

ALL05295**Teachers heard or herd: when research silences teacher stories**

Jennifer Allen, University of Newcastle
Email: Jennifer.Allen@newcastle.edu.au

Abstract

The ongoing debate between critical theory and postmodernism has borne ongoing concerns over the place of philosophical research in informing teacher practices. In seeking to critique emancipatory goals 'for all', 'truth' and the grand narratives that appear implicit in critical theory postmodernists have challenged the constructive power of discourse and the nexus of power and knowledge. Power relations are thought to not only distort knowledge (as with critical theory) but that knowledge itself is borne of these power relations. In seeking to give voice to the marginalised postmodernism engages with research as a social practice rather than a producer of transcendental 'truth'. If philosophical research is to inform teachers' work it should recognise the "interconnectedness" of teachers' worlds, in a context that acknowledges that lifeworld is pervasive in communicative everyday practice. The debate continues over the "taken-for-granted" nature and unquestioned familiarity of the lifeworld of teachers and the possibility of bringing such knowledge to the fore. This paper makes explicit the danger of placing the methodology and methods of philosophy as themselves beyond question, where lived experience is regarded as a pure unmediated and authentic knowledgeability and the research account the true and direct 'speech' of the autonomous, self-present individual. Rather lived experience and the 'tools' of research must be constantly problematised recognising their 'mediation' into 'reality through language, text, discourse, discursive practices and power relations. This problematisation is thus evident in the tension in the 'personalising' of research and the role of reflexivity and a critical consciousness in demystifying implicit, political and ideological teacher contexts. This paper explores the tension facing research when it is driven by a sense of transcending direction but seeks to acknowledge the importance of the immanent, emerging world of teachers work.

Introduction: Calling the herd to be heard

The individual on a journey of discovery can learn much from the past and the future she seeks but also a great deal in the way she views the world in which she travels and any limitations or boundaries as she travels onwards. Boundaries are oftentimes built to contain and protect that which we own, know and value. To journey outside of these boundaries can be exciting but also daunting as we are confronted with new worlds and challenges. At times it is easier to retreat to the known, to retreat back into the herd of familiarity where our voice is known and understood. As a child living in dairy country I am reminded of milking time when the farmer would call and the cattle would come and so after time the farmer would no longer need to call and the cattle would still come. Even as a child I wondered what would happen if the farmer never came, or if the milking shed was moved, or if one cow was not happy to follow. I watched old ways change into new as technology entered the fray and sterile, sanitised environments replaced the hands-on approach. I wondered whether the farmer and cow ever missed the contact they once had as the farmer sat under the belly of the cow. With technology, the farmer became more distant and machines replaced her hands. Knowing the cow and herd changed in its construction.

This metaphor serves to remind us that as we journey we are constructed in social, cultural and historical moments within shifting and changing power relations...we see the world in constructed ways. The debate between modernism and postmodernism has moved the milking shed, challenged the role of the farmer, and has recognised that some of the herd need not and should not follow. This paper explores the tension facing research when it is driven by a sense of transcending direction but seeks to acknowledge the importance of the immanent, emerging world of teachers' stories. Is it possible to hear the marginalised voice within the herd and how can philosophers of education wrestle with this question?

This paper also asks philosophers of education to recognise the epistemic potential present in the debate between modernist and postmodernist discourses. This call is to recognise the place of voice, the construction of voice, and constraints upon teachers' voices when the search for transcendental 'truth' outweighs the everyday narratives of teachers. It is to regard philosophical research as a social practice rather than a producer of transcendental 'truth' whereby teachers' everyday lives are regarded as

significant within philosophical discourses. It is to recognise that teachers' voices and the voices of philosophers of education are constructed in power relations that relegate the everyday as having lesser importance than philosophical wisdom. Whilst we listen to teachers' narratives they are oftentimes fodder for contemplation not part of a shared process that seeks change through praxis. Teachers' voices are heard but their conversations within the philosophy of education are limited. Boundaries are created whereby they are the subject of the research process not collaborators in a communicative philosophical discourse. Teacher's stories are told but oftentimes by others through interpretive lenses that are not their own. This paper seeks to question the construction of philosophical research where lived experience is regarded as a pure unmediated and authentic knowledgeability and the research account the true and direct 'speech' of the autonomous, self-present individual—a story that can be sterilised of lifeworld. Rather lived experience and the 'tools' of research must be constantly problematised recognising their 'mediation' into 'reality through language, text, discourse, discursive practices and power relations.

We seek not too isolate the lone voice of the teacher from the herd but recognise that all voices are located within discursive practices that are "heard" within power relations. Teachers' voices can be marginalised and obscured when the field they enter is the philosophy of education. It is here their stories are told as they slip for a brief moment out of the herd. They remain dependent on others to re-tell their story, for once their story is told and interpreted for them they slip back into the herd. This paper contends that philosophers of education should not locate themselves as the farmer on whom the herd is dependent. If philosophical research is to inform teachers' work it should recognise the "interconnectedness" of teachers' worlds, in a context that acknowledges that lifeworld is pervasive in communicative everyday practice and saturates the research process...it cannot be sanitised.

The 'Authored' Research Journey

To quote Galtung:

There is no such thing as a general, universal methodology ... To work with any methodology, hence, is a political act ... the choice of a methodology is implicitly the choice of an ideology, including the mystifying, monotheistic ideology that there is but one methodology—the universal one. To the extent that we are conscious the choice is for us to make, not to be made for us, and to the extent that we are free for us to enact. (Galtung, 1967, p. 40)

Lifeworld, refers to an internal subjective viewpoint and an action orientation of the individual within society, which provides a context from which to act.ⁱ Lifeworld, as a complex world of practices, customs and ideas saturates every cavern of the research process and each participant in this process brings different lifeworlds that stand next to each other grappling with mutual understanding, and constantly colliding. "As totalities, they follow the pull of their claims to universality and work out their differences until their horizons of understanding 'fuse' with one another" (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 358).ⁱⁱ Lifeworld, to the extent that we are conscious of it, promises the possibility of keeping things in intuitive reach and the "replacement of a subject-centred conception of rationality by a communicative one grounded in interactions between human subjects" (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 15). In discussing this promise, Habermas proposed that the lifeworld, as centred on reaching a shared understanding, envelops the communicative practices of everyday life where "cognitive interpretations, moral expectations, expressions, and valuations have to interpenetrate and form a rational interconnectedness via the transfer of validity that is possible in the performative attitude" (Habermas, 1987a, p. 327).

In exploring this interconnectedness, in a context that acknowledges that lifeworld is pervasive in communicative everyday practice this paper recognises the taken-for-granted nature and unquestioned familiarity of lifeworld and the possibility of bringing such knowledge to the fore through philosophical discourses. In considering this possibility, Habermas (1987a), in likening lifeworld to background knowledge, notes:

...that which stands beyond all doubt seems as if it could never become problematic; as what is simply unproblematic, a lifeworld can at most fall apart. It is only under the pressure of approaching problems that relevant components of such background knowledge are torn out of their unquestioned familiarity and brought to consciousness as something in need of being ascertained. (p. 401)

This paper makes explicit the danger in placing the methodology and methods as themselves being beyond question, where lived experience is regarded as "a pure unmediated and authentic knowledgeability" and

the research account the “true and direct ‘speech’ of the autonomous, self-present individual” (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 148). Rather, lived experience and the tools of the research process must be constantly problematised recognising their mediation into reality through language, text, discourse, discursive practices and power relations.

These contexts are not only the subject of demystification but sources that embed the choice of methodology within larger structures. As Morrow (1994) suggests, to define a scientific approach within the social sciences, we must first consider: systematic key aspects of the theory itself, including its approach to the sciences; its conception of society and its vision for realising certain values; and its historical origins and contemporary placement in sociological theory. To grapple with the research act as reflexive is to recognise that “in our action is our knowing” (Lather, 1991, p. xv) and thus the historical, social, political, and cultural worlds in which my actions and texts are embedded saturate the methodology and methods.

A tension arises for the research process when it is driven by a sense of transcending direction but seeks to acknowledge the importance of the immanent, emerging world of teachers stories. This tension is constructed in historical moments and the legacy of questioning the Cartesian and positivist assumptions that have so often set the agenda for social science research and philosophical thought. This questioning created the spaces for the ethnographic, the phenomenological, the hermeneutical and the critical to meet. The development of existentialist thought is one example of this as it embraced many themes traditionally the concern only of theology and involved forms of existential psychology.ⁱⁱⁱ The ongoing debate between structuralism, existentialism and phenomenology is only one of the key debates that created new spaces for social science research. Kantian legacies argued that for science as we know it to exist, there must be some *a priori* or pre-given characteristics of the human mind that cannot be observed directly and must be inferred through acts of self- reflection by the human mind. Cognition was defined within universal structures that joined the human species. It is here that we are reminded again of the inextricable link between the problem and the method. It would be naive of this paper to assume that these agendas and debates have passed. These legacies do not rest as something we move on from; rather, they saturate the very soil in which new research directions grow. Morrow (1994) notes this embeddedness as one of three key analytic questions for analysis necessary in understanding science as a specialised form of discourse. Morrow also questions the “systematics or logical structure of a science” and “logically what kind of method and form of explanation are or should be characteristic of a science?” (p. 64). He considers “its history, social embeddedness, and social construction and what is the nature of the community of inquiry that produces science, and how is this related to the nature of scientific knowledge?” and “its cultural implications as a perspective on reality questioning what is the broader meaning of science, what is its relation to power relations, ideologies, and values within a society?” (pp. 64–65).

The Research Journey as a Hermeneutical Journey

Hermeneutics was founded as a science of interpretation and was originally not a response to philosophical developments but to interpret biblical or other ancient texts. The hermeneutic method, as a theory and method of interpreting human action and artifacts, has, however, found a place in philosophical discourse where holistic analysis and a common ground of knowledge were contested.^{iv} In considering the interpretation of any phenomena, the hermeneuticist argues that the researcher must enter the worldview in which the phenomena are located. Thus, the researcher must surrender efforts to interpret from a neutral or outside position and temporarily adopt the cultural perspective that houses the phenomena. Taber (1983) uses the phenomenon of the kinship system as an example to describe this interpretive relationship. He suggests that this system cannot be understood in isolation from the economic and political systems in which it is embedded but, in order to approach any single phenomenon of a culture, the whole culture must be taken into account. Any exploration into an alien landscape confronts us with the cultural limitations and inappropriateness of that which we bring with us. Our tools of translation that help us understand and live within our own culture are now foreign to the world we enter and our dialect is unfamiliar. We will have to be content to leave the alien world with some phenomena still shrouded in mystery for, without a perfect correspondence between entire cultures, our shared dialect will be limited. In the hermeneutic world, a common ground of knowledge is contested, sought, but thought impossible by some. In taking on the worldview of the culture, we begin a hermeneutic process in search of interpretation or *verstehen* within worlds, which are incommensurable.^v In reflecting on this contention Rorty, following Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer, rejects the prejudice of science and “the idea of universal commensuration”. In rejecting the traditional metaphysical-epistemological philosophical discourses, the

richness of hermeneutics, however, has as an aim to not only overcome objectivism but also to counter relativism. To quote Madison:

For hermeneutics, relativism is only the obverse, indeed the perverse, side of postmodern objectivism. Hermeneutics seeks not so much to reject the notion of reason and its universalist pretensions as it seeks to reconstruct radically our idea of what it means to be rational.
(Madison, 1990, p. 51)

For Madison, like Rorty, rationality is integrally linked to the linguisticity of all human experience and, thus, the mediation of the “unending differences” that plague shared understanding is possible through conversation and dialogue when there is the desire for common understanding and agreement. Unlike Madison’s conception, however, this dialogue, or common understanding need not reach the point of agreement. This paper will wrestle with the possibility of a shared and common understanding that rests in disagreement and also the apparent rationality, which argues that, because understanding is language-bound, it must bow to relativism. As Gadamer (1977) reminds us “there is absolutely no captivity within a language”; rather, it is an “infinite realm of possible expression” (p. 15) and, thus, it is the task of hermeneutics to maintain the openness and possibilities of human discourse but also to note that conversation is the “ultimate context” in which knowledge can be understood (Rorty, 1979, p. 389). Within hermeneutical interpretation, there is a place not only for understanding but also explanation, both bound up in the view that the reader is a knowing player in the construction of the world and understanding amounts to self-understanding. It is to release the conception of objectivity, subjectivity and relativism from views of rationality that are overwhelmed with positivistic understandings of science. It is to privilege the self, self-reflection and self-understanding and to create and recreate spaces for these in science. It is to assume, in this paper, that interpretation will evolve holistically as the players are constantly being shaped and are reshaping themselves. The research process as saturated by self-reflective moments, fragments of self-understanding, and the finitude of its claims to knowledge, has been marginalised in positivistic understandings.

Nevertheless this paper is again not unaware of the tension concerned with the possibility of a universal normal mode of discourse and the desirability to institute one. Taber (1983), in identifying the philosophical adoption of hermeneutics by Dewey, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Sellars and Quine, argues that, whilst Rorty calls them edifying philosophers, this is in fact inappropriate because they do maintain an “absolute truth” in the form of a “real encounter” (pp. 124–125). Bridging the gap between the strange and the familiar is, however, an ongoing concern for everyday life and, in this case, the everyday lives of teachers. As teachers seek to understand the world, themselves and those who also act within it, philosophers of education also seek to describe their understanding. Gadamer (1977) notes the temporal distance that separates the knower from the object-to-be-known as problematic and he contends that understanding is a self-transposition or imaginative projection as the knower seeks to become contemporaneous with it. Thus the task of understanding searches for the original lifeworld in the hope of uncovering and recovering it (Gadamer, 1977, p. xiv). As Doll (1995) suggests, we are “rooted in dialogue and history” but all participating share a common purpose in seeking to understand, to venture into lifeworlds and to search out the worldview of the “other” (pp. 98).

Philosophers grappled with hermeneutics, at times within a religious context, but other disciplines also considered this mode of interpretation. Wilhelm Dilthey, whose interest in hermeneutics was born in part of descriptive psychology, and later philosophical interest used the term to refer to a method within the cultural sciences.^{vi} Dilthey (1976, 1987) strongly differentiated between the natural sciences (or the *Naturwissenschaften*) and the “moral” or “cultural” sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Interpretation was the focus of the cultural sciences whilst causal explanation, the realm of the natural sciences, was deemed inappropriate to understand human action. Morrow (1994), however, reminds us that the German terms used by Dilthey defy translation as “in English the term science is already loaded with natural scientific connotations reflecting the traditional empiricism and positivism of Anglo-American scholarship” (pp. 93-94).^{vii} Morrow uses as an example the words *Wissenschaft*, which is closer to the concept of a discipline than the Anglo-American understanding of the word *science*. Furthermore, in using the word *Geist*, Dilthey suggested a “spiritual dimension” of social reality that was not so much religious cultural and moral. In recognising Morrow’s concern over the inadequacy of interpretation, we will continue to grapple with some other integral terminology. Dilthey linked the term *Verstehen* with hermeneutics and, given its meaning to understand, this would appear appropriate. Alternatively, Dilthey used the word *Erklären*, to explain in relation to causal inference and natural science.

This paper is aware of Dilthey's impact on the growth of hermeneutics. The "spiritual dimension", noted by Dilthey, is relevant here. As the problem and method grapple with the everyday lives of teachers, the "spiritual dimensions" of their lifeworld and lived world can be explored. *Verstehende* sociology has been the subject of critique that suggested its conception of meaning is too restrictive and limits a hermeneutic foundation of social theory. In the search for *Verstehen*, understanding is brought to the fore in the research process but also rests and is housed within description. Description may be all that we can hope for and should hope for at times, especially in the context of *aporia* and the hermeneutic circle. In other words, we never reach understanding in the context of certainty but rather moments and fragments of understanding in the context of the unknown.

Gadamer's (1977) conception of hermeneutics was broader than that of Dilthey (1987) and developed in part from Heidegger's work. To Gadamer, hermeneutics is the beginning point of all scientific exploration. Like Dilthey, he distinguished *Geisteswissenschaften* from the natural sciences, but he also distinguished the social sciences from the human sciences, locating the social sciences between the two. This resulted in a broader understanding of hermeneutics. Of particular interest to this paper, Gadamer's work recognises in this broader conception the dialogical dimension ever-present when differing worldviews meet. This meeting requires mediation which, Giddens (1993) notes, is a "hermeneutic matter" (p. 158). Gadamer also helps us to unite hermeneutics with the *aporias* present in everyday lives. If hermeneutics, as Gadamer suggests, has its birth in ruptures in intersubjectivity, then it delves into a world that is not immediately understandable and privileges a reflexive dimension of hermeneutics.^{viii} This world requires a striving for interpretation that enters at a point within a circle of understanding. This hermeneutic circle reflects the everyday reflexive process as a cycle in which "each return brings a reconsideration of the familiar from the vantage point of the novel— until the familiar becomes novel and the novel familiar, when the relations switch back again, and then again. Here, the loop is a passage that represents change and growth" (Burbules, 1997a, p. 5). This paper hopes that, as the philosophy of education explores teacher's everyday lives, the familiar will become novel and the novel familiar; it also will hope to recognise that some things will remain unfamiliar and alien and that, at times, we should be content with this.

The Hermeneutic Research Journey well Underway

In seeking to confront existing constructions of philosophical research, the hermeneutic journey is underway. Hermeneutics, as stated, is not considered to be just an alternative procedure for research; it is what we practise, what guides this research and, as such, is itself open to critique. Sparks describes the practice of hermeneutics as a homecoming, an excursion and return to one shared world before paradigm boundaries.^{ix} In fashioning the research problem and process, hermeneutics itself is a portrait of critically reflexive knowledge, exploring what is at play in what participants are saying and doing.^x It is also a reminder of the complex conversation and multiple meanings that fuse to construct propositions.^{xi} This conversation is of the many disciplines within education, seeking to inform new understandings of critical thinking. In the words of Taylor (1989), hermeneutics can be considered appropriate to make what is called "epistemic gain", moving from one problematic position to a more adequate one.^{xii} The issue at stake is whether this journey is one of moving along a continuum of adequacy or gain. In the everyday, it may well be that we move from one problematic situation to another and these positions are not based on an understanding of relativity, of more or less, but on being different. We may know that we have moved because we are in a different place but not necessarily a better place. Alternatively, we may have gained experiences and knowledge and thus epistemic gain could be assumed. No such assumption will lie untested in this paper, however, for to seek epistemic gain itself may leave a shared or common view of knowledge as also assumed.

With the journey continuing we open hermeneutics itself to critique to seek a different but not necessarily a better place in conceiving the problem and method of this research. To quote Habermas (1990), "hermeneutic consciousness remains incomplete as long as it does not include a reflection upon the limits of hermeneutic understanding" (p. 190). Where is the place for critique in hermeneutics? With its origins in textual analysis and theological apologetics, the focus of hermeneutics was often assumed to be the search for meaning and truth and yet, as Ricoeur (1970) notes, it could also be considered to be tossed between different poles. On the one hand, "hermeneutics is understood as the manifestation and restoration of meaning", whilst it can also be understood "as a demystification, as a reduction of illusion" (p. 26). Whilst Gadamer's emphasis is considered most closely aligned with the restoration of meaning, others have argued for the inclusion of demystification within the hermeneutic agenda. Certainly, Habermas and the school of critical theory would encourage a focus on critique in the latter and regard hermeneutics as limited by linguistic idealism with no place to grapple with systematic distorted communication.^{xiii} In his

early work, Habermas (1972) distinguished hermeneutic inquiry from the constitutive interests of the empirical sciences and critical social sciences in his theory of knowledge-guiding interests. Here, Habermas linked hermeneutic inquiry with the "preservation and expansion of the intersubjectivity of possible action-oriented mutual understanding" as distinct from the cognitive interests in technical control over objectified processes and emancipation (p. 309). Whilst this theory has faced claims of emergent ambiguities and 'quasi-transcendental' dilemmas,^{xiv} this theory nonetheless formed the basis of Habermas' later development of the theory of communicative action. Habermas (1987b) contended that it was not merely understanding (*Verstehen*) that we should seek, but mutual understanding (*Verständigung*). It is this theory that is brought together, in this paper, with Gadamer's claim that all research is hermeneutic. This is possible in the blending, in critical social science, of system and lifeworld perspectives through self-reflection, where:

...the traditional use of the term 'reflection' which goes back to German idealism, covers (and confuses) two things: on the one hand, it denotes the reflection upon the conditions of potential abilities of a knowing, speaking and acting subject as such; on the other hand, it denotes the reflection upon unconsciously produced constraints to which a determinate subject (or a determinate group of subjects, or a determinate species-subject) succumbs in its process of self-reflection. (Habermas, 1973)

This self-reflection is a site for both interpretation and critique, the conscious and unconscious, the possible and impossible, the shared and the private. It is a site that we can lay claim to with others but which needs to be measured at this point in our journey.

Others have also noted reservation and promise in their journeys. Outhwaite (1987), who uses much of Habermas' work on which to build his theories also notes, for example, that Habermas "retains the orientation to ordinary language and to communicative action within the context-creating horizon of the lifeworld but now he wants to make stronger claims, if anything, about what goes on there than he thinks can be made about nature" (p. 89). Poststructuralism, with its accusation of Habermasian 'grand narratives', has also embraced the notion of critique that began in conversation with Habermas' work. This discussion between the various theories brings forth the foundation stones and possibilities that will aid and abet our journey.

Outhwaite (1987) offers the hope of a synthesis of realism, hermeneutics and critical theory, predicting that these theories are not "mutually incommensurable metatheoretical paradigms but differences of emphasis, and theoretical as opposed to metatheoretical disagreements" (pp. 93–94). Their shared opposition to positivistic understandings is noted in this paper, and it is this hope that may conceive of a more sophisticated consensus and theoretical developments. These developments could include the bringing together of: Gadamer's universalist conception of hermeneutics; Habermas' critique of mere methodologies of science with different types of science as epistemologically differentiated in view of a pragmatic distinction and 'pseudo-realism'; and, critical theory as not the exclusive domain of critique but "subverted by the realist notion of an emancipatory critique arising directly out of the practice of science" (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 93). Although Outhwaite suggests that this claim could undoubtedly be premature and taken "with a heavy pinch of salt", this paper seeks the same goal. It will hopefully tackle social ontology head-on and not sort concerns into a discrete set of social sciences with their individual claims to rigour (Outhwaite, 1987, p. 106). It is here with the threat of such a sorting that the danger of separating problem and method could be reified.

The work of Foucault can help here to broaden our hermeneutic adventure. Foucault's early work and analysis of discourse could be considered much like depth hermeneutics where the search is to delve back to the original place where a branching off occurred. Foucault performed this process, inquiring into when madness was first born and thus differentiated from reason. His quest was to decipher the unspoken in what is said. For Foucault, hermeneutics was always to be linked to an unveiling, which, whilst in itself was commendable, was also linked to a promise through critique. Furthermore, Foucault (1965) was concerned with what he regarded as a hermeneutic search for meaning that was constrained by a search of what lay only within whilst he also sought "to write the history of the boundaries ... by which culture reprobates something that lies outside it" (p. 9). Habermas, in his critique of Foucault, also notes his parting with hermeneutics, where Foucault does not consider *Verstehen* appropriate. According to Habermas, Foucault contends that the search for meaning requires the engagement in

the destruction and dismantling of that context of effective history which putatively links the historian with his object and with which he enters into communication only to find himself in it ... the archaeologist is going to change talkative documents into mute monuments, objects that have to be freed from their own context in order to become accessible to a structuralist description. The genealogist approaches the archaeologically excavated monuments from outside, in order to explain their derivation from the contingent ups and downs of battles, victories and defeats---history in the singular has to be dissolved, not into a manifold of narrative histories, but into a plurality of irregularly emerging and disappearing islands of discourse. The critical historian will first dissolve false continuities and pay attention to ruptures, thresholds, and changes in direction. He does not produce teleological contexts; he is not interested in the large causal chains. (Habermas, 1987b, pp. 250–251)

Whilst Foucault rejects the link between critique and possibility and “large causal chains”, he remains interested in critique as problem and method. Critique is not linked to rejection, but a continual questioning of the boundaries of identity and arbitrary constraint. For Foucault, critique becomes

a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying ... this criticism is not transcendental ... it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think (Foucault, 1984, pp. 45-46).

For Foucault all discourses derive from practices of power and have the character of hidden power and he uses the “panopticon”^{xv} to demonstrate the practices of power. Foucault maintains that the human sciences frictionlessly intermesh in the overall technology of power that finds its architectural expression in the closed institution. They are translated into techniques, and “form the most effective medium of the new, disciplinary violence that dominates modernity. They owe this to the fact that the penetrating gaze of the human scientist can occupy that centralised space of the panopticon from which one can look without being seen” (Habermas, 1987b, p. 245). For postmodernist social theory, totalising theories of society and history are obsolete and all values and modes of cognition are essentially relative. Thus, social research must be content with local analyses. Whilst, at first sight, it would appear that postmodernism is clearly incompatible with critical theory, Morrow (1994) would suggest that “many of the critiques by critical theorists directed against Marxism and sociological functionalism are uncannily parallel.” (p.22). Furthermore Morrow suggests that “a critical appropriation of postmodernist social theory is one of the crucial challenges of contemporary critical theory” (pp. 22–23).^{xvi}

Through the particular emphases of Habermas and Foucault, philosophical research has become a site for interpretation, critique and action, and has thus broadened to become reflexive. For Habermas it is a site where propositional content, validity claims, rational consensus and conditions of ideal communication will be explored. It is a place to unveil the hidden through critique and transformative action, a place to link theory and practice, and a place for shared understandings. For Foucault, it is a site to question the very existence of shared understandings, a place inviting transgression and experimentation, to provide accounts of self-invention and self-stylisation. These places are rich in their differences and similarities. This is a place for self-transformation and critique. Critique is freed from its association only with rejection and possibilities and allowed to travel on the journey unaccompanied for as long as possible. In this paper, it is hoped to create spaces where we can delve into the possibility of shared meanings where power relations and discursive practices are privileged, and where silence speaks loudly in the hope of understanding and, at times, resting in *aporia*.

In seeking understanding, this paper considers constructions of philosophical research that exclude the unity of system and lifeworld, where rational reconstruction concerns only pre-theoretical knowledge or the replacing of pre-scientific knowledge. Hermeneutics is thus broadened to include a critical, reconstructive and deconstructive sense where the observer and the observed are united and we challenge the supposed autonomy of the actors, the independence of culture and the transparency of communication but also the exclusion of imagination, vision, ideology, and power relations (Habermas, 1987a, p. 224).

Meanwhile, we are continually plagued by the dualisms that haunt the research process, or divisions ever present in ‘carving up’ research. It will be the bringing together of these theories that will guide us onwards. It is to consider the possibility of grand narratives and discursive practices, to lay claims and yet

remain open to possibilities and uncertainties. This journey is arduous, perplexing, knotty and unaccommodating as the path before us has been, for so long, founded on dualities and divisions.^{xvii}

The Research Path Before us is Built on Dualities and Divisions

We do not walk alone on our path and many are walking behind us, before us, alongside of us and around us. Behind, in the pursuit of a way beyond dualities, are Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Gadamer. Merleau-Ponty (1964) noted that, in one integral duality, people become pure spectators whilst simultaneously the world becomes *le Grand Objet*. Whilst, in some respects, Merleau-Ponty's theories were postmodern, whether he was a postmodernist has, nonetheless, initiated debate.^{xviii} Initially, his theories were founded in a reflective philosophy that, whilst he was criticised for it, did not suggest reflecting on the unreflected, nor linking philosophy with lived experience. He argued that "assuredly life is not a philosophy" and that "description is not the return to immediate experience" for "one never returns to immediate experience" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 30). Nevertheless, he does suggest that the question is whether we are to try and understand immediate experience and that to attempt to express it "is not to betray reason but, on the contrary, to work toward its aggrandisement" (p. 30). For Merleau-Ponty, philosophy is reflection and without it "life would probably dissipate itself in ignorance of itself or in chaos" (p. 19). Although commendable in his intent to overcome duality, he was in danger, as is this paper, of entering the realm of philosophical monism.^{xix} We are reminded that the integration or unification of divisions does not necessarily mean the fusion or disillusion of these divisions into one whole, an understanding, but rather the recognition of multiple fragments that shape our understanding. Merleau-Ponty's theories do enter the postmodern arena, however, when he suggests that reflection should reject all instruments that have been provided for it, and place itself in an alien landscape where it can be redefined through ontological interrogation (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 130). Philosophy, he contends, must move beyond psychological and transcendental reflection and leave behind all language associated with these. We must seek a "language of coincidence", of "making the things themselves speak", rather than a language where the philosopher is the organiser, where meaning is not associated with a word, "but the lateral relations, the kinships that are implicated in their transfers and their exchanges" are privileged (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 125). He also argues that there is a dialectical relation between the silence of the origins and language for in breaking the silence "language realises...what silence wished but did not obtain," for silence is the outworking of reflection (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 176). The grappling with silence, as well as the spoken, should be valued in philosophical research.

Reflection cannot be the only focus of philosophy as those on the path beside us have reminded us. Reflection is embraced by reflexivity where pragmatism and the bond of thought to action are integral to linking philosophy to transformation. What is particularly relevant from Merleau-Ponty's work for this paper is his explication of reason and vision. Although postmodern in some aspects of his work, he did not reject or disavow reason and considered the link between rationality and enlightenment. Here, his link of rationality to "reasonableness", and the aim to reach uncoerced agreement with others through unrestricted dialogue, is suggestive of Habermas' communicative ideal. Furthermore Merleau-Ponty (1968) argues that we can overcome the duality of self and other "because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general" (p. 142). In extending his concepts of rationality and vision this research will explore both, in linking the self and other, and explore the potential and impossibility of unrestricted dialogue. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty has assisted in conceiving of a philosophy that re-embraces physical sciences and does not, as hoped by Husserl, have to fight to become a rigorous science in its own right.

Whilst the search for meaning could be located just as a grappling with ontology, discursive moments, self-stylisation, and philosophical reflection, this would silence and marginalise lived experience. Just as suggested earlier, there is the danger of reducing everything to text and thus, as Derrida would suggest, unending *différance*. Nor, as Wittgenstein would suggest, can meaning be reduced to mere use. Wittgenstein's philosophy of language was bound by language itself and did not cross this boundary "beyond which hermeneutics lies" (Giddens, 1993, p. 640). Lived experience should not be examined as something other than language, as something other than philosophy but, as Gadamer would argue, they are "affiliated", entwined in a mutual belonging:

Language is not just the 'expression' of experience; it is experience; it is experience which comes to know, acknowledge itself, to be this or that specific experience (subject, naturally, under the pressure of ongoing lived experience, to future linguistic revisions and rewritings—we will have ceased to rewrite our autobiographies only when we will have ceased to be we don't merely add on to them as the years go by). (Madison, 1990, p. 165)

Lived experience is valued as a site for the research journey. Poststructuralism has rejected dualism, distinctions and divisions, and yet is in danger of privileging discourse and discursive practices at the risk of marginalising the actors and lived experience. Alternatively, the oftentimes overpoliticised concept of research performed in the name of critical theory is also recognised as a sub-text fraught with dangers of losing the individual actor in everyday life. Yet, both traditions are critical if the intent is to explore meanings of and through ideology, power and critique in view of a freer world. Young (1996) defines critical as the “making of relatively *unfettered* validity judgements through judgements of the truth, rightness and sincerity of other people’s actions and through being able to act truthfully, rightly and sincerely oneself. Alternatively it can also refer to the identification of obstacles to this” (p. 187). The challenge is to define truthfulness, rightness and sincerity through critique without dislocating them from the everyday lives of actors. The challenge also lies, yet again, in defining these notions without reifying the duality of what they are or what they are not. A transcendent critique is a collective and uncoerced process that would have us go outside the system to carefully specify standards and validity measures of these notions. As Wittgenstein (1958) suggests, if there is no distinction between “seems right” and “is right”, then that means that here we cannot talk about “right” and if we cannot distinguish between what a teacher perceives to be correct and what is actually correct, then we will need a criterion of correctness outside of her perception (paragraph 258). Marx, like Hegel, challenged this assumption through his dialectical approach, contending that critical ideas do not have to be brought from outside by a free critical consciousness for they are already contained immanently within existing conditions. Immanent critique would thus explore these notions in terms of what they promise. In this paper, some discourses of philosophical.

The Exploration of Philosophical Research as Immanent Critique

Immanent critique was born of the critique of natural right theories as a critique of dogmatism. To Hegel, this dogmatism was presented in discourses through “unexamined givens”, as “dogmatic moments” became grounded in the uncritical relation of the knower to the genesis of knowledge, and the “conditions” through which knowledge emerged. This rejection was directed at both the natural law ontology of those before him and the prescriptivism of Kantian moral philosophy.^{xx} The role of immanent critique for Hegel (1975) was to reveal the presence of unexamined givens, and thus the dogmatism of knowledge within the “taken-for-granted”. To Hegel, the source of critique was thus not only the object but also the concept of the object. Through immanent critique, an understanding of the object as actuality would manifest the object as false, exposing internal and external contradictions, contradictions that would remain predominant as a Hegelian influence on definitions of immanent critique as a continued debate.

Another focus within the Hegelian conception of immanent critique that became influential in later discourses was the notion of transcendence (here in the historical sense). Hegel (1975) maintained that there was no moment in the present on which to anchor a view of a “unified ethical life” and, as such, the ideal of ethical life was retrospective, and thus a transcendental ideal. It is here that we enter the debate within immanent critique of actually how immanent immanent critique can be and on what ideal immanence is based. Benhabib (1986) would argue that Hegel’s critique of natural right theories is retrospective and, as such, is not wholly immanent either.

Marx also largely influenced the emergent definition of immanent critique.^{xxi} Benhabib (1986) suggests that, through a Marxian transformation, “critique refused to stand outside its object and instead juxtaposed the immanent, normative self-understanding of its object to the material actuality of this object” (p. 33). Like Hegel, Marx developed his critique of ideology through an explicit rejection of earlier ‘idealism’, and also like Hegel debated the role of contradiction within immanent critique. Marx also challenged the transcendent nature of immanent critique.

The idealism that was the central focus of the Marxian critique was particularly evident in the work of the German idealists, namely, Kant. Like Hegel’s rejection of unexamined givens, Marx regarded the role of critique as showing that the given is not a mere fact, but rather is understood by showing what it could be but is not. Thus, critique is founded upon the relationship between actuality and potential and, in this, Marx distinguished here between immanent and transcendent utopia.^{xxii} In *Capital* Marx (1967) provides, in the example of “classical political economy”, categories that are self-contradictory. He maintains that if these categories (ie. modes of production) are actually thought through to their end they fail to explain the phenomena which they intend to explain. In this case, actuality is identified with intention. Like categorical critique normative critique suggests a contradiction. Thus within the Marxist definition of immanent critique,

the juxtaposition of actuality and intention is integral. This juxtaposition is that of category to actuality and norm to actuality.

For Horkheimer, who engaged very much in the Marxian-Hegelian debate, it was also the critique of the given in the name of a utopian-normative standard that constituted the philosophical tradition. To follow such a tradition, Horkheimer (1974) suggested that a critique of knowledge, presented as a dialectical critique of ideology, was required. This critique must locate all thought in its historical context and uncover its rootedness in human interests. Horkheimer, in *Eclipse of Reason*, describes philosophy as confronting "the existent, in its historical context with the claim of its conceptual principles, in order to criticise the relation between the two (ideas and reality) and thus transcend them" (p. 182). Calhoun (1995) suggested that the key in this philosophical theory is "the tensions and contradictions that underpin existing reality and point both to its situation in a larger historical reality and to the possibilities of transcendence" (p. 9).

Immanent critique, according to Horkheimer, confronts the disparity between ideas and reality. The task of the individual as critic is to expose that the given is not a mere fact, that to understand it to be actuality is also to criticise it by showing what it could be but is not. To Horkheimer, theory and history are intertwined and if a theory is correct, it will be evident in history. In this way, the ideal of a free, self-determining society is not merely an ought but a possibility, an immanent, historical potential. Held (1980) discusses this immanent, historical, potential in Horkheimer's work within the context of *praxis*. This *praxis* is historical, political and epistemological and the Hegelian transformation of "practical philosophy" into a philosophy of *praxis* is realised in Horkheimer's definition of immanent critique. The concern to maintain a philosophy of *praxis* that was not ahistorical, but historically immanent, was also prevalent in the work of Habermas. What is needed, according to Habermas, is a critique of functionalist reason which can be obtained only when a systems perspective is integrated with a communicative model of action (White, 1988). This critique should not only focus on functionalist reason, however, but should encompass all theoretical discourses. As suggested by Calhoun:

...if theory is not constantly opened to revision in the light of empirical inquiry, it is likely to become brittle, or to fall into disuse, or to become simply a repository of ideology. But the same is true not only of empirical investigation as organised by social science, but of experience and practical action which are also sources of the inductive content, meaning and flexibility of social theory. Using theory to challenge the givenness of the social world and to enable researchers to see new problems and new facts in that world requires recognising that knowledge is a historical product and always at least potentially a medium of historically significant action. (Calhoun, 1995, p. 10)

Immanent critique, has journeyed and will journey into the otherworldliness of paradigm shifts. Marx, Hegel, Horkheimer, and Habermas have shifted in historically specific and transhistorical theories, in responding to despair and optimism. Young (1989), in describing the importance of critique in a critical conception of analysis, asserts the need for critique to be more than philosophical contemplation and thus seemingly abstract, unattainable or utopian. Rather, critique needs to be considered immanent. Held (1980) also contends that to comprehend something, we must, to begin with, perceive it in its immanent connections with other things and examine the conditions under which it exists and becomes. It is the exploration of what these other things and conditions signify within an historical discourse that challenges epistemic gain. Calhoun describes immanent critique as:

a critique that worked from within the categories of existing thought, radicalised them, and showed in varying degrees both their problems and their unrecognised possibilities ... Immanence by itself was not enough; one could not just trust history to realise the possibilities embodied in the forms of culture or in material social relations. Critique was required as a tool for finding and heightening the tensions between the merely existent and its possibilities. (Calhoun, 1995 p. 23)

Critique may also be driven by a sense of transcending direction through continued change in practice. "Dramatic personal and social change becomes possible by becoming aware of the way ideologies—sexual, racial, religious, educational, occupational, political, economic and technological- have created or contributed to our dependency on reified powers" (Mezirow, 1981, p. 6).

It is here that Habermas would differ from deconstructional discourses. Foucault, as an example, would claim that power circulates in every interaction, whereas Habermas espouses the conditions necessary to

be freed from the nexus of power. Poststructuralist philosophical theory would argue that this claim is an impossibility. This criticism of Habermasian critique is also recognised by this paper and has and will influence the exploration of definitions of power and power relations. Habermas would maintain, however, that although cognitive interests are the transcendental conditions of knowledge, they are themselves naturalistically grounded. This concept is vital to an understanding of immanent critique. Critique does not arise from the philosophical ideals of theorist alone but, rather, it arises from the concrete structures of human life. In relation to the debate over the transcendent nature of immanent critique, Benhabib states:

The critique of ideologies does not merely disclose the dependence of thought upon social being, of consciousness upon material praxis. It also criticises this dependence from the standpoint of a struggle for the future ... consciousness is both immanent and transcendent: as an aspect of human material existence, consciousness is immanent and dependent upon the present stage of society. Since it possesses a utopian truth-content which projects beyond the limits of the present, consciousness is transcendent. (Benhabib, 1986, p. 4)

In recognition of this tension, Habermas himself refers to the cognitive interests as 'quasi-transcendental'. It is not the intention of this paper at this point to enter the debate of the validity of Habermas' cognitive interests as quasi-transcendental, rather it is considered here that this criticism of Habermas' work may be a misnomer. As suggested by Benhabib:

what distinguishes rational reconstructions from both hermeneutical and deconstructivist accounts is not their special philosophical status, but their empirical fruitfulness in generating further research, their viability to serve as models in a number of fields, and their capacity to order and explain complex phenomena into intelligible narratives. (Benhabib, 1986, p. 269)

Of particular interest to this paper is the need for utopian potential within immanent critique. Habermas maintained that the true negation of instrumental reason was not the appeal to a utopian reconciliation with nature but rather communicative reason. Is it possible for critique to have an overriding vision, a transcending direction, and utopian potential and can this utopian potential be founded in concrete life experiences? Immanent critique, has as its focus actuality in relation to intention and can concentrate on issues that arise out of the lives of those to whom the critique will be most useful.

Also this paper considers the need for universal valid notions within immanent critique. The task of critical theory was one of immanent critique that "merely required pointing to the discrepancy between the basic liberal values of freedom and equality proclaimed by bourgeois society and the objective realities of economic irrationality that could be subjected to human control" (Morrow, 1994, p. 97). Critical theory did not need to employ criticism from outside because it could employ a form of ideology critique whose message was potentially available and sensible to the subordinated classes. As such, it sought to explore human reason and to enact freedom through enlightenment, empowerment and emancipation. Habermas also sought a universally valid communicative process. Where do we locate the concepts of ideology, vision, hope and freedom if they are not universally valid?

The journey to critique of the ideological, political, and historical context of the discourses surrounding philosophical research regards regards *praxis* as central in portraits of research. Dewey (1957) described thinking as "a method of reconstructing experience" (p. 141). Thinking was portrayed as reflection and involved recursion through a number of cyclical phases beginning with an intentional endeavour to discover specific connections between action and consequence (Dewey, 1933). Through this recursion, a hermeneutic modification comes into being. Whilst Dewey is not describing an examination of the contradictions between the actual and ideal, the need for critique to be defined in respect of action and change is supported by both Dewey and within immanent critique. Bridging the gap between theory and practice, thought and experience is also a focus of both. Critique as pure theory is regarded as deficient, and without the link to action (*praxis*) is naively idealistic. Young (1989) suggests that it is not enough to have an immanent theoretical focus, that for critique to be historically immanent it has to be reflected in changed lives, and ultimately changed practices and culture. Critique within the definition of immanence therefore is inextricably linked to action, with practical intent.

Through immanent critique, the research process aims: to assess the breach between ideas and reality; to examine the relationship between actuality and ideal; to examine the contradictions between the external and the internal; to examine problems that arise from human encounters in everyday experience; to

maintain a utopian potential and vision for the future; and, to recognise the historical contextuality of knowledge while, at the same time, sustaining the possibility of critique in being.

Michel Foucault reduces all scientific knowledge to ideology. Formalists like Karl Mannheim and anti-formalists like Thomas Geiger claim to analyse the specificity of ideology. But Mannheim reduces ideology to social consciousness as a whole, and Geiger reduces value judgments to ideology. In other words ideology is either reduced to other forms of thinking, or other forms of thinking are reduced to ideology; either ideology is defined by including it in other spheres of thinking, or other spheres of thinking are included in ideology.
(Balaban, 1995, p. 77)

Philosophical research is not a monologist authority or voice, but is dialogically defined within discursive practices of ideology and vision. Knowledge is concerned with immutable illusion. In examining the latent puzzle, however, the research process is also linked to immanent critique, to *praxis*. Philosophical research is not research that objectifies context and thus excludes it as neutral, known, and monological. Furthermore, it is not concerned only with transcendental critique that sanctions disregard for the reality of being. Rather, it is concerned with a sense of transcending direction or vision, of imagination, of possibilities which lives within history, critique and *praxis*.

This paper is attempting to bring to the surface the dissonances between, around and within espoused theories and practice in philosophical research. It is a critique that seek to work from within the categories of existing thought, describe them, radicalise them, and explore in varying degrees both their problems and their unrecognised possibilities. What is required is that we be prepared to place ourselves "at the standpoint of others" but also acknowledge the possibility that "we may be highly motivated not to see our practice as others see it" (Dewhurst, 1995, p. 415).

The Research Journey 'Originated' in Lived Experience

The possibilities of philosophical research can be located within a heuristic juncture of historical origins within ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics and immanent critique. It is born of a concern to explore the culturally shared perceptions of everyday lives. Unlike traditional understandings of ethnography, it is not located in a physical site nor does it separate the observer from the observed. It is constructed, constituted, contested and conducted in a field of competing discourses of human relationships, power relations, cultural, historical, political, social, ideological and visionary terrain. The participants are not subjects to be observed but actors involved in this process and in the active production of discourses, as they each bring their lifeworlds into the process. Teachers' lives are not only worlds to be described and understood, but contested terrain, where disjuncture, rupture, contradiction, harmony and control meet as knowledge, where meaning and power relations are discursively located, constructed and acted. In this way, this paper hopes to privilege not only description and a mapping of everyday lives but indeterminacy and contestation as teachers wrestle, in pre-text, context and sub-text, with elements of lifeworld that constitute teacher everyday lives.

This journey is also born of phenomenology where it was thought that the objective mind could be known in itself by studying the ways it appears, where presuppositions are bracketed and the absolute is reached through an intentional and immanent critique of human experience.^{xxiii} Whilst calling on some central principles of phenomenology this paper assumes that we cannot bracket theoretical prejudices and that the conscious and taken-for-granted, the intentional and unintentional will be present in the voice of the research data. Nevertheless, Heidegger's "existential phenomenology" and Gadamer's synpaper of phenomenology and hermeneutics are influential in this paper. The importance of ontological inquiry and recognition of the fundamental relation of the subject and object as belonging to the world will be emphasised. Furthermore, the complexity of making explicit everyday understandings, that live too much within to demand that they become explicit, is recognised. This paper then values the importance of accounts of lived experiences of space, time, body and human relations (Van Manen, 1990), and is seeking a "knowing one's way around", rather than only a "kind of knowledge". This knowing recognises that *Dasein* is linked to temporality and immanence where understanding oneself is to consider projecting one's possibilities and potentiality (Heidegger, 1967, p. 183).^{xxiv}

Hermeneutics argues that the researcher must enter the worldview and cultural perspective in which the phenomena are located and thus surrender efforts to interpret from a neutral or outside position. In the hermeneutic world, we search for *verstehen* through seeking and contesting a common ground of

knowledge within worlds, which are incommensurable.^{xxv} The richness of hermeneutics seeks to overcome objectivism and counter relativism, not so much through a rejection of the notion of reason and its universalist pretensions but a radical reconstruction of what it means to be rational (Madison, 1990, p. 51). Gadamer's concept of the mediation necessary when differing worldviews meet is of particular interest in this paper. Within the dialogical dimension of this meeting and the birth of hermeneutical moments in ruptures in intersubjectivity, Gadamer helps this paper to unite hermeneutics with the *aporias* present in everyday lives. It is to strive continually for description, interpretation and understanding within a world that is not immediately understandable and privileges a reflexive dimension of hermeneutics.^{xxvi} This paper hopes that, as we explore constructions of philosophical research that the familiar will become novel and the novel familiar but also recognises that some things will remain unfamiliar and alien and that, at times, we should rest in this (Burbules, 1997, p. 5).

Immanent critique brings to this paper a concern to acknowledge and reveal the presence of unexamined givens, ideological, social and cultural structures and, thus, the dogmatism of knowledge within the taken-for-granted (Hegel, 1975). Within immanent critique, the source of critique is both the object and the concept of the object. An understanding of the object as actuality would manifest the object as false, exposing internal and external contradictions. Within this paper, the juxtaposition of actuality and intention, ideas and reality, that which is and that which could be, is integral. This juxtaposition locates all thought in its historical context and seeks to uncover its rootedness in human interests. The concern is to maintain a philosophy of *praxis* that is not ahistorical but historically immanent. Immanent critique is used in this research to seek epistemic gain which assumes that, in order to comprehend something, we must firstly perceive it in its immanent connections with other things and examine the conditions under which it exists and becomes (Held, 1980, p. 214). It is not limited to this, however, but is also concerned with the need and possibility of 'universally valid notions'. Critique does not arise from the philosophical ideals of theorist alone but rather it arises from the concrete structures of human life and thus focuses on issues that arise out of the lives of those to whom the critique will be most useful. The focus here is on changed lives and bridging the gap between theory and practice, thought and experience. Within this paper philosophical research is inextricably linked to action, with practical intent.

The research journey is, then, born of a meeting of fields of endeavour through ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics and immanent critique, but it is also born of everyday lives. It is the meeting of pre-text, con-text, and sub-text with the everyday lives of teachers as lifeworld is confronted with fragments of theories, practices, discourses, visions, constraints, possibilities and power relations (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 153). It is to examine the enactment, construction and contestation of teacher thinking within professional paradigms and discourses, power-knowledge formations, and social, cultural, political and ideological structures as they intersect within and around the everyday lives of teachers.

The Research Journey as a 'Critical' Endeavour

The theories of critical realism, critical theory and poststructuralism can also meet in the research endeavour. Whilst all differ in many aspects, their critique of positivism is shared. In this paper, critical realism is valued in seeking to privilege the reflexive and subjective in grappling with a post-empiricist meta-theory of science. In seeking to redefine the relations between epistemology and ontology, critical realism challenges the polarisation of positivism and postmodern relativism, suggesting the necessary meeting of empiricism and objectivism (Morrow, 1994, p. 77). Moving beyond the correspondence theory where truth mirrors reality critical realism creates a space for a radical reworking of ontological realism where, as Bhaskar (1986) suggests, the strengths of both deductivism and contextualism can be incorporated. Without the recognition of the "intransitive" as well as the "transitive",^{xxvii} Bhaskar (1986) contends that we succumb to post-empiricist relativism where thought becomes "bereft of intra-discursive conditions and rational controls" (p. 52). Bhaskar also contends that it is in this alternative to ontological skepticism that the hope of human emancipation is advanced.^{xxviii} Furthermore, Morrow (1994) notes, as does this paper, that the "reflexive turn" is privileged in such an interpretation, whereby the history and sociology of the sciences "becomes a necessary basis of their intelligibility and justification" (p. 78).

In embracing these notions of the transitive, intransitive and the importance of the "reflexive turn" this paper is also born of critical theory. Whilst this phrase is now associated with a multitude of meanings it is considered here as epistemic gain not a retrograde step in exploring existing theories. This multiplicity of meanings has compelled philosophical discourse to search for the core assumptions that distinguish critical theory from other schools of thought. This paper builds upon some of these core assumptions, whilst it

challenges and extends others. Critique as integral, not just a part of social research, is foundational, as too is the emphasis on reflexivity and a dedication to advocacy, emancipation, the dialogical process and social criticism. Critical theory has been significant in emphasising the need for the ongoing conversation between theory and practice, the ideological and communicative underpinnings of reality and the contextualising of meaning. It recognised the dislocative force of positivism in isolating the vision and ideals of alternative ways of knowing and denying the place of lifeworld in linking knowing and acting. It brought to the fore immanence, power relations, knowledge constitutive and emancipatory interests. Alternatively, whilst this paper challenges positivistic rationality and espouses the need to critique power/knowledge relations and interests, it links critical theory and critical realism to provide a space for alternative scientific understandings. The hope is not to replace positivistic understandings but to regard them as only one of the many fragments that represent what is known as rationality. What is needed, according to Habermas, is a critique of functionalist reason, which can be obtained only when a systems perspective is integrated with a communicative model of action (White, 1988, p. 104). This critique should not only focus on functionalist reason but should encompass all theoretical discourses. This paper challenges the split between objectivity and subjectivity, the transitive and the intransitive, the deductive and contextual, the ontological and the epistemological. It is also aware, however, of the danger of seeking to be all-inclusive and will tread this path carefully.

It is not only the meeting of critical theory with critical realism but also postmodernism that has been influential in this paper. The ongoing debate between critical theory and postmodernism has borne the concern with *aporetical* moments. In seeking to critique emancipatory goals for all, truth and the grand narratives that appear implicit in critical theory, postmodernists have challenged the constructive power of discourse and the nexus of power and knowledge. Power relations are not thought, as with critical theory, only to distort knowledge but that knowledge itself is borne of these power relations. Postmodernism, also borne of advocacy and the desire to give voice to the marginalised, engages with research as a social practice rather than a producer of transcendental truth (Usher and Edwards, 1994). To postmodernist writers, the quality of interpretation presents a multiplicity of meanings and nothing is either inherently bad or good. The quality of interpretation is to recognise its complexity as discursive practices and power relations weave a social, historical and cultural web of understanding. To grapple with interpretation is to be confronted with its own richness dependent on how fully and well we develop the various alternatives indeterminacy presents. It is to embrace the catalyst of discovery and seek alien territory. Yet we do not venture into the *aporetical* caverns consumed by post-empiricist relativism bereft of intra-discursive conditions and rational controls, for then we would limit our description of the cavern and only give voice to selected corridors. Similarly, we appear to know when we are confronted by such a cavern or dilemma in everyday life and which caverns will need to be conquered and which can remain, for a time, unexplored. At this point in the journey, we will realise the importance of how we venture forth and what we are not only prepared to confront but also leave -for-granted until another day. To uncover all may be a possibility but one that is caught up in the web of time and space, of the historical, ideological, cultural, political, social, structural and individual contexts.

Thus, the apparent freedom of choice of problem and method is thus anything but free. It is influenced, constrained and released by discourses and discursive practices at work not only in and around the everyday lives of the teachers but within and around the constructions that constitute philosophical research. To return to our metaphor briefly it is to recognise that there is no farmer we are all members of the herd seeking to be heard.

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Notes

- ⁱ Lifeworld is contrasted to system
- ⁱⁱ Outhwaite attributes the concept of “fuse” here to Gadamer.
- ⁱⁱⁱ According to Morrow (1994, pp.123–124) this involved the historicist appropriation of Freud as a theorist of anxiety and “In this respect existential theory as the basis of a theory of action complemented in some respects the role of symbolic interactionism and neo-Freudian theory in the Anglo American context”.
- ^{iv} Taber (1983) cites Schleiermacher as the principal originator of this school of thought.
- ^v For a more extensive analysis Taber’s (1983) book is particularly useful.
- ^{vi} He associated this also with the word *Verstehen*.

- vii The German word *Geisteswissenschaften* was coined in the 18 century to translate the English phrase "moral sciences". His decription here Anglo-American refers here to Americans whose first language is English.
- viii This view of hermeneutics was largely ignored by what could be called the "science of hermeneutics".
- ix Sparks, E.T. (1993, p. 13) depicts Escher's woodcuts from Escher, M.C. (1967) *The graphic work of M.C. Escher*, translated J.E. Brigham, New York: Ballantine Books. Following Escher, Sparks depicts the hermeneutic circle, the continuous path comprising four "turns" offering four "gifts". The gifts of imagination, enigma, ignorance, and incarnation are each described. The 'gifts' are described as vision (imagination); enigma (salute to the hermeneutic stranger in our midst); ignorance (the beginning of wisdom is the gift of ignorance); and incarnation (becoming oneself is losing oneself).
- x Marcuse discusses reflexivity as the integral bias of any hermeneutic practice further in Goodman & Fisher (1995, pp. 108-9).
- xi See Grondin 1991 (p. 133) for further discussion of hermeneutics as critically reflexive knowledge.
- xii For a further discussion of 'epistemic gain' as an alternative to absolute truth claims or complete relativism see Charles Taylor (1989) and (1985).
- xiii Habermas (1988) provides an analysis of many of the methodological dilemmas confronting the social sciences. Whilst hermeneutics was discussed here Habermas also critiques analytic philosophy, phenomenology and systems theory.
- xiv McCarthy (1984) and Hesse (1980) provide a more detailed account of the critique of Habermasian theory in this regard.
- xv This concept was originally used by Jeremy Bentham in 1791 as an architectural depiction of penitentiary management.
- xvi Some of the theorist exploring this critical appropriation of postmodernist social theory are Poster (1989), Agger (1991), and McCarthy (1991).
- xvii Madison (1990) suggests that dualism, this "single word can serve to designate the essence of modern thought from Descartes to Sartre"(p. 58).
- xviii For a more extensive description of this debate see Madison (1990, pp.57–81).
- xix For a more extensive analysis of Merleau-Ponty, dualism and monism see Madison (1990, pp.62–64).
- xx According to Benhabib, Hegel develops the method of immanent critique in order to avoid the pitfalls of criteriological and foundationalist inquiries both in epistemology and in moral, political philosophy (Benhabib, 1986, p. 9).
- xxi. The work of Seyla Benhabib (1986) is particularly useful here as she expounds on the development of immanent critique as a philosophical discourse based historically on the rejection of previous definitions.
- xxii "It will be shown that the world already possesses the dream of something of which it must possess the consciousness, before it can actually take possession of it. It will be shown that the task is not to insert a line between the past and the future, but the fulfilment of the thought of the past. Finally, it will be shown that humans begin no new task, but consciously bring old tasks to fruition" (Marx, 1980, p. 346).
- xxiii The work of Hegel, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty were particularly influential here.
- xxiv Again Thompson (1981) is very helpful in a critique of Heidegger and hermeneutic phenomenology.
- xxv For a more extensive analysis Taber's (1983) book is particularly useful.
- xxvi This view of hermeneutics was largely ignored by what could be called the "science of hermeneutics".
- xxvii Intransitive objects are defined as "the (relatively) unchanging real objects which exist out- side and perdure independently of the scientific process", whereas transitive objects are "the changing (and theoretically- imbued) cognitive objects which are produced within science as a function and result of its practice" (Bhaskar 1986, p. 51).
- xxviii Outhwaite (1987) has also developed this thesis.