

FOURTH CYCLE

4. CAN WE CREATE A LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY FOR A GOOD SOCIAL ORDER?

'How do I relate my educational development to a good social order?'. The 'I' in the question is my own and embodies my sense of personal identity. In trying to relate to the idea and practices of a **good** social order I want to ground my views within my experiences of our research community. In claiming to belong to our community I want to use **we** below in stating what I think are our shared commitments. I don't use **we** lightly and I expect to be subjected to the most savage criticism if I am mistaken in thinking that we share the following views and commitments. The writings of Alasdair MacIntyre (1990) have enabled me to make the following ideas and commitments my own.

Firstly, I think you and I share a similar view of personal identity which rejects the Cartesian Dualism of the independence of our minds and bodies. I think we understand ourselves as thinking bodies. Secondly, we are members of an educational research community which has extended through time. In our community we hold each other responsible and accountable for our actions in enquiries of the kind, '*How do I improve my practice?*' or '*How do I live more fully my values in practice?*'. We have also demonstrated, through our validation exercises on each others' claims to know our professional practice, our capacities to reevaluate our actions in the light of the judgements proposed by each other. I share MacIntyre's belief that *part of being one and the same person throughout our professional lives in education is being continuously liable to account for our actions, attitudes, and beliefs to others within our community.*

I think we understand our lives as capable of being explained. I am meaning this in the sense that we can give reasons for our actions and offer these accounts in a dialectical whole. I am thinking of our art as dialecticians through which we present accounts of our educational development, as an ordered unity which contains evidence of both our capacities for analysis and for synthesis. Because we offer, for public criticism, our accounts of our professional lives in the value-laden practice of education, we understand the necessity of making value-judgements as what constitutes a 'good' life and a 'good' social order.

We are also learning how to communicate the nature of our lives in education and their good. Whilst we experience ourselves as living contradictions in the sense that **the good and the not-good** are experienced simultaneously in our practice, we see our lives as the continuity and unity of a human enquiry whose complete unity will only close with our death. The object of our enquiries is to discover that truth about our life as a whole, which is an indispensable part of the good of that life. We are also committed to justifying our professional practices as educative, in the sense that they are of value in helping our pupils and students to give a **good** form to their own lives.

So on this view our life has the unity of a story with a beginning, a middle and an end, beginning with birth and ending, so far as concerns the final judgement to be passed on it - in respect of the achievement of our good - with death.

Accountability for particular actions and projects cannot be entirely independent of accountability for one's life as a whole, since the adequate characterization of some actions and projects, and these not the least important, depends in part upon how the whole life is to be understood and characterized. And every particular life as a whole exists in its particular parts, in that range of particular actions, transactions, and projects which are the enacted narrative of that life, and as the life of that one particular body. (MacIntyre 1990 pp 196-197)

In making the nature of our own lives and their good the object of our enquiry, we clearly presuppose that there is a truth to be discovered about our life and its good, which may, of course, evade discovery, so we must ask with MacIntyre: *through what form of social engagement and learning can the errors which may obstruct such discovery be brought to light?*

MacIntyre claims that it is only insofar as we subject our claims to dialectical refutation that we can come to know whether and what we know. He says that it is only by belonging to a community systematically engaged in a dialectical enterprise in which the standards of judgement are sovereign over the contending parties that one can begin to learn the truth. By learning the truth he means that we recognise our own error, not error from this or that point of view but error as such. We have all experienced such errors in subjecting our accounts to the criticism of our standards of judgement in our validation groups.

Our enquiries are open in the sense that, as we have presented accounts of what we have said or done, we have amplified, explained, defended, and, where we believed it necessary, we have either modified or abandoned our accounts. In the latter case we have produced a new one.

We are a community which shares this conception of accountability in enquiry and agree with MacIntyre that education involves an initiation into the practices within which dialectical and confessional conversations and self-evaluations are institutionalized. We may disagree that education is primarily concerned with these practices but we agree that such initiation has to,

take the form of a reappropriation by each individual of the history of the formation and transformations of belief through those practices, so that the history of thought and practice is reenacted and the novice learns from that reenactment what the best theses, arguments and doctrines to emerge so far have been...

We also accept that we have to rescrutinize them so that they become genuinely ours and that we attempt to extend them further in ways which expose us further to those evaluations through which accountability is realized.

We accept that it is no trivial matter that all claims to knowledge are the claims of some particular person, developed out of the claims of other particular persons. In particular our community is committed to the view that knowledge is possessed only in and through participation in a history of dialectical encounters.

In following the implications of the above commitments I suggest that we can extend MacIntyre's views by exploring our educational enquiries of the form, 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?', not as the enquiries of moral philosophers but as the educational enquiries of professionals who are practically engaged in assisting learners to give a good form to their own lives. The particular explorations I have in mind involve the descriptions and explanations which you and I, as individual learners, are producing for our own educational development in our different professional contexts as we enquire into the constitution of a good social order. In a paper below I characterise such explanations as constituting a living form of educational theory for and from professional practice.

As you may know, my early research (1970-1982) was concerned with the methodologies, values and epistemology of educational research and educational theory. My later research (1982-95) can be characterised in terms of the development and testing of a living educational theory. In the 1991 version of this Guide I saw my contribution to living educational theory in terms of an enquiry into my educational development in the politics of truth and good order of the workplace. In attempting to relate my educational development to a good social order and cultural renewal I have found it necessary to

engage with the values and practices of others within a network of power relations which are determining what counts as educational knowledge a good order and cultural renewal.

The papers which follow place my view of a living educational theory in its historical context. They begin with an affirmation of the primacy of asking educational questions. They develop into a view of a living educational theory which is grounded in the explanations which individual's produce for their own educational development. They propose a unit of appraisal and standards of judgement for use in judging the validity of such a claim to knowledge. They show how a living educational theory can be understood as part of a process of social transformation which is guided by values constituting a good social order. They also show how such a view of theory can engage directly with those persons (which may be oneself) and conditions which are negating the values of good order.

Thus the papers are organised as follows ;

A) The Primacy of Asking Educational Questions.

B) Creating a Living Educational Theory from questions of the kind, How do I Improve my Practice?

C) Changing views on the nature of educational theory

D) The Unit of Appraisal and the Standards of Judgement for use in judging the validity of an individual's claim to educational development.

E) Can we create a living educational theory for a good social order?

4.1 THE PRIMACY OF ASKING AN EDUCATIONAL QUESTION.

Material from the MEd tutorial booklet for Action Research 1, 1990

I want to start by claiming that you and I are similar in that you, like me, are conscious of asking yourself a question of the form, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. I also want to locate such questioning within the value-laden contexts of your practical activities in education. I also want to test the validity of my assumption that you are also a reflective practitioner in the sense that you can offer a description and explanation for your own educational activities when asked for one. My third assumption is that you will recognise in your actions, a form of problem solving in which you have experienced a tension because you are not living fully your values in your practice, you will have imagined ways of improving the quality of your practice, chosen a plan to act on, acted and evaluated your effectiveness in the process of change.

From the basis of these three assumptions I want to convince you of the value of describing and explaining your own educational development. What I have in mind is the development of a new view of educational theory which is constituted by the descriptions and explanations which individual learners are producing for their own educational development. I have characterised this view as a 'living' educational theory because it is embodied in yours and other learners living practice (Whitehead 1989). It is 'embodied' in the sense that your descriptions and explanations of present practice contain both an evaluation of past practice and an intention to produce an improvement in practice which is not, as yet, in existence. It is this crucial human capacity to engage in goal directed activities which permits the development of a 'living' theory. When I use the term 'values' I am thinking of those qualities which we use to give our lives their particular forms. I see values, as qualities whose meaning becomes clarified in the course of their emergence in practice in particular contexts. We will be exploring the nature of educational values in the next session and I will be suggesting that we adopt a view of an educational enquiry as a form of enquiry in which we ask questions of the kind, 'How do I live more fully my values in my practice?'

Starting from this base in your capacities to make sense of your life experiences I want to locate our present activities within their social context. I want to do this because I see an understanding of the processes, of living values more fully in practice, as located in particular social contexts. Part of our social context consists of the ideas and practices of other individuals and I thus judge a process as 'educative' partly in terms of the evidence which shows an integration of the ideas of others in one's own understandings. For example as part of the process of answering the question, 'What constitutes an enquiry as educational?', I will integrate some ideas from Gadamer and Collingwood.

Gadamer's ideas appealed to me because I could identify with his emphasis on the importance of forming a question. For Gadamer, questioning is a 'passion', He says that questions press upon us when our experiences conflict with our preconceived opinions. He believes that the art of questioning is not the art of avoiding the pressure of opinion.

"It is not an art in the sense that the Greeks speak of techne, not a craft that can be taught and by means of which we would master the knowledge of truth". Drawing on Plato's Seventh Letter he distinguishes the unique character of the art of dialectic from everything that can be taught and learned. He does not see the art of dialectic as the art of being able to win every argument. On the contrary, he says it is possible that someone who is practising the art of dialectic, ie the art of questioning and of seeking truth, comes off worse in the argument in the eyes of those listening to it."

According to Gadamer, dialectic, as the art of asking questions, proves itself only because the person who knows how to ask questions is able to persist in his questioning. I see a characteristic of this persistence as being able to preserve one's openness to the possibilities which life itself permits. The art of questioning is that of being able to continue with one's questions. Gadamer refers to, dialectic as the art of conducting a real conversation.

"To conduct a conversation requires first of all that the partners to it do not talk at cross purposes. Hence its necessary structure is that of question and answer. the first condition of the art of conversation is to ensure that the other person is with us... To conduct a conversation.. requires that one does not try to out-argue the other person, but that one really considers the weight of the other's opinion. Hence it is an art of testing. But the art of testing is the art of questioning. For we have seen that to question means to lay open, to place in the open. As against the solidity of opinions, questioning makes the object and all its possibilities fluid. A person who possesses the 'art' of questioning is a person who is able to prevent the suppression of questions by the dominant opinion.... Thus the meaning of a sentence is relative to the question to which it is a reply (my emphasis) , ie, it necessarily goes beyond what is said in it. The logic of the human sciences is, then, as appears from what we have said a logic of the question. Despite Plato we are not very ready for such a logic."

I was shocked by this last sentence. What could it mean? Despite Plato we are not very ready for a logic of question and answer. I read on with increasing excitement to the point where he states that R.G. Collingwood. developed the idea of a logic of question and answer, but unfortunately did not develop it

systematically before he died. Having assimilated Gadamer's views on the art of conversation and of the necessity of finding a common language. I then found myself disagreeing with the following ideas on the relationship between 'I', 'language' and 'the world'.

"Every conversation presupposes a common language, or, it creates a common language. Something is placed in the centre, as the Greeks said, which the partners to the dialogue both share and concerning which they can exchange ideas with one another. Hence agreement concerning the object, which it is the purpose of the conversation to bring about, necessarily means that a common language must first be worked out in the conversation. This is not an external matter of simply adjusting our tools, nor is it even right to say that the partners adapt themselves to one another but, rather, in the successful conversation they both come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a new community. To reach an understanding with one's partner in a dialogue is not merely a matter of total self-expression and the successful assertion of one's own point of view, but a transformation into a communion, in which we do not remain what we were."

Having agreed with Gadamer up to this point I was disappointed to discover this basic idea which moved his enquiry forward,

"Our enquiry has been guided by the basic idea that language is a central point where 'I' and the world meet or, rather, manifest their original unity." (G. 431)

The basic difference between Gadamer's enquiry and my own is that I do not hold that language is a central point where 'I' and the world manifest their original unity. I begin with the experience of 'I' as a living contradiction in the world in which I am conscious of holding values which are at the same time negated in practice. I have no understanding of any 'original unity'. If there is to be unity I see my enquiry as an attempt to understand how to create a unity between 'I' and the world.

I did however find myself in complete accord with the following ideas of Collingwood on the relationship between a dialectical, or question and answer form, and the propositional form,

"I began by observing that you cannot find out what a man means by simply studying his spoken or written statements, even though he has spoken or written with perfect command of language and perfectly truthful intention. In order to find out his meaning you must also know what the question was (a question in his own mind, and presumed by him to be in yours) to which the thing he has said or written was meant as an answer.... The same principle applied to the idea of truth. If the meaning of a proposition is relative to the question it answers, its truth must be relative to the same thing. Meaning, agreement and contradiction, truth and falsehood, none of these belonged to propositions in their own right, propositions by themselves; they belonged only to propositions as the answers to questions : each proposition answering a question strictly correlative to itself.

Here I parted company with what I called propositional logic, and its offspring the generally recognized theories of truth. According to propositional logic (under which denomination I include the so-called 'traditional' logic, the 'idealistic' logic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the 'symbolic' logic of the nineteenth and twentieth) truth or falsehood, which are what logic is chiefly concerned with, belongs to propositions as such.... This attempt to correlate the logical proposition with the grammatical indicative sentence has never been altogether satisfactory. There have always been people who saw that the true 'unit of thought' was not the proposition but something more complex in which the proposition served as answer to a question. Not only Bacon and Descartes, but Plato and Kant, come to mind as examples. When Plato described thinking as a 'dialogue of the soul with itself', he meant (as we know from his own dialogues) that it was a process of question and answer, and that of these two elements the primacy belongs to the questioning activity, the Socrates within us. When Kant said that it takes a wise man to know what questions he can reasonably ask, he was in effect repudiating a merely propositional logic and demanding a logic of question and answer.... For a logic of propositions I wanted to substitute what I called a logic of question and answer. It seemed to me that truth, if that meant the kind of thing which I was accustomed to pursue in my ordinary work as a philosopher or historian - truth in the sense in which a philosophical theory or an historical narrative is called true, which seemed to me the proper sense of the word - was something that belonged not to any single proposition, nor even, as the coherence-theorists maintained, to a complex of propositions taken together; but to a complex consisting of questions and answers. The structure of this complex had, of course, never been studied by propositional logic; but with help from Bacon, Descartes, and others I could hazard a few statements about it. Each question and each answer in a given complex had to be relevant or appropriate, and to 'belong' both to the whole and to the place it occupied in the whole. Each question had to 'arise'; there must be that about it whose absence we condemn when we refuse to answer a question on the ground that it 'doesn't arise'. Each answer must be 'the right' answer to the question it professes to answer.

By 'right' I do not mean 'true'. The 'right' answer to a question is the answer which enables us to get ahead with the process of questioning and answering. It follows, too, and this is what especially struck me at the time, that whereas no two propositions can be in themselves mutually contradictory, there are many cases in which one and the same pair of propositions are capable of being thought either that or the opposites, according as the questions they were meant to answer are reconstructed in one way or in another".

I accept and live with Collingwood's point below that there is an intimate and mutual dependence between theory and practice, 'thought depending upon what the thinker learned by experience in action, action depending upon how he thought of himself and the world'. I also accept the implications of working in education as a vocation in the sense that education, as a value-laden practical activity places a responsibility on the educator to live values in practice. I see educators as moral agents in Collingwood's sense below.

"I was also working at a rapprochement between theory and practice. My first efforts in this direction were attempts to obey what I felt as a call to resist the moral corruption propagated by the 'realist' dogma that moral philosophy does no more than study in a purely theoretical spirit a subject matter which it leaves wholly unaffected by that investigation.

The opposite of this dogma seemed to me not only a truth, but a truth which, for the sake of his integrity and efficacy as a moral agent in the wider sense of that term, ought to be familiar to every human being: namely, that in his capacity as a moral, political, or economic agent he lives not in a world of 'hard facts' to which 'thoughts' make no difference, but in a world of 'thoughts'; that if you change the moral, political, and economic 'theories' generally accepted by the society in which he lives, you change the character of his world; and that if you change his own 'theories' you change his relation to that world; so that in either case you change the ways in which he acts.....There were, I held, no merely moral actions, no merely political actions, and no merely economic actions. Every action was moral, political, and economic. But although actions were not to be divided into three separate classes - the moral, the political and the economic - these three characteristics, their morality, their politicality, and their economicity, must be distinguished and not confused as they are, for example, by utilitarianism, which offers an account of economicity when professing to offer one of morality.....The rapprochement between theory and practice was equally incomplete. I no longer thought of them as mutually independent: It was that the relation between them was one of intimate and mutual dependence, thought depending upon what the thinker learned by experience in action, action depending upon how he thought of himself and the world;"

What I hope to have done in the readings for this first session is to sketch out the basic assumptions in the stance I intend to adopt. These assumptions are open to challenge. They will not be abandoned lightly but have been opened up for your criticism because of my commitment to a view of research-based professionalism in education in which it is a responsibility of the researcher to submit her or his work to public tests of validity. I relate this commitment to MacIntyre's view (1988) that,

"The rival claims to truth of contending traditions of enquiry depend for their vindication upon the adequacy and the explanatory power of the histories which the resources of each of those traditions in conflict enable their adherents to write." (p403)

I intend to make your criticisms welcome and to 'practice what I preach' in the sense of helping to develop a conversational research community in which you experience the value of academic freedom in helping to take your own enquiries forward.

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**4.2 CREATING A LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY FROM QUESTIONS OF THE KIND,
'HOW DO I IMPROVE MY PRACTICE?'**

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SUMMARY

This paper argues that a living educational theory of professional practice can be constructed from practitioner's enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. The significance of 'I' existing as a living contradiction in such enquiries is considered and other epistemological issues related to values, validity and generalisability are discussed from the living perspective. The process of gaining academic legitimation for a living form of theory is examined in terms of the politics of truth within our Institutions of Higher Education.

Have you ever made a claim to know your own educational development and subjected the claim to public criticism? If you have, what does such a claim to educational knowledge look like?

I'm assuming that all readers of this Journal will at some time have asked themselves questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?', and will have endeavoured to improve some aspect of their practice. I believe that a systematic reflection on such a process provides insights into the nature of the descriptions and explanations which we would accept as valid accounts of our educational development. I claim that a living educational theory will be produced from such accounts.

The idea that philosophers interpret the world whilst the point is to improve it, is not a new idea. I have been urging my fellow academics for some years (Whitehead 1982) to carry out an investigation into their own educational development as they question themselves on how they are improving their practice. I believe that academics who write about educational theory should do just that: make a claim to know their development and subject it to public criticism. In this way I believe that they will come to see that it is possible to create a living educational theory which can be related directly to practice.

PRODUCING A LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY

The traditional view is that a theory is a general explanatory framework which can generate descriptions and explanations for empirically observed regularities and the behaviour of individual cases. The explanations are offered in the conceptual terms of propositions which define determinate relationships between variables. Piagetian Cognitive Stage Theory is a classical example of such a theory. By their nature concepts involve grasping principles thus ensuring that theories are presented in general terms.

A commitment to the propositional form can also be seen, surprisingly, in those researchers who are committed to a reflexive approach to understanding. For example, Kilpatrick's (1951) view on the importance of dialogue in educational theory is presented in a propositional form. A more recent example in the work of Gitlin and Goldstein (1987) on a dialogical approach to understanding shows the authors presenting their case within a propositional form. Whilst I can recognise the importance of what they say, about teachers forming relationships that enable school change to be based on a joint inquiry into what is really appropriate, I believe that the propositional form of presentation will prevent them getting closer to answering their final, dialogical question, 'How can we encourage the conditions necessary for teachers to enter into a dialogue aimed at understanding?'

Even those academics one would expect to understand the need to create an alternative to the propositional form of theory remain within it. For example Donald Schon (1983) points out that,

"when someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case."

Schon is however committed to the fundamental category of established theory in holding to the propositional form,

"Theories are theories regardless of their origin: there are practical, common-sense theories as well as academic or scientific theories. A theory is not necessarily accepted, good, or true; it is only a set of interconnected propositions that have the same referent - the subject of the theory. Their interconnectedness is reflected in the logic of relationships among propositions: change in propositions at one point in the theory entails changes in propositions elsewhere in it."

Theories are vehicles for explanation, prediction, explanatory theory explains events by setting forth propositions from which these events may be inferred, a predictive theory sets forth propositions from which inferences about future events may be made, and a theory of control describes the conditions under which events of a certain kind may be made to occur. In each case, the theory has an 'if...then....' form."

(Argyris, C. and Schon, D. 1975)

I am arguing that the propositional form is masking the living form and content of an educational theory which can generate valid descriptions and explanations for the educational development of individuals. This is not to deny the importance of propositional forms of understanding. I am arguing for a reconstruction of educational theory into a living form of question and answer which includes propositional contributions from the traditional disciplines of education.

Gadamer (1975) points out that despite Plato we are still not ready for a logic of question and answer. He says that Collingwood (1978) helped to move us forward but died before he could develop this logic in a systematic way. Collingwood points out that if the meaning of a proposition is relative to the question it answers, its truth must be relative to the same thing. I agree with his point that meaning, agreement and

contradiction, truth and falsehood, do not belong to propositions in their own right, they belong only to propositions as the answers to questions.

In saying that the theory should be in a living form, I recognise that this creates a fundamental problem. The way academics think about theory is constrained by propositional logic. All academics working in the field of educational theory present the theory in terms of propositional relationships. However, the purpose of my own text is to direct your attention to the living individuals and the contexts within which a living theory is being produced (Lomax 1986). Again I wish to stress that this is not to deny the importance of propositional forms of understanding. In a living educational theory the logic of the propositional forms, whilst existing within the explanations given by practitioners in making sense of their practice, does not characterise the explanation. Rather the explanation is characterised by the logic of question and answer used in the exploration of questions of the form, 'How do I improve my practice?'

In developing such an approach I have had to come to terms with questions concerning an appropriate methodology for enquiries such as, 'How do I improve this process of education here?'. In looking at video-tapes of my practice I have had to confront the questions which arise on recognising the 'I' in the question as existing as a living contradiction. In the production of an explanation for my practice I have had to question how to include and present values whose meaning can only be clarified in the course of their emergence in practice. I have had to face questions related to validity and generalisability. I have also had to question the power relations which influence the academic legitimacy of a living educational theory.

In such a short article all I can do is outline the present state of my thinking in relation to these questions.

1) 'HOW DO I IMPROVE MY PRACTICE?' - A QUESTION OF METHODOLOGY.

If we look at the locations where a living form of educational theory is being produced (Lomax 1986, McNiff 1988) we can trace the development of a number of teacher/researchers who have used the following form of action/reflection cycle for presenting their claims to know their own educational development as they investigate questions of the form,

'How do I improve this process of education here?'

I experience problems when my educational values are negated in my practice.

I imagine ways of overcoming my problems.

I act on a chosen solution.

I evaluate the outcomes of my actions.

I modify my problems, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluations ...(and the cycle continues).

This form of enquiry falls within the tradition of action research. It can be distinguished from other approaches in the tradition through its inclusion of 'I' as a living contradiction within the presentation of a claim to educational knowledge.

2) A QUESTION OF ACKNOWLEDGING ONE'S EXISTENCE AS A LIVING CONTRADICTION.

My insights about the nature of educational theory have been influenced by viewing video-tapes of my classroom practice. I could see that the 'I' in the question 'How do I improve this process of education here?', existed as a living contradiction. By this I mean that 'I' contained two mutually exclusive opposites, the experience of holding educational values and the experience of their negation.

I searched the back issues of Educational Theory to see if I could find details of similar experiences reported by other researchers. I began to appreciate how the crucial issues of logic and values continued to reappear in the Journal. From Cunningham's (1953) analysis of the 'Extensional Limits of Aristotelean Logic', through Mosier's (1967), 'From Enquirylogic to Symbolic logic', to Tostberg's (1976), 'Observations of the Logic Bases of Educational Policy', the debate about the logical basis of educational theory continues to rage in the literature.

A similar debate can be seen in the realm of values. We have "The role of Value Theory in Education" (Butler 1954), 'Are Values Verifiable (Bayles 1960), 'Education and some moves towards a Value Methodology (Clayton 1969) and 'Knowledge and Values' (Smith 1976). What these articles pick out is the continuing concern of educational researchers with the fundamental problems of logic and values in the production of educational theory.

I began to understand the concrete problems experienced by adherents to dialectical and propositional logics when they try to establish a sustained dialogue. The nucleus of dialectics, contradiction, is eliminated from descriptions and explanations presented in the propositional form (Popper 1963). Dialecticians claim that the propositional form masks the dialectical nature of reality (Marcuse 1964). I traced the tension between these logics to differences between Plato and Aristotle. In the Phaedrus, Socrates tells us that there are two ways of coming to know. We break things down into their separate components and we hold things together under a general idea. He says that those thinkers who can hold both the one and the many together he calls dialecticians. Aristotle, on the other hand demands, in his work on interpretation, that the questioner puts his question into a definite form and asks whether or not a person has a particular characteristic or not. Aristotle's propositional logic eliminates contradictions from correct thought.

An understanding of a living form developed, in my case, from the combination of the following insight from Wittgenstein with visual records of practice.

"I" is not the name of a person, nor "here" of a place, and "this" is not a name. But they are connected with names. Names are explained by means of them. It is also true that it is characteristic of physics not to use these words." (Wittgenstein 1953)

Now 'I', 'this' and 'here', are contained within questions of the form, 'How do I improve this process of education here?'. In viewing video-tapes of our own educational practices I believe that we can see our own 'I's existing as living contradictions. This revelation, through the visual record, is crucial for the reconstruction of educational theory. Yet there is a tendency to reduce the significance of "I" as it appears on a page of text. It is so easy to see the word 'I' and think of this as simply referring to a person. The "I" remains formal and is rarely examined for content in itself. When you view yourself on video you can see and experience your 'I' containing content in itself. By this I mean that you see yourself as a living contradiction, holding educational values whilst at the same time negating them. Is it not such tension, caused by this contradiction, which moves us to imagine alternative ways of improving our situation? By integrating such contradictions in the presentations of our claims to know our educational practice we can construct descriptions and explanations for the educational development of individuals (King 1987). Rather than conceive educational theory as a set of propositional relations from which we generate such descriptions and explanations I am suggesting we produce educational theory in the living form of dialogues (Larter 1987, Jensen 1987) which have their focus in the descriptions and explanations which practitioners are producing for their own value-laden practice.

3) HOW DO WE SHOW OUR VALUES IN ACTION?

The reason that values are fundamental to educational theory is that education is a value-laden practical activity. We cannot distinguish a process as education without making a value-judgement. I am taking such values to be the human goals which we use to give our lives their particular form. These values, which are embodied in our practice, are often referred to in terms such as freedom, justice, democracy, (Peters 1966) and love and productive work (Fromm 1960). When offering an explanation for an individual's educational development these values can be used as reasons for action. For example, if a person is experiencing the negation of freedom, yet believes that she should be free, then the reason why she is acting to become free can be given in terms of freedom, ie, I am acting in this way because I value my freedom. If someone asks why you are working to overcome anti-democratic forces in the work place then I believe that a commitment to the value of democracy would count as a reason to explain your actions. I do not believe that values are the type of qualities whose meanings can be communicated solely through a propositional form. I think values are embodied in our practice and their meaning can be communicated in the course of their emergence in practice. To understand the values, which move our educational development forward, I think we should start with records of our experience of their negation (Larter 1985,1987). I want to stress the importance of the visual records of our practice. In using such records we can both experience ourselves as living contradictions and communicate our understanding of the value-laden practical activity of education.

Through the use of video-tape the teachers can engage in dialogues with colleagues about their practice. They can show the places where their values are negated. A clear understanding of these values can be shown to emerge in practice through time and struggle (Jensen 1987). The kind of theory I have in mind forms part of the educational practices of the individuals concerned. It is not a theory which can be constituted into a propositional form. It is a description and explanation of practice which is part of the living form of the practice itself. I have suggested a dialogical form enables such a theory to be presented for public criticism. Within this form the action reflection cycle has been found (Lomax 1986) to be an appropriate way of investigating questions of the kind, 'How do we improve this process of education here?'. In this cycle we can study the gradual emergence of our values through time as we struggle to overcome the experience of their negation. We can describe and explain an individual's attempts to

improve his or her educational practice (Foster 1980). This approach to educational theory is being developed in a community of educational researchers who are committed to forming and sustaining a dialogical community (Bernstein 1983) and who are willing to offer, for public criticism, records of their practice which are integrated within their claims to know this practice (Lomax 1986). I am suggesting that a form of question and answer can also show how to incorporate insights in the conceptual terms of the traditional forms of knowledge whilst acknowledging the existence of ourselves as living contradictions as we refer to the records of our practice.

4) HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WHAT THE RESEACHER SAYS IS TRUE? - A QUESTION OF VALIDITY.

Questions of validity are fundamentally important in all research which is concerned with the generation and testing of theory. Researchers need to know what to use as the unit of appraisal and the standards of judgement in order to test a claim to educational knowledge. I suggest that the unit of appraisal is the individual's claim to know his or her educational development. Within this unit of appraisal I use methodological, logical, ethical and aesthetic standards to judge the validity of the claim to knowledge (Whitehead and Foster 1984).

Whilst most researchers may find it strange to take a unit of appraisal as their claim to know their educational development I think the unit is clearly comprehensible. My commitment to this unit owes a great deal to the work of Michael Polanyi. As I read *Personal Knowledge* (Polanyi 1958), and reflected on my positivist approach to research (Whitehead 1972), Polanyi's work fulfilled its purpose of, "stripping away the crippling mutilations which centuries of objectivist thought have imposed on the minds of men".

"In grounding my epistemology in Personal Knowledge I am conscious that I have taken a decision to understand the world from my own point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising his personal judgement responsibly with universal intent. This commitment determines the nature of the unit of appraisal in my claim to knowledge. The unit is the individual's claim to know his or her own educational development." (Whitehead 1985).

I have given above some indication of the nature of the standards of judgement I use to test the validity of an individual's claim to know their own educational development. The questions I ask in judging the validity of the claim include,

- a) Was the enquiry carried out in a systematic way? One methodological criteria I have used is the action reflection cycle described above (Foster 1980, Forrest 1983)
- b) Are the values used to distinguish the claim to knowledge as educational knowledge clearly shown and justified?
- c) Does the claim contain evidence of a critical accommodation of propositional contributions from the traditional disciplines of education?
- d) Are the assertions made in the claim clearly justified?
- e) Is there evidence of an enquiring and critical approach to an educational problem?

I characterise the application of these criteria as an approach to social validation. They are related to Habermas' view on the claims to validity I am making if I wish to participate in a process of reaching understanding with you. Habermas (1976) says that I must choose a comprehensible expression so that we can understand one another. I must have the intention of communicating a true proposition so that we can share my claim to knowledge. I must want to express my intentions truthfully so that we can believe what I say. Finally, I must choose an utterance that is right so that we can accept what I say and we can agree with one another with respect to a recognized normative background. Moreover, communicative action can continue undisturbed only as long as participants suppose that the validity claims they reciprocally raise are justified. However, such claims to knowledge may conform to acceptable standards of judgement yet still raise questions about their generalisability.

5) HOW CAN WE MOVE FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE UNIVERSAL? - A QUESTION OF GENERALISABILITY.

Instead of thinking of an educational theory in terms of a set of propositional relationships between linguistic concepts I am proposing a view of educational theory as a dynamic and living form whose content changes with the developing public conversations of those involved in its creation (Whitehead & Lomax 1987). The theory is constituted by the practitioners' public descriptions and explanations of their own practice. The theory is located not solely within these accounts but in the relationship between the accounts

and the practice. It is this relationship which constitutes the descriptions and explanations as a living form of the theory. In being generated from the practices of individuals it has the capacity to relate directly to those practices. To the extent that the values underpinning the practices, the dialogues of question and answer and the systematic form of action/reflection cycle, are shared assumptions within this research community, then we are constructing an educational theory with some potential for generalisability. The 'general' in a living theory still refers to 'all' but instead of being represented in a linguistic concept, 'all' refers to the shared form of life between the individuals constituting the theory. Now History shows us that new ideas have often met with scepticism, rejection or hostility from those who are working within the dominant paradigm. Researchers who are trying to make original and acknowledged contributions to their subject, education, might expect powerful opposition to their ideas.

6) WHICH POWER RELATIONS INFLUENCE THE ACADEMIC LEGITIMACY OF A LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY? - A QUESTION OF THE POLITICS OF TRUTH.

My enquiry has led me to the question of how to support those power relations which support the autonomy of practical rationality within education. As part of this enquiry I think it important to examine the power relations which are distorting, undermining and systematically blocking the development of dialogical communities.

"... In addition to the attempt to recover and reclaim the autonomy of practical rationality and show its relevance to all domains of culture, we realize that today the type of dialogical communities that are required for its flourishing are being distorted, undermined, and systematically blocked from coming into existence.... But today, when we seek for concrete exemplars of the types of dialogical communities in which practical rationality flourishes, we are at a much greater loss. Yet we can recognize how deeply rooted this frustrated aspiration is in human life." (Bernstein 1983)

Whilst this part of my enquiry is still embryonic I am continuing to study my own educational development as I engage with the following three problems.

A crucial issue in gaining academic legitimacy for a particular view of educational theory concerns the institutional arrangements for appointing examiners for Research Degrees in Education. For example in some institutions a student is not permitted, under any circumstances, to question the competence of an examiner once the examiner has been appointed by the Senate. Given that the academics in one such institution have committed themselves to the statement, "A University has a moral purpose in society in the sense of upholding certain standards of truth, freedom and democracy", this raises a question on how the academics are upholding these values.

I wish to question the power relations which sustain the view that competence is a matter of appointment rather than of judgement, on the grounds that any academic judgement should, as a matter of principle, be open to criticism and to the possibility of incompetence. Could any academic keep his or her integrity and at the same time accept the truth of power which sustains the view that no questions of competence can be raised in the light of actual judgements?

I argue that, on principle, the power of truth is served by permitting such a challenge in relation to an examiner's judgement rather than seeing competence to be a procedural matter of appointment.

The second problem concerns the problem of self-identification in texts for publication. A problem I would have had in sending this work to a refereed Journal such as Educational Theory. The problem follows from a central point in this paper that academics and practitioners should identify themselves in their work context and, at some point in their research, offer for public criticism a claim to know their own educational development. However, the guidelines and procedures of the staff of Educational Theory state,

"Manuscripts are subjected to a double-blind reviewing process (i.e. reviewers do not know the identity of authors, the authors will not learn the identity of reviewers) ...

To preserve the advantages of blind reviewing, authors should avoid self-identification in the text as well as the footnotes of their manuscripts."

In asking that an alternative form of presentation is considered by the readership of such Journals as Educational Theory, a presentation which demands self-identification, I am conscious of entering, as Walker (Walker 1985) says, long-standing and fiercely defended positions in the history and philosophy of science. I do not enter such a debate lightly. I have found it necessary to engage with such politics of educational knowledge for the sake of developing an educational theory which can be directly related to the educational development of individuals.

The third problem is one in which the power relations in the academic community support the power of truth against the truth of power. I am thinking about the problem of testing one's ideas against those of others. In supporting the power of truth against the truth of power, academics offer their ideas for public criticism in a forum where the power of rationality in the force of better argument is paramount. Acknowledging mistakes is a fundamental part in developing our ideas.

In his paper, Educational Theory, Practical Philosophy and Action Research, Elliott (1987) treats Hirst (1983) rather gently and chooses a statement which does not fully acknowledge Hirst's mistake in advocating the 'disciplines approach to educational theory'.

"It is not so much that what I wrote in 1966 was mistaken as that what I omitted led to a distorting emphasis. Educational theory I still see as concerned with determining rationally defensible principles for educational practice." (Hirst 1983)

Because our views about educational theory affect the way we see human existence I believe it imperative to acknowledge that mistakes have been made and to understand the nature of these mistakes so that we can move forward.

Paul Hirst has in fact made a most generous acknowledgement that he was mistaken in his view of educational theory.

"In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical, justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake." (Hirst 1983)

I believe both Hirst and Elliott are making a mistake in their view of rationality. They both subscribe to a view of rationality which leads them to use a propositional form of discourse in their characterisations of educational theory. What I am advocating is that the propositional form of discourse in the disciplines of education should be incorporated within a living form of theory. This theory should not be seen in purely propositional terms. It should be seen to exist in the lives of practitioners as they reflect on the implications of asking themselves questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'

What I wish to do is to push Elliott's position forward. I think Gadamer points the way, but his propositional logic does not permit him to make the creative leap to a new synthesis.

Elliott points out that in developing our understanding we have to risk our values and beliefs. As we open ourselves to the things we seek to understand they will force us to become aware of problematic pre-judgements and to criticise them in the light of new meanings.

Let us be clear about my purpose. I am attempting to make an acknowledged and scholarly contribution to knowledge of my subject, education. This purpose is part of my contract of employment as a University Academic. I have chosen the field of educational theory because I am committed to the profession of education and believe that it needs a theory which can adequately describe and explain the educational development of individuals. I am writing as a professional in education. In saying this I want to distinguish my activities from those of a philosopher, psychologist, sociologist or historian. I value their contributions to education but I do not believe that educational theory can be adequately characterised by any of them. I believe the limits of philosophers, whose work I have benefited from, such as Elliott, Carr (1986) and Hirst, are limited by the propositional form of their discourse. As philosophers, rather than educationalists, they have not taken the leap necessary to comprehend the nature of educational theory. I am saying that educationalists, through studying their own attempts to answer questions such as, 'How do I improve my practice?', are constructing a living educational theory within which the work of Hirst, Carr, Elliott, Habermas and Gadamer, is usefully integrated (Eames 1987, Larter 1987).

It seems to me to be crucial to ask the right questions in Collingwood's sense of moving our enquiry forward. In his work on Educational Theory and Social Change, Pritchard (1988) says that the questions are: "How much do we wish to see, How much do we wish to understand? What conceptions, and alternative conceptions, of human practices do we have that will enable us to enhance and significantly enrich life and well-being?"

Pritchard argues that we urgently need studies within educational theory which will serve to demystify institutions and to unmask ideologies. He concludes,

"It is evident that the attempt to 'raid' the disciplines of education and to use materials drawn from these areas without considerable theoretical understanding and support is ill-advised and, ultimately, is based upon an incoherent conception of the theory of education."

My worry is that Pritchard's questions are still grounded within the conceptual forms of the disciplines of education. In order to construct an educational theory for professional practice I believe we will have to face the practical and theoretical implications of asking ourselves questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'

In the past I have been critical of academics who are unwilling to study their own educational development and subject their claim to know this development to social validation (Whitehead and Foster 1984). It seems that Whitty (1986) voices a similar criticism in the context of the work of American and Australian sociologists on the politics and sociology of education.

"Yet, if the prescriptions of these writers are not to remain purely rhetorical, there is an urgent need for them to engage in an active exploration of the implications of their work among the political constituencies in whose interests it is supposedly being carried out."

I hope to demonstrate my own engagement by investigating how relations which support the power of truth against the truth of power influence my own educational development. These influences are emerging as I engage with the politics of truth within arenas such as the Educational Research Associations and Institutions of Higher Education.

In conclusion I identify with a conversation between Giles Deleuze and Michel Foucault which considers the necessity for the practitioner of speaking on his or her own behalf.

"You were the first to teach us something absolutely fundamental: the indignity of speaking for others. We ridiculed representation and said it was finished, but we failed to draw the consequences of this 'theoretical' conversion - to appreciate the theoretical fact that only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf." (Foucault 1980)

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4.3 CHANGING VIEWS ON THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Material from the tutorial booklet from the booklet MEd Action Research 1, 1990.

My aim is to stimulate your interest in generating and testing your own educational theory for professional practice. I want to do this because I view educational theory as being constituted by the descriptions and explanations which individual learners are producing for their own educational development. I have proposed this view as an alternative to the educational theory which guided teacher education in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. I will relate this introduction to my own experience of in-service teacher education and to the research programme which was aimed at reconstructing educational theory in a way which could produce valid descriptions and explanations for the educational development of individuals.

I will begin with extracts from two articles published in 1951 in the first issue of 'Educational Theory'. The first points out that educational theory is a form of dialogue which has profound implications for the future of humanity. The second refers to educational theory as strictly analogous to the part play by theory in the development of the natural sciences. I then want to describe the rise and fall of the view that educational theory was constituted by disciplines such as the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education. My purpose is to set the scene for the presentation of a living form of educational theory which I believe is being generated by the descriptions and explanations which individual learners are producing for their own educational development.

Kilpatrick (1951) points out that,

"Our civilization seems seriously threatened by the lack of a sufficient and common outlook on life. Men can effectively confer only in the degree that they have a common outlook. Within our own country and within the world, contending philosophies are so far apart that conferring is made very difficult if not impossible. This fact constitutes perhaps the greatest single long-term threat to our civilization. Education must face this problem in spite of its inherent difficulties. It seems true to say that in this problem is our whole future at stake."

I agree that education must face up to this problem. My concern is that over thirty years have been wasted by academics in the development of educational theories which did not have a dialogical form. BY this I mean that they did not describe and explain education as a process of coming to understanding through question and answer. Instead of working at this insight academics working in the dominant paradigm in the 1950s chose to examine education with methods derived from positivist science.

Anderson (1951) gives an early account of this belief that educational researchers should follow the methodologies of the physical sciences. This article is well worth reading as it shows a total disregard for the value-laden nature of education and for the fact that education is a form of art.

"If educational theory is to make the contribution it should make to the study of education, it must receive adequate attention, and it must play a part in the development of the science of education strictly analogous to the part played by theory in the development of the natural sciences....the great advance in physical theory was related to experimental physics in several ways. It was touched off by the results of experimental investigation. It was dependent for its ultimate acceptance upon experimental verification. And it stimulated years of further experimental investigation. The reciprocal relationship between the theoretical and the empirical is quite clear. It is equally clear however that the advance in theory was not produced by the experimental methods used in the original investigations, or in the later verification, or in the subsequent investigations. This advance resulted from the study of theoretical problems in their own terms and with the methodologies appropriate to the study of such problems ...No analogy is ever exact. Allowances must be made for the fact that the study of education involves problems of engineering as well as of experimentation. Nevertheless, after all allowances have been made the function of theory in the field of education is analogous to the function of theory in the field of physics and the other natural sciences."

O' Connor (1957), in his influential introduction to the philosophy of education, concludes his essay on 'What is an Educational Theory?', with the statement which formed the focus for a later debate with Paul Hirst (1966)

"The word theory as it is used in educational contexts is generally a courtesy title. It is justified only where we are applying well-established experimental findings in psychology or sociology to the practice of education. And even here we should be aware that the conjectural gap between our theories and the facts on which they rest is sufficiently wide to make our logical consciences uneasy. We can hope that the future development of the social sciences will narrow this gap and this hope gives an incentive for developing these sciences."

The President of the British Educational Research Association, in his analysis of the effectiveness of the methods of experimental design and data analysis, acknowledged that these methods had failed to live up to expectations (Eggleston 1979). The failure to yield statistically significant results in favour of one treatment or another and the failure to facilitate the elucidation of mechanisms may not, says Eggleston, be due to inherent defects in the method. Eggleston advocates that we should attempt to improve the approach by putting the ideal of true experimental designs in the broader perspective of what is loosely called 'scientific method'.

Tom Kitwood (1975) analysed research findings which were based on an acceptance of the assumptions of 'scientific method' discussed by Eggleston. He argued that these assumptions are the reasons why so many of the findings of educational research fail to appear convincing or relevant to those who are directly involved in education;

"It is suggested that many research studies employ a specious view of science, as a result of which important problems are often trivialized. Also some of the techniques of inquiry commonly used involve counter-educational assumptions. Thus a 'false consciousness' about education tends to be generated, and many substantive issues are obscured or neglected. Three positive propositions are put forward. First, that research must be centrally concerned with education itself; second, that the conception of the human beings implicit in research must be one in which human powers are acknowledged; third, that fresh standards of acceptability must be established, based on a more intelligent understanding of the nature, scope, and limits of scientific inquiry. "

The creative phase of the genesis of an alternative to the 'science' approach can be traced to the work of Louis Arnaud Reid the first holder of the Chair of the Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education of the University of London. Reid (1962) cautioned practitioners against the idea that educational theory was a theory, like the physical sciences, which could be applied directly to practice.

"Whenever there is anywhere, application of theory to practice, a judgment of value is implied. The values of application are assumed. Nevertheless when the application is to human welfare it is easy to fall into compartmental thinking, to forget the human personal needs of the patients or children, to think of the application of formulae, to forget that the first aim or value is to help them as human beings. It does not matter in an engineer, but it does matter in a doctor or a teacher, if he gets too much into routine habits, or becomes a hack, because that tends to make him a bit inhuman in doing his job. "

The development of the alternative 'disciplines' approach to educational theory, described below, was carried out with great force by R.S. Peters and P. Hirst. This approach dominated the 1960s 1970s and early 1980s has yet to be replaced by a coherent alternative which commands wide support in the teaching and research community.

When I began teaching in 1967 the disciplines approach was already well established and was based on the wholly admirable desire to,

*"... make an end to the undifferentiated mush that is often perpetrated under the heading of educational theory before the different types of question have been distinguished; but we must make sure that the research and training carried out under the aegis of the different disciplines is brought together again in an integrated conversation on matters of common concern. In fact I am making in a concrete way the logical point that 'integration' is inseparable from 'differentiation'."*Peters 1964/77

As a student at the London Institute of Education (1968 - 72) I was presented with the differentiated forms of thought in the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education as if these disciplines

constituted 'educational theory'. How the disciplines approach came to be named can be seen in the three principles below, which Richard Peters used to determine the selection and presentation of educational theory;

"1) Though it must be presented in a differentiated way the different disciplines must also mesh in with and be seen to mesh in with each other in relation to matters of educational policy and practice.

2) Selection from the content of the basic disciplines must, in the main, be determined by what is relevant to the practical problems and interests of teachers in training.

3) The differentiated modes of thought about education, though harnessed to practical issues, must also be presented in a way that they intimate, and are seen to intimate, problems, at a more fundamental level in the disciplines themselves, and the forms of enquiry necessary for their solution." (Peters1964/1977)

A fundamental criticism against Peters' position was made by Charles Clark. Clark (1976) focussed his attack on Peters' claim that whilst most people study education with practical concerns in view, it need not necessarily be so studied. Clark claimed that it must be so studied, in so far as it is education, and that it cannot be 'studied in a...reflective, disinterested manner' by academics, or for that matter by anyone. Clark attacked the assumption that there is any 'it' in the sense required, that such people could mediate upon. On these grounds he called for the abandonment of higher degrees in education predicated upon the disciplines approach. It may be worth noting that higher degrees in education are still be awarded which do not require evidence of competent practice.

The views of Paul Hirst, a Professor of Education at the London Institute and later the University of Cambridge before his recent retirement, are still influential in debates about the nature of educational theory. In 1983 he acknowledged a mistake in his thinking about the nature of educational theory (Hirst 1983). The criticisms below by Reid and Schilling are focused on Hirst's beliefs about the nature of educational knowledge and rationality. Hirst's basic position is that examples of knowing-this in the sense of knowing a direct object can be reduced to examples of knowing-that, knowing-how plus another non-knowledge component. I think the essence of Hirst's position is contained in the following passage,

"It has frequently been pointed out that the language we use when referring to knowledge is very varied. We speak of knowing that $2+2=4$, that it is wrong to cause unnecessary suffering, what caused a fire, how to drive a car, how to get from Euston Station to Russell Square, who is the President of France, about motor cars. Mr. John Smith, Paris, the Ring, the feeling of pain and so on. On closer investigation, however, these expressions all seem to be readily reducible to variations on three basic forms, in spite of certain overlaps in the linguistic structures involved. First, there are those expressions in which what is known is a truth or set of truths, eg. that $2+2=4$, or who is President of France, These are normally referred to as expressions of propositional knowledge or know-that. Secondly there are expressions in which what is known is how to carry out a performance or activity of some kind, eg. how to drive a car. These are usually referred to as cases of procedural knowledge of know-how. Thirdly there are expressions in which what is known is an object of some kind eg. Paris, the Ring, the Prime Minister, the feeling of pain. Here it is customary to speak of knowledge with a direct object. But are there then three quite distinct mutually irreducible kinds of knowledge, or can we show that there are ultimately only two kinds, or perhaps even one? In a strict sense it seems to me there are only two distinct mutually irreducible concepts. 'Know-that' and 'Know-how' with cases of knowledge with a direct object, always being reducible to 'know-that' and 'know-how' plus another non-knowledge element. " (Hirst 1979)

In total opposition to the above view that knowledge with a direct object or knowing-this, is reducible to 'know-that' or 'know-how' plus another non-knowledge element, Reid argues his case for knowledge of the direct object. Drawing his example from music Reid makes his point:-

"Consider one of the Master Classes', which, through T.V. we are sometimes privileged to look in upon. The clear, and important, distinction between knowledge-that and knowledge with the direct object comes clearly if I say, 'the Master knows-that it ought to go like this'. His knowledge - that and - how is clearly dispositional, and up to a point his overt message can be conveyed in general words, sometimes metaphors. But only so far. Then come expressive bodily gestures, facial movements arm and body moving, singing, perhaps demonstrating. The passage just has to go

'like this' something so particular and individual that in the nature of things the 'this' cannot be said in any general language. It is not to repeat once more that there is a non-knowledge experience on which knowledge-that can "rest". It is indivisible a cognitive experience. Real musical intuitive knowledge is direct as the arrow. Many insightful things, in forms of knowledge-that and -how can be said by musicians; but musical knowledge, qua musical, does not reach its musically cognitive consummation finally from -that or -how. Rather, knowledge-that or -about music in itself derives from direct musical gnosis, musical intuition. Even technical knowing-how of performance is barren musically without underlying musical intuition. In the sphere of art, at any rate (and perhaps in other spheres too) Professor Hirst puts the cart before the horse - or maybe he has just unharnessed the horse." (Reid 1980)

One of the central points in the view of educational theory of Paul Hirst was the claim that the conceptual structures manifest in, and formed by, formal public knowledge are necessary to rational thought, and are consequently the prime conditioning factor of general intellectual education. Philip Walkling (1979) mounted an attack on this point by showing that each of the alternative possible accounts of this necessity are impossible of demonstration. He argued that this provided a conclusive refutation of the theory that a 'curriculum' can be deduced from 'the nature of knowledge and of mind'. He called for curriculum planners to abandon such 'value-free' assumptions and return to the notion of curriculum content as valued.

By 1982 Hirst began to move his position considerably. The following passage clearly shows Hirst emphasising the common sense base of educational professionalism.

" The idea that activities like teaching, any more than many of those of everyday life, can be undertaken as a technology is an error. The ends brought about by reasons are not simply causes. They involve unique personalities in complex non-causal relationships, operating in what are often unique circumstances. There are common elements to these situations and activities which permit theoretical enquiries in the disciplines. But these necessarily concern themselves with limited abstracted elements from what are basically complex concrete situations. In addition there is no obvious reason to say that such disciplines ever could, let alone do now, provide an exhaustive account of situations so that they can be put back together to provide some total understanding on which rational action could be based. Certainly what the 'disciplined' study of education has achieved so far is fragmentary, very limited and disagreement even within the individual disciplines is widespread.

What we must start from is rather a more integrated picture of the nature of human activities, recognising that much of our understanding of personal situations is necessarily tacit, implicitly acquired and employed in concrete situations.....

The complex of explicit and implicit understanding, attitudes, principles and skills, within 'discipline-refined common sense' as developed within educational institutions by the practitioner is, I suggest, the proper base of educational professionalism." (Hirst 1982)

In 1983 Hirst published a most generous acknowledgement that his previous view was mistaken. He makes the following points about his new position on the nature of educational theory:-

"Consideration of particular actions or activities and their rationale may however raise critical consideration of the understanding and principles with which the practitioner in general approaches these situations. The question then is no longer whether particular judgments or actions were the best that could be taken by this practitioner in the circumstances in which the situation arose, but whether the understanding, principles and capacities that he could bring were themselves justifiable. It is with the critique of 'operational educational theory' in this sense that educational theory in its wider sense is concerned. Educational theory is thus directed at more rational educational practice by the continuous attempt to develop operational educational theory composed of elements that are as far as possible rational defensible. But if this pursuit is not to be misunderstood, the complex character of practice must be kept firmly in mind. In general the concepts employed in operational theory will be those used by practitioners as a result of their formal and informal education, training and socialization.

Many of these concepts will be those of every day life, developed to capture the complex situations and activities as existential wholes, whilst taking for granted a common recognition of their detailed characters and their context. The concepts of specifically educational situations and activities will be of exactly the same character. Much of the understanding within this level of theory will have been developed in the context of immediate practical experience

and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices. In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical, justification. THAT NOW SEEMS TO ME A MISTAKE (my emphasis). Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate. This demand stems from the fact that only principles generated in relation to practical experience and that are operationally tested can begin to do justice to the necessarily complex tacit elements within practice. Indeed I would now argue that the essence of any practical theory is its concern to develop principles formulated in operationally effective practical discourse that are subjected to practical test." (Hirst 1983).

Marie Schilling (1986) laid the disciplines approach to rest with the points that,

"Implicit in the critic's charges that Hirst's thesis is narrow, incoherent and lacking adequate justification is a unifying theme that has its roots in the Aristotelian tradition. If we can identify this theme, it may sharpen the criticism of Hirst and permit us, with the help of some current interpreters of Aristotle, to suggest an alternative way of thinking about liberal education that is consistent with modern philosophy....."

The definition of rationality espoused by Toulmin, MacIntyre and Bernstein is clearly distinguishable from Hirst's definition on several dimensions. Whereas Hirst leans towards a definition of rationality that fixes it in relatively stable and closed systems of knowledge, the proponents of practical rationality define it as more open, historically developed and subject to continual modification. For Hirst, the goal of rationality is truth or objectivity; for the practical rationalists, the ends are understanding, right action and character development. For Hirst, the achievement of rationality is predicated on the mastery of the structure of knowledge; for MacIntyre et al., rationality is developed through the exercise of deliberation and choice in situations that require interpretation. Clearly, liberal education defined in terms of practical reason would be very different from Hirst's definition in terms of theoretic reason.

Before concluding, I would like to suggest two ways in which an Aristotelian view of liberal education might differ from Hirst's. First, education itself can be understood as a practice or set of practices that is embedded in a tradition or set of traditions. Consequently, there is no fixed point or ultimate ground on which educational content can be based; the purposes that direct educational choices are always subject to reconsideration and negotiation. Educational discourse is ethical and political; educational choices are justified by the giving of reasons.

Second, the point of education is to cultivate in individuals the virtues that will enable them to select practices widely, to reflect on and direct the narrative course of their lives towards the attainment of good and to become critical of tradition in such a way as to accept it or modify it in the light of the good for humankind. Among these virtues are, I suggest, playfulness, flexibility, openness to the alien, respect for what is different, empathic understanding, trust, reasonableness, truthfulness and a capacity for self-criticism. If the point of liberal education is the cultivation of these and other virtues that permit an individual to understand what is new to him or her and to make this understanding the occasion for evaluation of his or her prejudices, then the selection of subject matter, although important, is a secondary consideration. Furthermore, the basis for subject selection is not how it fits into a general structure of knowledge, but what point or purpose it serves in developing practical rationality, understanding and the capacity for right action." (Schilling 1986)

I would offer a word of caution against the belief that we will be able to construct a valid form of educational theory on the basis of Aristotle's thinking. I acknowledge the profound insights contained in the Nicomachean Ethics on the nature of practical knowledge. In accepting the insights in Aristotle's ethics we must take care, for the reasons discussed below, against accepting the propositional form with its Law of Contradiction as the appropriate form for presenting educational theory.

Whilst the above examples demonstrate the existence of an academic community engaging in critical discourse, the discourse is bounded by the Law of Contradiction of the propositional form, which eliminates contradiction for theoretical discourse. What all these academics have in common is an acceptance of this logical form for their communications on the nature of educational theory. This has implications for how they see the unit of appraisal and standards of judgement in claims to educational knowledge. I offer my own

unit and standards below from a dialectical perspective which includes the unit of appraisal as a living contradiction's account of their own educational development.

2.4 THE UNIT OF APPRAISAL AND THE STANDARDS OF JUDGEMENT USED TO VALIDATE AN INDIVIDUAL'S CLAIM TO KNOW THEIR OWN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

The educational analysis which follows is focussed upon the nature of the validity of an individual action-researcher's claim to know his or her own educational development. The analysis outlines a form of educational theory which can be generated from professional practice and which can integrate the different contributions of the disciplines of education. Let me say at the beginning how I see the relationship between my own research and teacher action-research. In my work in a University I am paid to make a scholarly and acknowledged contribution to knowledge of my subject, education. I characterise my attempts to make this contribution a form of academic action-research. In my investigations of my own claims to know my own educational development I have explored the nature of a form of educational theory which is directly related to educational practice. My particular concerns have focussed upon the academic legitimacy of an individual's claim to know his or her own educational development. I think that my findings will be of use to those teacher-researchers who wish to justify their own claims to knowledge to the academic community.

The approach to educational theory I am suggesting we adopt rests on a number of assumptions concerning both the idea of a 'living form of theory' and the personal and social criteria which can be used to criticise the theory. I use the term a 'living form of theory' to distinguish the suggested approach from the 'linguistic form' in which traditional theories are presented for criticism. In a living approach to educational theory I am suggesting that teacher action-researchers present their claims to know how and why they are attempting to overcome practical educational problems in this form,

I experience a problem when some of my educational values are negated in my practice.

I imagine a solution to my problem.

I act in the direction of the solution.

I evaluate the outcomes of my actions.

I modify my problems, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluations.

For educational theory to be directly related to educational practice it must have the power to explain an individual's development. One of the major problems which has led to the discrediting of traditional forms of educational theory was that they could not produce adequate explanations for the educational development of individuals. A theory should also be able to answer questions concerning why things happen. In the approach to educational theory advocated here the 'why' questions are answered in terms of 'value'. Like Ilyenkov (1982) I take 'value' to be a human goal for the sake of which we struggle to give our lives their particular form. In relation to the enquiry I take it that the experience of the negation of educational values moves the enquiry forward and that the values are taken, by the holder, to be concrete universal laws in the sense that we hold our educational values with universal intent.

Questions concerning the academic legitimacy of a claim to knowledge are often focussed upon the criticism of a particular piece of work. The work being criticised can be a single hypothesis or theory (Popper 1972) or a research programme (Lakatos 1972). Whatever is being criticised is known as the unit of appraisal. In criticising a claim to knowledge it is important to be clear about the unit and the standards of judgement which can legitimately be used in the criticism. There is some dispute amongst philosophers about the nature of the standards which can be used to criticise a claim to knowledge.

The unit of appraisal in my conception of educational theory is the individual's claim to know his or her own educational development. Although this unit may appear strange to most educational researchers I think that it is clearly comprehensible. The standards of judgement are however more difficult to communicate. I use both personal and social standards in justifying my own claims to know my own educational development. In using personal criteria I draw upon the work of Michael Polanyi. I am grateful for Personal Knowledge (1958) because in my case Polanyi fulfilled his purpose of 'stripping away the crippling mutilations which centuries of objectivist thought have imposed on the minds of men'. The personal criteria I use in making a claim to know my own educational development include Polanyi's values of respect and commitment.

" To claim validity for a statement merely declares that it ought to be accepted by everyone because everyone ought to be able to see it...The affirmation of a scientific truth has an obligatory character; in this it is like all other valuations that are declared universal by our own respect for them. " Polanyi and Prosch 1975

" It is the act of commitment in its full structure that saves personal knowledge from being merely subjective. Intellectual commitment is a responsible decision, in submission to the compelling claims of what in good conscience I

conceive to be true. It is an act of hope, striving to fulfil an obligation within a personal situation for which I am not responsible and which therefore determines my calling. This hope and this obligation are expressed in the universal intent of personal knowledge.Any conclusions, whether given as a surmise or claimed as a certainty, represents a commitment of the person who arrives at it. No one can utter more than a responsible commitment of his own, and this completely fulfils his responsibility for finding the truth and telling it. Whether or not it is the truth can be hazarded only by another, equally responsible commitment."

Polanyi 1958

In grounding my epistemology in Personal Knowledge I am conscious that I have taken a decision to understand the world from my own point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising his personal judgement responsibly with universal intent. This commitment determines the nature of the unit of appraisal in my claim to knowledge. The unit is the individual's claim to know his or her own educational development.

The social criteria I use to criticise my claim to knowledge appear to conform to Habermas' view on what claims to validity I am making if I wish to participate in a process of reaching understanding with you. Habermas (1979) says that I must choose a comprehensible expression so that we can understand one another. I must have the intention of communicating a true proposition so that we can share my claim to knowledge. I must want to express my intentions truthfully so that we can believe what I say. Finally, I must choose an utterance that is right so that we can accept what I say and we can agree with one another with respect to a recognized normative background. Moreover, communicative action can continue undisturbed only as long as participants suppose that the validity claims they reciprocally raise are justified.

From this I take it that the action-researcher has a responsibility to present a claim to knowledge for public criticism in a way which is comprehensible. The researcher must justify the propositional content of what he or she asserts, and justify the values which are used to give a form to the researcher's life in education. The researcher must be authentic in the sense of wanting to express his intentions truthfully. Habermas says, and I agree, that a claim to authenticity can only be realized in interaction: "in the interaction it will be shown in time, whether the other side is 'in truth or honestly' participating or is only pretending to engage in communicative action". The personal and social standards I use to judge the academic legitimacy of my claim to knowledge are the values I use in giving my life its particular form in education. In judging my own claim to educational knowledge I use the following logical, scientific, ethical and aesthetic values. In such a brief space all I can hope to do is to sketch out the general principles of my position and to draw your attention to the locations where the position is being worked out in more detail in practice.

The most difficult problem to be overcome in presenting my ideas to others in a comprehensible way concerns the logic of my position. As a dialectician I am aware of the attacks on dialectical logic by such eminent Western philosophers as Karl Popper. Popper (1963) dismisses the use of dialectical logic in the presentation of theories as based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking. His case rests on the way he thinks about contradictions. The point at issue has been clearly put by Ilyenkov (1977).

" Contradiction as the concrete unity of mutually exclusive opposites is the real nucleus of dialectics, its central category...but no small difficulty immediately arises as soon as matters touch on 'subjective dialectics' , on dialectics as the logic of thinking. If any object is a living contradiction, what must the thought (statement about the object) be that expresses it? Can and should an objective contradiction find reflection in thought? And if so, in what form? "

Formal logicians such as Popper(1963) hold that any theory which contains contradictions is entirely useless as a theory. This view is based upon a linguistic presentation of theory. In this paper I am emphasising that we are generating and testing a living form of educational theory. The theory is embodied in the lives of practitioners who exist as living contradictions. The inclusion of 'I' as a living contradiction within a theoretical presentation creates problems if we attempt this presentation in a purely propositional form because the propositional logic holds that we cannot have two mutually exclusive statements which are true simultaneously.

In my own development I am conscious of attempting to overcome the experience of myself as a living contradiction in order to minimise the tensions between, for example, values negated in practice and the current practice. I am also conscious of the need to give a form to my life and of the need for meaning and purpose. If I attempt to describe my development in a purely propositional form I will fail to communicate my meaning because of the existence of 'I' as a living contradiction in my development. The central problem is how to present a dialectical claim to knowledge in a publicly criticisable form. My own presentation is in the form of ten research reports (Whitehead 1982) produced over the past ten years as I have explored my existence in terms of 'I' as a living contradiction in the School of Education of the University of Bath. Table two in an earlier section summarised the educational analysis of my educational development. I think that we are involved in the creation of an educational theory which is embodied in your form of life, as a practitioner, rather than existing in a propositional form within textbooks on library shelves. This is not to

deny that the propositional form can have significance for the genesis of educational theory. On the contrary the standards I use to justify my claim to know my own development as a scientific form of life are drawn from Popper's (1972) views on the logic of scientific discovery.

The main difference between the traditional view of educational theory and the dialectical approach is that the traditional view was presented in a propositional form which excluded dialectical logic. The dialectical approach is presented in terms of the forms of life of individuals in education and shows how propositional forms exist within the forms of life. In using Popper's work I check to see whether or not the claim to know my own educational development conforms to the cycle of experiencing and formulating problems, imagining a solution, acting on the imagined solution, evaluating the outcomes and modifying the problems and ideas. This capacity of the dialectical approach to integrate within itself the insights from a propositional form is what gives the approach its power to integrate the concepts of the disciplines of education. I think that this power rests upon the imaginative capacity of individuals to relate the concepts to their practical concerns. For example as the individual encounters personal and social constraints in his or her attempts to improve the quality of education in schools, the concepts from the psychology or sociology of education might prove useful in helping to overcome the barriers to improvement. The form I suggested above for the presentation of our claims to know our own educational development has the capacity to allow the inclusions of the concepts from the disciplines of education whilst being itself irreducible to the form of any of the present disciplines of education.

As the individual presents a claim to educational knowledge the academic community will be able to judge whether or not the work demonstrates an understanding of contemporary accounts in the different disciplines of education. It might also be the case that the claims to educational knowledge could point out deficiencies in the present state of development of the disciplines of education.

Because of a desire to give a correct account of the nature of educational theory I want to hold up the value-laden nature of my claim to knowledge for public criticism. I want you to understand and accept for good reasons, the normative background of my ethical values.

I recognise a major problem, almost as great as the problem of contradiction, as soon as I attempt to communicate the ethical values in my claim to know my educational development. The problem is grounded in the principle known as the autonomy of ethics. This principle, usually attributed to Hume (1738) and upheld by linguistic philosophers, holds that statements of value and statements of fact form logically independent realms of discourse. In my educational development matters of fact and matters of value are integrated in my experience of practical problems of the kind, 'How do I improve this process of education here?'. How then do I present a claim to know my educational development in a way that truly represents this integration?

I can talk about the ethical values I use in making decisions which give a form to my life in education. I can use value-words such as those of consideration of interest, worth-while activities, respect for persons and democratic forms of social control (Peters 1966). The meanings of my ethical values are however embodied in my educational practice. Their meanings emerge in the course of my attempts to overcome their negation (Feyerabend 1975). In order to communicate these meanings I think that it is necessary to present visual records of that practice. I must show you where I am experiencing the denial of my educational values, give a public formulation of my problems in terms of the denial and I must present a programme of activities which I believe will overcome the denial. I must show you my actions and hold up my evaluations of those actions for your criticism. In this way it is possible for an individual to hold up a claim to know his or her educational development as an ethical form of life for public scrutiny. The individual can thus generate a personal form of educational theory and submit it for public test.

However, since the meaning of values cannot be expressed in a purely linguistic form of discourse, they must, as I have said, be shown in action. Hence, it will be necessary for whoever is validating the claim to knowledge to use ostensive, as well as linguistic, criticism, in judging this aspect of the claim to knowledge. In judging the legitimacy of a value-laden claim to knowledge the individual is faced with the problem of justifying one set of values against another. In recent Islamic publications (Abdullah 1982), for example, the Western view of Democracy has been declared inimical to educational theory viewed from an Islamic perspective. My own justification for my educational values is grounded within Polanyi's view of Personal Knowledge. Given that I am using a particular set of values in attempting to give my life its particular form in education, I am committed to examining the implications of attempting to overcome the experience of the negation of these values in a way which fulfils Habermas' views on the validity claims I must fulfil if I am to reach an understanding with you. If our values conflict it seems to me inevitable that we are engaged in a political struggle. Conflict is most intense when particular forms of life cut across those of others to the extent of one form negating the value-laden practice of another.

In the justification of a claim for scientific status for the individual's claim to know his or her own educational development I advocated the use of criteria from the work of Popper. To judge the logical status of the claim I suggested the use of a dialectical logic based on the work of Ilyenkov. To judge the ethical status I explained that my values were embodied in practice and that public criticism of the ethical base of my claim would require a form of ostensive criticism in which I must present visual records of my practice. I recognise that the cultural relativity of ethical values presents a serious problem for educators in a multicultural society who are asked to justify their own educational values. How the problem is being resolved must be shown and criticised in practice.

The final criterion is concerned with the notion of authenticity. This is a difficult concept to define because I think of education as a form of art in the sense that the individual is attempting to give a form to his or her life in a way which does not violate the integrity of other individuals. The aesthetic standard I use in judging the authenticity of the claim to knowledge requires an approach I have termed, following Holbrook(1979), 'indwelling'. Its use involves an ability on the part of the reader to empathise (through written, aural and visual records) with another individual's form of life as it is presented in a claim to knowledge and, through 'delicate intuitions, imagination and respect' (Russell 1916), to judge whether or not the form of life can be seen in terms of the quality of human relationships in which the unity of humanity appears to be possible.

Just as the artist attempts to give a form to his or her material so teachers, who are practising the art of education, are giving a form to their own lives in education and assisting their pupils to do the same. When the artist presents his or her work, the appreciation of it will come as the viewer spends time 'reliving the work of its creator' (Lipps, in Holbrook 1979). In a similar way, in judging the aesthetic form of a claim to know another individual's form of life in education, the reader must attempt to identify with the process in which that individual struggled to give a form to his or her life in education.

In affirming or rejecting the claim to knowledge as embodying an aesthetic form of life it is necessary, I think, for the reader to judge whether the quality of the actions presented in the claim to knowledge have violated the integrity of an individual or the unity of humanity as a whole. I say this because education has, for me, significance not only for its personal influence but also for its role in the world as a whole.

In offering the unit of appraisal and the standards of judgement which I think can be used by educational action-researchers to establish the academic legitimacy of their claims to knowledge I wish to emphasise that the logic of education proposed by Peters and Hirst(1970) is mistaken.

"...facts are only relevant to practical decisions about educational matters in so far as they are made relevant by some general view of what we are about when we are educating people. It is the purpose of this book to show the ways in which a view of education must impose such a structure on our practical decisions."

In my view of educational theory the theory is essentially transformatory. Structures may exist in the process of transformation but they must not be imposed on the individual. The idea of imposing a structure is inconsistent with the view of educational knowledge proposed above. I would remind the reader that they should always bear Polanyi's point in mind and approach their own claims to knowledge in a creative and critical way as individuals who have made a decision to understand the world from their own point of view, and who are claiming originality and exercising their judgements with universal intent. For the sake of the development of the profession of education they should also feel obliged to offer their claims to knowledge in an open forum for rational criticism.

Every educational action-researcher has a part to play in the development of the profession. Teacher action-researchers must be prepared to make public the educational theory which is embodied in their practices. Academic action-researchers must be prepared to help to establish the standards of judgement which are appropriate for judging the validity of such claims to knowledge. Administrator action-researchers must be prepared to show in what sense their activities are sustaining or improving the quality of education with the pupils in their institutions. My own work is concerned with assisting teacher action-researchers to justify their professional claims to know what they are doing through the provision of standards of judgement which themselves can stand the test of public and rational criticism.

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4.5 CAN WE CREATE A LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY FOR A GOOD SOCIAL ORDER

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The text of this paper was presented to the First World Congress on Action Research and Process Management, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia, July 1990. The paper was entitled How do I improve my professional practice as an academic and educational manager? A dialectical analysis of an individual's educational development and a basis for socially orientated action research.

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines a dialectical approach to educational action research and attempts to synthesise a process of personal development with a process of social evolution. The dialectical approach is characterised as a process of question and answer in which an individual 'I' exists as a living contradiction in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. The potential of educational action research for social evolution is examined in terms of an individual's responses to contradictions in the workplace. These contradictions involve the loss of one's employment, the denial of one's originality, the denial of the right to ask questions, being disciplined for what one writes and then having one's research legitimated in the MEd Curriculum of a University School of Education.

Like critical action research (Carr and Kemmis 1986) the dialectical approach will be shown to incorporate a consideration of values and power. This will be shown in two examples of action research and the processes of educational management. The first involves my own academic development in relation to the good order and politics of truth of a University. The second involves my contribution to the educational management of a comprehensive school. From these examples it is argued that the dialectical approach can generate valid explanations for the educational development of an individual in a way which shows that the production of a living form of educational theory from such explanations can have implications for social evolution.

INTRODUCTION

The heuristic potential of action research is currently being explored in a variety of forms and fields of knowledge within this Congress. In the field of education, action research has become a major force in teachers' professional development, in educational management and educational theory. My own contribution to the field has focussed on my claim to know my own educational development in the course of my enquiry, 'How do I improve the quality of my practice?'. My early methodological questions progressed into epistemological enquiries related to the values, logic, unit of appraisal and standards of judgement which could be used to test claims to know the nature and processes of education (Whitehead & Foster 1984). I became interested in trying to create a dialectical form of educational theory for producing valid explanations for the educational development of an individual (Whitehead 1985a). My attempts to gain academic legitimacy for this dialectical approach to educational knowledge developed into questions concerning the good order and politics of truth in a University (Whitehead 1985b). These have led to the questions in this paper concerning educational action research and social evolution. I want to explore with you the potential of an individual's action research, for linking educational theory and the politics of educational knowledge with social evolution, in the context of academic and institutional management.

The dialectical nature of my enquiry, 'How do I improve my practice?' can be distinguished from other approaches to action research as it is an attempt to answer the question of contradiction posed by Ilyenkov,

"Contradiction as the concrete unity of mutually exclusive opposites is the real nucleus of dialectics, its central category ... If any object is a 'living contradiction', what must the thought/statement about the object be that expresses it?" (Ilyenkov 1977).

In looking at video-tapes of my own teaching I came to appreciate that 'I' existed in my question as a living contradiction in Ilyenkov's sense that I hold two mutually exclusive opposites together in practice. I could experience myself holding certain educational values whilst at the same time denying them in my practice. For example I could experience myself valuing my pupil's capacities to learn by enquiry whilst at the same time closing down their opportunity for doing so by the way I structured my lessons (Whitehead 1977). I believe that the incorporation of 'I' as a living contradiction in explanations for the educational development of individuals, has distinguished an original contribution to the action research movement by researchers associated with the School of Education of the University of Bath (Elliott 1989, Lomax 1989, McNiff 1988, Whitehead 1989). The characteristic action research methodology which incorporates 'I' and which has developed from this work has the form: I experience problems or concerns when some of my values are denied in my practice; I imagine ways of improving my practice and choose a course of action; I act and gather evidence which will enable me to make a judgement on the effectiveness of my actions; I evaluate the outcomes of my actions; I modify my concerns, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluation.

In analysing this claim to know my own educational development I took the unit of appraisal to be the individual's claim to know her or his own educational development. The standards of judgement I used to characterise my claim to knowledge as 'educational' included the form of the action research cycle above, Ilyenkov's criteria for characterising dialectical logic, the values defined by Peters (1966) and the aesthetic/spiritual values in Buber's characterisation of the I-You relationship (Whitehead 1985a).

I then examined the possibility of moving from such a dialectical base into a living form of educational theory. By a 'living' theory I mean that the explanations generated by the theory to explain the educational development of individuals contain an evaluation of past practice and evidence of present practice which includes the 'I's' intention (a human goal) to produce something valued which is not yet in existence. I now claim that it is possible to construct such a theory from the explanations which individuals produce for their own educational development (Whitehead 1989b).

My enquiry moved into the politics of truth as I encountered the power relations which legitimated the judgements, on two PhD submissions to the University of Bath. These judgements stated that I had not shown an ability to conduct original investigations or to test my own ideas or those of others and that my work did not contain matter worthy of publication. These power relations also legitimated the instruction that under no circumstances could I question the competence of my examiners. In understanding these power relations I have used Foucault's insights into the conflict between the truth of power and the power of truth in an analysis of the procedures and rules which surround the legitimation of a dialectical claim to educational knowledge in a University.

I accept Foucault's (1977) distinction between the 'specific intellectual' as opposed to the 'universal intellectual'. He says that for a long period the 'left' intellectual was acknowledged as a master of truth and justice. The specific intellectual was a spokesperson of the universal in the sense of moral, theoretical and political choices. In opposition to the universal intellectual, he describes the specific intellectual in terms of an engagement in a struggle at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them.

Foucault takes care to emphasise that by 'truth' he does not mean 'the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted'. By 'truth', he means the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true. The struggles 'around truth' are not 'on behalf of the truth, but about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays.

I am offering the following account of my struggle to support the good order and the power of truth of a University as part of my enquiry into the relationship between action research, educational theory, the politics of truth and social evolution. I see this enquiry as developing from my earlier analysis of an individual's educational development which has provided the basis for personally orientated action research (Whitehead 1985b). I am now attempting to produce a basis for socially orientated action research which will incorporate my earlier ideas.

EXTENDING THE EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY FROM A PERSONAL INTO A SOCIAL ORIENTATION - SOCIAL CONCERNS GROUNDED IN CONTRADICTIONS

I wish to characterise this extension into a socially orientated action research by a dialogical form of presentation. This choice was influenced by Kilpatrick's (1951) point that educational theory is a form of dialogue which has profound implications for the future of humanity. I will begin to extend this social orientation by acknowledging my identification with the meanings in the following conversation between David Bohm (1988) George Wikman and others in which Bohm is affirming the value of originality in the perception of new meanings and relating this perception to social change.

" David Bohm: ... What actually has value would be to have a constantly creative culture. Now I suggest that such creativity is related to a constant discovery of new meanings. Generally speaking we start from old meanings and commonly make small changes in them. Sometimes we may, however, perceive a big change of meaning. An idea changes in a fundamental way although, of course some old features are still carried along, no matter how big the change is.

George Wikman: But what is it that really happens when you perceive a new meaning?

David Bohm: That's the creative step. If I say that meaning is being and something new is perceived in a meaning, something has changed in being. For example, all the perceptions that took place in science changed the meaning of the world for us and this changed the world. It first changed in the sense that we saw it differently: but science also changed the physical, the somatic level. The entire earth has been changed and it could have changed a lot more, for the better or for the worse. Therefore, at least in my own experience, being and meaning are there together.

And I'm proposing this more generally. So if somebody sees a different meaning to society or to life, that will change society. Every revolution has come from somebody seeing a different meaning in human society. For example, the meaning that some people saw was that of a very static society, where everybody was in his place and the top was overlooking the bottom. Then other people saw a different meaning, according to which people should be equal. That different meaning was the power that generated the change.....". (Pylkannen, 1989)

The new meaning I am seeking to share is in showing what it means for individual researchers to speak on their own behalf as they attempt to transcend the truth of power through the power of truth in their workplace. This meaning is extended in the second enquiry as I explore the nature of educative relationships within the power of truth. I argue that 'educational' researchers who are making claims to educational and professional knowledge should be showing how they are enabling the professionals and their pupils and students to speak on their own behalf. It is the idea that researchers should be showing what it means for themselves to be living more fully their values in their workplace and showing how they are enabling the 'researched' to speak on their own behalf which I am offering as a basis for socially orientated, educational action research.

As a dialectician who is interested in moving understanding forward through a process of question and answer I accept the category of contradiction as the nucleus of dialectics. I also believe that social change and transformation can be understood in terms of the attempts by human beings to resolve their consciously lived contradictions. Because of these assumptions I will begin with the five experiences of contradiction which have moved me into the present phase of my enquiry. I am hoping that you will identify with these contradictions and my responses in the sense that they raise fundamental questions about human existence. I am thinking of questions concerning the appropriate response to: being sacked; having one's originality and the right to ask questions denied; being told that one's research and teaching were inconsistent with one's duties to the employer; being asked to teach a curriculum based upon the research and writings which were at the focus of the earlier contradictions.

Whilst these contradictions are socially and historically located within a particular time and culture I am interested in exploring the potential significance of the ensuing actions for social evolution. What I have in mind is the possibility that you will identify with the experience of the truth of power which denies the individual the right to practice his or her vocation; which denies the individual the right to ask questions; which refuses to acknowledge the individual's contribution to knowledge; which mobilises other power relations to try to prevent the individual teaching and researching a chosen area. I think you will identify with these experiences in the historical sense that many other individuals have been subjected to such power relations and that the course of social evolution can partly be understood in terms of the responses which individuals and groups have made to these experiences of oppression. In my own case I am hoping that you will identify with my responses to the following contradictions in the sense that you will feel moved by them to help to generate a living form of educational theory which has implications for social evolution through its goal of human betterment.

Holding Together the Academic Vocation and Having One's Employment Terminated

The first major contradiction I had to come to terms with involved both my economic well being and my sense of vocation to make a contribution to the reconstruction of educational theory through my work in the University. Being informed that my employment was terminated meant that I experienced the contradiction of holding together my sense of vocation together with the denial of my sense of vocation in the grounds given below to sack me. The grounds given for terminating my employment were;

"The Academic Staff Committee's grounds for recommending that a new appointment should not be offered are as follows:-

1. That you have not given satisfaction in the teaching of prescribed courses assigned to you.
2. That there is an absence of evidence to suggest that you have pursued research of sufficient quality for the assessors to be assured of your ability to perform adequately the duties of a University Lecturer; the objectives being to make acknowledged scholarly contributions to the advancement of your subject as well as to perform proper teaching and other administrative tasks.
3. That you have exhibited forms of behaviour which have harmed the good order and morale of the School of Education."

The power behind these judgements was reinforced by their acceptance by the University Senate. Given the force of the judgements I think you will appreciate how much energy and commitment were required to overthrow them. I owe my existence as a tenured academic of the University to the commitment, values, actions and political and legal understandings of other individuals both within and outside the University (Whitehead 1985b). I simply wish to share this insight with you as an acknowledgement that my past and future contributions to education, in the University, are grounded in those individuals who refused to accept the above judgements on my work. Because they engaged in the necessary political activities they overcame the power relations which were attempting to sustain these judgements. In recognition of their ethical and political commitments I could not in future jeopardise this tenure in the quest for promotion in the University of Bath. In the University promotion is now accompanied by a loss of tenure.

Holding Together Originality and the Right to Ask Questions with their Denial.

The second and third contradictions are focussed on my failure to gain academic legitimacy for two PhD Theses I submitted to the University in 1980 and 1982 entitled, 'Educational Practice and its Theory' and 'A Dialectical Approach to Education'. The second contradiction is grounded in the denial of my originality by the University's examiners and Board of Studies for Education. I am thinking of my claim to originality in my decision to ground my understanding of the world within personal knowledge (Polanyi 1959). The ability to make original contributions to one's subject is traditionally respected in academic life. These original contributions are often submitted for PhD examination in which examiners are asked to judge the originality of the text. When my examiners were asked the question as to whether I had demonstrated an ability to conduct original investigations, to test my own ideas and those of others, they claimed that I had not shown such an ability. These judgements were accepted by the Board of Studies for Education and my appeal against these judgements was rejected by the Board of Studies in November 1980. My approach to overcoming this contradiction has been a public one. I have great faith in the truth seeking capacities of human beings. That is why I believe I must subject my claims of originality to public test in contexts such as this World Congress. Just as I have faith in our truth seeking capacities I have faith that our creativity and originality together with our critical abilities will move our ideas forward. In time you will be able to judge whether I have shown an ability to conduct original investigations, to test my own ideas and those of others

or whether my examiners were correct in denying that I had shown these abilities. Whether you make your own judgements public is up to you. The third contradiction was grounded in a judgement on the University Regulations that once examiners had been appointed by the Senate under no circumstances could their competence be questioned. Given that I wished to question the competence of my examiners on the grounds of political bias, prejudice and inadequate assessment I had to hold such questioning together with the force of an instruction from the University that under no circumstances could I question their competence.

I overcame this contradiction on 1st June 1990 with a presentation to a research seminar at the Centre for the Study of Management Learning at the University of Lancaster on 1st June 1990 (Whitehead 1990). I outlined my arguments for demanding the right to question the competence of my examiners on the grounds of bias, prejudice and inadequate assessment. In presenting the evidence which I believe would convince any rational individual that there is a case to answer I felt protected by the law which guarantees my academic freedom to ask questions.

Holding Together the Power of Truth and the Truth of Power

I experienced my fourth contradiction on May 1st 1987 when I attended a meeting held under the authority of the University Council to hear complaints about my activities and writings which had been made to the University by two Professors of Education. I was in no doubt that my activities and writings were being viewed as incompatible with the duties the University wished me to pursue in teaching and research. I was thus faced with holding together my support for the power of truth in researching the politics of truth within my University together with the truth of power within the University which was attempting to block this research.

Holding Together the Acceptance of my Research in the School's Curriculum with the Above Contradictions.

I experienced my fifth contradiction at the Board of Studies of Education on May 9th 1990 when the Board agreed to send to Senate two proposals on action research modules for the MED programme - the highest level of taught course in the School of Education. The upsurge of interest in action research approaches to professional development has convinced the majority of staff in the School of Education that we should offer taught courses on action research. These modules, whilst drawing on the work of other academics, clearly reference my research and writings over my seventeen years in the University. Hence I was faced with the experience of contradiction of holding together the experience of the Board of Studies legitimating my research and writings in the taught MED programme with the experience of the University's and Board of Studies denial of the legitimacy of this knowledge in previous judgements on my research. So I am in the position of being asked to teach a curriculum which includes references to the activities, writings, teaching and research whose legitimacy has been denied in judgements which are still in force.

MOVING THE ENQUIRY FORWARD

The fourth and fifth contradictions are related and I will now outline the action cycle I am using to resolve these contradictions by moving my enquiry forward into the good order and politics of truth within the University. What I mean by good order is related to the values of the Academic Assembly of the University.

"High sounding phrases like 'values of freedom, truth and democracy', 'rational debate', 'integrity', have been used. It is easy to be cynical about these and to dismiss them as hopelessly idealistic, but without ideals and a certain agreement about shared values a community cannot be sustained, and will degenerate. These are the phrases in which members of Academic Assembly have chosen to convey their concept of this community". (The Idea of a University. Academic Assembly, University of Bath, 1988).

The Statutes of the University enable Academic Assembly to remain a democratic forum to discuss any matter of concern to the University and to pass resolutions to Senate. It is this capacity to support the power of truth against the truth of power through dialogue and democratic decision making which has focussed my attention on the value of Academic Assembly in sustaining and promoting the good order of the University. Given this context my next question is, Can I relate action research to social evolution through an analysis of an individual's educational development? I think Foucault (1980) points the way to answer this question through his idea that as a university academic I occupy a specific position in the economy which is linked to the politics of truth within our society. If I use this idea to show how I am changing power relations which are related to that regime of truth which is essential to the structure and functioning of our society and our world have I not established the practical principle that this individual's actions can be related to social evolution?

My question is related to Bohm's earlier point about a constantly creative culture. I am trying to show what it means for an academic to try to constitute a 'good' order in his workplace through giving a new meaning to the relationship between the power of truth and the truth of power - a meaning which is part of the process of transcending the truth of power through the power of truth. I think my proposals for a socially orientated educational action research rests on the extent to which you identify these contradictions as intrinsic to the power relations in your own societies and forms of life.

I claim that these contradictions can be understood in terms of a conflict between the power of truth and the truth of power. At one pole of the contradictions in my workplace is the power of truth in the values embodied by the Academic Assembly. At the other pole of the contradiction are the negations of these values in judgements which have been upheld by the truth of power of the University Council, Senate and a Board of Studies. I thus see my educational development in the good order and politics of truth in the University as an examination of what it takes to move the power of truth into an ascendancy over the truth of power. I propose to try to achieve this through public debate and dialogue within the above bodies and in contexts such as this, outside the University.

I want to make a distinction between action research and educational action research in terms of values. If action research is characterised by a particular form of systematic enquiry then there is no necessity to justify the value base of the enquiry in defining the research as 'action research'. Action research could, in these terms, be used to increase the efficiency of activities which could be morally unacceptable. In claiming that my research is 'educational' I am committing myself to upholding the values of good order. I am not willing to accept the term 'educational' to describe activities which are undermining these values.

In undertaking educational action research I accept the responsibility of making public the values which I use to characterise my activities as 'educational'. In showing what it means for an individual's educational development to try to live by the values which are embodied in the Academic Assembly's notion of good order and in trying to ensure the ascendancy of the power of truth over the truth of power I am attempting to establish a basis for a socially orientated, educational action research.

I am not restricting my view of 'educational development' to the traditional view of educational institutions such as schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities. I see any development in which individuals are learning what it means to live more fully their values in their practice as potentially 'educational'. The generality of my account and hence its relationship to social evolution rests upon the way in which others identify their contradictions with my own and find it useful in making sense of their own lives in their own action enquiry in the workplace.

The kind of enquiry I have in mind is like the first one below in which I move from an examination of the concerns created by the experience of contradiction, to the design of an action plan, to acting, evaluating and modifying concerns, plans and actions.

I now want to present the evidence on the development of my latest action cycles. The first concerns the educational management of my own learning in the good order and politics of truth within the University of Bath. The second presents evidence from my enquiry, 'How do I improve the quality of my contribution to the educational management of a comprehensive school?'. The evidence demonstrates my support for the introduction of an action research approach to professional development with its commitment to democratic procedures within the school. I want to use the second example to illustrate a point about the nature of educative relationships which I believe will challenge the validity of the propositional writings of many 'educational' researchers particularly those researching the professional learning of teachers. At the end of each enquiry I will briefly review how I see the present position.

Constructing an Action Plan and Acting

The experiences of the contradiction and conflicts discussed above led me to submit a paper to the Secretary of the Board of Studies of the School of Education, under an item dealing with the Good Order of the School of Education, for a meeting on 9th May 1990. I wished to raise the issues concerning the above contradictions in relation to the organisation and curriculum of the School. The Head of the School of Education sought the advice of the Secretary and Registrar who ruled that the matter was not appropriate business for the Board of Studies.

Evaluation and Modified Plan

This rejection was followed by a discussion with the Head of School. My evaluation was that, if I was to set out my reasons for believing that the item was appropriate matter under the University Statutes, for

consideration by the Board of Studies, then the rationality of my case would convince him to include it on the Agenda. This led me to respond with the reasons why I believed that the matter was appropriate for the Board of Studies and why I believed the matter was related to the good order of the School of Education in relation to the University Statutes. The Head of School is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the good order of the School of Education and my response was based on my feeling that I had not communicated my intentions clearly enough. I am seeking to place material before the Board of Studies which will reveal fundamental contradictions in its judgements relating to the organisation of teaching, research and the curricula of the School. I am also trying to explain how such contradictions have arisen and what might be done to resolve them. At its meeting on 20th June 1990, the Board decided that it should discuss the issue and I may now submit my material to the next meeting in October 1990.

I can also locate my understanding of the value of Academic Freedom in relation to the politics of truth, in the context of the invitation to present a paper on my research to this Congress. Following complaints made by two Professors of Education about my activities and writings at the hearing on 1st May 1987, the University require me to submit such papers to the Head of School before publication so that I might be told if I am prejudicing the University's relationships. I have submitted this paper to the Head of School in the context of the Educational Reform Act which states that,

"... academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions."

Criteria for Judging Effectiveness

In the design of an action plan I always encourage my students to include the details of the kind of evidence they would need to enable them to make a judgement on their effectiveness. I also encourage them to make explicit the criteria on which these judgements are based. I will make a similar demand of myself evaluating the effectiveness of my actions. I would expect to see my research papers showing a developing understanding of an individual's educational development in relation to the good order and politics of truth in a university. In making judgements with universal intent I judge my effectiveness in terms of the extent to which my ideas are useful to others in their attempts to make sense of their own educational practice. If my questioning is fundamental and we experience ourselves as existing in more creative rather than hostile cultures then I would expect others to participate in the creation of a public living educational theory which could be shown to have profound implications for the future of humanity (Kilpatrick 1951). I believe that this will occur as we explore and share what it means for our educational development as we live more fully the values of freedom, truth, democracy, rational debate and integrity, in our workplace and world and create a living educational theory through dialogue.

In evaluating my past practice I am aware of the social relations which protected my job, when my employment was terminated in 1976, and the social relations implicit in my use of the ideas of others in making sense of my own life. For example I owe my ability to articulate my decision to understand the world from my own point of view as a person claiming originality and exercising his judgement with universal intent to Polanyi's (1959) insights into the grounds of personal knowledge. I use this insight in defining the unit of appraisal in my claim to educational knowledge. I take the unit to be an individual's claim to know her or his own educational development. In developing my understanding of the implications of the standards of judgement I use in testing my claims to educational knowledge for social evolution I have been influenced by Habermas' views in communication and the evolution of society. I accept Habermas' (1976) point that the validity claims I am making in my attempt to communicate can be judged in terms of coherence, values, truth and authenticity (Whitehead 1989b). When I consider the validity of my claims to educational knowledge I also draw upon MacIntyre's (1988) insight that the rival claims to truth of contending traditions of enquiry depend for their vindication upon the adequacy and the explanatory power of the histories which the resources of each of those traditions in conflict enable their adherents to write. I thus see the extension of my enquiry into questions concerning social evolution to be related to the ground of my judgements in personal knowledge in that the judgements are being made responsibly with universal intent.

In addition to these points concerning validity I am interested in developing an understanding of an appropriate concept of rigour for action research. Winter (1989) has proposed six principles for the rigorous conduct of action-research which he refers to as Reflexive and Dialectical Critique, Collaborative Resource, Risk, Plurality of Structure, and Theory, Practice, Transformation. These principles, whilst open to refinement, for example in the understanding of the values which are required to conduct a rigorous form of educational action research, are the principles which I accept as appropriate for judging the rigour of my own enquiry.

I now want to move the context of my enquiry from the educational management of my professional development as an academic researcher into the context of my contribution to the educational management of a comprehensive school. I have shown what it means for a dialectical action researcher to speak on his own behalf. I now want to show what it means to engage in a dialectical form of action research in which one's professional colleagues are being encouraged to develop democratic forms of decision making and being enabled to speak, in the research, on their own behalf.

DIALECTICAL ACTION RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF A SCHOOL

I now want to extend my action enquiry into the social base of a secondary school through answering the question, 'How do I improve my contribution to the educational management of a Comprehensive School through my activities as Chair of Governors?'

Concerns

In particular I want to focus on the values of rationality and democracy and present the evidence to show how I am trying to embody these values in my form of life. Following on from my previous analysis I want to show what it means for me to be engaged in action research in which the power of truth is in the ascendancy over the truth of power. I want to do this by showing what it means to empower a teacher to speak on his own behalf rather than for me, as a researcher, to make a claim to knowledge about the professional learning of teachers without enabling teachers to speak for themselves. In judging my efforts to improve the quality of my contribution to the educational management of a secondary school I wish to focus on the value of rationality as it is embodied in the action research cycle and the value of democratic procedures in staff selection.

I will relate my enquiry to the evidence provided by the Acting Head of the school in relation to the acceptance of an action research approach to professional development and to the first democratic election for a staff development tutor. The extracts from the school's and the Local Education Authority's (L.E.A.) policy documents below show that I have moved my contribution from a position where I was part of a management structure supporting forms of professional development which did not incorporate the above view of rationality to a position which supported the above view of rationality in the way described below.

Actions

Over the past four years Avon L.E.A., has paid the University of Bath a consultancy fee to enable me to spend some time promoting action research with teachers. In March 1990 Avon L.E.A. published a booklet on 'You and Your Professional Development', which, commits the Authority to providing the majority of its INSET (Inservice Education of Teachers) support through an action-research approach to professional development.

The following extracts from a paper from the the Acting Head of the School to the Senior Management Team dated 5/3/90 show clearly the integration of an action-research approach into the School's policy for staff development for 1990-91.

"We have for a long time at Culverhay been very concerned about an INSET Policy which requires teachers to LEAVE their classes with a supply teacher, often with no expertise in the subject area, and for understandable reasons without the same commitment to the progress of the pupils.

The advantage to the School of teachers engaged in this form of INSET is also questionable, although we have tried to reduce the problems of "cascading" by having a "reporting back" form, which is then circulated to the relevant members of staff.

From the L.E.A. draft Staff Development Policy, it is clear that INSET should now be much more CLASSROOM based, and resources should be allocated to support teachers as they carry out their work. Several Culverhay Staff have been involved in such INSET/STAFF DEVELOPMENT over the last few years, and the most recent example was the STRICT initiative (Supporting Teacher Research Into Classroom Teaching).

Staff are gaining experience in "action research" techniques, which basically follows the pattern shown below:-

1. The teacher identifies or is presented with a problem, and chooses a colleague to work with to help find a solution.....

2. The teacher works with the colleague both inside and outside the classroom, with the aim of devising an approach which will improve the quality of education provided.....
3. The lesson is taught, and information collected as the class proceeds which will highlight whether or not the approach is a successful one.....
4. Following the class, the lesson is assessed by the two teachers....
5. The next stage requires a new improved approach to the topic to be devised, building on the experience gained from the research.....

Thus the cycle of events can be continued, with both colleagues benefitting professionally from the experience, and the quality of the classroom teaching hopefully improving as a result."

The following extract from the Acting Head shows my own commitment to the democratic principle of staff selecting their own staff development tutor.

" We have been asked by the L.E.A. to appoint a Staff Development Tutor. This position should be assessed annually. The role/ qualities of this person are outlined below:-

1. The Staff Development Tutor (S.D.T.)will be required to help staff decide on which aspects of their classroom work they wish to develop through Action Research.
2. The S.D.T., to be effective, needs to be accepted by his or her colleagues as equal partners. He or she needs to be able to work alongside teachers in an open and supportive way..... The Chair of Governors and I are both happy to see the Staff select and appoint a S.D.T. for 1990-91." (School Policy document 20/4/90).

Evaluation

My claim to be improving my contribution to the educational management of Culverhay School rests upon the evidence of the integration of an action research approach to professional development in the school's policy and practices. It was grounded in my view of the rationality of action research as an approach to improving the quality of education with teachers and pupils and the the support for the extension of democratic practices in the workplace. The latter was exemplified in the process of staff selection of their own Staff Development Tutor.

I want to emphasise that the evidence I have presented for my claim to be contributing to improvements in educational management of a school, was provided in the writings of a teacher. These were not my words, they were his. In seeing my contribution to educational management as a form of educative relationship I think my claims to educational knowledge of such relationships rest upon the acknowledgement by others of the value they have found in my activities, research and writings.

Modified Plans

On 26th June 1990 the local authority agreed to fund a curriculum innovation on technical and vocational education in the school. The teaching and learning styles favoured by this innovation are similar to the form of action cycle described above. My plans are to support the development of a school-based action research group to help the teachers to answer questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?' in relation to this innovation. I will be helping to gather evidence and to evaluate the practitioners' research reports in an attempt to see if it is possible to produce reports in which both the pupils and the teachers are speaking on their own behalf. I would like to extend this idea of 'speaking on your own behalf', into 'educational' research in general, by asking a number of questions of my professional and academic colleagues.

In submitting my ideas for your criticism I am conscious of the vulnerability which comes from an openness to change because one recognises failure and error. I want you to recognise an original contribution to educational research. I may not receive such recognition because you may rightly refuse this acknowledgement. I trust that your acknowledgements or refusals will rest upon the power of your rational criticism in support of the power of truth and that you will present your criticisms openly and in a public arena.

In presenting my ideas in the above form I am conscious that it may contain an implicit criticism of your own ideas. I am thinking of those of you who claim to belong to an educational research community and who, whilst believing that your research is 'educational', do not show what your research means for your own or

others' educational practice. I am addressing the following points and questions to all those who believe that their research is 'educational research'.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

I am assuming that we share the conviction that it was right to abandon the disciplines approach to education research (dominant in the 1960s and 1970s) because it was both mistaken (Hirst 1983) and, by virtue of the ideological power of its proponents, because it was exercising a damaging influence on the views of teachers and academics. The power of many of your criticisms helped to create a climate in which alternative views began to emerge. My worry is that you have replaced the ideological hegemony of the disciplines approach with the hegemony of your own critical/interpretative and thus propositional forms which are clearly identified through their organising concepts as a philosophy of education (Carr 1989 and Carr and Kemmis 1986, Rudduck 1989), a sociology of education (Whitty 1986) a history of education (Hamilton 1989, 1990) and a psychology of education (Calderhead 1988). I recognise these texts as having value for my educational discourse but they contain no synthesis which enables education to be viewed in a way which is holistic and dynamic. If you believe your research to be 'educational' in whose sense is it 'educational'? Can you substantiate a claim to be 'educational researchers' without an examination of your own or another's educational development? I am hoping that you will respond to my questions in a way which can help to establish a personal and social basis for educational action research and help to create a living educational theory which may indeed have 'profound implications for the future of humanity'. In asking such questions I am wondering if you experience contradictions in your workplace. Watkins (1987) in his research on the contested workplace has argued that "during work experience the contradictions of work are exposed and thus may serve to undermine the existing social relations of work by revealing both the oppositional forms and the stark 'reality' of the workplace". As well as conducting research on students I wonder whether such researchers have a responsibility to conduct research on themselves in their own workplace as they show what it means for their educational development to live more fully their values in their practice.

My questions concerning the potential of action research and educational theory for social evolution have emerged from my recognition of the power relations which protected my job in the University and in the legal protection given to me as an academic by the Education Reform Act of 1988. This act protects my right to question freely and to test received wisdom. It also protects the freedom of academics to put forward new ideas and controversial and unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions.

In offering a case study of an individual's educational development and questioning its relationship to social evolution I am opening myself once again to criticism. I am thinking of the charges of arrogance, of making ridiculous and unsubstantiated claims, of trying to claim a potential for action research which it does not have, or of being incomprehensible from the Deakin point of view! I may indeed be mistaken. Yet of all the criteria I have mentioned in this paper for judging its validity I wish to return to Habermas' criteria of authenticity where he says that it is only through watching a person through time, in action, will we be able to judge that person's authenticity. I must leave you to judge freely and wisely in the hope that you will feel moved to go public on your judgements on my research. I hope that you will do this within a dialogue which shows how you are trying to live more fully your educational values in your workplace as you support the power of truth against the truth of power. In this way, as I have argued, will you not be making your own contribution to the evolution of our society through education?

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