PART ONE: THEORY

CHAPTER THREE

ACTION RESEARCH MODELS AND METHOD

In this chapter I show how my methodology connects with the action research models of Reason (Reason and Bradbury 2001), Heron (Heron 1996), Marshall (Marshall, 2004) and Whitehead (Whitehead 1988).
I provide a case example that shows how my inquiry combines first person action research methods with spiritual practice.

HOW IS THIS INQUIRY AND HOW IS THIS ACTION RESEARCH?

This is a first person inquiry that combines spiritual practice and action research methods.

I am inquiring into my values and the phenomenological meaning of love by considering what happens beneath practice because I want love to influence my practice more fully.

My writing becomes my inquiry and a demonstration of my learning as I reflect on how love can be seen in my practice.

This is an emergent process. Others have been involved, as co-inquirers in peer supervision, as commentators on the text, with participants in conversations, as part of an Inquiry Group. There is only one author, but I will show that many people have influenced my thinking and many ideas have influenced my text.

My inquiring is part of a process that contributes to a participatory worldview:

1) My primary purpose is practical, I want to bring love more fully into what I do.

2) I am continually inquiring into meaning and purpose, through meditating on a daily basis, and through practising yoga postures. I pay disciplined attention in a review of actions at the end of each day. I journal stories about my practice. I discipline my appetites, and keep an alignment with my bodily knowing. I do this everyday in an iterative and persistent way.

3) In the extended epistemology of Reason and Heron, I use different forms of knowing, representing experiential knowing through drawing, photos, journalling, poetry and video. In Torbert's four territories of experience I am concerned with the first territory, visioning and enactment of that vision.

4) I am focused on the relational (the criteria against which I ask my work to be judged are relational), and am concerned with reframing what we do together, with bringing a sense of harmony into participatory practice, with supporting relational and inclusive decision making within organisations.

5) I contribute to our joint understanding of a shared reality through living more lovingly, and I show how I bring this into practice through a pedagogy of presence.

Throughout the writing I use the methodological form that Jack Whitehead uses for self-study (Whitehead, 1988).

i)   I experience concern because I feel my values are negated (love is hidden, it feels uncomfortable)

ii)   I imagine a solution – I think where is this discomfort coming from, how do I explain it, how does this alter my action

iii)   I act in the direction of this solution in the act of writing from my bodily knowing

iv)   I evaluate the outcome, in this case my felt experience, the resonance of my response.

v)   I modify my actions and sometimes the meaning of my values in the sense memory that I hold in my body.

Love is both the landscape into which I inquire and a focus that is beyond my horizon.

I have used a wide range of models to inform my thinking, these are:

- First, Second and Third person inquiry practices (Reason and Bradbury, 2001)

- Torbert's Four territories of experience and Four parts of speech (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000)

- Jack Whitehead methodological form for self study (Whitehead, 1988)

- Judi Marshall's work on inner and outer arcs of attention (Marshall, 2001)

- Hindu techniques and models of self, including references to Buddhist practice and a Christian viewpoint (Iyengar, 1966), (Verala,Thompson & Roche, 1991)

- Rayner's work on inclusionality and the Complex Self (Rayner, 2004)

Throughout this process, I have been concerned to keep the sense of love that is felt in the body as my directional guide.

EXTENDED EPISTEMOLOGY AND CLAIMS TO TRUTH

I develop my propositional knowledge using the extended epistemology of Reason and Heron, where practical knowing is knowing 'how to', propositional knowing is knowing 'about', presentational knowing is knowing in 'imagery and metaphor', and experiential knowing is knowing 'by encounter'
:

Practical knowing

Propositional knowing

Presentational knowing

Experiential knowing
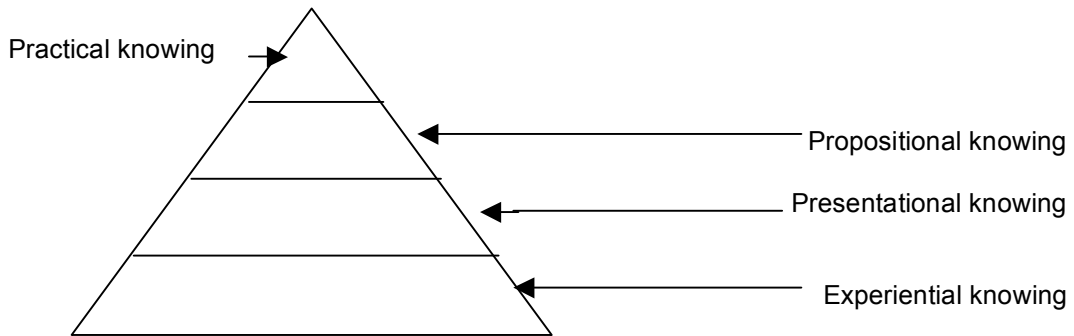
(Heron, 1996, p.53)

Heron goes on to suggest that any claim to truth must show 'a congruence between the four ways of knowing … the experiential knowing of what is present, the presentational knowing of imaginal patterns, the propositional knowing of conceptual constructs and the practical knowing of skills and competencies' (ibid. p.164).

I develop my method by combining spiritual practice and first person practice. Using journalled accounts of action to re-immerse myself in the experience, I bring it into my action in a series of iterative reflections that incorporate daily spiritual practice. Propositional knowing, that eventually becomes my living educational theory is then developed from this practical knowing. The 'imaginal patterns' of presentational knowing run alongside this in drawing, photos and video work.

Propositional knowing

Presentational knowing

Practical knowing

Experiential knowing
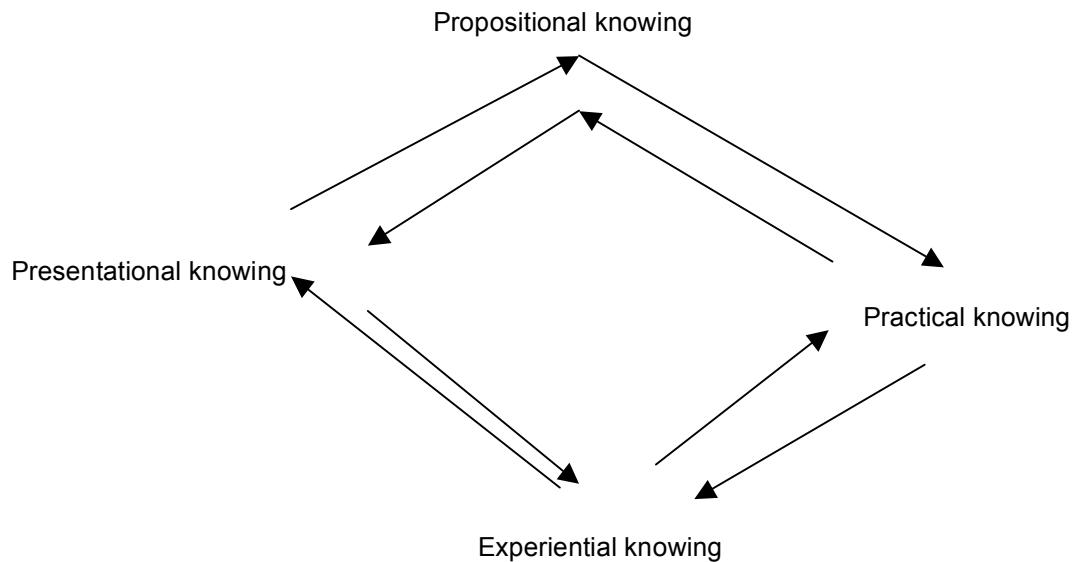
Bi-polar Congruence and the dialectical relation, taken from Heron (ibid. p.57)

Heron refers to the inner rectangle as 'grounding truth values' and the outer rectangle as 'consummating being-values'.

Heron maintains that this bi-polar congruence shows a dialectical relation between 'being coming into action' and 'knowing the truth in the action'.

I bring 'being' into relation with 'action' as I inquire. I take experiential knowing and situate it in social and participative action, iteratively allowing one process to inform the other. Peter Reason has written, 'Compassionate action is both the purpose and the test of knowing' (Reason, 2000 p.17), and it is this dialogic relation that is at the heart of my inquiry.

ACTION RESEARCH MODELS AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Reason makes the distinction between first, second and third person research practices (Reason and Bradbury, 2001 p. xxv), where first person research, 'brings inquiry into more and more moments of action' (ibid. p. xxvi). First person research develops an inquiring attitude, brought to life through values lived through action.

Value-laden first person inquiry is a perspective shared by both action research and by everyday spiritual practice.

Reason suggests that action research can also be seen as, 'not just a form of knowledge creation, but as a spiritual path…' (Reason, 2000 p. 19). However, action research is unlike spiritual practice in that it actively seeks practical outcomes. Spiritual practice on the other hand, seeks to develop an inner knowing, the development of divine consciousness, which might lead to change that, may (but may not), be observable.

Spiritual practice can be practical. St. Ignatius in the 15th century and St. Benedict in the 6th century are examples of holy men who translated the meaning of the Holy Scriptures into practical exercises and rules for living a good life.   These ways of living in God remain alive today in Christian communities of prayer and practise across the world. Faith, discipline and love of and for, God are the components of living a spiritual life.   This is similar to the Paths to enlightenment in Hinduism, the Path of Duty and the Path of Love.

Action research provides an evaluative perspective for those practising spiritual disciplines. I would draw similarities with the process that Coghlan (Coghlan, 2005) refers to in relation to Ignatian spirituality and action research. He says,

> 'For those who live out of a spirituality that might be termed Ignatian, the action research perspective can draw together the processes of Ignatian spirituality into a mode of inquiry-in-action whereby the first person experience of God at work in a person's life, the second person practice of engaging in faith inquiry and working with others to live and act congruently … may find that they can draw on action research for an articulation of rigour and quality of inquiry that can enrich their practice of Ignatian spirituality' (Coghlan, 2005 p. 104).

Winter (Winter, 2003) makes the distinction between modality of consciousness and practice when he links the Buddhist meditation practice of *metta,* 'loving kindness', to developing positive feelings in the action researcher. Heron also identifies the potential for spiritual practice in developing the skills of action research (Heron, 1996 p. 122).

The skills of reflection are common to both spiritual practice and action research. The difference between them is in the direction of the focus. In action research the focus is on action supported by reflection, and in spiritual practice the focus is on reflection, the truth of which can be supported by action.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS

Reason and Bradbury (2001) say that 'first person research practice is best conducted in the company of friends and colleagues who can provide support and challenge' (ibid. p. xxvi).   First person inquiry shows its relevance to action, through a dialogic relation with others and / or development of new skills and social practices.

Engagement with others does not necessarily involve formal inquiry groups, provided that the inquirer can show involvement with others in the process of inquiring. (Marshall, 2001) and (Marshall, 2004).

Judi Marshall (Marshall, 2004) shows how she conducts her first person inquiry firstly by situating it in 'living systemic thinking' which she says is 'a form of inquiry, seeking to act with context sensitivity and agency in a multi-dimensional world' (ibid. p.315). She places importance on attentional practices that become clear to her, that arise as a consequence of her inquiring approaches (ibid. p. 323).

By comparison, my sense making arises within a dynamic inclusional field within which the permeable aspects of being influence both thought and action. Similarly to Marshall, my inquiry disciplines includes engagement with others as well as feedback and comments on my writings.

To show how I shape my inquiry, I list the relational aspects of my research process as:

• **Realising the relation of emotion, thought and action in meditation.** These are the 'facts' of my ontology that I can 'see' rather than 'know', and that I understand through spiritual practice and that I describe in the language of phenomenology (Bortroft, 1996).
• **Holding the sense of 'the other' as part of the self in the act of writing.** This is an extension of Ruddick's (Ruddick, 1989) process of writing through 'feeling' whilst thinking about purpose. This sense of the other permeates all the writing.   Sometimes 'the other' is a memory of an event, as described in the Prologue; sometimes it is a sensed memory of love.

- **Immersion in the synaesthetic act of writing.** This is a step on from holding the sense of the other. Here the mental frame becomes subservient to action. In the act of writing it is as if the words write themselves and have a life of their own. This is the submission of will, a collapse of the subjective / objective, of the binary relation, the outcome of which can be perceived by others.

- **Describing experience through theory.** An example of writing in this way is provided in the previous chapter, and is integrated into my methodology in Part Two and Part Three.

- **Framing experience with theory.** This is the basis of my reflective writing, which is described in Chapter Two.

- **Theorising action.** Theorising action occurs at the end of each cycle of my inquiry. It is present in the final paragraphs of the case example given below.

- **Feedback from others in conversation.** I have included accounts of conversation with others involved in first person research, as well as with others with whom I am professionally involved. In the case example given later in this Chapter, I 'process' conflict in an inquiry group through journalling and through conversation.

- **Inquiring with others on the nature of inquiring relationships.** The case example arose in an inquiry group that took place during my research.

- **Research cycling, moving between acting, reflecting, inquiring with others.** This is demonstrated both in the case example in this Chapter, as well as in Chapter Six and in Chapter Eight.

- **Feedback from others in writing.** Examples of this feedback with explanation can be found in the concluding section in this chapter.

THE DIALOGIC RELATION

As I stand on the edge of the uncomfortable gaps between opposing theories, or between incongruent life experiences, I inquire into the nature of the relation between them. I create new understanding from my accounts of action. It is this dialogic relation that informs my inquiry.

My reflexivity follows the methodological form that Jack Whitehead suggests for living action researchers investigating the question, 'How do I improve my practice?' (Whitehead, 1988) except that here my inquiry is, 'How can I express love through my actions?'

> 'i) I experience a concern because my *(spiritual)* values are negated
>
> ii) I imagine a solution
>
> iii) I act in the direction of this solution
>
> iv) I evaluate the outcomes of actions
>
> v) I modify the meaning of my values, problems, ideas and actions in the light of evaluations' (Whitehead, 2004b [italics insertion are my additions to the text]).

Living the inner contradiction

How do I recognise when my values are negated?   I recognise this by feeling the discomforted responses of my body[1].

I decide to critique Torbert's Leadership Development profile not only because it cuts across my views on gender and linear developmental learning models, but also because I feel resistant to it. I want to stop, put my hand up against these ideas like a policeman stopping the traffic. I feel a need to prevent the idea travelling further.

In relation to Griffin's ideas about the emergence of leadership and Complexity Theory, I move with much of the its flow. My mouth is in a subtle 'ooo - this is

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[1] This embodied process is described fully in Chapter Six

nice' shape until I reach his arguments for the similarity of Bohm's Implicate Order and Kantian ideas, then my nose wrinkles and there is a sharp intake of breath. I know that I need to research the discomfort I feel, that I need to understand this discomfort better.

So when I reject this notion or prefer that idea, these are felt experiences. Going through the five stages of the question, 'How can I improve the expression of loving values through my action? My responses to these stages are mirrored inwardly and well as expressed analytically.

This is how I now come to reword the process:

- I experience concern because I feel my values are negated (love is hidden, it feels uncomfortable)
- I imagine a solution – I think where is this discomfort coming from, how do I explain it, how does this alter my action
- I act in the direction of this solution in the act of writing from my bodily knowing
- I evaluate the outcome, in this case my felt experience, the reflexive resonance of my response.
- I modify my actions and sometimes the meaning of my values in the sense memory that I hold in my body.

The movement of the body reflects the movements of consciousness in spiritual practice; the mind moves the body. If thought contradicts speech, it shows in the body. If speech contradicts action, it shows in the body. This is how embodied writing is integrated into my methodology. I attend to these movements, they help me to identify my concern and indicate my direction.

Feedback from others in conversation and inquiring with others

In order to develop my awareness in practice, I reflect on the gaps between my intention and my action. How I do this is shown in the case example below:

CASE EXAMPLE ONE: Working with Contradiction in an Inquiry Group

My first person research included a joint inquiry into the dynamics of group process in a self-facilitated group.

The narrative is in five parts:

- I tell the story through a conversation with one of the participants as we recall the incident and explore our differing perspectives.
- I tell the story from my own point of view. This is written from an embodied and emotional viewpoint, fully immersing myself in the experience.
- I reflect on my earlier conversation and my emotional immersion, and consider my learning.
- I come to tentative conclusions about the relation of emotion, conversation and group dynamic.
- I reflect on, and evaluate, the meaning of this experience as I consider group dynamics in organisations.

Clarifying my concern in conversation:

M said:

She's right, we have formed a group that she is not part of, we talk about her behind her back, and somewhere she knows this.

There is always someone who doesn't join, if she weren't there it would be me.

When you said you did not care I was liberated, she was liberated.

If we do not care, then we are putting the bomb on the table.

What do I think about that? I say:

I do not care that I upset her because I am tired of upsetting her. She only wants what she wants, not what I want. She does not alter what she wants, she keeps asking for the same thing over and over, but not taking it, getting upset, being upsetting to others, she refuses to just take what she wants, and wants to get upset with us for not giving it to her.

I do not think that it is inevitable, that there is always someone carrying the distress in a group, and anyway that is not the same thing as 'always having someone who challenges the group'.

Surely the point of an Inquiry group is to ride the distress, live through it, certainly not get stuck in it.

Ahhhhhh, that was why I felt stuck and said I felt stuck. I felt stuck in distress. My distress or hers? Both I think. What do I care about being stuck? A lot, I care a lot about being stuck, and I have been thinking about my lack of passion today and yesterday. 'I lack passion, I have been saying, I must care about something. I am getting old, over satisfied, not challenged enough, too used to the easy life.'

S said:

Well if we do not care (about each other) then we just have position statements.

I think:

She caused the exact situation that she did not want by wanting it not taking it and getting upset.

I even read out my journalling after the last session…

'And what did I see that we might have created together today? A sense of how we bring ourselves into the inquiry, and how we ask for attention. A sense of how it might be possible to satisfy our individual (satiated was a word X brought) inquiry by asking in a different way, by not asking but introducing the ideas we

are working with. By linking, bringing my interest in – say – how we work together (in the CVN or in this inquiry), into the conversation following M's example of working with (facilitating) a network.

Perhaps looking for the commonalties, or speaking up about the contradictions, or even working contrapuntally, we begin to weave through the conversation something of our individual inquiries not necessarily articulated in the usual way. Do we begin in this way to speak outside the 'normal' addictive patterns of organisational, binding behaviours, whilst continuing to organise ourselves?'

And I didn't notice my own repeating addictive pattern settling in! So why did I choose to read this? There's always a reason, just look more closely Eleanor.

Looking more closely: Immersing myself in the experience.

She said to me:
'What you said just now has really upset me, Eleanor.'

I looked at her, and thought:
She says she's upset, but she doesn't look upset, and I heard the words expressed in a way, which reminded me of a schoolteacher with a wagging forefinger, wagging it at me.

She was crying just then, but she's not crying now, she looks OK now, what does she mean when she says that I have upset her, what is she expecting from me now?

We have been around this cycle three times, it's the same every time and I am tired of it, don't have the energy to repeat the same postures again. I am not learning anything, getting nothing out of the repeats except despair and feelings of disempowerment.

M has just showed her that she mistook what X said about 'purpose' for what the group as a whole thinks. She paid no attention to that; it was such good feedback…ahhhhhhhhHHHHH. Perhaps she really meant that she is upset with Mad because I have already forgotten what I said, was it upsetting?

I guess as I spoke I was thinking that she needs to pay attention to insights that might help her, even if they are uncomfortable.

There is a game going on here, she is manipulating us (me), and I want to step aside from the possibility that we are about to play the same game with the same rules for the fourth time. Fuck it. THIS is how I feel; I will play the same game as her, be childish, and blurt out what I am feeling.

'I don't care if you are upset'. There – now it's out.
What I meant was, 'I do not care to play your game just now, so I am 'going away', ducking out of this one, to avoid answering you because in this instant I do not know how to respond in a way which does not invite another repeat of the pattern that fills me with despair. I won't do your despair just now, if it's all the same to you.'

Imagining solutions: How can I learn from this?

If I am unable to get into a posture, an asana, then I reflect on it, work it out, try out parts of the posture, exercise, wait for the ideas to come. I meditate, reflect on the problem, get involved in it in as many ways as possible.

I realise that I am unable to respond when I scent the whiff of manipulation, I am unable to respond to the victim asking to be made victim again, asking for help and ignoring opportunities (as I see them) to practise differently. The only people that I feel compassion for in these circumstances are my children; the rest can go hang themselves.

This is absolutely appalling. It 'places the bomb on the table', it is my serious problem, and it is my spiritual block, a knot in the psyche. Prattling on about forgiveness makes not a jot of difference, I have known about this for the last 20 years and its still there. I do not notice as it creeps up again, it renders me speechless, sends me into infancy and only then do I begin to realise – it's got me again!

Now recognising, seeing the 'bomb' is there, I skirt around it, go away, think. It's no good the knot remains firmly tied, and it will reappear when I least expect it.

Reflecting again (as I am supposed to be meditating) the thought came to me. Write stories about victims and rescuers, talk about being a victim and about forgiveness – like doing the asanas - try bits of the exercise out and perhaps some cognitive understanding of what it takes to stop repeating my pattern will arise.

That and keep on practising the 5th Limb of yoga, pratyahara, control of desire.

I keep asking for what I want, and when it is offered I refuse to take up the opportunity and start feeling stuck. I feel the same way when I think that I see another person getting stuck in their repeating patterns.

This is what I take and what I have learned from working together in last Friday's Inquiry Group.

Evaluation: What might happen differently?

What is the nature of this conversation? It is one I have had many times, usually in an organisational context, in which someone is refusing or unable to see my perspective and I start to react in habitual ways.

There are five of us in this inquiry group; three people have been specific about wanting an unfacilitated unstructured Inquiry, one has been easy going about the

conduct of the group, and one wants us to agree to structure time for each participant to work on individual issues. At every meeting we have an unresolved (and now increasingly upsetting) conversation about this difference that is initiated by the person who would like boundaried delineated time for herself.

We are becoming less inquiring on this issue, as demonstrated in the three stories above. Passions are running high, of which some are controlled and others are not. I feel that there is not an equitable recognition of our (and my) emotional states, and three of us are compensating for this by talking about her behind her back. She says that she feels confused and left out, and suggests that she might be 'carrying the group's distress'.

This is a question about emotional landscape, are we as a group in distress or is the group being distressed by a participant's emotional responses? Probably both are true. Its effect is that we have been unable to construct an imaginary community of Inquiry and so we are creating connections with each other outside the main arena of the group itself.

There is no intimacy possible while these conditions persist, and the potential for generative dialogue is lost because words are not being spoken within a relational matrix. There is no context. Rediscovering our mutuality involves reaffirming our relationships. Our initial agreement to inquire together implies that there is recognition of the needs of both speakers and listeners and this is not happening. So whereas generative dialogue does depend upon the 'continuous generation of difference' (Gergen, 2002) too much emotional imbalance has created a distance that is not productive, that cannot be foreshortened except by generosity.

Whereas sustainable intimate conversations include an element of repetition, echoes of previous speakers' words, this repeating scenario is destroying our coherence and therefore our inquiring capability.

Taking this example into my writing about agape and emotional relationships in organisation. In so doing I clarify the meanings of love.

So, I am beginning to write about the emotional charge that is carried in conversations and the nature of group life in organisations, taking our capacity for gossip and chatting as my mental frame and which I know from experience can be a powerful force for good or ill. And I am considering it from the perspective of knowing in the heart as well as the head, and considering conversation as a means by which staff gain satisfaction with work, that what we do, and how we do it, is formed out of this emotional landscape.

How do we decide whether these emotionally charged conversations are right or wrong? Shotter writes about a particular kind of ethical sensibility that is encapsulated in speech and that enables adult conversation to take place.

'Making sense … within a conversational reality, constructing a grasp of what is being "talked about" from what is "said" is not … a simple one-pass matter of an individual saying a sentence and a listener "understanding" it. … Specifying or determining them (events) sufficiently for the relevant practical purposes involves a complex back and forth process of negotiation both between speaker and hearer, and between what has already been said, and what is currently being said, the making use of tests and assumptions, the use of both the present context and the waiting for something to be said later to make clear what was said earlier, and the use of many other "seen but unnoticed" background features of everyday senses' (Shotter, 1993 p.27).

'This sense, these feelings (which are not properly called emotions), work as standards against which our more explicit formulations are judged for their adequacy and appropriateness' (Shotter, 1993 p.29).

This is an incomplete process of 'giving form to feeling' that happens in conversations, which refers to the imaginary and half formed grounding that people act out in their daily lives and which is given further form to the extent that

people 'act back upon that background to give it further form' (Shotter, 1993 p.79). In this way the imaginary becomes imaginary entities and 'exert a real influence upon the structure of people's lives' (Shotter, 1993 p.80).

Conversation thus becomes an active form of living-in-the moment that gives form to feeling through an emotional landscape that contains an ethical dimension and which enacts itself through the dynamic of mutual interdependence. If I (or we) develop our inner capacity to give voice to agape, then love enters more fully into the conversation by widening the landscape of interaction to include agape's constellation of values.

DEVELOPING LIVING THEORY

Theorising action

Earlier I showed how extended epistemology in Heron's model of bi-polar congruence moved from experiential knowing, to practical knowing, to propositional knowing. Whitehead (1988) suggests that a living form of theory is developed by an individual theorising his / her action. He suggests that by developing propositional knowing, the inquirer learns how to articulate his / her living educational theory. The case example above shows how I clarify the meanings of love by theorising my action in conjunction with the ideas of Shotter (1993). It is this practical and propositional knowledge, combined with the ideas of others, which leads me to develop my living educational theory.

My inquiry is in three stages:
- I give an account of my practice
- I interpret this by immersing myself in the sensed memory of the event
- This then contributes to the development of my propositional knowledge.

I am changed in this process of inquiring as I write and inquire. This is the 'I' of the Complex Self in the inclusional flow, what I see with my 'eye' changes, my mind changes as I write. What remains unchanged is the discipline of spiritual practice and the dialogic practices of first person inquiry.

Research cycling

There is an ebb and flow between the practices of being and the practices of doing. I cannot sit and meditate all day, and I cannot continually act without spending time in reflection. Spiritual practice is a daily practice, as is conversation and work. My inquiry moves between these frames within a 24-hour cycle. The rhythms of writing and inquiring with others overlay daily discipline of first person action and reflection. My journal writing is regular, but not daily. Inquiring with others within communities of practice goes through months of intense and creative activity, and then slows.

Often inquiring with others is the outward focus of my attention, which is then processed in the times of quiet inner reflection. Sometimes it is the work that I do in organisations that is uppermost in my outward attention so that the focus of the inward practise and the learning that arises is more concerned with agency and leadership. It is the movement between these rhythms that provide the opportunities for learning. These are cycles of action and reflection akin to that described by Judi Marshall, where she says,

> 'The …frame I use to image inquiry is that of cycling between action and reflection. At its clearest this may mean planning to engage in some action or exploration, becoming immersed in the chosen territory in an appropriate way, noting as I go along, and then taking a step back and what I have experienced and done, later moving on again to plan another cycle of engagement (Marshall, 2001 p. 434).

In the case examples given above I show how I inquire into a particular event, reflect on it, either alone or with others, come to tentative conclusions, and after further reflection on what this means, taking into account the ideas of others, I begin to theorise my learning. The iterative stages of my inquiry move from action to reflection to theorising, and then back into action.

PEER REVIEW PROCESSES

Feedback from others on writing

I have had many conversations about love in peer supervision and elsewhere over the past two years. These developing discussions have signified a deepening of relationship that has enabled me to bring the non-verbal into language. These conversations have been a creative experience of knowledge production, an exchange of words and meanings without which this thesis would have been poorer and less 'true'.

With Madeline Church (Mad), we formed a peer supervision group with Jack Whitehead as our supervisor. Mad and I have been developing a joint understanding of the meaning of love, how it can come into practice (first) and how it might be possible to describe it (second). We have discovered that we share a particular passion for inquiring into shape-changing, seeing shapes, getting into the shape, speaking the shape, letting the shape change happen, being taken over by the shape, transforming with the shape, not being the shape, shouting at the shape. As I write this I know where Mad is, that she is not writing because she is on holiday but that while in New York she will buy a couple of books we have been referring to … and so on… Luckily, writing this thesis has not been a solitary experience.

Lincoln emphasises this as a characteristic of person-centred interpretive work, as an intense 'lover-model' where parties to the research relationship and their relationships are, 'marked by a deep sense of trust, caring and mutuality' (Lincoln, 1995 p.284). Because the very nature of the social world is relational, 'emerging criteria are relational' (Ibid. p.278), reciprocity becomes an essential component of writing about lived experience. And echoes my experience, with Jack (Whitehead) and with Mad.

Case Example One demonstrates how conversation and feedback informs my inquiry. The importance of conversation in the transfer, exchange and development of meaning is also shown in Chapter Eight.

I found that the feedback from outside action research 'communities of practice' was less challenging and did not move my inquiry forward. Some responses

have been perplexed, others have questioned and some have been enthused. Generally feedback helped to show me how I might explain myself better.

Some examples of the written feedback are given below:

'You seemed to be working through a number of questions, rather than making specific points. I cannot help thinking this is because you have not identified a specific model for relationship between the inner and outer. Because you do not make this explicit I felt I had to infer a number of things. For example, that there is a dichotomy between the interior and the exterior. This may be my reading – but this seemed explicit in the phrase 'male gaze' as if something objective and exterior was bound to have an impact on your perceptions. It seemed quite a mechanistic model – reflected in the phrase 'pressure to conform'. What is it that makes us 'imagine how others might see us'?' (Daniel Bedingfield [my son] on Chapter One: written communication Jan 2004)

'It seems somewhat strange to me that a thesis should go into such detail about intimate and personal matters but not show how these details are objectively relevant to the overall purpose of the paper… but that may have something to do with the way you have been encouraged to approach the exercise. Is it what you refer to as Action Research? Does this entail a sort of self-analysis to assist in developing an objective proposition about the future? If so how? Please explain.' (Lynn Moseley [friend and previous work colleague] on Chapter One: Email communication autumn 2003).

'You mention Eros and male models of leadership which surprised me as (without any background reading) I'd tended to link Eros and female models. I like the way you contrast Eros and Thanatos and suggest the important role of idealism and vision in organisations within a secular society. The discussion of triple loop might go best under the leadership heading, rather than idealism/vision.' (Anna Bowman [friend and previous boss] on Chapter Two: Email communication Feb 2003).

APPLYING ACTION RESEARCH MODELS

In this Chapter I provide a strong methodological discussion by considering extended epistemology, and Heron's model of bi-polar congruence (Heron, 1996). I consider the relational aspects of my inquiry process using Marshall (2001, 2004) as an exemplar, and show how I have engaged with others. I demonstrate how I apply Whitehead's five responses to the question 'How may I improve my practice?' and use this methodology in a case example to show how I develop my living educational theory from propositional knowledge which arises from reflecting on action.

I make the cyclical processes of my inquiry explicit by distinguishing between an initial action account and a series of iterative reflections that follow on from that account. In the seven chapters that follow this one, including those in Part Two and Part Three, only Chapter Five and Chapter Nine are not structured in this way.

Chapter Five is my initial experiential grounding that defines the territory for the rest of my inquiry.

Chapter Nine draws conclusions from the previous two chapters and articulates my theory of a pedagogy of presence.

In concluding this Chapter, the reader should note that my methodology does not develop through an analysis of action research models, or as a consequence of a deliberate decision to adapt one model rather than another to suit my purposes. My action research methodology arises out of my 'already absorbed' knowledge of action research models as I honour my subjective experience and allow love to guide my inquiry. In this way my methodology 'finds me' as I begin to enact the embodied meaning of these models. My methodology discloses itself as I inquire.

In the next chapter I show how this process took place.