

EXPERIENTIAL RESEARCH

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FOREWORD

These two papers were written between the Summer of 1979 and the Spring of 1980 for inclusion in Human Inquiry; A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research, edited by Peter Reason and John Rowan, and published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 1981.

I am grateful to the Publisher for permission to reprint them in this format.

The first paper, Experiential Research Methodology, contains an important part - the last four sections - on the intermediate experiential research model, which for reasons of space was not included in Human Inquiry. So this part is published here for the first time.

For the first monograph I wrote on this theme see Experience and Method (1971), and for an example of a piece of experiential research see Co-Counselling; An Experiential Inquiry, (Heron and Reason, 1981).

John Heron.

CONTENTS

EXPERIENTIAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction
The Traditional Research Model
The Full Experiential Research Model
Noticing and Trying Out
Examples of Full Experiential Research
Further Features of the Full Model
The Intermediate Experiential Research Model
Candidates for the Intermediate Model
The Research Dimension of the Intermediate Model
Further Features of the Intermediate Model

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS FOR A NEW RESEARCH PARADIGM

Cooperative Inquiry
The Argument from the Nature of Research Behaviour
The Argument from Intentionality
The Argument from Language
The Argument from an Extended Epistemology
The Argument from Axiology
The Political and Moral Argument

References

EXPERIENTIAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Experiential research is the kind of research on persons in which the subjects of the research contribute not only to the content of the research, ie: the activity that is being researched, but also to the creative thinking that generates, manages, and draws conclusions from, the research. And the researchers, in the full model, contribute not only to the creative thinking and management, but they also participate, like the subjects, in the activity that is being researched. The rationale for this sort of research I have given in the Second Paper in this Monograph, as well as in an earlier paper (Heron, 1971).

The contribution of subjects to the research propositions - hypothesis, statements on design and management, discussions on conclusions, and so on - may be strong or weak. It is strong if the subjects are fully-fledged co-researchers taking an equal part in the creative thinking that generates, accompanies and concludes the research. It is weak if they are merely consulted by the researchers about these matters for assent or dissent, and if dissent occurs negotiated with until agreement is reached.

The contribution of the researchers to the research action may also be strong or weak. It is strong if they go thoroughly through all the prescribed stages of the action and are thus fully-fledged co-subjects. It is weak if they only go through some stages and omit others, or do one or more stages incompletely.

In the traditional model, of course, the subjects make no contribution to the research propositions, ie: they don't help to formulate the propositions; and the researchers make no contribution to the research action, ie: they don't do what the subjects do. If we map out all the relevant possibilities, then we have:

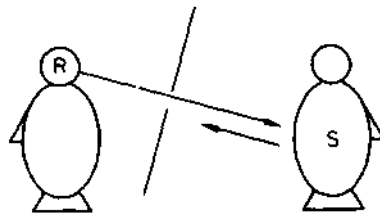
	RESEARCHER	SUBJECT
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS	Strong	Strong Weak Zero
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH ACTION	Strong Weak Zero	Strong

The Traditional Research Model

First of all a brief consideration of the traditional model, which is as follows:

CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS	RESEARCHER	SUBJECT
	Strong	Zero
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH ACTION	Zero	Strong

We can also symbolise the traditional model like this:



This is the model for unilateral control by the researcher of the research enterprise and of the subject's contribution to it. It is similar to authoritarian, unilateral control in traditional education: staff unilaterally decide on student objectives, on course design (interrelating topics, teaching and learning methods, human and physical resources, time), on criteria of assessment and on the assessment itself. And in traditional therapy: the patient, passive and dependent, is the recipient of a therapeutic programme unilaterally designed and managed by the therapist. And also, of course, in traditional management: the autocratic manager makes decisions without consulting any of those who are directly affected by them.

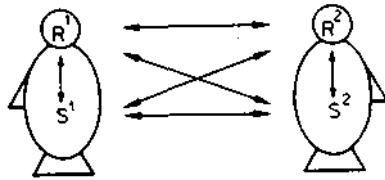
Some of the features of the traditional model are as follows: R and S are separate roles which are non-reciprocal and are in asymmetrical relation. R gives instructions to S in accordance with a hypothesis and a research design which S has not been consulted about and will not be informed about. S's intellectual queries about the research are not required or elicited. R's human relationship to S, other than the conventional protocols of polite managerial behaviour, is irrelevant to the research. Getting to know about what S does in fulfilling his instructions is more important than relating to S and getting to know S. R's commitment is to knowledge not to persons. To this end R can influence S, but not vice versa. And so on.

The Full Experiential Research Model

Now let's consider the full-blown experiential research model:

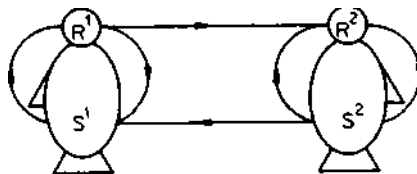
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS	RESEARCHER	SUBJECT
	Strong	Strong
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH ACTION	Strong	Strong

And in diagram form the experiential research model looks like this:



In this model each person involved is both researcher and subject. Each is involved as co-researcher, contributing to the research propositions at all stages from the working hypothesis to the research conclusions. And each is involved as co-subject being fully involved in all stages of the research action. Each person researches the hypothesis through his own experience and action, and at the same time through the experience and action of the other. With respect to R1, S1, R2, S2, there is a reciprocal relation in all the six possible directions. Intrapsychically and interpersonally there is full reciprocity: the exchange of ideas, the mutual experiential encounter, the two-way corrective interaction between ideas and experience both within each person and between the two persons - it is all there.

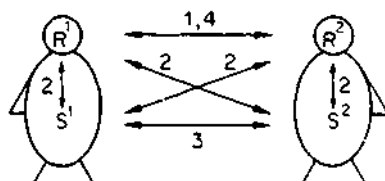
There are three basic corrective feedback loops, involving the influence of ideas on experience/action, and vice versa: one for each person and for the interaction between them. Actually there are three-times-two loops, since reciprocity requires another three with arrows going in the opposite direction. I only show one set of three here. This set shows the R1-S1 loop, the R2-S2 loop and the ideas of R1 influencing via R2 the actions of S2, and the actions of S2 via S1 influencing the ideas of R1.



Each person goes through an action research cycle through the use of his own loop, and is his own control on a serial basis; and at the same time, through his loop with the other, can take account of corrective feedback from the other. He can also take account of comparisons between his own internal loop and the internal loop of the other. And as a dyad they go through an action research cycle, through the use of the dyadic loop (in both directions), and so together provide their own control group on a serial basis.

Of course, there may be several dyads engaged in the same research inquiry or one small group, or several small groups. This simply increases the range of interlooping, and of comparisons between different sorts of loops. The model is thus charged with internal checks and balances for the empirical validation of research propositions through experience and action, where this validation is always from the agents' standpoints.

The four stages of the research are as follows:



1. The co-researchers discuss the initial research propositions, and agree on some hypothesis about persons in relation: about the basic phenomenal categories that apply and how to map them; about what persons' capacities and potentialities are, what can happen to these capacities, what can restrict them, what can liberate them; about what persons in relation can do and can become through developing these capacities and about how they can do it and become it, what developmental procedures they can adopt.

2. The co-researchers as co-subjects apply these mapping and/or developmental procedures, using all the corrective feedback loops, with ideas influencing action and experience, with action and experience influencing ideas, both intra- and inter-personally in the different ways indicated in the paragraph under the feedback loops diagram. The initial hypothesis (about both theory and procedure) may (or may not) undergo some progressive modification during this stage. In this and the following stage the co-researchers will be especially alert to how the hypothesis falls short of accounting for what they are actually doing and experiencing.

3. The co-subjects become fully immersed in their mutual encounter and experience; they become fully open to their experiential knowledge of what is going on when applying the procedures. They encounter each other and attendant phenomena without preconception discriminating so far as possible what is actually happening, bracketing off any prejudicial influence of the ideas they started with in stage (1). They may, indeed, temporarily forget how and why they started the enquiry. This stage will, of course, be interwoven with phases of stage (2).

4. After an appropriate period involving stages (2) and (3), the co-researchers return to consider and discuss their original research propositions, take account of modifications in them resulting from stages (2) and (3), then formulate together the final research conclusions. These conclusions may cover the following sorts of issues.

- (i) Acceptance of all or some, rejection of all or some, modification of all or some of the initial research propositions as a function of the research procedure. This acceptance, rejection, modification may concern the statements about basic phenomenal categories and their mapping, about human capacities, the statements about what can restrict and what can hinder their development, the statements about what persons in relation can do to develop their capacities, the statements about the developmental procedure they can adopt to achieve this.
- (ii) Evaluative statements about the research procedure (as distinct from the mapping or developmental procedure used within the research procedure) and its impact of the research conclusions.
- (iii) Proposals for further hypotheses and/or for future modifications to the research procedure to be tried out in some future research endeavour.

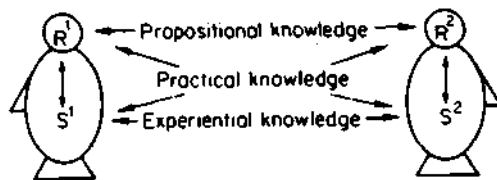
The diagram above can also indicate the relations between propositional knowledge, practical knowledge, and experiential knowledge that hold within the experiential research paradigm. Propositional knowledge is knowledge of facts or truths as stated in propositions: it is entirely language dependent. Practical knowledge is knowing how to do something as exemplified in the exercise of some special skill or proficiency. Experiential knowledge is knowing some entity by direct fact-to-face encounter with her/him/it; it is direct discrimination of what is present

in relation with the knower. (For further discussion of these three basic types of knowledge, see my other contribution to this book).

Stages (1) and (4) are firmly within the domain of propositional knowledge: in stage (1) the co-researchers clarify and state their initial hypothesis; in stage (4) they clarify and state their research conclusions. In stage (2), two main sorts of practical knowledge, of knowing how, are involved. Firstly, the co-researchers have, or have to acquire through practice, knowledge how to work the research procedures; they need to know how to go round the various feedback loops, interrelating action/experience and ideas. Secondly, they need to know how to work the developmental procedures, the personal and interpersonal growth and change methods that constitute the practical core of the research; this sort of practical knowledge they may well have to acquire through considerable practice.

Stage (3) is the empirical bedrock of the enquiry and is firmly within the domain of experiential knowledge. The co-subjects encounter each other fully and encounter everything else that is going on within the actual realities of the research situation. This stage involves the fundamental phenomenological discrimination of persons in relation in their world. The co-subjects are open to what is going on between them, within them, between them and their environment - an openness that allows them to learn through encounter and experience, that brackets off their latent propositional knowledge, that disarms its tendency to restrict present discrimination and perception. I do not suggest that co-subjects in stage (3) can entirely disown, discard or temporarily obliterate all their latent propositional knowledge; but that, like the true poet, they can sufficiently disengage from the claims of the past language of words to be open to the present "language" of experience, so that their future use of words may become revisionary in the most fundamental, empirical way. They are alert to the possible limitations of their hypothesis. They hold in suspension their initial theories and their view of the appropriate developmental procedures in order to discriminate what is actually going on, subsequently invoking language to symbolise this experiential discrimination, rather than crushing the experience into some preferred and pre-existent propositional mould.

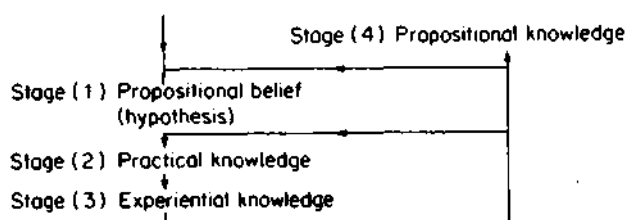
In diagram form these different types of knowledge can be shown as follows:



I call this research experiential because its empirical basis is the experiential knowledge of persons in relation to their situation, their world. And I suggest there can be no other empirical base for researching the human condition and human capacity for self-direction from the stand-point of the agent; and that no other standpoint can have research precedence over the agent's standpoint (Heron, 1971).

Strictly speaking, of course, the co-researchers start off not with propositional knowledge, but with propositional belief, with hypothesis. (Propositional belief is belief that, to be distinguished from believing a person, and belief in; cf. Price, 1969).

If we now put into diagram form the relations between the initial belief and the various forms of knowledge, we get the following:



Noticing and Trying Out

There are two complementary aspects to experiential research of this sort: they are phenomenological mapping and intentional interaction (Heron, 1977a). Phenomenological mapping is simply noticing, awarely discriminating, and categorising what is going on. It attends very fully and openly to the phenomena, identifying the marginal as well as the focal, the less obvious as well as the more obvious, those that tend to get screened out by our current use of language as well as those that are highlighted by our use of language.

Intentional interaction is the trying out of some developmental procedure that follows from the hypothesis about persons, about what they can do and become. So the complementarity or polarity is between noticing and trying out, between experiential receptivity and active agency. And the research may focus more on one than on the other: the trying out may serve the noticing or the noticing may serve the trying out. We may hypothesise that the "eyes" and the "gaze" are distinct phenomenal categories, then try out various procedures in relation with each other to bring out this distinction. Or we may hypothesise that persons in relation can choose to move around at will through a variety of emotional states, positive and negative, then discriminate and notice carefully the various emotional states in order to aid the moving around them. Or the research inquiry may balance equally both the noticing and trying out processes.

The two poles overlap when the researchers notice very carefully how they are trying something out, and then seek to categorise this accurately. They notice how they are doing something, and then formulate the "how". The result is a set of statements about practical knowledge.

Following this analysis, there are two sorts of basic proposition in the research conclusions: statements about what the co-researchers experience and statements about what they do. These two sorts of propositions will provide the warrant for any other higher order general and/or theoretical propositions.

Examples of Full Experiential Research

I wish now to consider a range of practical candidates for this full-blown experiential research. All of these I have been involved with over the last few years either (1) as prolegomenon only, or (2) partially and informally through various shared activities and experiences in groups and workshops, or (3) in ways that approximate more fully to the paradigm outlined here. My concept of the methodology, as clarified in this paper, has evolved gradually through my endeavours.

1. Phenomenological mapping. Here the paradigm is used to clarify and categorise what is going on for persons in relation in their research

situation, to make critical distinctions between different aspects of the total experience, to characterise criteria for differentiating between phenomena, to characterise how persons can act within the research situation, and so on. All this mapping can only properly be done from within the experience and action. It can't be done by a non-participant observer who simply gathers "evidence" from others who are within the experience and action. There are many areas for phenomenological mapping. Some of them are:

- (a) Elements of encounter between persons. The co-researchers explore, refine, elaborate hypothesised phenomenal categories such as: the distinction between the eyes and the gaze; the distinction between the tissues and the touch; the distinction between private experience and shared experience, that is, between private access to the contents of consciousness and shared access to the contents of consciousness; mutual gazing and all the other phenomenal categories that do justice to it; similarly with mutual touching. For a prolegomenon see Heron, (1970). A further area of inquiry here is to formulate phenomenal categories that do justice to what is going on when two people speak the same language and use it to seek and find agreement.
- (b) Sorts of interactions between persons, and the sorts of intrapsychic states/emotional spaces within persons. The co-researchers take on hypothetical maps about what goes on between themselves and within themselves; about the species of distorted transaction, the species of authentic transaction, the negative emotional spaces and the positive emotional spaces, sorts of need/interest/wish/want and so on (Heron, 1975a, 1977b), Pointers to this whole area come from notions such as those of transference and the defence mechanisms in classical psychoanalysis, of transactions and ego-states in transactional analysis, of patterns, states of attention and restimulation in co-counselling theory. Research here extends to the categorisations of the whole range of phenomena that occur in groups (Heron, 1973a, Heron, 1977a).
- (c) Altered states of consciousness. The co-researchers can devise and adopt procedures to explore hypothesised altered states of consciousness, and map out carefully the states, processes and goings on they experience. It is also important to give a careful account of the entry procedures used. Experiential research of the kind outlined in this paper seems to me to be the paramount method for researching ASCs, ESP and the whole field of the so-called paranormal (of Heron, 1975b). Traditional research designs fail to get at the heart of the matter. Groups of co-researchers together need to agree to shift their state of consciousness following the relevant procedures, as co-subjects, then to monitor and discriminate the outcomes. I set up and participated in such a group which ran through three cycles of activity in 1977 (Heron, 1978a).

These are only three examples of candidates for phenomenological mapping. There are no doubt many more.

2. Intentional interaction. Here the paradigm is used to explore hypotheses about what persons can become, what they can do to develop their capacities, with presuppositions about what these capacities are and what can happen to them by way of restriction or liberation. Of course experiential research of this sort can't be separated out entirely from phenomenological mapping, nor vice versa, for each is more or less explicitly involved in the other. Here are ~~some~~ candidates only.

- (a) Personal growth through mutual aid. Two or more persons share some hypothesis about persons, about what can and does happen to them, about what procedures they can adopt to change. They then apply these procedures in systematic interaction with each other, using this experience to review the hypotheses during the research and eventually to formulate the final research conclusions. Co-counselling theory and practice provides a ready vehicle for experiential research (Heron, 1973b, 1974a, 1977c,d). Many other growth modalities and therapies are ripe for experiential research; Gestalt therapy, Reichian and neo-Reichian therapies, primal therapy, etc. Also ripe, are the varieties of transpersonal development, the many meditation and related approaches, which are often in the grip of spiritual authoritarianism, dogmatic intuitionism, and appallingly exclude any spirit of discriminating inquiry. Experiential research offers a great antidote here (cf. Heron, 1975c).
- (b) Peer learning community. The co-researchers are co-students who set up a course on a peer basis. They consult together and hypothesise their capacity to change in the direction of specified individual and collective objectives; they agree a programme for reaching these objectives that covers topics or areas of change, methods of change, resources for change, time allocation. They follow the programme, modifying the programme, the objectives or both as a function of action and experience. They then engage in a self and peer assessment procedure to see whether the original or modified objectives have been met; and in the light of the total experience, including the assessment, they evaluate and reach final conclusions about the original or modified notion of their capacity to change in the direction of the elected objectives, and about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme actually adopted. Such a community may have an initial facilitator, who ideally moves down a gradient from influential primary facilitator at the outset to influential peer at a later stage (Heron, 1974b,c,d, 1978b).
- (c) Peer review audit. A group of fellow professionals - doctors, dentists, teachers, or any other - meet to co-research their capacity to monitor and improve their standards of performance of professional practice. First, they identify what appear to be their current standards and what they actually do in practice. Second they agree, where relevant, to commit themselves to apply what they suppose to be more desirable standards and practices. Third, they devise some form of self-assessment (and if practicable reciprocal peer assessment) which each can apply periodically to his actual professional work to assess the degree to which each is applying these more desirable standards and practices. Fourth, they go back to work and apply the self-assessment schedules. Fifth, they meet after a suitable interval for a self and peer assessment session, each person sharing his recent self-assessment findings and being open to feedback, questions and confrontations from his peers. This may lead to a revision of the standards, the practices, the self-assessment schedules, the self and peer assessment session, or any combination of these. Then a further cycle is launched. After an agreed number of cycles, the group meet to evaluate the whole experience and decide whether or not, or to what degree and with what qualifications, their hypothesis about their capacity to monitor and improve their standards of and performance of professional practice has been validated (Heron, 1977b, 1979).

There are many other candidates for this sort of experiential research, for example, in organisational development, in work collectives using a collective contract system, in sexual interaction, in a shared life-style with spouse or living partner (Heron, 1974e), and so on. One application that comprehensively closes the gap between research and everyday living is contained in the idea of a self-generating culture in which a group of persons generate social practices and social rituals for their whole life-style together as an experiential research inquiry into their capacity for giving more meaning to and finding more meaning in the human condition (Heron, 1978c).

Further Features of the Full Model

1. It is a paradigm for a state-specific science (Tart, 1971), that is a science in which you have to shift your state of consciousness in order to do the research, communicate it and understand communications about it. Each person involved in both co-researcher and co-subject, is both committed to inquire into an activity and committed to engage in that activity. To balance inquiry and action, discriminating critical awareness and committed active participation, conceptual grasp and experiential immersion - is itself a special state of consciousness. This special state may in its turn be the entree to further altered states.
2. This state-specific requirement raises the apparent paradox of experiential research: that the research method seems to presuppose a degree of personal development and self-direction which has yet to be achieved through the research action. The answer to this, I think, is that the research method is itself a way of enhancing the development of the capacities it is seeking to inquire into. The stage (2) feedback loops, processing the initial ideas through action and experience, give space for the co-researchers to improve their skill in using the method, which in turn helps them improve their skill in the developmental procedures which the research is in part about.
3. Nevertheless, it is clear that the discipline and rigour involved in this sort of research is formidable. The rigour is essentially one of mindfulness, of inner alertness, of knowing what is and is not going on while it is and is not going on, of keeping in mind a second-order objective while fulfilling a first-order objective. It has its analogue in oriental forms of consciousness training, eg: satipatthana in Buddhism (Goleman, 1972). But the ancient oriental motivation for such training is more concerned with salvation than it is with inquiry.
4. The validation of this sort of research does not lie in numbers or statistics, but ultimately in the experiential discrimination of those who execute a common plan of action and experience in the light of some agreed hypothesis. However, many persons agree in the research conclusions this is per se no guarantee of their validity. Consensus gentium is no adequate criterion of truth; it may simply represent widespread collusion to ignore crucial and relevant variables. "What is crucial in attaining ... consensual validation is the quality of critical awareness and discrimination in categorising and evaluating the experiential effects and referring them back to the original theory" (Heron, 1971). If in doubt about this quality in the research of others, then replicate the research including yourself as co-researcher-subject and get your own discrimination to bear upon the issues.

5. The core of the validation process and the key to its quality is provided by the critical and corrective feedback loops, in which the theory with which the co-researchers start is continually reviewed in the light of action and experience. If the initial theory is stated in such a form that whatever the co-researchers do and experience has no bearing upon it, then we are not in the domain of science. So a statement like "Persons are always striving for a greater good whether they are aware of it or not, and whatever they do" is a non-scientific statement. It may be true but if so its validation does not rest on any kind of scientific process. The critical acumen which the co-researchers need to exercise on an appropriately stated theory is to be alert to whether it does justice to, whether it honours or falls short of honouring, what is actually experienced. The theory is validated to the extent, and only to the extent, that it survives this kind of alertness. The sort of knowledge that results from this process is provisional only. Its truth is relative to the critical acumen in action and experience of those who assert it. It is in principle open to revision as a function of further more extended action and experience on the part of others. There are no final truths in a science of persons any more than there are in the natural sciences (cf. Magee, 1975).
6. But within this general account of the provisional nature of all scientific knowledge of persons, we can make a distinction between statements that are definitive and clear, even apparently apodeictic, categoric, and others that are tentative, approximate, even confused, vague. The human condition being what it is, any research paradigm that honours the human condition may well lead in practice to the emergence of ambiguity, imprecision, confusion, uncertainty, apparent contradiction and paradox - these may be present to a greater or lesser extent in the process, the product or both. Where the human condition is concerned it is better to be vaguely right than precisely wrong, better to own a fruitful confusion than mask it with irrelevant precision.
7. The research products are both propositional and practical. There are the research conclusions: propositions about phenomenal categories, about persons and their capacities, about procedures that persons can adopt and about norms of procedure. Then there are the skills and proficiencies of various kinds which persons involved take away both as co-researchers and as co-subjects. (Some of the products may also be presentational, ie: pictures, paintings, sculptures, music, dance, movement - which make their own sort of statement about the human condition. For a brief discussion of presentational knowledge, see my other contribution to this book).
8. Who writes up the research? Whoever does it, the writing reports the fruits of a lot of discussion among the co-researchers at the various stages. One or more persons in the research group may do the writing, send a draft to the rest for comment, on the basis of which, a second draft is written and sent around for final approval. Or each person in the group may keep a research diary; one or more persons collate the diaries for the first draft, which is sent round for comments and so on. No doubt there are numerous other ways of doing it, using video and audio recording and so on.
9. Experiential research of this sort closes the gap between research and "real life". Any two or more persons, interacting in some project in everyday life, can choose to make of that project an

experiential research inquiry, assuming that the social system in which the project is set gives enough room for all the manoeuvres involved. The human condition itself is one of experiential research: people meeting together and agreeing how to symbolise their experience; revising their symbolisations in the light of further experience, and so on.

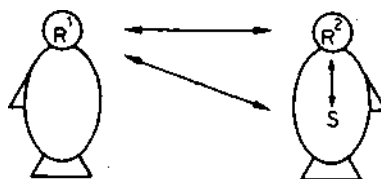
10. Many traditional social science research institutions lack the sort of research climate and culture that motivates people to do experiential research and that enables them to grasp the rationale of it. Official research on people still too often wears that bleak face that has unwittingly confused respectability with oppression. We have to do a lot to create a new climate.

The Intermediate Experiential Research Model

There is also an intermediate experiential research model:

CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS	RESEARCHER	SUBJECT
	Strong	Strong
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH ACTION	Zero	Strong

As a diagram, it looks like this:



In this sort of research design, the researcher and subject discuss together all the research propositions from hypothesis to conclusions, and negotiate together to agree what it is that the subject will do in the research action. Furthermore, the subject in action can modify what he does in the light of experience and through negotiation with the researcher; reciprocally the researcher can seek to modify through negotiation what the subject does. But the researcher stays outside the research action, he does not participate in it as subject.

So R1 and R2 are in reciprocal researcher roles; and S is in a two-way relation with R1 and himself as R2. R1 may and probably will initiate and propose more than R2 by way of contribution to the research propositions, but R2 participates thoroughly and it is in principle equally open to R2 to initiate research thinking. In fact, R2 will probably initiate and contribute more and more as time goes on and as his self-directing competence increases.

S goes through an action-research cycle, testing ideas in action, with a corrective feedback loop so that the action modifies the ideas as well as vice versa. And both directions in the loop are open to the influence of R1 through consultation and negotiation. Because of its important elements of reciprocity between subject and researcher, this model is much more human, more a research on and with persons than the traditional autocratic model.

Candidates for the Intermediate Model

There are several existing candidates for this sort of research. But each requires an extra dimension of awareness and procedure to turn it into fully-fledged research. I will first of all describe each of the candidates, then describe the extra research dimension. And note that each of these candidates, when doing its own sort of thing, that is, when not being thought of as any kind of research activity, nevertheless, is isomorphic in its procedures with the above diagram and model.

1. The tutor as facilitator of self-directed student learning on a contractual and mutually consultative basis with the student. This educational model has the following features:
 - (i) Tutor and student consult together to agree overall objectives for student learning, and then to agree a programme of student learning for some specified period. This programme will integrate subject matter, teaching and learning methods, human and physical resources, time allocation. The tutor may (or may not) do some of the teaching in this programme.
 - (ii) The student carries out the programme, being free to modify it in the light of the experience of doing it. He is free in the light of experience, to modify the objectives and/or the programme. Major modifications will be negotiated with the tutor. The tutor is also free to propose and negotiate modifications to the agreed student objectives and/or programme in the light of the tutor's perceptions of how the student is getting on and of what the student says about his work.
 - (iii) Tutor and student together agree criteria for assessing student performance. The tutor assesses student performance in the light of these criteria, the student assesses his own performance in the light of the agreed criteria, and they negotiate a final grade. Agreeing the criteria might actually occur at a quite early point in the whole procedure.

2. The doctor or therapist as facilitator of patient self-help on a contractual and mutually consultative basis with the patient. This is the therapeutic model, which follows closely the educational model, and indeed subsumes therapy within education as a special case of the latter. It has the following features:
 - (i) Doctor and patient consult together and agree first of all what the symptoms are. They then discuss - each from the standpoint of his own relevant knowledge - and agree the most probably hypothesis about the (probably multifactorial) causes of the symptoms. Finally, they discuss and agree an initial programme of treatment to deal with the causes and remove the symptoms. Especially they agree what part the doctor or his colleagues are to play in providing this treatment, and what part the patient plays on a self-help basis.
 - (ii) Doctor and patient carry out their respective parts of the treatment. As a function of the patient's experience of and response to both parts of the treatment, and of the doctor's perception of this, it is open to both patient and doctor to propose negotiation to modify the treatment in some respect (in either part) to change the initial hypothesis of the cause, to revise an account of the symptoms or any combination of these. They will meet at agreed intervals to discuss all this and negotiate as appropriate.

- (iii) Doctor and patient together agree criteria for successful completion of treatment (ie: "cure"). The doctor assesses the patient's progress in the light of these criteria, and the patient assesses his own progress in the light of the criteria. Both the agreed criteria and the assessment will cover both the doctor's and the patient's part in the treatment programme. They then negotiate to see whether they agree or not that the treatment as a whole has been successfully completed.

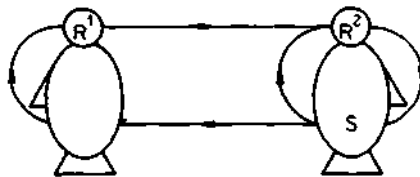
This, of course, is a radical procedure from the point of view of traditional medicine, but humanistic medicine would press the case for it (Heron, 1978d, Miller, - 1975), it has definite links with the work of Balint and his associates (Balint, 1964), and of course it restores some of the original meaning of the title doctor as educator. It offers a wholesome corrective to the more authoritarian and unilateral tendencies on the part of the therapist in psychotherapy; and provides a good model for the facilitation of personal growth work in humanistic psychology and the human potential movement, where there is a professional or fee-paying relationship between facilitator and client, and where the facilitator himself is not himself doing any personal growth work within the relationship. In this last instance as well as talking about "facilitator" and "client" instead of "doctor" and "patient", one will also talk about "restrictions and rigidities of personal functioning" rather than "symptoms" and a "personal growth programme" rather than "treatment".

- 3. The process consultant working with the members of an organisation or some part of an organisation to facilitate organisational change and development on a contractual and mutually consultative basis with those members.
 - (i) After an appropriate period for the consultant to familiarise himself, consultant and clients discuss together and agree on a provisional diagnosis of the state of the organisation. Similarly, they discuss together and agree a provisional programme of organisational change and development. This will primarily involve activities undertaken by the clients. But the consultant may function as a resource person at various points in the programme. The respective client and consultant roles throughout are, of course, negotiated and agreed.
 - (ii) The programme of change and development is put into action. As a function of seeing how the action goes, the clients or the consultant may propose a negotiation between them to modify the action, the programme or both. Consultant and clients will meet at agreed intervals to discuss how things are going and negotiate any modifications.
 - (iii) Consultant and clients together discuss and agree criteria for assessing whether the original or modified programme has been successfully completed. They each assess the current state of the organisation in the light of the criteria and then negotiate to see whether they agree that the programme has been successfully completed.
- 4. A manager working with staff to facilitate self-determined staff work schedules on a contractual and mutually consultative basis with staff.
 - (i) Manager and worker discuss together and agree the worker's job description, and a provisional programme of work for the worker over a specified period to fulfil that description.

They clarify and agree what their respective responsibilities are with respect to that programme.

- (ii) As the worker implements the programme in action, either the worker or the manager can, on the basis of perceptions of how the work is going, propose a negotiation to modify the way the work is being done, the actual work to be done, the overall programme, the job description, or any combination of these. They will meet at agreed intervals to discuss the work in progress and to negotiate any modifications.
- (iii) Manager and worker together agree criteria for the successful completion of the work programme - either the original one if it still holds, or any subsequent modified programme mutually agreed. Each assesses the work done in the light of these criteria and negotiate to see if they agree that the work has been successfully completed.

All these four candidates share a common basic procedure in each stage, especially an all important double corrective feedback loop in stage (ii). Thus the student's action influences both his own and his tutor's ideas about it; and both the student's ideas and his tutor's ideas influence the student's action. Furthermore, on each of these two parts of the loop, the student's ideas and the tutor's ideas are shared, discussed and worked with as a basis for agreement. Similarly, for the doctor and patient, process consultant and clients, manager and worker. In terms of the research diagram the two feedback loops can be shown as follows:



What this means is that the researcher, the tutor, the doctor, the process consultant and the manager each functions as an additional and consultative source of corrective feedback (corrective to ideas or action or both) for a self-directing subject, student, patient, client in an organisation, or worker.

Another small but important point to make about the four candidates given above is that in stage (iii) agreement about criteria is included, for convenience. In actual fact determining and agreeing criteria or assessment might well occur at an earlier stage.

The Research Dimension of the Intermediate Model

What now is the extra dimension of awareness and procedure needed to convert each of these four candidates into a research activity of the intermediate experiential sort? One basic question which the experiential method addresses is this: "How, from the standpoint of the agent, can self-directing capacity be developed?" (Heron, 1971). The four candidates are eligible to be researched as ways of developing the self-directing capacity respectively of the student, the patient, the organisation, the worker. What is necessary in each case is that the tutor and student, doctor and patient, etc., choose to regard themselves as R1 and R2 - and - S respectively, and choose to regard the whole process they go through together not simply as an educational process or a healing process, etc., but also as the same as a higher order inquiry into how, from the subject's standpoint his self-directing capacity can be developed.

And this means both R1 and R2 sustaining an extra margin of awareness throughout the process so that each can continuously monitor it in the light of this question.

The research process will have its three parts, similar in structure to, but supervenient on and additional to, the three parts of the educational procedure, the therapy procedure, etc. For the sake of convenience I will outline the three parts of the research process as applied to the educational procedure. So in what follows R1 and R2 - and - S are tutor and student respectively.

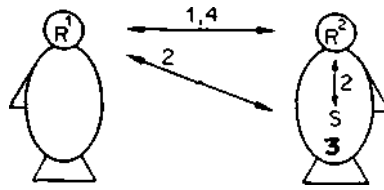
- (i) R1 and R2 discuss and agree their working research hypothesis to the effect that the whole educational procedure with its three parts will develop the self-directing capacity of R2 - and - S, the student, as he sees it.
- (ii) As they go through the educational procedure, R1 and R2 - and - S will take time out to use their all-important double feedback loop referred to just above to discuss and decide whether or not this or that or the other aspect of the educational procedure is fulfilling the working hypothesis, ie: is enabling S to become a more self-directing student; and if not, then to modify that part or parts of the procedure in ways that may fulfil it better.
- (iii) And this presupposes that they will have discussed and agreed working criteria of self-directing ability. But these criteria too may be modified through the use of the double feedback loop. Finally, these criteria will be used by each party at the end of the educational-procedure-with-attached-research-procedure to discuss and decide whether or to what extent or with what qualifications the working hypothesis has been fulfilled, ie: the student has developed his self-directing capacity, as he sees it.

The research conclusions are generated by R1 and R2 but with an emphasis on the standpoint of R2 the agent, the self-directing subject. These conclusions may cover a range of possible issues some of which are as follows:

- (i) The features of the educational procedure that were especially restricting, or especially fulfilling, to the fulfilment of the working hypothesis.
- (ii) Significant changes introduced, via the double feedback loop, to the educational procedure that were judged to have made it better able to fulfil the working hypothesis.
- (iii) Significant changes to the educational procedure which this research inquiry suggests could fruitfully be tried out in a future piece of research.
- (iv) Extraneous factors that affected, positively and/or negatively, the educational procedure, the research procedure or both.

The basic empirical touchstone in this whole research process is the experience of S, what he proves on his pulse, his experiential knowledge through direct encounter with what has been going on - his encounter with R1, with himself and his own developing competence in the light of his encounter with R1, with the propositional structures that guide the action, with extraneous variables, and so on. The most that R1 can do through interaction with S is to facilitate, in the direction of fulfilling the working hypothesis, qualitative changes in S's experiential knowledge (for a discussion of the key concept of experiential knowledge and its relation to propositional knowledge, see my other contribution to this book).

If we add this crucial experiential knowledge of S to the research process, then we have four parts, which can be symbolised on the diagram as follows:



These four parts or stages, briefly, are:

1. R1 and R2 agree the working research hypothesis.
2. R1 and R2 - and - S use their double corrective feedback loop to monitor the educational procedure, and if necessary to modify it, in the light of the working hypothesis.
3. S enters as fully as possible into his experiential knowledge of what is going on.
- A. R1 and R2 decide in the light of appropriate agreed criteria and S's experience, whether or not and with what qualifications the working hypothesis has been fulfilled.

Again, I call this research experiential research because its empirical touchstone is the experiential knowledge of S, what S discriminates through direct face-to-face interaction; and because each loop of the double feedback loop, the one through R1 and the one through R2, passes through the fire of S's experience.

Further Features of the Intermediate Model

There are two basic sorts of research product. The obvious and familiar sort is provided by the research conclusions, and I have outlined above four different possible sets of these. Some of these conclusions are descriptive, some are normative, that is, they state norms of educational or other procedure that help or hinder the development of the subject's self-directing competence; they are the reflections, in the propositional realm, of practical knowledge, knowing how. The other sort of research product is not propositional at all. It is practical knowledge. If the research goes well, the subject comes out of it knowing how, in a way he did not before, to be self-directing. He has acquired an important human skill, a proficiency as agent in some domain or other.

For simplicity of analysis I have referred throughout to only one S. But there may be several Ss, and more than one researcher who is not functioning as an S. Indeed, the whole model becomes more meaningful with several Ss. Extending the general thesis that persons are only persons in relation with persons, persons only develop self-directing competence in relation with others similarly engaged. Self-directing competence requires co-operative competence, and this needs to be exercised with other Ss not only with R1. But the model can readily be extended to accommodate other Ss.

3. This model, like the full-blown model, is really very challenging, because it too provides a methodology for a state-specific science. The state of consciousness which R1 and R2 need to get into is one in which, throughout their pursuit of the educational (or therapeutic, or whatever) procedure, they retain an extra margin of awareness to

monitor it all in the light of the research hypothesis. This is not an easy thing to do, especially for R2. The base-line educational or other procedure may be very absorbing or problematic or both, and so a forgetfulness, a nescience, about the research dimension may set in. As I have said before, experiential research has its own very special kind of rigour, which is fundamental, a rigour of mindfulness, of self-remembering, of higher order project awareness. Once this slips, the various stage of activity that go with it evaporate, leaving a base-line activity that may be fascinating, but remains unresearched.

4. The researcher in this intermediate model, is very much a facilitator, both in the base-line activity that is being researched and in the research activity (especially as facilitator of mindfulness). In neither is he functioning as a formally acknowledged subject: he is not present as student, patient, etc., nor is he present as person enquiring into developing his self-directing competence. But he is present as an unacknowledged subject in a very important way; he is present as a person who is developing his facilitative skills, his skills in facilitating both the development of self-direction in others and their enquiry into this. Inevitably, this skill or lack of it will be reflected directly or indirectly in the research conclusions. But if it is to be explicitly included in the research model, then we are moving over into the full-blown experiential research model.
5. Because R1 is only present as a tacit subject, and there is not full human reciprocity, this will almost certainly limit the degree to which S can develop within the model. Nevertheless, I have spent so much space on it, since it may be regarded as a first stage on from the traditional autocratic model. Incidentally, R1 can much improve the facilitation and the reciprocity of the intermediate model by appropriate self-disclosure, by sharing his past or present experience in the formally acknowledged subject areas.

Going back now to the original table which mapped out all the possibilities for researcher and subject to contribute to the research propositions and the research action, there are obviously other intermediate experiential research models. There isn't space to go into any more of them here, but the following has interesting possibilities:

CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS	RESEARCHER	SUBJECT
	Strong	Weak
CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH ACTION	Weak	Strong

This paper purports to offer only some basic elements in the logic of experiential research methodology backed up by nine years of field work of varying degrees of explicitness. There is a great deal of interesting and challenging work to be done to clarify further the methodology through more thorough-going practice.

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS FOR A NEW RESEARCH PARADIGM

Cooperative Inquiry

Research is a process of systematic (and not so systematic) inquiry that leads to knowledge stated in propositions. In social science research this inquiry involves an element of observation of or interaction with persons in order to offer empirical evidence for the research conclusions.

But there are two quite different ways of interacting with persons in research. One way is to interact with them so that they make no direct contribution to formulating the propositions that purport to be about them or to be based on their sayings and doings. This, of course, is the traditional social science experiment or study in which the subjects are kept naive about the research propositions and make no contribution at all to formulation at the stage of hypothesis making, at the stage of final conclusions, or anywhere in between. In the extreme, and still popular form of this approach, the inquiry is all on the side of the researcher, and the action being inquired into is all on the side of the subject.

The other way - the way of cooperative inquiry - is for the researcher to interact with the subjects so that they do contribute directly both to hypothesis making, to formulating the final conclusions, and to what goes on in between. This contribution may be strong, in the sense that the subject is co-researcher and contributes to creative thinking at all stages. Or it may be weak, in the sense that the subject is thoroughly informed of the research propositions at all stages and is invited to assent or dissent, and if there is dissent, then the researcher and subject negotiate until agreement is reached. In the complete form of this approach, not only will the subject be fully-fledged co-researcher, but the researcher will also be co-subject, participating fully in the action and experience to be researched.

My purpose in writing this paper is to present a variety of arguments supporting the second of these two ways, that is, supporting a research paradigm in which the subject is also co-researcher, being actively and openly involved on the inquiry side of the research, as well as on the action side.

The Argument from the Nature of Research Behaviour

It is a presupposition of doing research of any kind that you have already committed yourself to some very general model of explanation with respect to the subjects or objects of your research. Most orthodox research takes absolute determination as the general model of explanation; however difficult this is to achieve in practice, in principle human behaviour is regarded as part of a deterministic order, as the exclusive effects of prior antecedent conditions. This assumption is mistaken, I believe, because the presuppositional analysis is misplaced. It results from asking the wrong question first, which obscures a more radical question and one which is logically prior. The wrong question to ask first is, "To what kind of explanation of the behaviour of my subjects am I committed?". The prior and more radical question is, "To what kind of explanation of my own research behaviour am I committed?". This question is less obviously relevant in the physical sciences, but when the investigator is the same kind of being as the subjects of his investigation, then this reflexive question becomes of paramount importance.

Does it make sense to say that in principle research behaviour is precisely predictable and can be fully subsumed under causal laws? I think not. It is surely part of what we mean by "research behaviour" that it is behaviour that is in particular detail unpredictable. We engage in it precisely because we cannot know in advance what particular form it will take. It is behaviour which in the nature of the case constitutes creative advance, surmounting and transcending the predictable. It depends on the generation of new ideas, new insights, fresh hypothesis, and innovative theoretical formulations. And the notion that you could predict specifically the occurrence of the expression of new ideas on the basis of observations of what is already known is incomprehensible, for the ideas would not in any intelligible sense be new. There is no precise methodology for generating new ideas; new ideas are not the logical product of empirical observation, rather they arise unpredictably to direct it into ever more fruitful channels.

Research behaviour is, therefore, original creative activity which cannot in principle be contained within an explanatory model of absolute determinism; it is not the sort of event that could be predicted as the outcome of antecedent conditions. What explanatory model can be adopted for such behaviour? I suggest that central to any such model is the notion of intelligent agency, or to put it another way, the notion of a self-directing person. To give a full and sufficient explanation of research behaviour, some reference must be made to the notion of intelligent agency or self-direction, where this concept cannot be explained in terms of anything else.

To say that the researcher is an intelligent agent is to say that his behaviour is not fully subsumable under the causal laws of the natural order, but the expression of self-directed activity within that order. There are two fundamental statements here: 1) There is a causal order in nature; 2) There are creative acts of self-directing agents occurring within nature. But if the second statement cannot be included within, or reduced to, the first, how then can they be reconciled and made consistent while retaining their relative independence? One answer is provided by the thesis of relative determinism, which has been set forth in detail in my earlier paper (Heron, 1971). This thesis holds that antecedent conditions delimit and determine a range of possible outcomes, and that the width of this range is a function of the position of an entity in the hierarchy of chemical and biological types from the atom to the human being: the human being, if not seriously damaged, has a significant degree of freedom and can bring intelligent, rational principles to bear on the direction of his or her activity within nature.

But human beings are social beings. Within the limits set by causal factors, members of a society make a tacit choice to relate to each other in accordance with certain norms and conventions. Thus for any piece of social behaviour there may be three distinct yet interrelated levels of explanation, none of which are necessarily mutually exclusive. There is a causal explanation in terms of relatively determining conditions of inner needs and environmental factors; there is a conventional explanation in terms of tacit commitment to prevailing social norms; and there is autonomous explanation in terms of a fully explicit self-directed commitment to certain purposes and principles. Research behaviour is a special case of social behaviour to which the level of autonomous explanation, inter alia, applies.

Thus the basic explanatory model for research behaviour is that of intelligent self-direction - commitment to purposes in the light of principles - combined with relative determinism.

The next question is as follows: "Given that I am committed to such a model to explain my own research behaviour, what explanatory model is relevant to my subjects' behaviour, and what method of inquiry is appropriate to apply to it?" I cannot without gross inconsistency apply to my subjects a model which is logically at odds with the one I apply to myself. I cannot responsibly argue that they are in principle to be seen as fully under the control of antecedent conditions within a scheme of absolute determinism, while it is a necessary condition of my researching them that I view myself as a self-directing intelligence within a scheme of relative determinism. I must surely see them in principle also as self-directing and intelligent agents. Hence my subjects become my co-researchers: together we decide what possibilities for intelligent self-determination are to be investigated through action. If the subjects are not privy to the research thinking, they will not be functioning fully as intelligent agents. For a self-determining person is one who generates, or takes up freely as his own, the thinking that determines his actions.

The Argument from Intentionality

Brentano (1974) and others have regarded intentionality as one of the defining features of the mental. Intentionality simply refers to the fact that when I am conscious I am always conscious of some content - whether perceptual, imaged or other. Such content has some sort of meaning or significance for me: I construe it as content of this or that or the other sort. Furthermore, when I engage in choice and overt action, an important part of what I am conscious of is my intent, my purpose in doing what I am doing, my meaning in acting.

In my view, such construing-and-intending is original, creative human activity. It generates, and reference to it explains the origins of, any and every domain of inquiry. It is not susceptible of a reductive explanation in terms of the concepts of the domains it generates. Any attempt to do so necessarily presupposes its exemption from the attempt. It presents two polar and interdependent aspects of intelligent agency as a significant determinant and explanation of human behaviour: how persons construe their world, and the intentions with which they act within it. For whenever a person is functioning as a person, that person's construing-and-intending is a necessary irreducible part of the explanation of his or her behaviour. But it is not therefore a sufficient explanation of the behaviour. For, as we have seen in the previous section, explanation in terms of intelligent agency as an irreducible notion does not exclude further explanation in terms of relative determinism, that is, in terms of causal laws that delimit the range of options, the degrees of freedom, within which such intelligent agency can manifest itself.

On this analysis of intentionality, the wise researcher will at least consult his subjects to see whether their constructs and intentions concur with his conclusions based on their behaviour during the research. So as researcher I may need to ask my subjects "Did you in fact construe what was going on in the way that I have construed your reaction to it in my research conclusions?" And again: "When you produced that piece of behaviour during the research, was your intention in doing it consonant with my interpretation in these conclusions?"

Asch's experiment on recency and primacy in impression formation (Asch, 1952) begs an important unanswered question about how the experimental subjects construed the experimental conditions. To one group he presented first nice adjectives, then nasty adjectives, about some imagined person; to the other group he presented the nasty adjectives first, followed by the nice. The first group saw the person as basically nice with some flaws, the second group saw the person as basically flawed with some redeeming features.

Asch concluded that early information was more influential than later information in impression formation. But how did the subjects construe it all? We don't know, of course. They may have said: "Look here, the way we construed it, it was not temporal order as such that counted. We took it on the basis of prior experience, that the temporal order signified a rank order of weighting or importance, and that was the crucial thing in determining our overall impression". It would be interesting to re-run many experiments of this sort on the basis of cooperative inquiry.

When subjects are acting within the research arena, consulting them about the validity of the research conclusions depends on the level of behavioural analysis at which the conclusions are pitched. If it is simply overt physical movements I am reporting on where the limbs, trunk, head, fingers, etc. are moving in space - then my observations may be more reliable than the agent's. Again, if my description is simply at the level of what I will call basic actions - such as "walks", "talks", "looks", "points", and so on - it may well be quite unnecessary to check my account against the agent's account. But when I am interpreting such basic actions in terms of their more complex intentions and purposes, then I need to check my version against the agent's version of what he was about. For a person may walk, or talk, or look or point to fulfil many different higher order intentions.

The general form of this argument is that human beings are symbolising beings. They find meaning in and give meaning to their world, through symbolising their experience in a variety of constructs and actions. This notion of symbolising activity as an explanatory concept is irreducible to any other, since it is presupposed by and transcends any reductive argument. It points both to a determinant and to an explanation of human behaviour sui generis. To explain human behaviour you have, among other things, to understand this activity, and fully to understand it involves participating in it through overt dialogue and communication with those who are engaging in it.

Thus, if we want to explain the research behaviour of researchers we should not go and do some traditional non-consultative research on them, but to do some research with them. We should inquire through dialogue, interaction and cooperative endeavour, how they symbolise their experience of the world through scientific constructs and actions; and in the light of this understanding, to explain their behaviour. But the same model applies in any other domain of human symbolising activity.

Another version of the same argument is to say that cultural explanations of human behaviour are irreducible to any other type of explanation. A cultural explanation is one that sees the values, norms and beliefs of a person as significant determinants and explanations of his behaviour. Such values, norms and beliefs may be autonomous: the person espouses them because he has really thought them through. Or they may be conventional: the person espouses them because others do. But autonomy and conventionality are themselves explanatory concepts that cannot be reduced back to some extra-cultural domain. To understand an autonomous or conventional culture, we need to participate in it through dialogue and interaction with those who exemplify it. Any cultural explanation needs to be checked with those within the culture.

Of course, a person may misconstrue his world, and may be deluded about his intentions in the sense that his stated purpose for an action is a rationalisation of some process within him of which he is not fully aware. A person's construing and intending competence may go sadly awry. Human agency can lose its way. Each individual is not necessarily the best authority on the validity of his own constructs and intentions.

Hence the importance of cooperative inquiry into what human agency is capable of. Co-researchers who are also co-subjects can give each other corrective feedback: they can illuminate and clarify the human process for each other.

The Argument from Language

The generation and use of language is the original, archetypal form of human inquiry. Language enables human beings to symbolise - that is, state propositions about - their particular experiences in terms of general concepts. I can use general terms to symbolise a particular experience, or I can use them to make a generalisation about many particular experiences. In either case it is the generality of the terms of a language that gives it its peculiar symbolising power.

When two people communicate in the same language, they necessarily agree in the use of the rules of that language. Agreement about these rules is, of course, agreement in use, it is not explicitly stated spoken agreement, since few people who know how to use a language can formulate its many rules. How can we explain such agreement in use?

Apart from the fact that in practice people who speak the same language don't use that language to agree about its rules, in principle agreement about the rules of language cannot ultimately be mediated by language. We cannot use words to agree about the use of all words: this is logically impossible. For language to get started at all, there must be some words agreement about the use of which is mediated non verbally.

One might say, following Chomsky (1976) that human beings are genetically programmed with linguistic universals, deep structure rules that apply to any and every language. Apart from being a highly controversial theory, this doesn't help. For we still have to explain how persons agree in the use of a particular language, with all its idiosyncratic, surface structure rules.

Thomas Reid's thesis (Reid, 1764) was that agreement about the use of words is ultimately mediated by what he called the "natural language" of eyes, facial expression, gesture, non verbal sound. And indeed such non verbal expressive signs would seem to be the only contenders for mediating agreement about language use. But unless human beings also agree in what these expressive signs mean, they cannot use them to agree about how to use words. So we now have to explain how people agree in the use of non verbal expressive signs.

Reid dealt with this point by arguing that expressive signs have a meaning which every human being understands "by the principle of his nature" and which is prior to all agreement. Wittgenstein (1953) made a related sort of point when he wrote "The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language". What this kind of argument boils down to is the view that human beings can understand what at any rate some of their non verbal signs to each other mean, without this understanding being mediated through any other set of signs. This view seems to be inescapable since (a) there appear to be no candidates for such a further set of signs, and (b) if there were, we would have launched ourselves on an endless regress of one set of signs mediating agreement about the use of another set of signs, agreement about the use of the former set being mediated by the use of a third set, and so on.

Our agreement about the use of the language we are both speaking, on this analysis, rests finally on a mutuality of understanding about some of the non verbal expressive signs we make to each other.

By "mutuality of understanding" I mean that we each understand the same sort of sign produced by each other in the same sort of way, and moreover we know that we are so doing. One candidate for such a sign is eye contact; another is touch. When two persons look into each other's eyes, the mutual gazing combines both simultaneity and reciprocity. Each person is looking into the other's eyes and having his own eyes looked into; and all four phenomena are occurring simultaneously.

I suggest that there is a tacit dimension of mutual gazing (and associated signs) that enables us at a basic level of awareness to agree about the use of words. And that this dimension involves a pre-linguistic experiential knowing that is primarily relational. What we know is the relation between, the interconnectedness of: our presence to each other, our world, our eyes and other signs. Such knowing is tacit, inchoate, unfocussed. It does not of itself give us explicit propositional knowledge of facts and truths about ourselves and our world, but it enables us to agree how to use language to make such propositions. Nor, of course, does it do so alone: There is also touch, and, tangential to the gaze, facial expression, gesture of head, arms and hands, sound and so on. It mediates a tacit, experiential, primitive, Tao of knowing which constitutes a ground for the figure of explicit knowledge. The knowing is tacit in Polanyi's sense (Polanyi, 1967): we attend from the relational awareness implicit in this dimension of mutual gazing in order to attend to the meaning of what is being explicitly said and done in terms of our mastery of language and other social norms. But the significance of what we attend from is evident in the agreement in usage in what we attend to. Such tacit knowing is not immaculate: it needs the focussing provided by explicit propositional knowledge. And it is only one of three sorts of experiential knowledge of persons - a point which I shall develop in the next section.

What follows from this sort of analysis? If the use of language is validated by interpersonal experiential knowing, then language is primarily public and shared: it is a collective product whose primary locutions are relational - "we", "our world", "our signs", "our language". Secondly, the original and archetypal paradigm of human inquiry is two persons who agree through face-to-face meaningful encounter about how to symbolise their experience in words. The propositions about persons in the world which they generate are a co-operative construct, a social artefact, whose use is validated for them by the touchstone of their direct encounter.

The use of language itself, then contains within it the paradigm of co-operative inquiry. And since language is the primary tool whose use enables human construing and intending to occur, it is difficult to see how there can be any more fundamental model of inquiry for human beings into the human condition. For at its roots, language is used to mediate a shared vision.

Now, of course, I can use language to make statements about persons who have not contributed or assented to the formulation of those statements. And, of course, there is a strong case for so doing both in everyday life and certain sorts of more peripheral research on persons as beings who have reaction-times, psychophysical thresholds and so on. But when we come to more central research on persons as intelligent agents in relation who construe, and have intentions within, their world, to use language in this way is to cut it off from its validating base in the realities of human encounter. For the researchers on the traditional research model encounter each other but generate out of this interpersonal experience no statements of a shared view about persons; and the researchers encounter their subjects

but generate out of this interpersonal experience no statements of a shared view of persons. Rather the researchers encounter each other to generate statements not about themselves but about their subjects - who make no contribution to the formulation of those statements either out of their encounter with each other or with the researchers. The result is a set of alienated statements hanging in an interpersonal void: statements about persons not authorised by those persons in relation. For a science of persons as agents, my considered view of your reality without consulting you is a very different matter from our considered view of our reality.

Another way of putting this is to say that central research on persons cannot be separated from the revisionary use of language. Persons are language creators who in relation symbolise a shared vision and experience. In fundamental research on the human condition, persons in relation regenerate the use of language, revise and extend its protocols, through cooperative endeavour in symbolising the ways in which they have extended the horizons of their shared vision and experience.

The Argument from an Extended Epistemology

Science, as product, is in the domain of propositional knowledge. The outcome of research is stated in propositions, which claim to be assertions of facts or truths, a contribution to the corpus of knowledge statements. A claimed fact or truth is a propositional entity, a construct, an artefact - it is a statement about the world. It does not constitute the world, is not part of or found in the world. Propositions may be latent in and inform our perception of the world, but perception is wider than and transcends its latent propositional content, as I shall argue below. Indeed, if this were not so, we could not use perception of the world as a check on the accuracy of our propositions about the world.

Science, as a process of inquiry, involves not only propositional knowledge, but also practical knowledge and experiential knowledge. Practical knowledge is evident in some skill, proficiency or knack, whether physical and/or mental. It is knowing how to do something. Knowing how to do research is a set of interrelated acquired skills which cannot be fully reduced to any set of written instructions. Understanding instructions about how to do research is not the same as having the actual practical knack of doing it.

Experiential knowledge is knowing an entity - person, place, thing, process, etc. - in face-to-face encounter and interaction. It is knowing a person or thing through sustained acquaintance. Empirical research, precisely because it is empirical, necessarily requires some degree of experiential knowledge of the persons or objects which the research is about. The researcher's conclusions are propositions about persons or things of which he or she has had experiential knowledge through direct encounter.

Experiential knowledge through encounter or acquaintance with what is before me involves more than just bare or minimal perception. It involves familiarity with the encountered entity through sustained perception and interaction. It includes both construing and doing - with some degree of commitment to get to know what is in front of me. It is knowing the world present here and now before me, and cannot be fully reduced to a set of descriptive statements about that world. Reading a description of a place is never the same as getting to know that place through going there, exploring and encountering it. But more than this, experiential knowledge of an entity always transcends any set of propositions about it, and any set of propositions that may be involved in the way we perceive it.

When I perceive an entity in front of me, there are at least two sorts of construing going on. I will call these propositional construing and presentational construing. Propositional construing in perception involves seeing the entity in terms of the concepts and identifying names that come with the acquisition of language. So I see it as an entity of some sort or kind, as a cat, house, tree or my friend George; I see it as having certain describable qualities; and as being in certain describable relations with other entities. But this linguistic construing that informs perception is interwoven with a complementary, non-linguistic, spatio-temporal, presentational construing. At the physiological level, the former involves left hemisphere brain function, the latter right hemisphere brain function (Ornstein, 1977).

Presentational construing is at several levels. Firstly, it involves seeing the apparent, presented, perspectival form, colour, size as the whole, "actual", or "real", or "constant" form, colour and size. I imaginatively grasp the whole entity in and with this particular view of it. So I see that presented flattened little oval with a bluish hue as a white circular plate of regular size - and this spatial construing of total form and colour is not dependent on the propositional competence with which I here assert it. Secondly, it involves seeing or hearing a sequence of presentations, a seriatim display, as a total cycle process or metamorphosis. Thus I hear the serial sounds as a piece of music, I see the serial presentations of the form of a bird in the sky as a total arc or spiral of movement.

This construing of what is immediately presented as a spatio-temporal whole that transcends what is immediately presented, is not only a means of experiential knowing, it is also a fundamental kind of practical knowledge - knowing how to orientate oneself in space and time, knowing how to construe presentations or appearance in terms of spatial and temporal "reality". It is not language dependent, it is extra-propositional, since it is evident in the spatio-temporal competence of animals, in their coordination of perception and action in their environment. It is also, of course, evident in children before the acquisition of language. Indeed, some significant degree of competence in presentational construing in perception can be argued as a necessary condition of language acquisition.

And while I can make some translation of the process of presentational construing into propositional construing - as, for example, when I talk of the perceptual constancies and so on - yet I can never fully accommodate in language the perceptual achievement of construing these presentations as that spatio-temporal whole of which they are the presentations. This is a practical cognitive and perceptual skill operating essentially outside the domain of language. Such skill may indeed be enhanced by the acquisition and use of language. And for the adult, presentationally construed wholes may always at the same time be propositionally construed as wholes of certain sorts or named kinds. But the extra-linguistic right hemispherical nature of presentational construing remains irreducible, complementary to left hemispherical propositional construing. Furthermore, it enables us to make an empirical check on the validity of our propositional constructs about the world. My ability to discriminate between different presentations and different spatio-temporal wholes without this ability being dependent on language and proposition-making, provides a touchstone for the accuracy with which I symbolise such differences in propositions.

But there is a third level of presentational construing in perception: and that is construing a series of presentations or appearances not just as presentations of a spatio-temporal whole that transcends its immediate presentations, but also as the presentations of a presence in space and time.

For the spatio-temporal whole is making a non-linguistic statement, it is "saying" something in and through the gesture of its totality. I look at an owl on a perch in a cage. I construe the presented form and colour as the "real" form and colour, the presented sequence of movements as a total Gestalt of movement. But at the same time, I construe all these presentations as those of a unique and idiosyncratic presence in space and time. The spatio-temporal whole presented is the mark, the gesture, the signature, the "speech", of a presence.

If you sceptically ask me to be more precise in defining a presence, then I can only repeat that it is what you extra-linguistically construe a spatio-temporal whole as. It is a matter, a basic and fundamental matter, of non-propositional, experiential knowledge of some entity here and now before you. Of course, the poet or artist is highly sensitive at this third level of presentational construing. He or she moves, in the creative act, swiftly from presentational construing of the unique spatio-temporal gesture of a presence either to linguistic construing, trying to find an analogue in words for that unique gesture, or to the generation of a presentational analogue in painting, sculpture, music, dance, and so on. In this domain of perception, the artist is concerned with the archetypal "speech" of the encountered world, a "speech" which finds only its remote echo in everyday language. It was, of course, a fundamental canon of classical Chinese Art to catch in painting this rhythmic, vital, autonomous "utterance" of things.

Now my fullest encounter with a presence in space and time is when that presence is encountering me. I can see a dog leaping up excitedly at someone else, and I am certainly having a passive, non-interactive, rather external encounter with a presence. The qualitative impact in construing that presence in space and time is very different when the dog leaps up excitedly at me. Similarly, when an owl and I are looking at each other in face-to-face encounter, I construe the owl as presence more fully than when I see it going about other business from afar. No doubt both approaches, the onlooker and the face-to-face, are relevant to experiential knowledge; but the face-to-face approach is primary for only then do I encounter a presence encountering me.

For persons, other persons are the pre-eminent presences in space and time. As with the dog and the owl, when I directly interact with a person, I construe and encounter him or her as present more fully than when I observe a person interacting with someone else. And the more fully I interact the more fully I construe him or her as a presence. I construe a person more fully as a presence when we are in a very aware committed, concerned, exploratory, inquiring relationship. Hence again the paradigm of cooperative inquiry.

On this sort of analysis, the most complete empirical base for a science of persons is one in which my necessary experiential knowledge of my subjects is: (1) not dominated by propositional construing to the detriment of a really open presentational construing; (2) not simply restricted to observing them in interaction with others, but focusses centrally on their reciprocal interaction with myself, so that we become both co-researchers and co-subjects.

There would seem to be at least three sorts of presentational construing of a person as a presence. Firstly, there is the pre-linguistic, mutual and simultaneous, tacit construing of two persons as presences in relation in a shared spatio-temporal world - mutual gazing being central to this. I have already referred to this in the previous section as the primitive Tao of experiential knowing: a tacit knowing of the interconnectedness of human presences in and with their world, a knowing which provides a warrant for, and is evident in our agreement about, the use of language.

But secondly, I construe a person as a presence while talking and interacting with him or her. And this presentational construing is interwoven, of course, with propositional construing - that is, with seeing, hearing, acting towards, the person in terms of the concepts that come with language. But the presentational construing when fully exercised and opened up can include and transcend the propositional. For I can construe the whole spatio-temporal Gestalt of a person, both non verbal and verbal - including the sequence of gestures, postures, facial expressions, eye contacts, paralinguistic features of speech, together with the meaning of what is said and what is not said - as the idiosyncratic developing signature of a human presence. I am encountering and construing how such a presence is manifesting, and not manifesting in space and time. I grasp this how presentationally, extra-propositionally, since it includes explicit speech and intention in a much more comprehensive "speech" or "statement" of a total way of being in the world. This kind of total presentational construing of a person is a skill, a competence, that can be cultivated. Its findings can be symbolised by propositions but never fully encompassed by propositions. It offers a fundamental empirical touchstone for any fully systematic inquiry into persons.

Thirdly, and in parenthesis, there is perhaps a post-linguistic construing of a person as a presence: for example, when two people gaze into each other's eyes, suspend or bracket off the propositional elements in their perception and awareness of each other and mutually apprehend each other as presences in relation. This can lead to experiences of dual-unity and related altered states of consciousness.

What I am arguing in this section is that empirical research on persons involves a subtle, developing interdependence between propositional knowledge, practical knowledge and experiential knowledge. The research conclusions, stated as propositions and laying claim to be part of the corpus of empirical knowledge about persons, necessarily rest on the researchers' experiential knowledge of the subjects of the enquiry. This knowledge of persons is most adequate as an empirical base when it involves the fullest sort of presentational construing, that is, when researcher and subject are fully present to each other in a relationship of reciprocal and open inquiry, and when each is open to construe how the other manifests as a presence in space and time. And knowing how to construe and encounter persons in this way is a skill, a knack, which is a critical sort of practical knowledge involved in doing effective research on persons.

So the propositional outcomes of the research depend critically on the practical and experiential components of the process of the research. But proposition-making is very much part of the process of the inquiry too. The co-researchers' practical competence in presentational construing in relation with each other can be enhanced or hindered by the sorts of propositional constructs used during the inquiry; and also, therefore, the co-researchers' openness or closure to what can be known experientially. If the inquiry is over-conceptualised and over-theorised, then the phenomenological noticing and awareness of the researchers will be inhibited and restricted. If the inquiry is under-conceptualised and under-theorised, then the researchers' phenomenological noticing will be diffuse, unfocussed, chaotic, ambiguous. Too much propositional construing blinds researchers to the gestures of being. Too much presentational construing keeps the archives of propositional knowledge empty, although it may, of course, fill up the vaults of presentational knowledge in the form of drawing, painting, sculpture, music, dance. Co-researchers who are also co-subjects need to find a mutually enhancing balance and interaction between left hemisphere and right hemisphere brain functions.

The Argument from Axiology

The products of research on persons are propositions (they could also be artistic presentations - but that possibility merits a separate paper). And the hope and claim of effective research is to generate true propositions. The truth-value of a proposition is in part a function of its coherence with other and related propositions, and in part a function of its correspondence with extra-propositional dimensions of the world as encountered. Of these two criteria of truth, coherence and correspondence, the latter seems to me more fundamental, for however internally coherent any set of propositions, it remains but an unanchored set of possibilities until it corresponds in substantial part to the world as encountered. It is this that provides the basic touchstone for the truth value of propositions in empirical research. More precisely, it is the world as presentationally construed when encountered that provides the touchstone; for this provides the extra-propositional element in perception, and so provides a warp for the woof of propositions. I have argued this point in more detail in the previous section.

But the presentational or presented world is valued. And because we value it - for its charm, beauty, elegance, ineffability, or whatever other predicates we generate to convey our non verbal delight in being - we seek to symbolise it adequately in propositions. The assertion of true propositions is a way of enhancing our appreciation of a world we already value in encountering it. Behind the truth-value of propositions lie the being values of the experienced, presented world. Between the two, mediating lie the norms or rules of language, and of any other practical procedure that enables us to assert the truth about the world we value.

Because we value our encounter with what is there, we know how to symbolise it in words, and therefore our statement has the value of truth. Or to put it the other way round, our statement is true because we know how to formulate it to do justice to a valued experience. Out of our varied encounter with the world, we generate norms of language and of related practices, to express true propositions about that world. There is an axiological hierarchy here: first the values of being, then the norms of language and of other practical procedures, then the truth-value of propositions, the facts or truths asserted in propositions.

More than this, language and the true propositions it is used to assert, ultimately presuppose a shared community of value, a shared way of delighting in and valuing the world as encountered. This follows from the view that truth-values presuppose values of being, together with the view put forward earlier that agreement about the use of language presupposes a shared awareness of human presences in relation in their world. On this analysis, true propositions are asserted by those who know how properly to symbolise in words shared experiences of shared value: to learn a language and be able to state truths is ipso facto to acquire the norms and values of a shared culture - the immediate sub-culture and the wider culture of which it is a part.

In general terms, truth is asserted through the application of norms of language and of other practical procedures by those who generate such norms out of a shared value system. The truths we assert are a function of our procedural norms which in turn are a function of our shared value system. The "truths" researchers generate are a function of the researchers' procedural norms and underlying values. And if these "truths" purport to be about persons other than the researchers then they have indeterminate validity, no secure status as truths, until we know whether those other persons assent to and regard as their own the norms and values of the researchers.

For within the broad aegis of the culture of a whole society, there are manifold sub-cultures each with its own differential value system. Statements about you that do not take into account the values and norms of your sub-culture, but dress you up in the values and norms of my somewhat different sub-culture, are not really statements about you. Statements about persons as agents are true of those persons when the statements are reached by procedures that show cognisance of the values of those persons.

Thus, for example, questionnaires and all such instruments unilaterally designed by researchers will simply rest on their prior norms and values. And if the researchers who make no attempt to determine whether those norms and values and hence the design of the questionnaire are acceptable to those who are invited to fill it in, then any statements about the respondents made by the researchers on the basis of the questionnaire results will have indeterminate validity. In some instances, of course, it may for all practical purposes be appropriate to assume consonance of the respondents' values with the researchers' values. In other instances, grossly distorted conclusions may emerge from so doing. For if the researchers are not themselves the respondents, then the conclusions will be "truths" that hang in a curious void - alienated from the values of the researchers, and from the actual and different values of the respondents.

Finally, the idea that any science can be value free is, in my view, a delusion. Persons in relation in their world symbolising their experience of the value of the presented world constitutes a fundament of the human condition. Every science is just a special case of this symbolising activity. When the subjects of a science are other persons, then the idea that the researchers' underlying value system can exclude, need not consult or consider or cooperate with the value system of the subjects, can only tend to generate alienated, pseudo-truths about persons. For an authentic science of persons, true statements about persons rest on a value system explicitly shared by researchers and subjects, and on procedural research norms explicitly agreed by researchers and subjects on the basis of that value system. Hence, again, the model of cooperative inquiry.

The Political and Moral Argument

Traditional research on persons is also a way of exercising power over persons. The experimental subjects of course agree voluntarily to be subjects, but thereafter they do what they are asked to do in accordance with principles frequently not disclosed to them and in accordance with decisions made unilaterally by the researchers. At its very worst, researchers using this model get knowledge unilaterally from persons' in order to be able to apply this knowledge unilaterally to other persons, with only token initial assent from these persons to initiate the research phase and the application phase. Research then becomes another agent of authoritarian social control. Knowledge and power are all on the side of the researchers and their political masters and none is on the side of those who provide the data and are subject to its subsequent application.

Politics is essentially about power, and power is about who effectively makes decisions in what manner about what and about whom. In this sense, political issues are about the who, the what and the how of decision-making and pervade every arena of human life: the family, education, research, every organisation and association of persons, as well as the state. Many researchers would probably assent to the moral case for political self-determination of citizens in the modern state. The moral principle of respect for personal autonomy requires that we give impartial consideration to the needs and interests of all, that we provide just conditions for the fulfilment of human well-being.

Traditional and contemporary doctrines of human rights have spelt out some of the fundamental conditions required for such fulfilment: the right to freedom of speech and expression; the right to freedom of association and contract; the right to political membership of the community - to participate in the framing and the working of political institutions.

The last named right - to political membership of the community - is in my view a special case of an all-pervasive right of persons to participate, through some appropriate arrangements, in decision-making that affects the fulfilment of their needs and interests. While acknowledging this right in the restricted political sense, that is, in the arena of local and national government, our society has been slow to acknowledge its relevance to industry and commerce, to organisation structures generally, to the family, to education, and, of course, to research. But the same right must extend to the arena of research on persons. For persons, as autonomous beings have a moral right to participate in decisions that claim to generate knowledge about them. Such a right does many things: (1) it honours the fulfilment of their need for autonomously acquired knowledge; (2) it protects them from becoming unwitting accessories to knowledge-claims that may be false and may be inappropriately or harmfully applied to others; (3) it protects them from being excluded from the formation of knowledge that purports to be about them and so from being managed and manipulated, both in the acquisition and in the application of the knowledge, in ways they do not understand and so cannot assent to or dissent from.

Knowledge fuels power: it increases the efficacy of decision-making. Knowledge about persons can fuel power over persons or fuel power shared with persons. And the moral principle of respect for persons is most fully honoured when power is shared not only in the application of knowledge about persons, but also in the generation of such knowledge. On this view researchers have a moral obligation to initiate subjects into the whole rationale of the research they are doing and to seek the free assent of subjects to this rationale so that, internalising it as their own, the subjects can become autonomous inquirers alongside the researchers. Put in other words, doing research on persons involves an important educational commitment: to provide conditions under which subjects can enhance their capacity for self-determination in acquiring knowledge about the human condition.

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