checking out what else is important to S?**

Stanza 9: You like to spend and get money

32. E *er* and then you said you like to spend *money*

33. E and get money

Stanza 10: Mum and nan as the closest people to S

34. E and then I asked you about people you consider important to you *and* you said / closest people to you like your mum and your nan

35. E erm and that they’re the ones that give you everything and all that (1)

36. E / a’you happy with that?

S yea

**Strophe 6: E clarifies *‘stuff’*?**

Stanza 11: What do you mean by *‘stuff’*?

37. E and *then* / oh you said about them giving you *stuff*

38. E / everyone else gives me stuff / they give *me*

39. E but *they* / your mum and nan give you the most

40. E what d’you mean by *stuff* / can you tell me a bit more

41. S like money or *gifts* and that

E yeah

Stanza 12: Anything I need

42. S they just *buy me* stuff and that

43. E *yeah* (1) what types of things (1) do they buy you?

44. S anythin I *need* *or,* ask for

E *yeah* ok

**Part 3: A future self?**

**Strophe 7: A decent job**

Stanza 13: A decent job and rich

45. E *erm* and *then* I asked *you* (2) / who you hope to be like in the near future (2) and you said *rich* [laughs] (1)

46. E / don’t we all

47. E and to have a decent job you said

S yeah

48. E and just try and get rich

E (1) mhm (2) ok

Stanza 14: Checking out about starting your own business

49. E and then you said about starting your own *business* hopefully after you’ve got some money

50. E (1) yeah / would you still agree with that?

S yeah

**Strophe 8: Knowledge about business**

Stanza 15: S explains further about type of business

51. E erm and I asked you what type of business and you said *anything,* really

52. S like like an’/ like a *shop* or anythin or *rentin out* / like a landlord

E mm

53. S *or like* if you had enough go into like est-like real estate where like you *erm* sell houses off an that

Stanza 16: I know loads of information

54. E *yeah* ok (1) and who- / *how* did you get *the idea* for that?

55. S jus *erm* / *me uncle* used to do it / but then he dropped out of it,

56. S but like I know loadsa information about it

E yeah

57. S and me mum ad her own shop, and me uncle’s got shops and barber’s shops and that

E yeah

68. S *so* I just know a bit about that

E yeah, that’s good that you know that, ok

**Strophe 9: When you leave school…what you might be doing**

Stanza 17: Checking out -plans when you leave school

59. E *erm* and you said about renting it out

60. E erm and you also said about when you left school you’d like to be a fireman (2) still

S yeah

E yeah, / happy with that

Stanza 18: Fixing bikes and jobs that you get money from

62. E (5) *ok* so you mentioned *what* you might be *doin* in your spare time / in the future (1) and you mentioned about hobbies

63. E (2) oh you mentioned about goin- on y / fixin bikes up or garage things and that

64. S yeah

65. E erm (2) and you said things, / jobs to *do* that you got money from as well as that you enjoyed with that

66. S yeah

67. E yeah / to be makin money, / *yeah*

**Strophe 10: How you might get there?**

Stanza 19: Checking out about ‘study, and get your head down’

68. E and I asked you what you might have to do *now* to help you get there / in the future

69. E and you said (1) *erm* to study, and get your head down, and just try and get through it

E yeah, m’ok

Stanza 20: Anything else you want to add?

70. E anything else you want to add? (2)

71. S nna

**Strophe 11: And you mentioned…**

Stanza 21: About…trying to do your best in your exams

72. E *and* you mentioned about tryin to do your best in your exams

73. E and that means not saying you’re going to fail!

S [laughs]

E [laughs]

Stanza 22: About…your mum’s businesses

74. E you mentioned about your mum’s businesses there as well

**Strophe 12: A future self not hoped for**

Stanza 23: Not to be on the dole or in prison

75. E and just to ask you what / to describe what you *really* hope *not* to be like in the future / and you said *erm* like on the dole or going to prison

Stanza 24: Stay out of trouble, walk away

76. E erm (2) and I asked you *to,* tell me a bit about what you *might* have to do so that *doesn’t* happen (1) and you said to stay out of trouble and walk away from it

E (2) yeah

S yeah

E ok

Stanza 25: Sitting on the dole like a tramp

77. E and what *don’t* you want to be doing in your spare time / you said sittin there on the dole like a tramp

S [nods]

**Strophe 13: Learnt from my lessons**

Stanza 26: Do you experience much peer pressure?

78. E and *then* I asked you to tell me a bit

79.E / you mentioned something a bit about *peer pressure* / ‘don’t listen to peer pressure’ (2)

80. E *erm* I *mean* / you told me a bit about what it *was,*

81. E and do you experience much peer pressure at all?

82. S nah, not *now* like,

83. S but like / *jus* when I was little like,

84. S I *just* used to *do anythin* like listen to *anybody* or like me mates’d go ‘go one do that’ an I’d just do it

85. S but like / I *don’t* do it now

Stanza 27: I’ve learnt from lessons

86. E and, can you tell me *why* you might not do it now

87. S I’ve just *learnt* from lessons and that

E mm yeah ok,

88. E / was there *any* is there *any* particular lesson that made you *think* right ok, I’m not gona, *listen* to what they say now

S yeah *like*

89. E was there any point?

90. S not like *previous* but like,

91. S like where they’re *all* people are *doin it* and they’re like ‘*come come’* and like then I’ve got like arrested and knicked and then,

92. S I’m on my final chance now

E mm

93. S otherwise I’ll go on a tag *or,* get put away or somethin

E yeah

S so

Stanza 28: Final chance –I got YOT

94. E so when was your final chance?

95. S *erm* the other day in court but I got erm YOT

E mm (1) yeah,

96. E / so *what’s* what’ve you got with YOT?

97. S I’ve gota do like, go up sign up and then like / talk about *things* what a keep you out of trouble

98. S and then, you have to do like this thing like community service

E yeah ok

Stanza 29: Checking out…you mentioned…

99. E *and* (3) you mentioned again (1) / oh yeah you gave an example there, about peer pressure

100. E and you mentioned about your mum and your nan are important ??? / and you’ve put / that they’re the closest there

**Part 4: Further reflections and recounts of school**

**Strophe 14: Checking out about school in the past**

Stanza 30: Just loadsa fighting…kicked out on the second to last day

101. E and then I asked you what school’s been like for you in the past (1) *and* (2) you said you had a bit of trouble *in*, your previous school

102. E and mentioned about your *ADHD* and you like / you used to always be /*naughty* /you said

S yeah (1)

103. S / just loadsa fightin

E yeah (1)

104. E and you had a different *primary* school to head teacher

S yeah

105. E and *erm* (2) she *kicked* you *out*

106. S yeah on the second to last day

E yeah, ok

Stanza 31: Who was ‘everybody’?

107.E *and* you mentioned *as well,* that you were messin *around* at that time, *and* you pulled your pants down to the girls / but you were *messin /* and they said you were messing /*as well*

108. E and you mentioned that *everybody* even said it was only a joke / but she still said no / *who* was ‘*everybody*’?

109. S like all the kids like in th- in the school

Stanza 32: S recounts and further defends

110. S / like I was *only messin* I went like *that*

E mm

111. S but I didn’t really pull me pants down but I just went like *that* *messin*

E mm, yeah

112. S an then erm, an then, I jus got kicked out the second to last day

E yeah

Stanza 33: A new head teacher –changed all the rules

113. S / but it was a *new* head teacher,

114. S cus there was a other head teacher there that I was sound with, called Miss C,

115. S but then this other one came just, made the whole school *dull*

E mm

116. S like changed *all the rules* and that an / *all* black trainees an everythin just changed loadsa rules

E right

117. S just made it worse

E ok yeah

**Strophe 16: Further experiences of school**

Stanza 34: S corrects upon name of school

118. E *And* (1) you *said* / I think it was (1) in your next school / that it was alright and you *had to be* a little bit good, and every single week you went to Awesome Walls is that C

119. S no that [was / like a unit

120. E [H

E yeah

Stanza 35: Checking out about KidsClub, a biggest experience of school

121. E and then you mentioned / when I asked you about one of your *biggest* experiences of school, you said it was when you were a little kid / *and* there was a breakfast club that you went to and they had a cafeteria called KidsClub, and the climbing frame, n that you really like [that

S yeah

E yeah

Stanza 36: S recounts event leading to exclusion with new information

122. E and then you mentioned I asked you about (4)

123. E you said about in *Year 7*, that youtrashed the theatre in the school and people were *winding* you up

124. S yeah n that / like I *trashed* the theatre cos they were like / *someone* was windin me up

125. S and then I got *shouted at* and she put a big stack a erm red paper and said just write loadsa lines over again

126. S and I didn’t do nothing, / so I just started trashin it

127. S but then like loadsa people *wound* me up by saying things,

128. S and then *I’d* have a fight with them

129. S and then, cos *I’d batter them or win*, then, / they kept *sayin* that I was bullying but, I didn’t start it

E yeah ok

**Strophe 17: It affects your street cred**

Stanza 37: You have to fight

130.E *and* then you said you had erm, lots of friends and *er*

131. E but yeah you mentioned about the fights (1) as well

132. E / and you mentioned that you *have to fight* otherwise they’ll say that you’re a faggot if you don’t

133. S yeah like (1) / like in *schools* like when other kids are like *there* and then like if you back down then they’ll say ‘aah he’s a faggot aah he’s a faggot’

E yeah

134. S like and like he *flapped* it n that

135. S but like (1) / [cos it affects your *street* cred

Stanza 38: Flapped it

136. E [*he flapped it*

137. S flapped it means like (1) like *scared* but ???

E right

Stanza 39: It’ll just affect your street credibility

138. S cos *erm* it’ll *just* affect your street credibility you know

E yeah

139. S so then, you *just* have to fight an’tha

**Strophe 18: Does that happen often?**

Stanza 40: Does that happen often?

140. E ok, and does that happen *often*?

141. S not *often*

142. S / that was just in that school

E yeah

Stanza 41: Ambiguous information

143. S cus, *everyone* like most people in ??? went there

144. E *right* ok, most people here, h’been there?

S na

E no

**Strophe 19: Difficulties and dislikes**

Stanza 42: It was a scatty school, dead dirty

145. E and then I asked you to tell anything that’s been *difficult* for you / or that you *didn’t like*

146. E erm (8) and you mentioned about *the school* and the building was *horrible*

147. S yeah H

148. E yeah / and it’s bad for health and safety you said

149. S yeah it was just a *scatty* school / it was dead *dirty* and horrible

E yeah ok

Stanza 43: Checking out other past difficulties?

150. E and has anything else been difficult for *you*? (3) / in the past (2)

**Part 5: Now**

**Strophe 20: School life now**

Stanza 44: Checking out about school now –it’s alright

151. E and then y-bout school life *now* / you said / *it’s alright*

E (2) mhm

152. E *erm* (2) *and* you said in this *school*, it’s ok

153. E but i-it’s *different* to other schools because you’re not allowed your phone, and then you *have* me- these meetings

Stanza 45: S elaborates upon meetings *…it’s just like a prison*

154. S yeah you have meetings every time before *erm* you go to *erm* break

E yeah

155. S then you have a *short* break cus people will mess,

156. S and then like they can restrain ya, throw you to the floor and then

157. S / it’s just like a *prison*

E *right* (1) ok (1)

**Strophe 21: S evaluates school life**

Stanza 46: Just horrible – *a sense of injustice?*

158. E and so what are your thoughts about it?

159. S *just horrible* like

160. S / an like some of the teachers *wind yor’up* and then / an give you time

161. S and then like say if you get *restrained* and if they get *hurt*, / if they get hurt in the restraint, then you’ll get *knicked* and everything

E mm

162. S but, if erm we get hurt in the restraint nothing happens

E mm

163. S so s’horrible

Stanza 47: Better if they worked with us

164. E what d’you think might happen if *erm,* *they* *weren’t* like that

165. S school ‘ud be *better* like, if they *worked* with us

E mm

166. S like it w-we’wouldn’t just take the piss like, *I mean rules*

167. S but like / in *here* you can get over two hour detentions and that

E mm

168. S and they can keep you til ages

E (1) mhm m’k

**Strophe 22: E checks out words and transcript**

Stanza 48: Checking out ‘normally’?

169. E I think I, /had a *word* here and I put you said about meeting before *it,* and / *normally* everyone’s talking / was that ‘normally’? / I wasn’t sure whether it *was*, / that you would have said that or not

170. E I thought it was ‘*normally*’ / and I wanted to check it (2) ok

Stanza 49: It’s important to stay good…last warning

171. E and I asked whether there is anything that’s important for you *now* (1) and you *said* / it’s important to stay good and that (1)

172. E erm, / and you mentioned about having got knicked for *weed*

173. E (1) and about your *offences*, / and so that was important *t* / so / it didn’t get worse

174. E and about you being on your last warning

**Strophe 23: E questions about anything else important**

Stanza 50: Is anything else important?

175. E is *anything else* important to you now, *anything*

176. S like?

177. E in general

178. S to get me GCSEs an that

E mmhm

179. S and get a good job

Stanza 51: Why’s that important?

180. E mmhm (3) / why’s that important to you?

181. S hmm (1) jus, jus so I’ve got like a job and that, nice house and money n that

E mm (1) yeah ok

**Strophe 24: E checks out about S**

Stanza 52: Who might help you -you said yourself

182. E and then you said *about* (4) d’you know what you *need* to do to help *you* / *achieve* the things you want to do (2) and I asked you (1) / what might help you or who might help you, / and you said yourself

S mhm

Stanza 53: Having calmed down

183. E and I asked you whether you think you’ve changed in anyway / and you said *yes*

184. E / you think this s-ch-school / you don’t think the school’s changed me but you think you’ve calmed down

S yeah

E yeah

Stanza 54: Anything else that you want to add?

185. E ok / anything else that you want to add to that?

186. S no

Stanza 55: Stopped lighting fires

187. E and *then* (3) / you said you’d stopped lightin *fires*

188. S yeah cos I used to be a, terrible firebomb when I was little

Stanza 56: Unsure of correct word?

189. E an otherwise you’re gona sp- / otherwise you’re gona just go *and* / I wasn’t quite sure what that word was

190. E (2) / but it doesn’t matter if you can’t think

**Part 6: More about S**

**Strophe 25: Something achieved**

Stanza 57: S recounts experience most proud of

191. E and then I asked you about / tell me a *time* when you *achieved* something that was hard to do (2) and that you were *proud of* (1)

192. S and that you said that you went to YOT on this course and that you built bikes for 8 weeks / built over 50 bikes

193. E and you fixed the breaks and things

S yeah

E yeah

194. S I *fixed up* *bikes* for like people who can’t afford bikes

195. S / like old bike

196. S and *erm* it *taught* me how to *all* rewire all the breaks and everything

E mm

197. S and like jus makin it newer

Stanza 58: Got it sold off by Christmas time

198. S / and then like we done like *fifty* or somethin bikes and then it got sold off by Christmas time

E mm

199. E that’s great / so Christmas presents for people then [laughs]

200. E so you’re proud of achieving that and the skills that you’ve learnt there?

**Strophe 26: E checks out information and reads transcript**

Stanza 59: E unsure of question she intended to ask

201. E *erm* (1) / I wasn’t sure on that question (2)

Stanza 60: How S describes himself now

202.E and then I asked you to describe yourself *now* / and what *words* you’d use to describe yourself

203. E and you said chilled and mature (1) because you used to be proper *silly* and do bad stuff and that (2)

204. E you also said about being safe (3) and you didn’t used to *think* about things (1) you know you’d light fires (1) / and mess around

205. E and, are happy with that / what you’ve said there yeah

**Strophe 27: Still unsure…**

Stanza 61: Still unable to say anything from teachers’ perspective

206. E and I asked you about / how would *your teachers* describe you as being like, and you weren’t sure (2)

207. E can you say anything *now* or (1)

208. S [shakes head]

Stanza 62: How might family and friends describe S?

209. E and I asked you about yo-what your family might describe you as being like / *as a person* (3) / and you weren’t sure (2)

210. E can you remember what / *your friends* might describe you as being like?

211. S just like, / not really

212. E you mentioned / *sick*, sick S

S yeah

213. E Sick S

214. S just ??? them

E yeah, ok

**Strophe 28: Other people’s influences**

Stanza 63: You get prison sentences, drug offences and can’t get into other countries

215. E erm (5) and I asked you about whether anybody had *done anything,* to make you *want to do something* or *not want to do something* / when you’re older,

216. E and you *mentioned about* how your cousin had sold coke and *so* (2) because of *that* you know, you *don’t want* to be doing *that*

S no like

217. E but it would be ok

218. S you get prison sentences and then drug offences and then you can’t go into other countries and that

E *right* ok

219. E you can’t go to Columbia and do go on the bike track

Stanza 64: Is there anything else that you want to add?

220. E erm / is there anything else you want to add to that?

S no

**Strophe 29: Other life goals or ambitions**

Stanza 65: Checking out about life goals or ambitions

221. E and *then* (2) / I asked you about *any other* life goals or ambitions, / and you said about the *massive* motorbike track (1) that *happens* in Columbia, / and it’s on a sandy desert, and you’d like t’ / do that

S yeah

Stanza 66: Loadsa things, like thrill stuff

222. E mhm, is there anything *else*

S just like

E you can tell me

223. S *do loadsa* things lik-ss-like-daf / like *sky diving* an that

224. E *I want* *to do a sky dive*

225. S just loadsa *loadsa* other things like / like *thrill stuff* cus I like all stuff like that

226. E mmhm, so have you given it much thought?

227. S m not really

228. E there’ll be lots of thrill things that you’d like to do (1)

S [nods]

E ok

**Part 7: Closing the conversation**

**Strophe 30: Closing questions**

Stanza 67: Anything that I’ve not asked you or you want to say?

229. E *erm* (3) and is there anything that I’ve not asked *you* / that you feel that I should have asked

S not [really

E [about you (2) no

230.E and anything else that you want to say?

S [shakes head]

Stanza 68: How are you feeling now?

231.E and how ar’you feelin *now*?

S alright

E ok,

Stanza 69: Thank you

232.E ok that’s great / thank you

***Overview of macro-analysis: the follow up interview conversation with Sonnie***

**Part 1: Returning to our first conversation**

**Strophe 1: Returning to our conversation to check…**

Stanza 1: Thank you again –your views are important

Stanza 2: The purpose of our second conversation

**Strophe 2: About S as a young person**

Stanza 3: Motorbikes, chases, weed, quads, chill, money –*happy with that?*

Stanza 4: You explained a little bit about…

**Part 2: Checking out and clarifying the transcript**

**Strophe 3: Checking the words**

Stanza 5: Checking out the word *‘plod’*

Stanza 6: Unsure of a word?

**Strophe 4: S likes…to chill**

Stanza 7: E, reading back the transcript

Stanza 8: Where do you chill?

**Strophe 5: Checking out what else is important to S?**

Stanza 9: You like to spend and get money

Stanza 10: Mun and nan as the closet people to S

**Strophe 6: E clarifies ‘*stuff’*?**

Stanza 11: What do you mean by *‘stuff’?*

Stanza 12: Anything I need

**Part 3: A future self?**

**Strophe 7: A decent job**

Stanza 13: A decent job and rich

Stanza 14: Checking out about starting your own business

**Strophe 8: Knowledge about business**

Stanza 15: S explains further about type of business

Stanza 16: I know loads of information

**Strophe 9: When you leave school…what you might be doing**

Stanza 17: Checking out plans when you leave school

Stanza 18: Fixing bikes and jobs that you get money from

**Strophe 10: How you might get there?**

Stanza 19: Checking out about ‘study, and get your head down’

Stanza 20: Anything else you want to add?

**Strophe 11: And you mentioned…**

Stanza 21: About …trying to do your best in your exams

Stanza 22: About …your mum’s businesses

**Strophe 12: A future self not hoped for**

Stanza 23: Not to be on the dole or in prison

Stanza 24: Stay out of trouble, walk away

Stanza 25: Sitting on the dole like a tramp

**Strophe 13: Learnt from my lessons**

Stanza 26: Do you experience much peer pressure?

Stanza 27: I’ve learnt from my lessons

Stanza 28: Final chance – I got YOT

Stanza 29: Checking out…you mentioned…

**Part 4: Further reflections and recounts of school**

**Strophe 14: Checking out about school in the past**

Stanza 30: Just loadsa fighting…kicked out on the second to last day

Stanza 31: Who was ‘everybody’?

Stanza 32: S recounts and further defends

Stanza 33: A new head teacher –changed all the rules

**Strophe 15: Further experiences of school**

Stanza 34: S corrects upon name of school

Stanza 35: Checking out about KidsClub, a biggest experience of school

Stanza 36: S recounts event leading to exclusion with new information

**Strophe 16: It affects your street cred**

Stanza 37: You have to fight

Stanza 38: Flapped it

Stanza 39: It’ll just affect your street credibility

**Strophe 17: Does that happen often?**

Stanza 40: Does that happen often?

Stanza 41: Ambiguous information

**Strophe 18: Difficulties and dislikes**

Stanza 42: It was a scatty school, dead dirty

Stanza 43: Checking out other past difficulties?

**Part 5: Now**

**Strophe 19: School life now**

Stanza 44: Checking out about school now –it’s alright

Stanza 45: S elaborates upon meetings…*it’s just like a prison*

**Strophe 20: S evaluates school life**

Stanza 46: Just horrible –*a sense of injustice?*

Stanza 47: Better if they worked with us

**Strophe 21: E checks out words and transcript**

Stanza 48: Checking out ‘normally’?

Stanza 49: It’s important to stay good…last warning

**Strophe 21: E questions about anything else important**

Stanza 50: Is anything else important?

Stanza 51: Why’s that important?

**Strophe 22: E checks out about S**

Stanza 52: Who might help you –‘yourself’

Stanza 53: Having calmed down

Stanza 54: Anything else that you want to add?

Stanza 55: Stopped lighting fires

Stanza 56: Unsure of correct word?

**Part 6: More about S**

**Strophe 23: Something achieved**

Stanza 57: S recounts experience most proud of

Stanza 58: Got it sold off by Christmas time

**Strophe 24: E checks out information and reads transcript**

Stanza 59: E unsure of question she intended to ask

Stanza 60: How S describes himself now

**Strophe 25: Still unsure…**

Stanza 61: Still unable to say anything from teacher’s perspective

Stanza 62: How might family and friends describe S?

**Strophe 26: Other people’s influences**

Stanza 63: You get prison sentences, drug offences and can’t get into other countries

Stanza 64: Is there anything else that you want to add?

**Strophe 27: Other life goals or ambitions**

Stanza 65: Checking out about life goals or ambitions

Stanza 66: Loadsa things, like thrill stuff

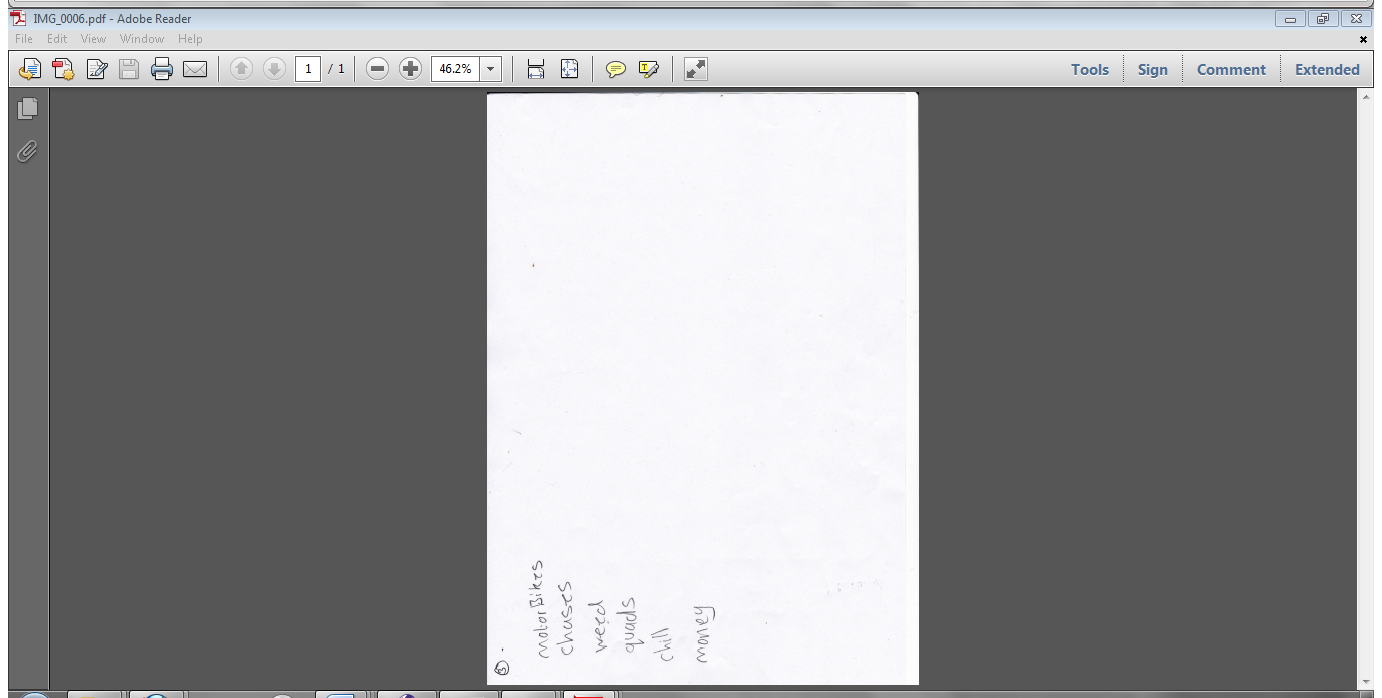
**Part 7: Closing the conversation**

**Strophe** **28: Closing questions**

Stanza 67: Anything that I’ve not asked you or you want to say?

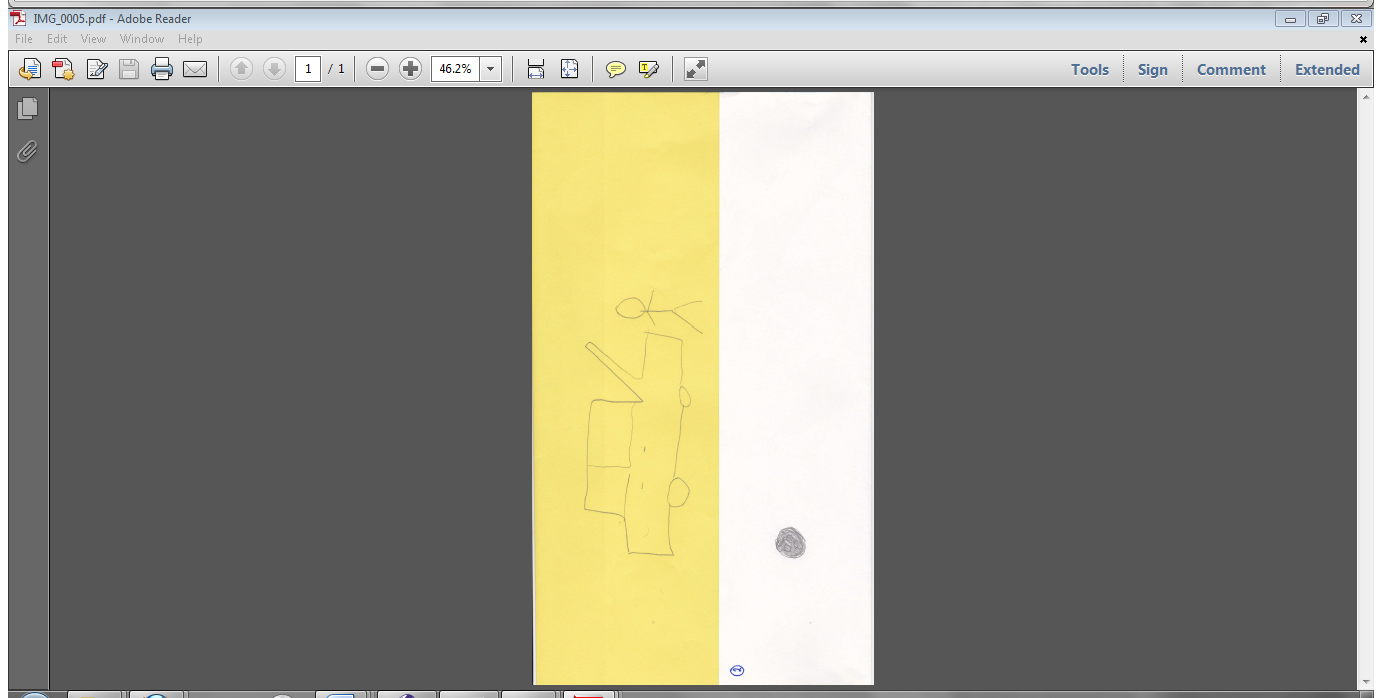
Stanza 68: How are you feeling now?

Stanza 69: Thank you

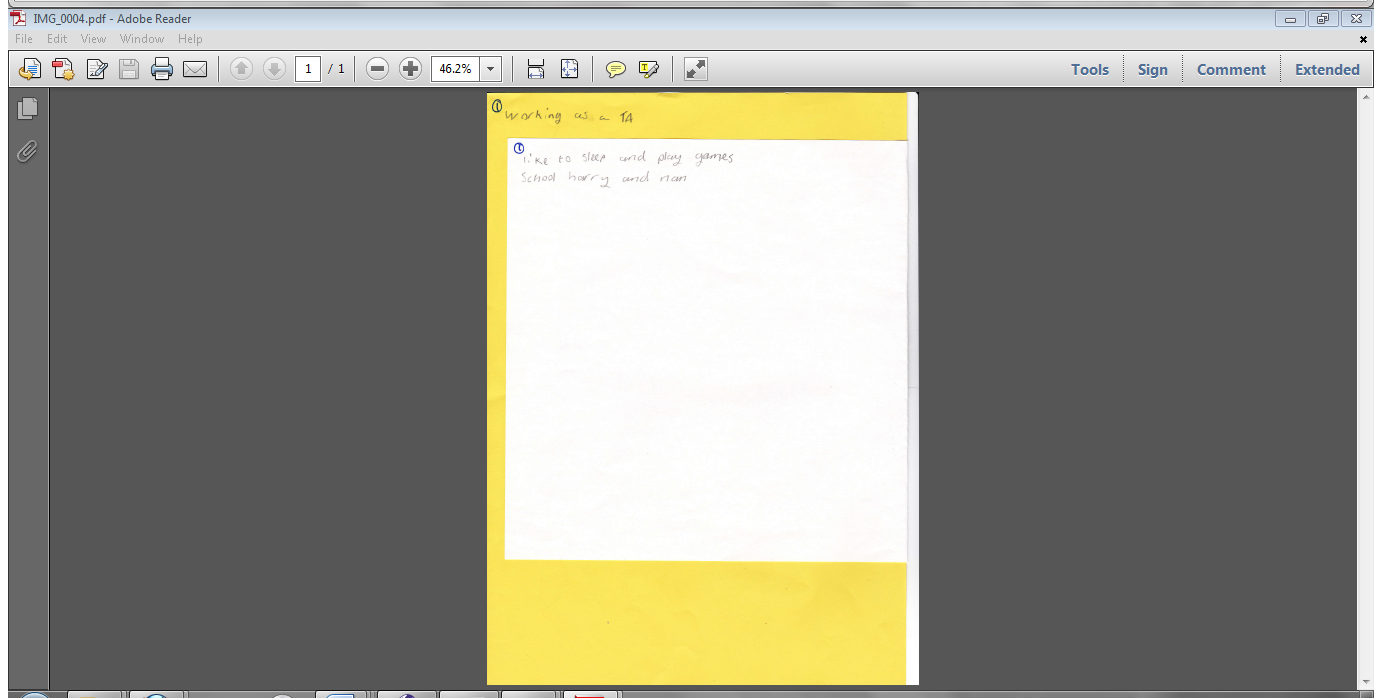
**Appendix VI: Examples of self-portrait responses: *present and future***

**Charlie**

***possible selves***



**Sonnie**



**Jackson**

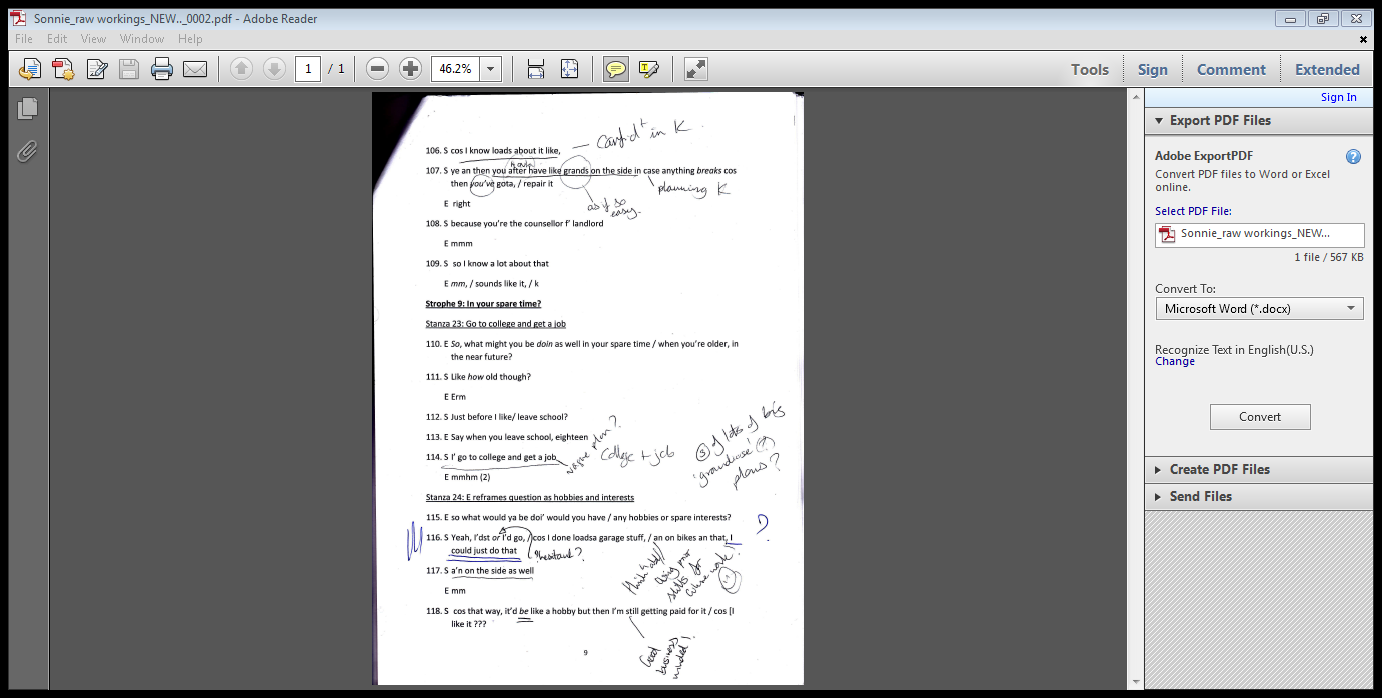
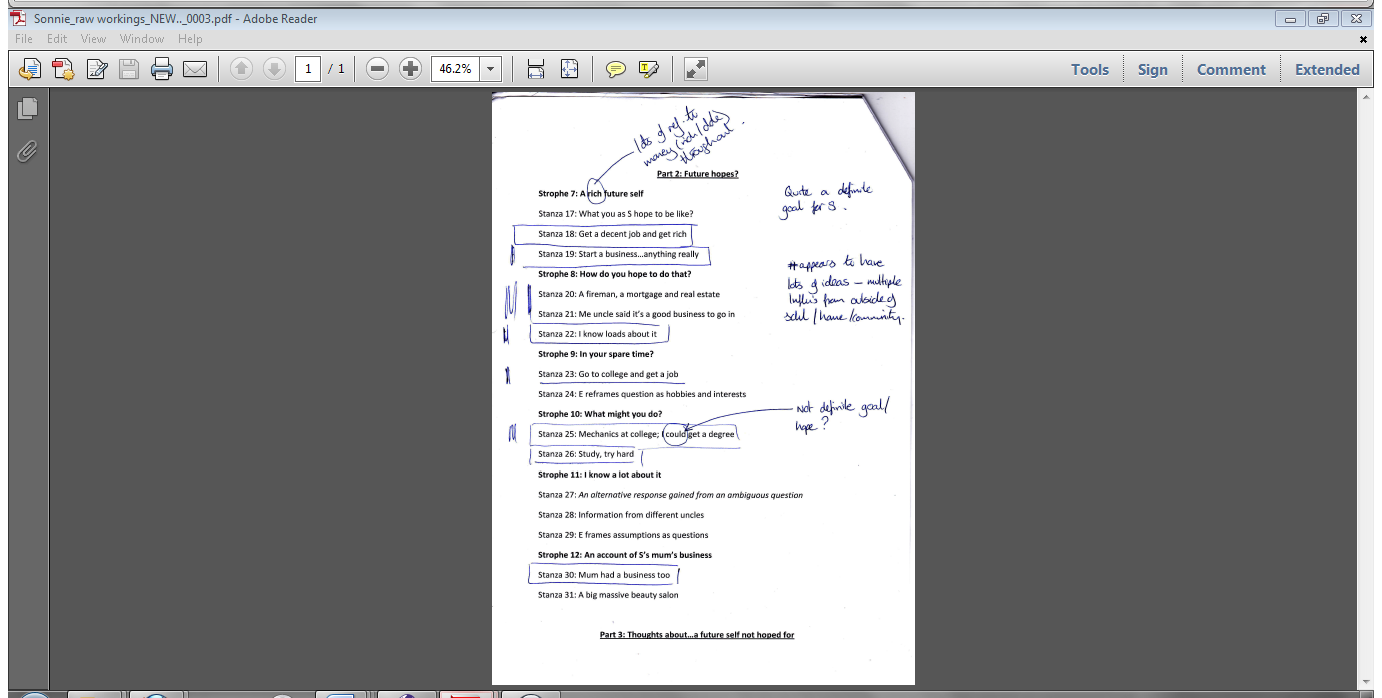
**Jackson**

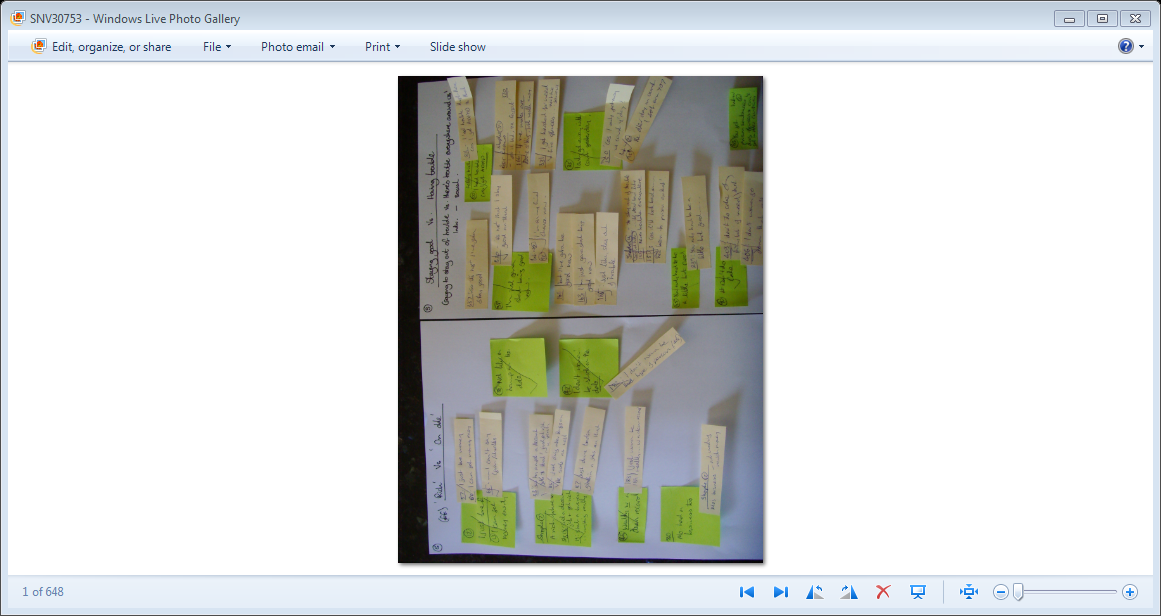
**Appendix VII: Overview of my impressions: Jackson’s narratives**

* Family: influence and support
* Protective: of family…
* Valuing positive school experiences:work experience; trips; team sports etc.
* Sense of achievements: skills learned from work experience; trophies won…
* Narratives of agency: positive school experiences now; positive change; reasoning for high school’s rules; little talk of barriers which may prevent ‘future self’ wished for; sense of ‘realism’ in talk about future plans –although some uncertainty of how to get there exactly
* Relationships: feeling valued / fighting / skitting
* Acceptance: feeling valued in school
* Changes: positive (a process of change: calmer, smaller school, safer?) V negative (new Head Teacher)

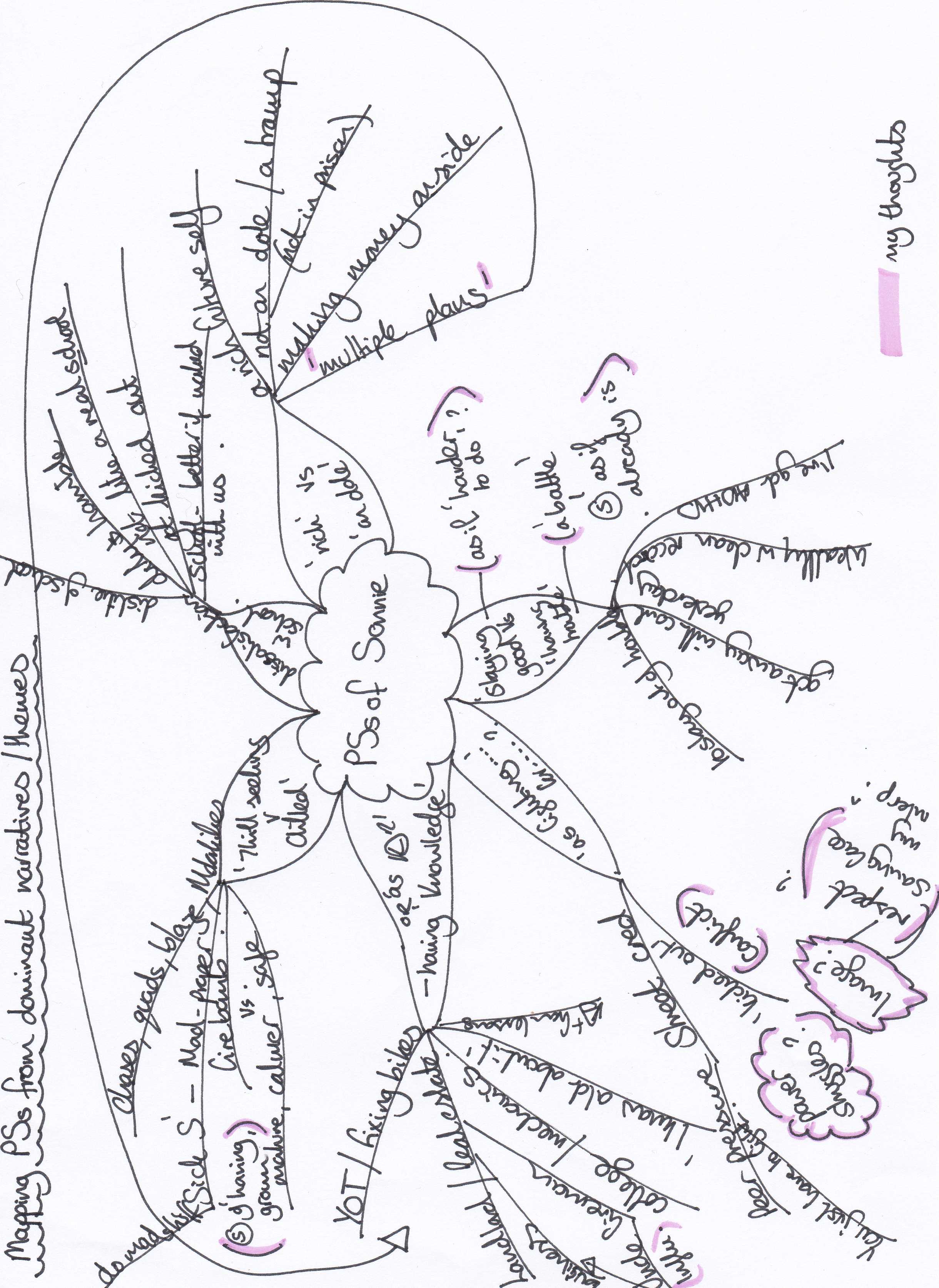
**Appendix VIII: Examples of my ‘raw’ working to trace themes through the**

**narratives**

* Transcript 1: first interview with Sonnie
* Overview of macro-analysis: the first conversation with Sonnie
* Exploring lines, stanzas and strophes to trace PSs and themes



* Mapping PSs from dominant narratives / themes: Sonnie



1. The term social and cultural resource is used interchangeably with socio-cultural resource. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘Narrator/s’ will be used interchangeably with the young person / people who are participating within this research. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I use the terms ‘narrative analysis’ and ‘narrative inquiry’ interchangeably within my thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)